

Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee



Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street,
Glenrothes / Blended Meeting

Thursday, 26 October 2023 - 10.00 am

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct Members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest(s) in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of meeting of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Committee of 24 August 2023 4 – 7
4. **BAD DEBTS 2022-23** – Joint report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services and the Head of Housing Services. 8 – 17
5. **SMART PLACE APPROACH – CITY OF DUNFERMLINE** – Report by the Head of Business and Employability Services. 18 – 25
6. **ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY AND PLANNING SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT** – Joint report by the Head of Business and Employability Services and the Head of Planning. 26 – 44
7. **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2022-23** – Report by the Head of Human Resources. 45 – 58
8. **2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – PLANNING SERVICE, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE** – Joint report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Chief Executive. 59 – 62
9. **2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE** – Joint report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Chief Executive. 63 – 67
10. **2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES** – Report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services). 68 – 71
11. **2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE** – Report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services). 72 – 76

12./

12. **FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN** - Report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services). 77 - 82

The Committee is asked to resolve, under Section 50(a)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

13. **COUNCIL'S PREPAREDNESS TO DEAL WITH ISSUES AROUND RANSOMWARE (PRIVATE REPORT)** – Report by the Head of Business Technology Solutions. 83 - 88

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.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services
Fife House
North Street
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Fife, KY7 5LT

19 October 2023

If telephoning, please ask for:
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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.

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THE FIFE COUNCIL - FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

24 August 2023

10.00 am – 11.35 am

PRESENT: Councillors Allan Knox (Convener), Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Auxi Barrera, Ian Cameron, Rod Cavanagh, Eugene Clarke, Colin Davidson, Sean Dillon, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Robin Lawson, James Leslie, Gordon Pryde, Alistair Suttie and Ann Verner.

ATTENDING: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services; Charlie Anderson, Head of Business Technology Solutions; Alan Paul, Head of Property Services, Michael O’Gorman, Service Manager - Estates and Asset Management and Ross Tulloch, Lead Professional – Civil/Structural Engineering, Property Services; Jackie Johnstone, Accountant and Donna Grieve, Accountant, Fiona Williams, Team Manager (Digital Skills and Learning), Emma Whyte, Committee Officer, Finance and Corporate Services.

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Graeme Downie.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

56. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of meeting of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 15 June 2023.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

57. DIGITAL PROGRESS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT - UPDATE ON FIFE POSITION

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business Technology Solutions outlining Fife's progress and areas of further consideration in relation to Audit Scotland's report "Digital Progress in Local Government", published in January, 2021, which highlighted both progress made and challenges encountered in delivering true digital transformation in Scottish Councils.

Decision

The committee noted progress made in Fife and areas for further development and improvement.

58. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023-2028

The committee considered a report by the Head of Property Services outlining the draft Asset Management Strategy for the five years from 2023.

Decision

The committee noted the information contained within the report.

59. 2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – PLANNING SERVICE, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) updating members on the provisional outturn financial position for the 2022/23 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

60. 2022/23 CAPITAL MONITORING PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) updating members on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the provisional financial position for the 2022/23 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

61. 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – PLANNING SERVICE, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) updating members on the projected outturn financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

62. 2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) updating members on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2023/24

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financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

63. 2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) updating members on the provisional outturn financial position for 2022/23 for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

64. 2022/23 CAPITAL MONITORING PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the provisional financial position for the 2022/23 financial year for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

65. 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for 2023/24 for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

66. 2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

67. FINANCE, ECONOMY & CORPORATE SERVICES FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) outlining a draft workplan for future meetings of this committee.

Decision

The committee noted the current Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Work Plan and added the following report:-

- Asset Management Strategy 2023 – 2028 - Annual update to committee detailing activity and progress during the year whilst identifying immediate challenges and opportunities.

26 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 4

Bad Debts 2022-23

Report by: Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services and John Mills,
Head of Housing Services.

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report summarises the irrecoverable bad debts that have been written off during 2022-23 by the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate and Housing Services.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the content of this report which must be presented annually to this Committee as per the Council's Financial Regulations.

Resource Implications

There are no further resource implications as all bad debts written off have been fully accounted for within the Council's overall provision.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal implications in writing off irrecoverable debts.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not needed as there are no changes to existing service delivery and policy.

Consultation

Consultation will be undertaken with tenants around the Housing Revenue Account written off rent debt to meet the requirements of the HRA guidance and best practice.

1.0 Background

1.1 Bad Debts

- 1.1.1 This report details the debts that have been written off during 2022-23 in relation to council tax, sundry debtors, non-domestic rates, and rental income. The Council must review the debt that is outstanding on the 31st of March 2023 and write off any debt that is uncollectible from a prudent management perspective.
- 1.1.2 The Council budgets for a level of bad debts in the form of a bad debts provision as there will always be a small percentage of debt which will not be collected, usually between 1% to 2.5% of charges raised. All write-offs listed within this report have already been accounted for within the debt provision or in the case of temporary accommodation within the existing service budget.

1.2 Write-off Process

- 1.2.1 Debt is pursued proactively by the Council and a variety of actions will have been exhausted before write-off is considered. Collection staff collaborate closely with colleagues in legal services and external debt collection agencies to ensure that all options are pursued. Write-off is only considered where there is no realistic hope of recovery or where it is not economic to pursue recovery further. Debt which has been written off may still be pursued should a debtor's circumstances change in the future. This means that the fact that a debt has been written off does not necessarily always mean that the collection process ends.
- 1.2.2 As previously agreed, the Council applies a "fair collection policy" towards debt recovery which aims to give support where households are identified as vulnerable and taking robust recovery action against those who do not engage or elect not to pay their debts. To this end, debt relief is given to vulnerable households where certain criteria are met and there no reasonable prospect to recovery the outstanding arrears (i.e., the debts are considered irrecoverable). These schemes are known as the Council Tax Allowance scheme and the Rent Allowance scheme, and all write offs using these schemes are approved by senior officers from within the relevant service and are included in the total write off figure presented within this report.
- 1.2.3 The amount of debt that has been written off is always significant, however, this needs to be viewed in the context of the total charges levied and the Council's performance on the collection of the debt. The overall gross amount billed for each debt stream in 2022-23 is detailed below in Table 1: -

Table 1 – Gross Amount Billed 2022-23

| | Council Tax | Non-Domestic Rates (Inc. BID Levy) | Sundry Income | Rents | Total |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Amount Billed | 316,571 | 213,997 | 78,874 | 136,664 | 746,106 |

*Includes Water Service Charges and Statutory Penalties.

- 1.2.4 The total write-off presented in this report is just over 0.73% of the total gross amount billed for 2022-23 and the total written off is well within the provision for bad debt already provided for within our financial accounts.

1.3 Economic Climate – Covid-19 recovery and Cost of Living

1.3.1 The collection of debt is more difficult when households are facing increased costs due to the current economic climate and inflation. Within the “fair collection” ethos, Fife Council strives to support households struggling to meet their obligations through the allowance schemes (Rent and Council Tax). In addition to these schemes, officers work closely with our third sector partners to use income maximisation strategy with targeted take-up campaigns being run. The main campaigns run so far have concentrated on the most underclaimed benefits such as Pension Credit and Council Tax Reduction. The Council has also invested via the Tackling Poverty and Prevention Board in advanced software Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) which uses data to show households that may not be claiming all benefits to which they are entitled and gives data on the overall poverty within Fife. We have also introduced an online Benefit calculator which not only highlights national benefit entitlement but also local benefit entitlement such as Scottish Welfare Fund.

1.4 Effect of Covid-19 on Bad Debt Provision

1.4.1 The only adjustment to the debt provision is to continue to increase of the 0.1% to the provision for Council Tax, all other provisions for bad debt remain at the pre-pandemic levels. This is kept under review by officers to ensure the provisions are adequate and reflect the likely write off needed in future years.

2.0 Bad Debts Written Off

2.1 Summary Analysis

2.1.1 A summary of the amounts written-off in 2022-23 and a comparison to the previous four years is shown below in Table 2: -

Table 2 – Bad Debt Written Off

| | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2019-20 | 2018-19 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Council Tax | 2,826 | 2,657 | 1,792 | 2,402 | 1,337 |
| Rents- Mainstream | 317 | 963 | 1,520 | 1,153 | 1,393 |
| Rents - Supported | 1,110 | 1,175 | 772 | 946 | 1,367 |
| Sundry Debt | 633 | 762 | 1,177 | 1,186 | 1,176 |
| Rates | 572 | 1,386 | 678 | 1,552 | 1,347 |
| Total | 5,458 | 6,943 | 5,939 | 7,239 | 6,734 |

2.1.2 A more detailed analysis of the debt write-off is included within Appendix 1 of this report. This analysis outlines the reasons for write-offs under each debt stream. It should be noted that whilst we compare written off debt with the current year charges, the debt written off has been accumulated over a period of over 20 years, dependant on the debt stream.

2.1.3 Overall, there is a 21.39% decrease in the total debt written off for 2022-23 in comparison with the previous year. The decrease is attributed to two primary areas – mainstream rents and rates. The decrease in mainstream rents is due to less activity (court action) being taken against tenants in arrears and it is expected when activity restarts this will revert to earlier levels. Within business rates there has been a notable decrease with less businesses ceasing trading which is a positive sign for the Fife economy.

- 2.1.4 Fuller details of each debt stream are contained in this report from section 2.2 onwards. Irrecoverable debt also should be viewed in context of overall collection performance as detailed in the following table 3 below.
- 2.1.5 The overall collection rates across all debt streams have shown acceptable performance, giving the ongoing challenges detailed in this report. The only area to show a slight decline in in-year collection was within the Rates stream. The following table illustrates the in-year collection performance over the last 5 years: -

Table 3 – In Year Collection Performance

| | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2019-20 | 2018-19 | 2017-18 |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Council Tax | 95.8 | 95.31 | 94.4 | 95.3 | 95.7 | 95.8 |
| Rents | 98.7 | 98.05 | 99.48 | 99.96 | 97.9 | 98.1 |
| Sundry Debt | 89.0 | 87.60 | 89.9 | 86.1 | 87.3 | 89.7 |
| Rates | 97.6 | 98.2 | 98.7 | 98.2 | 98.4 | 97.9 |

- 2.1.6 Officer keep debt under constant review, and we benchmark our performance and look to make improvements in the collection process wherever possible. The overall results achieved in-year collection have been kept/improved against pressures both on resources deployed to collect debts which have been reduced to meet budget savings and the external environment which continues to see challenges from post pandemic recovery and the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.1.7 Each debt stream is further analysed below giving further details of the overall collection of debt but not limited to the in-year collection said in table 3 above. The emphasis for debt collection has moved away from the “in-year” collection rate and the team are focusing efforts on collection of all debt (all years not just in-year), concentrating on collection in relation to total income in terms of actual cash value collected.

2.2 Council Tax

- 2.2.1 The overall write off for Council Tax has increased from £2.657 million to £2.826 million which is an overall amounting to £0.169 million (6% increase). Whilst this is a slight increase in comparison with last year, it still is just 0.89% of the gross amount billed which is well within the bad-debt provision set for 2022-23.

The increase in debt write off is due to the following factors: -

(a) **Previous Moratorium on diligence and sequestration action**

During the Covid pandemic there was a temporary halt placed on diligence and sequestrations. The increase in this year’s debt write off is partly due to the catch-up effect as the process and systems catch up with backlogs in applications.

(b) **Overall economic situation**

Clearly the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis are going to affect ongoing recoveries and this the level of debt presented as irrecoverable.

(c) **Council Tax Allowance Scheme**

The scheme aims to find at a much earlier stage, debt that is to be considered as irrecoverable. This scheme, in the first full year of operation, accounted for an increase of £87,157 of debt relief granted to vulnerable households.

(d) **Council Tax charges have been increased**

When the overall charge is increased, the level of debt write off will naturally increase due to the increased charges.

- 2.2.2 The collection of Council Tax has increased back to pre-pandemic levels in 2022-23. Indeed, the in-year collection of Council Tax is at the highest level achieved mirroring the collection achieved in 2017-18.
- 2.2.3 The team continue to develop generic collection staff who deal with all debt streams and dedicated recovery who officers specialise in the recovery specific debt streams.
- 2.2.4 Work continues to ensure the collection service is as efficient and customer focussed as possible incorporating new digital channels as noted below. To take this forward, operational responsibility for collection has been moved to the Customer and Online Service within the Communities Directorate to ensure the customer contact is rationalised into one service. The team still focus on improving the move to services to be digitally enabled. Key updates are noted below: -
- **Online Account:**
Work continues to promote the uptake of online access to Council Tax accounts. There are now 35,917 households who have registered (this is a 7,903 increase on the previously reported figure of 28,014) out of a total of nearly 182,000 domestic dwellings in Fife.
 - **Direct Debit Uptake:**
By far the cheapest means of collection is Direct Debit and the latest figures show an increase in the number of Households paying by this method. Overall, 69.22% of households pay Council Tax by DD (compared to 68.56% at the same time last year). Staff continue to constantly promote the uptake of DD as the Council's preferred payment method and offer multiple different dates and frequencies to the customer.
- 2.2.5 The overall cost of administration of Council tax increased in 2022-23 to £2.58 per dwelling from £1.53 per dwelling in 2021-22. The overall cost continues to be the lowest in Scotland. The increase in overall cost is due to a decrease in income from the 10% Statutory Penalties imposed on those who do not pay the tax on time. Whilst this has a negative effect on overall cost per dwelling, it is a good sign that more of our customers are paying the tax on time. The second reason is an increase in staff costs due to the 2022-23 pay settlement.

2.3 Sundry Debtors

- 2.3.1 The level of debt written off in 2022-23 for Sundry Debtors amounted to £0.633 million which is a slight decrease on the previous year of £0.129 million from last year's write off figure of £0.762 million.
- 2.3.2 The overall debt billed from sundry invoices increased from £ 77,375 million in 2022-23 to £ 78,874 million. The number of invoices issued remained relatively static with 60,878 which was a 123 increase on the previous year. The team continue to work with the organisation to try to reduce the number of invoices issued in line with the agreed payment strategy.

2.3.3 The collection rate for the year has increased from 87.60% in 2021-22 to 89.00% in 2022-23. Again, this is a testament to the excellent work the collection service adopts in recovery of income due to the Council.

2.3.4 The costs of raising an invoice increased slightly. In 2021-22 the cost was £4.73 per invoice raised which is compared with an overall cost of £4.78 in 2022-23.

2.4 Non-Domestic Rates

2.4.1 The level of debt written off in 2022-23 amounts to £0.572 million which is a significant reduction from the 2021-22 write off amount of £1.376 million. This is good news for Fife as fewer businesses in Fife have ceased trading and thus the lost revenues in terms of debt write off has reduced.

2.4.2 The non-domestic rates collection rate decreased to 97.6% in 2022-23 compared with the 2021-22 collection rate of 98.2%. The reduction in collection rates is a worrying over the last two years and is perhaps a sign that businesses are taking time to recover from the drop in trade because of the covid pandemic. The team continue to work with our debt collection partners to check and improve ongoing collection rates.

2.4.3 The rates team continue to promote the online account and Direct Debit facilities for businesses but uptake on both has continues to be lower than expected and enhanced efforts, including working with the Scottish Government, Digital Office, and Improvement Service to enhance the digital offering nationally for Non-Domestic Rates.

2.4.4 The cost for the delivery of the service continued to decrease in 2022-23 to £1.96 per property compared with £ 3.92 in 2021-22. The overall reduction of £1.98 per property is directly attributed to an increase in the 10% statutory penalty imposed which increased from £384,189 in 21/22 to £497,584 in 2022/23. Again, this is another indicator of the fact that businesses are struggling with pandemic recovery and increased energy costs.

2.4.5 To support businesses in Fife, the Rates team and Economic Development Service worked together to deliver a rates hardship scheme which allowed businesses to apply for hardship relief of rates of up to 50% (capped at £20,000). This was funded via Scottish Government LACER (Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery) funding. In 2022-23 the scheme awarded a total of £584,994.96 in relief to 49 successful applications (with 5 applications rejected). This helped the businesses awarded relief to continue to employ 1691 fife-based jobs.

2.5 Bad debts over £50,000

2.5.1 The Council's financial regulations state that members must be informed where a sum written off is more than £50,000 for any individual debtor. During 2022-23 there was only one company where the total write off was £182,486. This compared with 4 companies in 2021-22 with a total write off amounting to £466,806 – a 75% reduction in the number of businesses with written off debt exceeding the £50,000 threshold.

2.5.2 In the 2022-23 case the company ceased trading and was liquidated. On the 6th of December 2022, a claim has been lodged with the liquidator and we await details of any dividend payable.

2.6 Rents

2.6.1 Mainstream Housing

The total write-off for mainstream tenants (both current and former tenant) is £0.317 million in 2022-23 which is a reduction of £0.646 million from 2021-22 where the

debt written off was £0.963 million. The full reasons for the write-off are contained as a separate listing within Appendix 1. The write off amount equates to less than 0.3% of the total rent due in 2022-23 and is within the limits of affordability set out in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and within the provision available within the HRA already set aside to meet the debt write off.

- 2.6.2 The reduction in written off debt in 2022-23 is significantly lower than what would be expected. The reduction is due to the ongoing Scottish Government policy to ensure only the most serious cases are considered for eviction and thus the focus of the rent teams has changed to support tenants in meeting their rental liability instead of taking cases through the court system. This change in focus has allowed the team to keep collection rates at over 98% despite not being able to enforce the ultimate sanction of eviction for those households who continue to do not pay their rent.

2.6.3 Temporary Accommodation

Appendix 1 also includes a summary of temporary homeless accommodation rents that were written off in 2021-22. The overall write off for last year was £1.110 million which is a slight decrease of £0.065 million on the 2021-22 write off which was £1.175 million.

This write off will be contained within the overall provision provided within the general fund housing budget.

2.6.4 Overall Rent Collection

Rent collection for 2022-23 increased to 98.7% (compared with 98.1% in 2021-22) but clearly is below the pre-pandemic levels of almost 100%.

The service continues to prioritise the collection of rent at the same time as providing support to vulnerable households which was expanded to help tenants with heating costs allowing tenants' the ability to meet their rental payments. Overall, the collection performance is excellent given the challenges the team faced during 2022-23.

3.0 Covid 19 and Cost-of Living Implications on Collection of Debt

- 3.1 In earlier annual debt write off reports it was highlighted that collections rates would likely reduce given the stretched households budgets. However, whilst this was true in the last report (for the year 2021-22), collection rates in 2022-23 appear to have improved across all debt streams except in business rates. Officers monitor collection rates on a regular basis to ensure any trends or issues. We also review national trends to ensure our collection performance is as good as it can be in terms of resources deployed.
- 3.2 As said earlier in this report, the Revenue Service continues to apply a "fair collections policy" when dealing with our customers. Clearly the support provided to vulnerable households is aiding with the overall improvement in last year's collection rates.
- 3.3 We continue to collaborate with our partners to ensure, wherever possible, support is provided to households through income maximisation, money advice and budgeting support. This work is being enhanced through the work of the Tackling Poverty and Prevention Board and a recently formed Debt Group which meets on a regular basis to show trends and types of Households affected. The Board and debt group have introduced schemes of debt relief for Rent and Council Tax where circumstances show that the debt is likely to be considered irrecoverable, this relief allows households the ability to move forward to pay their ongoing liability without large historical debt also being chased.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The level of bad debts written off within 2022-23 is £5,458 million which is a decrease of £1.485 million compared with 2021-22 (21.4% reduction), where the amount written off was £6,943 million. The detailed reasons for the increase are contained in this report but the overall write-off is within the normal level expected with specific areas such as rents lower than expected.
- 4.2 When reviewing debt write off, it is important that this is considered alongside debt collection performance and that the level of debt written off within 2022-23 accounts for just 0.73% of the gross amount billed (down from 0.96% in 2021/22).
- 4.3 The impact of Covid19/Cost of living on ongoing collection rates is set out in this report. What is clearly not included is the potential for a serious impact of the reduction in household incomes on collection rates and increased debt going forward. Regular ongoing review of debt write offs and collections rates is undertaken by officers.
- 4.4 The consistent message from Fife Council is to offer support to vulnerable customers who need it and taking robust action against those who choose not to meet their obligations continues to have a positive impact on overall collection rates.
- 4.5 The Council actively pursues the collection of all debt. However, debt write off is unavoidable and occurs when individuals and businesses cannot pay their debts and it is an accepted best practice to ensure that irrecoverable debt is written off from our accounts from a prudent management perspective. All debt written off is within the provisions made or within the service budgets set.
- 4.6 All debt that is written off, if circumstances of the debtor changes, may be reviewed and debts can and will be written-on and pursued.

List of Appendices

1. Bad Debts Written Off 2022-23

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973: -

- Local Government (Finance) Act 1992 and subordinate legislation.
- Prescription and Limitations (Scotland) Act 1973

Report Contact

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Bad Debts Written Off 2022-23 (Excluding Rents)

| | Council Tax | Debtors | Non-Domestic Rates | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Sequestration /Liquidation | 790,995 | 70,025 | 242,489 | 1,103,509 |
| Uncollectable | 1,396,129 | 417,577 | 319,669 | 2,133,375 |
| Deceased | 419,737 | 144,682 | 0 | 564,419 |
| Untraceable | 130,573 | 95 | 10,187 | 140,855 |
| Small Balances/Other | 88,240 | 316 | 30 | 88,586 |
| Total | <u><u>2,825,674</u></u> | <u><u>632,695</u></u> | <u><u>572,375</u></u> | <u><u>4,030,744</u></u> |

Bad Debts Written Off 2021-22 – Rents

| 2021-22 £000s | | 2022-23 £000s |
|--|---|------------------|
| MAINSTREAM - HOUSE RENTS | | |
| 294 | Former Tenants Category A (Moved) | 9 |
| 156 | Former Tenants Category B (Absconded) | 4 |
| 12 | Former Tenants Category C (Evicted) | -9 |
| 32 | Former Tenants Category D (Deceased) | -7 |
| 73 | Former Tenants Category Miscellaneous | 4 |
| 187 | Former Tenants Sequestration | 156 |
| 106 | Current Tenants | 156 |
| <u>952</u> | | <u>313</u> |
| MAINSTREAM - GARAGE RENTS | | |
| 11 | Former Tenants All Categories | 4 |
| <u>963</u> | NET OVERALL TOTAL | <u>317</u> |
| TEMPORARY & SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION RENTS | | |
| 189 | Former Tenants Housing Revenue Account | 178 |
| 986 | Former Tenants General Fund Housing | 932 |
| <u>1,175</u> | | <u>1,110</u> |

26 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 5

Smart Place Approach – City of Dunfermline

Report by: Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report responds to a request for more information on the smart place approach being tested with City of Dunfermline.

Recommendation(s)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and advise if any further information or action is required.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal and risk implications from this report.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required as there are no changes to existing service delivery and policy.

The Fairer Scotland Duty, which came into force on 1 April 2018, requires the Council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

Consultation

The Heads of Finance and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Plan for Fife 2017–27 and its Recovery and Renewal Plan for Fife 2021-24 identify that technological and digital innovation, together with skills, will be crucial to Fife’s recovery. Immediate actions include to ensure that people are digitally capable and connected and to adopt and innovate in smart technologies to build on the progress made with digital approaches during the pandemic. Acting on evidence, actions include better use of data and project intelligence to deliver better outcomes and to improve data sharing across the Partnership.
- 1.2 Since 2018, Fife Council has been a partner in the Edinburgh and South East of Scotland City Region Deal. As part of the Deal, the Data-Driven Innovation initiative has helped establish six hubs at the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University – creating a regional powerhouse for collaboration and innovation. The hubs house expertise and facilities to help ten sectors become more innovative and competitive through data. For example, the National Robotics Centre provides leading-edge facilities to co-locate researchers, engineers, entrepreneurs and educators to deliver the UK’s leading international centre for the generation of new, smart robotics companies. By Spring 2024, all the hubs will be open and the focus will become increasing regional impact from the adoption of data driven innovation.
- 1.3 The Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) was approved by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee in 2021 and its Delivery Plan in March 2023. The council also committed to these. The RPF is the next phase of the development of Edinburgh and South East Scotland’s regional economy, building on the City Region Deal. It is designed to help shape where public and private investment could best contribute to drive the region forward in a sustainable and inclusive manner. The RPF sets out four ambitious programmes to deliver the region’s ambitions: Green Regeneration; Infrastructure for Recovery and Prosperity; Visitor Economy and Culture; and Data Driven Innovation Economy. These aim to maintain and enhance the City Region’s global reputation as the data capital of Europe and deliver sustainable and inclusive growth.
- 1.4 The City of Dunfermline was granted City Status in May 2022. Fife Council then joined the Scottish Cities Alliance. The Scottish Cities Alliance is the collaboration of Scotland’s eight cities and the Scottish Government. Scotland’s cities have made considerable progress in adopting open data and smart technologies to drive innovation, create new businesses and increase employment opportunities to deliver city services in a more effective and sustainable way and to attract investor and residents. The Alliance secured funding for its Smart Cities Scotland project (Scotland’s 8th City – The Smart City) 2015-23, to take forward co-designed technology and data opportunities to help achieve the cities’ ambitions to be global hi-tech hubs. <https://scottishcities.org.uk/smart-cities/>
- 1.5 In 2023/24, Business and Employability and Communities and Neighbourhoods Services commissioned Bable to help facilitate a smart city process in Dunfermline. [BABLE - Smart City Innovation Platform \(bable-smartcities.eu\)](https://bable-smartcities.eu) are an international consultancy who are a driving force in holistic and urban innovation, utilising clean-tech and innovation to elevate the standard of living in cities, towns and regions. They undertook a review of the 8th City Programme for the Scottish Cities Alliance in 2023. The process was to investigate if the concept could help deliver the ambitions of the Local Community Plan and if it was an approach that could be relevant to a place-based approach to service delivery and development for all areas in Fife.

- 1.6 A strategic and integrated place-based approach could help Fife to effectively respond to the global transformations driving innovation in the economy and society. These transformations include:
- Digitalisation, data and AI (Artificial Intelligence)
 - Future of work, automation and agetech (technology that makes comfortable longevity accessible to all)
 - Energy transition, security and decarbonisation
 - Smart mobility, ports and logistics
 - Intelligent, carbon neutral buildings
 - Connected urban realm, decentralisation and social value and
 - The need for place-based smart specialisation

2.0 Overview of a Smart City and Places approach

- 2.1 Smart cities and digital placemaking is occurring across the world. The goal of smart places policies is to achieve long-term development goals by leveraging data, innovative technology and collaboration in place planning and development. Bable highlighted that each city or place focuses on a different aspect of technology or data. For example, Belfast's approach is to develop the place as an Innovation District. It identified 30 project ideas across eight categories such as data platforms, urban innovation, support services. This enabled them to set district-wide innovation challenges to address local barriers to inclusion and wellbeing to maintain benefits locally.
- 2.2 The rationale for why places should be smarter is based on the premise that: DATA + MANAGEMENT + PEOPLE creates a dynamic process through which cities become more liveable and resilient. This then creates a TRANSFORMATIVE approach to urban management and development – it is not a project or theme. Expected benefits include the use of joined up data to see the big picture (across functions or departments) to enable more informed decisions, declutter and join duplicate processes to reassign resources and to use smart as a framework to realise benefits across disconnected projects.
- 2.3 Bable outlined why Cities are investing in new technologies and data – to own their own digital transformation, in more meaningful ways for their citizens. Investment is doubling every three years, estimated to be \$7.2 bn by 2030 (Precedence Research 2023). However, in their experience, the smart cities opportunity is much more than a tech or market trend. It helps Cities meet the need for more holistic ways to tackle their challenges while ensuring sustainable development and to respond to citizens and local stakeholders who want ways to get involved in the planning of their own city.
- 2.4 Bable summarises the reasons why Smart Places initiative fail as:
- Fuzziness – a lack of a coherent framework and approach
 - Lack of clear objectives and no plan to replicate or scale
 - Over-reliance on public sector budget, failure to leverage commercial investment, Public Sector procurement constraints
 - Digital divides and lack of community engagement
 - Closed IT architectures and vendor lock-in
 - Underestimating smaller cities, seeing size as a limitation

- 2.5 Historically, investment in infrastructure has been a source of growth but this contradicts both Fife and global Climate Action Plan targets. For example, the sustainable investment hierarchy from NTS2 (National Transport Strategy 2) focuses firstly on: reducing the need to travel unsustainably, then maintaining and safely operating existing assets, then making better use of existing capacity and, finally, targeted infrastructure improvements. In Bable's experience, smart place policies help put innovation to use to grow the economy in a sustainable way, supporting a reduction of the environmental footprint and increasing the efficiency of public spending.
- 2.6 Smart cities or places often choose to act as "testbeds" or "Living Labs" to transform themselves. For example, Perth is establishing an innovation highway and Dundee City has established a 5G testbed in the Waterfront. Living Labs used as policy tools can guide local or regional innovation ecosystems towards 'grand societal challenges', channel funding streams to address market failures, strengthen the innovation infrastructure of the place, building competitive advantage and creating economic value.
- 2.7 Smart cities use data to provide coherency and support real-time decisions. The journey towards a purpose-driven data ecosystem starts with policy, vision and goals. As a data ecosystem matures, it has clear roles and responsibilities to properly manage data inside the organisation. It then evolves to set up data governance, i.e. models to manage and govern data (with external parties). An organisation with a mature data ecosystem has the infrastructure and interoperability to develop the trust that data privacy concerns can be consistently met across all processes and services.
- 2.8 Based on their experience of helping other cities, Bable recommends that Fife Council set up a smart cities framework that clarifies our goals and expectations towards data-driven projects within it; set up an external governance that defines responsibilities of stakeholders around data use and management; assign responsibilities and hire skilled people to make sure our internal organisation matches our strategic vision and that the council pay attention to the Security and Privacy aspects of smart city projects.

3.0 Data Driven innovation (DDI)

- 3.1 The [Edinburgh International Data Facility](#) (EIDF) provides the enabling data infrastructure platform for the wider DDI initiative and its hubs. It brings together regional, national and international datasets to create new products, services and research. For example, the DataLoch service brings together key health and social care data to allow a holistic, data-driven approach to the prevention and treatment of different conditions, such as dementia. There is a secure process for researchers to access to the health and social care data.
- 3.2 The aim of the next phase of the DDI programme (2024-29) is to realise regional impact from data driven innovation. To build on the competencies and capacity created in Phase 1. To create and fully utilise open data resources like the Edinburgh International Data Facility. To build up world-class regional data clusters across the sectors such as Tourism and Festivals through adoption by existing businesses and start-ups; realising that regional impact depends on places being able to offer "test and trials of new technologies in a real world setting". These testbeds enable the commercial model to be tested sufficiently to attract investors in its production.

4.0 The Dunfermline pilot

- 4.1 Elected members, community representatives and officers from across the council took part in a series of workshops facilitated by Bable where they shared their expertise and knowledge of smart cities and placemaking as summarised in Section 2 above. This

culminated with a presentation to the Dunfermline City Conference in June that outlined the opportunity for a smart city framework to help achieve the vision for the city and tackle its challenges.

- 4.2 The proposition is that by adopting a smart city framework to achieve the long-term development goals of the city, this could be achieved by effective and strategic use of data, innovative technology and collaboration. This could be for both the strategic planning and development and the operation/management of the city.
- 4.3 There was broad support from participants for the smart city opportunity, that it could help deliver the Local Community Plan priorities and there was agreement that the 8th City Programme provides a good starting point. The emerging Local Community Plan priorities for the City of Dunfermline are: Building strong and resilient communities; Making the city a better place to live, work and visit; and Promoting and supporting Wellbeing. However, it was felt that the immediate priorities are balancing short/immediate needs with longer-term strategic objectives and having the data to achieve this and the better involvement of citizens, businesses and stakeholder groups in the strategic planning and service design.
- 4.4 The workshops concluded that a smart city framework could help make the City of Dunfermline a better place to live by making it:
- Safer (e.g. better lit through intelligent streetlights)
 - Healthier (e.g. to increase walking and cycling, reduce car use)
 - Prosperous and productive with better lives and livelihoods, better management of resources, (e.g. better manage energy costs and resilience, to reduce waste or congestion)
 - Develop and attract talent (digital, data skills and jobs in all sectors)
 - Shape the future – engage with service users through data civics (data civics – to use new forms of data, platforms, and innovations to gather, amplify, and engage the diversity of civic voices.)
- 4.5 Bable recommended that the city define a small number of “Lighthouse” demonstrator projects to start the process. These are projects that have smart transformation potential, use data to help several services work better together, deliver efficient resource use and enable better communication and influence. These are used by the EU to help contribute to their Missions, to tackle major challenges in health, climate and environment. This type of project works closely with the local communities to show how research and innovation can help citizens on the ground.
- 4.6 Five lighthouse projects have been identified for the City of Dunfermline. These are being considered by the Area Committee as part of the draft Local Community Plan (to be renamed the City Plan). If the draft is approved, it will be subject to consultation with the community. These projects will be defined, planned and piloted as part of the Local Community Plan.
- 4.7 The ideas for the Lighthouse projects identified by the workshop process are in a discovery phase and are still being defined. The needs-based project ideas include:
- Improve prosperity - develop a talent pipeline process for the city based on the skills required by its employers. With a focus on the data/digital/creative skills required by all ages to prosper in the digital economy. This could link the clients receiving anti-poverty support with Opportunities Fife’s Employability Pathway, centred around the new Community facilities at Abbeyview to provide a sustainable route out of poverty.

- Better connectivity and healthier residents – improve the data on mobility for the city through road asset mapping and management, to encourage more use of sustainable travel.
- Brand building for city – to create a strong narrative about what it stands for.
- More efficient resource management – to start with energy, through a proposed industry energy generation project and fit with the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy.
- Better community engagement and communications through the use of data civics – to develop new ways of creative participation through conversations.

4.8 An indicative timeline for a smart city roadmap was explored in the workshops. This is a long-term ambition. It considered what is driving the transformation of the liveability of the city (for example the delivery of the Strategic Development Areas) and how the ideas for Lighthouse projects might assist with that transition.

Table 1: Indicative timeline for a smart city roadmap.

| | 2023/4 | 2024/5 | 2025/6 | 2026-30 | 2030+ | 2045 |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Drivers of transformation | Global digital trends | LHEES, EHEES2, LTS | Fife's Economic Strategy – a stronger, greener, fairer economy. | | NSET – wellbeing economy | Net Zero - Ready, Just, Friendly. |
| Strategic Planning | FIFEplan (Fife's Local Development Plan) 2017 | | | FIFEplan 2 (a new Local Development Plan shaped by the views and aspirations of communities). | | |
| Plan4Fife change ambitions | No wrong door. Decentralisation. | | | Data driven innovation | Smart City Management processes & Dashboard | |
| Smart City Lighthouse projects | Define and resource | Talent pipeline. Data civics. Mobility Data. Industry Energy Project. Brand. (Data Governance). | | Round 2 activity could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenspace • Wellbeing • Safety | | |

4.9 The City of Dunfermline has many groups and stakeholders actively involved in shaping the city's future and investing in it. There have been discussions as part of the process about the requirement for community leadership of the transformation. To complement and assist with the democratic governance. Options being explored include the use of a Charter to define the goals, objectives and purpose of the smart city transformation to create a shared commitment to these. It might also set out the expectations in terms of shared values and behaviours. Any sharing of data between the organisations in the city would require formal data sharing agreements.

4.10 From the Smart City process, another critical factor for its success emerged from the workshops – the need for an appropriate measurement and evaluation framework relevant to the ambitions that are emerging for the City Plan. The Local Strategic Assessment for the City of Dunfermline provides an overview of how the Local Area is doing. Using the national Place Standard tool, local people were asked to consider aspects of the physical and social environment where they live and to paint a picture of the place and what needed to improve. It collated and updated a wide range of information as a key input into the Local Community Plans. It is intended to inform and support local conversations for both People and Place on the issues that need to be addressed in the Area. By comparing the results of Place Surveys in 2016, 2018 and 2022, there is a picture of how the Area is changing. This snapshot can be used as a background benchmark by local communities across the Area.

5.0 Risks and issues

- 5.1 This is a new concept for the council. The council is currently exploring the concept of place based services, what it means for the Fife Partnership and how to transform the concept into a reality for council services. It requires leveraging the three elements of data, digital technology and collaboration. This report aims to capitalise on the economic opportunity from this concept. Further engagement such as Continuing Professional Development sessions with elected members and officers is required to explore the concept and the learning from the smart city work in Dunfermline.
- 5.2 Paragraph 2.4 sets out the reasons why smart city initiatives fail includes fuzziness (the lack of a coherent framework and approach), the lack of clear objectives and no plan to replicate or scale. The geographic scope of the smart city approach agreed from the Dunfermline workshops was for the City of Dunfermline Area but there was agreement that clear objectives are critical to choose if wider geographic opportunities will help achieve the goals, e.g. Forth Green Freeport or Edinburgh and South East of Scotland's data driven innovation activities or wider UK or international opportunities. For these reasons, Fife Council also needs a plan to replicate and scale across Fife if the full benefits of smart places are to be realised.
- 5.3 Another risk included in para. 2.4 is overreliance on public sector budget and failure to leverage commercial investment. The smart city process in Dunfermline concluded that some form of leadership group was required to assist with this. It reinforces the need for a smart place framework to manage the pipeline of investment projects at all stages in the project lifecycle.
- 5.4 The Scottish Government has established the Scottish hub for regional economic development that developed the Local Wellbeing Economy Monitor <https://regionaleconomicdevelopment.scot/local-wellbeing-economy-monitor/> with a report on Fife. There is also the Regional Intelligence Hub mentioned in paragraph 3.2. However, the risk is that there is very little data available at a more detailed level to support measurement of the transition and effectiveness of a smart place/city approach.
- 5.5 If the council decides to adopt a smart place approach, firstly for the City of Dunfermline but then to scale up and roll out across Fife, it will require a more systematic approach to innovation and infrastructure for innovation to achieve this. The Connected Places Catapult produced a report analysing innovation places <https://cp.catapult.org.uk/innovation-places/>. This concluded that: "The development and implementation of connected places innovations that deliver greater mobility, access, optimise land use, improve decision making, foster new public spaces and points of human interaction are therefore integral to both the revival of regional economies and the sustained success of the UK's existing engines of innovation."
- 5.6 The next phase of the Edinburgh & South East of Scotland City Region Deal's Data Driven Innovation initiative offers the opportunity to connect into the new Hubs and their expertise and global connections. The regional Universities are partners in the City Region Deal but a more direct collaboration with Fife Council, e.g. a strategic innovation partnership could help the pace and access to resources and investment.
- 5.7 Scotland has fewer 'innovation-active' businesses (Source: UK Innovation Survey, 2021) than most other parts of the UK, although this percentage has risen over the past decade. More recent survey evidence from the Fraser of Allander Institute confirmed that although one in every three businesses in Scotland are currently planning to make major changes for the purpose of innovation in the coming 12 months, 60% were not. Innovation is required to drive improvements in productivity which, in turn, produces growth and better quality, higher paid jobs. Manufacturing has seen this but not many other sectors. Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-30 recognised that this is also needed to drive growth in the Fife economy.

- 5.8 If SMEs (Small, Medium Enterprises) are not able to adopt simple and relatively cheap technologies (such as cloud computing), there is little prospect of them having the capital, strategic capacity or skills necessary to invest in far more powerful and sophisticated technologies such as AI, automation, data analytics and 5G. In contrast, frontier firms concentrated in major cities will continue to invest, train staff and grow faster and more productive. The risk is that this will substantially deepen regional and skill-based wage inequality, dampen job creation (especially high value jobs) and weaken SME competitiveness.
- 5.9 Business Gateway Fife offers access to free webinars and online resources to help business do more with digital. There is a free Digital Health Check to assess a business’s digital performance and access tailored support. The council’s Economic Development team includes an Economic Advisor for Innovation to help SMEs access innovation support and funding. The TechScaler programme that is creating more tech startups has provided activities in Fife. There is joint working with the regional 5G centres. The City Region partnerships offer access to innovation activities such as the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) programme or the Tay Cities Clean Growth Community. The DDI programme is developing its Phase 2 to increase and expand its regional impact once its six hubs are completed in Spring 2024.
- 5.10 A smart city approach provides an opportunity for a place based approach to innovation and commercialisation of new technologies, to secure investment in production in Fife. There is “ladder” of business property available in mid and south Fife to do so through the i3 programme’s investment alongside the proposals for the Forth Green Freeport. The University of Edinburgh and the DDI programme is already a partner in the Freeport through the FastBlade Facility on the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus at Rosyth.

Table 2: a property ladder to support innovation

| Research Space (DDI Hubs) | Living Labs (DDI Hubs) | Commercialisation (Project space – Enterprise Centres) | Small Scale Production (Fife i3 Programme, Business Property Portfolio) | Large Scale Production (Forth Green Freeport) |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | | | | |

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Report summarises the process underway to investigate a smart city approach for the City of Dunfermline. The activity is still in its discovery phase and the ideas for Lighthouse projects need to be defined and secure resources. It is essentially a strategic and integrated approach to the long-term innovation and transformation of a place. To create distinctive places capable of competing successfully for commercial investment – in infrastructure, in commercialisation activities, in sustainable, growing businesses.
- 6.2 The potential benefits could support Plan4Fife priorities in how services are designed and delivered such as decentralisation and no wrong door. It potentially supports new ways to engage with residents, businesses and visitors to make places better – for lives and livelihoods. However, it is dependent on the council’s data maturity and a systematic approach to innovation by the council where all potential resources are harnessed.

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Enterprise and Environment Directorate: Business and Employability and Planning Services Performance Report

Report by: Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services and Pam Ewen,
Head of Planning

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To present Enterprise and Environment Directorate, Business and Employability and Planning Services' Performance Scorecards for 2022/23.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to: -

1. note the arrangements set out in Section 1.0 to fulfil the Council's obligation to comply with Audit Scotland's 2021 SPI Direction; and
2. consider the Enterprise and Environment Directorate, Business and Employability and Planning Services' performance information in Section 2.0, including current challenges/priorities and risks as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are legal requirements highlighted within this report, linked to a risk of regulatory intervention if the council does not adhere to the standards and expectations set by Audit Scotland.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

The Fairer Scotland Duty, which came into force on 1 April 2018, requires the council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. This performance report sets out progress against delivering economic actions that reduce inequalities in Fife.

Consultation

The Head of Finance and Head of Legal and Democratic Services have been consulted on the contents of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Audit Scotland published an update on Statutory Performance Direction in December 2021. The council is required to report a range of information setting out:
- i. its performance in improving local public services, provided by both (i) the council itself and (ii) by the council in conjunction with its partners and communities;
 - ii. its progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities;
 - iii. its performance in comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies including information drawn down from LGBF in particular and from other benchmarking activities; and
 - iv. its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment.

Below is a link to the Directorate Statutory Performance Indicators (revised) published in December 2021: -

[spi_direction_2021.pdf](#)

- 1.2 Planning Services annually submit a Planning Performance Framework to Scottish Ministers which sets out the planning authorities' performance against a range of national indicators. Once feedback is received from Ministers, the Service reports to committee on that feedback and overall performance benchmarked across Scotland.
- 1.3 Each year Business and Employability submits data for a number of 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 its performance in delivering economic development and employability activities against other Scottish local authorities. To mark the tenth anniversary of this report, an infographic (attached in Appendix 3) was produced showing the significant impact local authority economic development delivery has had.

2.0 Performance Reporting

- 2.1 Appendices 1 and 2 of this report are presented in the form of a balanced scorecard. A current snapshot of each Service's current challenges and priorities is given, including planned Change Plan Activities. The risks facing each Service in achieving its priorities are summarised and the performance against key Local Government Benchmarking Framework and Plan 4 Fife outcomes is examined.
- 2.2 Sections on Customer, Service Operations and Resources examine the performance of the Services against their KPIs during 2022/23.
- Business and Employability Service
- 2.3 Delivering prosperity for Fife is at the core of service delivery for Business and Employability. With a new Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030 setting out the priorities for the Service, the focus on delivering interventions at a Fife, regional and local levels to support businesses, improve business infrastructure and to increase skills, training and fair work will guide the future shaping of resources and delivery structures.
- 2.4 The activity, output and outcome performance indicators for monitoring both the Service's activities and the progress in delivering the new Fife Economic Strategy 2023-30 are to be reviewed and refreshed.

- 2.5 Fife's economy is subject to both internal and external factors, as set out in the council's strategic risk register. Over the last 12 months, Fife's economic challenges have included global and national pressures, such as the continuing war in Europe, rising economic inactivity, high costs of living and doing business and attendant interest rate rises and low capacity within the working population, leading to constraints on recruitment for key sectors.
- 2.6 Within the service, capacity gaps have been identified around project management capabilities and the service has recently recruited new project management roles for digital skills, together with a Project Management Modern apprenticeship. This move to balance demographics will be increasingly important with an ageing workforce.
- 2.7 Performance information for business support activities carried out by Business Gateway Fife are reported separately to this committee and Community Wealth Building delivery actions are captured through regular reporting to Cabinet Committee.

Planning Services

- 2.8 Planning Services report across two Scrutiny Committees, with Climate Change aspects reporting to the Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.9 Overall, performance across Planning Services is positive, set against an increased workload and challenges in recruiting experienced professional staff. The performance indicators, whilst focused on the speed of decision making, reflect the increased workload and growing complexity in the assessment of planning applications, implementing National Planning Framework 4 and the new Local Development Plan requirements.
- 2.10 Customer feedback is sought, improvements identified and actioned. Regular liaison with groups of customers assists in identifying improvements.
- 2.11 The Service's workforce strategy has developed over recent years with a positive balance in the workforce in respect of age profile. This should have medium and longer-term benefits in maintaining a skilled workforce. The Royal Town Planning Institute has undertaken research in recent years ('Resourcing the Planning Service', June 2021) which has highlighted challenges nationally. This was informed by a national study undertaken by Skills Development Scotland and partners ('Skills in Planning Research Paper', February 2021). Workforce planning continues around developing skills, retention, and recruitment.
- 2.12 The risks and emerging risks are set out in Appendix 2 to the report and highlight the importance of planning to Fife's economy and in addressing Climate Change. Risks are monitored regularly and mitigation identified.
- 2.13 Planning Services' more detailed performance reporting is undertaken annually through the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) as outlined in para 1.2 above. The latest and 12th version - 'Fife Planning Performance Framework 2022/23' - was submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2023. Once Ministerial feedback is received, a report will be presented to the committee.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 This report highlights the key challenges, risks and performance in relation to the items that the Enterprise and Environment Directorate oversees. Overall, performance in both Business and Employability and Planning Services is good, and the Services continue to make improvements.

List of Appendices

1. Business and Employability Service Performance
2. Planning Services Performance
3. SLAED Indicators Framework: 10 Year Trends (2012-2022)

Background Papers

- Resourcing the Planning Service', June 2021
<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2021/june/resourcing-the-planning-service-key-trends-and-findings-2021/>
- Fife Planning Performance Framework 2022/23, July 2023
https://www.fife.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/507316/Planning-Performance-Framework-2022-23.pdf
- Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Indicators Framework Report 2021-22
https://www.slaed.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/41483/SLAED-Indicators-Report-2021-22.pdf

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BUSINESS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

Current Challenges & Priorities

Current Challenges

- The number of jobs and businesses in Fife fell in both 2021 and 2022, and Fife's jobs density is lower than that for Scotland as a whole.
- Business investment in digitisation is below the Scottish average and many businesses are yet to achieve net zero emissions.
- Many of our industrial estates and properties need significant investment and there are gaps in digital and transport connectivity.
- Claimant rates in Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath remain consistently higher than the rest of Fife.
- The changing dynamics of high street retail in our town centres continue to pose a significant challenge.

Priorities

The new Fife Economic Strategy 2023-30, which was approved by Cabinet Committee on 1 June 2023 and by the Fife Partnership Board on 17 August 2023, identifies three priorities where our service delivery will be focused over the next seven years:

- **Supporting businesses**
- **Investing in premises and infrastructure**
- **Delivering skills, training and fair employment.**

A fourth priority **Working in Collaboration and Partnership** details how the Strategy will be delivered.

Fife's Economic Strategy also commits 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**.

Change Plan Activities

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, the Service will be at the centre of placemaking for our town and city centres. This place-based approach will see greater participation from communities, elected members and local decision-making supported by smart data and the development of investment prospectus content, linked to Local Community Plans, to commence with Dunfermline.

The Service will also 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 proposals to refresh the Regional Economic Strategy for the Tay Cities region. The regional partners in Edinburgh and South East Scotland seek to secure resources at a region level beyond existing government commitments for the projects to deliver improved prosperity. The move to regional collaborative working is anticipated to deliver long-term efficiency savings but in the short-term, greater resources will need to be moved to design, implement and deliver this new way of working.

We will also be working across new geographies and partnerships, with the designation of the Forth Green Freeport providing significant employment and investment opportunities, and the implementation of a new Opportunities Fife delivery framework, bringing together UK and Scottish Government funding for a cohesive delivery of employability activity across Fife. We will create new partnerships and alliances regionally, nationally and globally, building on existing European and North American links, and further developing our outward-facing investment offer.

The Service needs to demonstrate an intensification of innovation and inclusive growth activity to match Plan for Fife and regional ambitions. An underpinning Community Wealth Building approach to delivery is already producing change in recruitment practice and procurement but will require to be embedded in all activities as we develop Fife's Economic Strategy's Delivery Plans in the latter half of 2023.

Climate change adaptation is, for the first time, laid out in Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2030 as a fundamental objective driving change, and the Service will need to upscale its approach to appraisal, adaptation and dispose of assets to meet climate objectives, running alongside the delivery of new, lower carbon business space across Fife.

This will require capital and revenue funding, and the Service is utilising City Region Deal and UK Government funds to move forward at pace.

The next period will see significant input required from the Service into the Local Development Plan. In order to support this change, the Service will review its working relationships with other Services and partners. The Service will also need to digitally enable more of its processes.

With greater-than-ever time pressures, increased external scrutiny and new funding conditionality for the delivery of capital activity, effective capital management will be a major focus of activity in staff skills, governance, and stakeholder management. The Service is committed to reducing capital slippage and achieving at least 95% of profiled capital spend.

Our staff are our most important asset, and we will continue to develop their knowledge, skills and experience, with a particular focus on growing our young workforce, building on our need for training up a project management capability within teams.

RISKS/EMERGING RISKS

Since January 2023, the number and rate of young people (aged 16-24) in Fife claiming out-of-work benefits has steadily increased. This age group now has the highest claimant rate (4.3%) and in August was the only age group where the number of claimants was higher than a year ago. Scotland-wide figures for this age group show that the unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds increased between June 2022 and June 2023, while the employment rate decreased, and economic inactivity rate increased. Securing sustained positive destinations for our school leavers therefore remains a priority.

Historically low rates of unemployment and high rates of economic inactivity mean that Fife has a very tight labour market, with employers still reporting increasing numbers of hard-to-fill vacancies. Widening the talent pipeline through the Employability Pathway has become even more critical.

There is a risk that there will be a further reduction in the number of businesses and jobs as a result of the continuing high rates of inflation fuelling the persisting cost of living and cost of doing business crises. Whilst the rate of inflation fell in August 2023 for the third month in a row, the rate is still high (6.7%).

There are uncertainties in relation to the UK Government Levelling Up agenda and associated external funding streams beyond March 2025 when the current UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) ends. It is still unclear what the long-term replacement is for former European funding streams. Approximately 40% of Business Gateway activity and 70% of staff costs for the delivery of the Council's employability programme is reliant on short-term external funding (for example No One Left Behind funding is for one year, UKSPF for two years) which constrains long-term strategic planning and workforce development.

| KEY OUTCOMES (LGBF/P4F) | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Outcome Measure | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2021/22 Quartile Ranking |
| % of properties receiving superfast broadband in Fife | 95.0% | 95.6% | 96.1% | 96.2% | 2nd |
| Proportion of the working age population earning less than the Real Living Wage in Fife | 18.9% | 14.9% | 16.8% | 12.3% | 2nd |
| % of the working age (aged 16–64) population in Fife claiming out-of-work benefits (LGBF) | 3.6% | 3.8% | 6.4% | 4.9% | 3rd |
| Land immediately available for employment purposes in Fife | 4.6% | 4.6% | 5.7% | 3.3% | Bottom |
| Key to Quartile Ranking - Top quartile - Ranked in top 1-8 of Scottish local authorities in Scotland; 2nd quartile - ranked 9-16, 3 rd quartile - ranked 17-24; bottom quartile - ranked 25-32. | | | | | |
| P4F Outcome Measure | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23* |
| Employment Rate – Fife | 74.1% | 71.7% | 71.3% | 69.3% | 74.1% |
| Unemployment Rate – Fife | 3.9% | 4.1% | 4.8% | 3.7% | 3.9% |
| New businesses surviving at least 3 years in Fife | 57.9% | 60.3% | 58.7% | 55.5% | Available Nov |
| Total Visitor Numbers to Fife (All Visitors) (STEAM) | 2.87m | 2.80m | 1.14m | 1.75m | 2.71m |
| Economic Impact of Tourism in Fife (All Visitors) (STEAM) – 2022 prices | £407.8m | £400.9m | £155.7m | £299.6m | £450.0m |
| Estimated number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported by Tourism in Fife (STEAM) | 5,564 | 5,487 | 3,080 | 4,343 | 5,541 |
| Median Weekly Workplace Earning – Fife | £520.30 | £544.30 | £558.80 | £597.80 | £573.50 |
| Median Weekly Resident Earnings – Fife | £539.10 | £564.40 | £579.40 | £610.60 | £604.00 |
| * RAG status shows progress against P4F Outcomes | | | | | |

COMMENTARY ON KEY OUTCOMES

Employment/Unemployment/Claimant Count

- Fife's latest **employment rate** (for the 12 months to March 2023) is higher than it was prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, but lower than the Scottish rate (74.7%).
- Fife's **unemployment rate** rose slightly in 2022/23 after falling to a record low in 2021/22. An estimated 7,000 people were unemployed in Fife in the 12 months to March 2023. Whilst Fife's latest unemployment rate (3.9%) is higher than the rate for Scotland as a whole (3.5%), the gap is narrower than before the pandemic.
- After falling between April and October 2022, the **number of people claiming out-of-work benefits** in Fife increased between November 2022 and March 2023 although the average rate for 2022/23 (3.5%) was lower than prior to the pandemic (3.8%). The rate has subsequently fallen, and the latest (August 2023) claimant rate was 3.4% only 0.2 percentage points below the August 2023 Scottish rate (3.2%).

Fife's Business Base

- **Business survival rates** for 2019-2022 will be released in November. Early indications are that the number of businesses registered for VAT and/or PAYE in Fife fell again in 2023 for the third consecutive year. It is estimated that in March 2023 there were 920 or 9.3% fewer registered businesses in Fife than in March 2020; most of these were micro businesses employing fewer than 10 employees.
- The **amount of land that is immediately available for business use** increased slightly from 37.4ha in 2021 to 39.4ha in 2022 and the percentage immediately increased from 3.3% to 3.7%. The proportion of employment land in Fife that is deemed to be 'immediately available' is lower than in many other council areas. This is due to a range of factors including Fife's rurality and different interpretations of the definition.
- In January 2023, 96.6% of Fife's residential and business properties had **Superfast Broadband** (30Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband. This is higher than the figure for Scotland as a whole (94%).

Tourism

- In 2022, Fife received **2.7m visitors** - 97% of the number of visitors in 2019 prior to the Pandemic's restrictions on travel
- Between 2020 and 2022, the **economic impact of tourism increased by 189% to £450m**, a higher value than prior to the Pandemic.

Earnings

- The **median weekly earnings of people living in Fife** in April 2022 (£604.00) was significantly lower than the figure for Scotland as a whole (£640.00) and lower than the year before (£610.60).
- The **median weekly earnings of people working in Fife** (£573.50) was also significantly lower than that for Scotland as a whole (£640.50) and lower than the year before.
- The **proportion of employee jobs in Fife with hourly pay below the Real Living Wage** fell between 2021 and 2022 to its lowest level -12.3% - although this rate is higher than the Scottish rate (9.0%). Figures for 2022/23 will be released in October.
- In the three months to July 2023, **UK wage growth outstripped inflation** for the first time in more than 18 months according to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Between May and July, annual growth in regular pay (excluding bonuses) was 7.8% compared to the same period last year, the highest regular annual growth rate since comparable records began in 2001.

CUSTOMER

| Performance Indicator | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Q1 2023/24 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| New Business Start-ups supported by Business Gateway | 550 | 615 | 518 | 603 | 503 | 143 |
| Businesses supported by Council Economic Development activities – Fife | 979 | 1,105 | 4,974 | 963 | 852 | N/A |
| Number of businesses registered with the Supplier Development Programme | 692 | 845 | 923 | 1,007 | 878 | N/A |
| Number of businesses participating in Supplier Development Programme activities | 139 | 74 | 55 | 53 | 98 | N/A |
| Participants on employability programmes funded or operated by Fife Council | 4,082 | 3,248 | 3,483 | 3,277 | 1,429 | N/A |
| Number of people progressing from FC Funded/operated employability programmes into employment | 1,158 | 865 | 457 | 1,455 | 858 | N/A |
| Total number of Modern Apprenticeship starts in Fife | 1,820 | 1,794 | 1,205 | 1,756 | 1,750 | 371 |

2022/23 ACTIVITY UPDATES

Support given to Businesses

- During 2022-23 Business Gateway Fife and Fife Council Economic Development provided advice, signposting and support to **over 500 start-up businesses** in Fife, the third highest number across all Scottish local authority areas. This support is estimated to have helped create 702 jobs and a projected turnover of £17.1m. Over 2,900 new and existing businesses in Fife received advisory support from Business Gateway Fife.
- This year, we are reporting a **smaller number of businesses supported by economic development activities** than in previous years due to the introduction of a new, more robust method of recording tourism-related support. All other instances of support increased in 2022/23, in particular the number of grants awarded, and the support given by the Trade Development Programme.
- The Economic Development Team successfully bid for £1.23m from Fife Council's allocation from the Scottish Government's Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery (LACER) fund to provide the **Net Zero Transition Fund**. This fund, delivered by Business Gateway Fife, provided non-repayable grants of up to £3,000 to 413 Fife SMEs to introduce measures to improve their energy efficiency.
- In 2022/23, the **Supplier Development Programme** helped 240 Fife businesses improve their tendering skills. 41.7% of Fife Council procurement contracts were awarded to Fife businesses in 2022/23, an increase of 2 percentage points on the previous year (39.7%).
- 2022/23 was the final year of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded **Business Competitiveness Programme**. Between April 2016 and March 2023, this programme brought in £1.5m of additional funding which was used to support Fife businesses through the provision of grants, specialist advice and other interventions.
- Delivery of business support services funded through the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** commenced in 2022/23 with the 'Fit For Defence' supplier development programme and the introduction of an all-age business start-up grant of up to £500. This activity will increase in 2023/24 as UKSPF fully replaces EU funding.

Employability Support

- In 2022/23, **1,429 people participated on employability activities** funded or operated by the council. This was fewer than in the previous year as 2022/23 was a transition year, with EU-funded projects winding down and new projects starting to get off the ground. Although activity was commissioned for the new No One Left Behind/Parental Employability Support Fund projects in April 2022, there was a delay in receiving a Grant Offer Letter and therefore having a confirmed allocation. This meant that new projects were asked to start with an indicative allocation with the view to upscaling once the allocation had been confirmed. As a result, not all projects were fully staffed and working to capacity until the second half of the year. In addition, newly-initiated projects can take time to see outputs and results as they are just starting to build relationships with clients and assess what help they need. In previous years, we had well-established projects that had been operating for several years and therefore had the benefit of existing relationships from working with clients over a longer period of time.
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding helped extend the **No One Left Behind** delivery priorities in 2022/23 based on need and performance of existing providers. The commissioning approach for 2023 -2025 was agreed by the Opportunities Fife Partnership, with Council approval in Quarter 1 2023/4.
- **60% of participants on Fife Council funded employability programmes went on to employment**, a much higher proportion than in previous years.
- The 20th **Fife Business Diversity Awards** took place in December 2022 recognising and celebrating the achievements of individuals, employers and employability providers in ensuring that people from all backgrounds are able to fulfil their work ambitions.
- The **total number of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) starts** in Fife fell very slightly (by 6 people or -0.5%) after significantly increasing the year before. 72.9% of Fife's MAs completed their training in 2022/23, a higher rate than in 2021/22 (72%). There were 371 MA starts in Q1 of 2023/24. This is 38% (+103) higher than the same point last year (268).
- The Employability Team supported **103 Modern Apprenticeships** across various Services within Fife Council and **146 Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs)** in the Education & Children's Services and Health & Social Care Directorates. Positive feedback was received from participants and school staff on the new one-year FA delivery model introduced in 2022/23 and this model is being continued in 2023/24.
- Funding from Fife Council's allocation from the Scottish Government's Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery (LACER) fund was used to help establish **Midfield Skills and Development Centre** in Kirkcaldy as a training hub for Mid-Fife, and work is ongoing to replicate this model in the West of Fife. An Open Day is planned for November to showcase the hub.
- The Service's **Culture of Enterprise (CoE)** initiative delivered a **Food, Drink, Hospitality and Tourism Takeover Event** in January 2023 in partnership with Fife College, Developing the Young Workforce Fife, the Royal Highland Education Trust, Springboard, Food from Fife and local businesses. The event, attended by one hundred S2 pupils, was designed to encourage more young people to consider a career within the tourism and hospitality sector.
- There were 92 downloads of the **CoE 'Race to Zero' game** (entrepreneurial and Net Zero skills video game); ten pupils from Bell Baxter High School completed a **heat pump construction project** which included a site visit to the University of St Andrews Guardbridge facility; and eight Fife schools won awards at the **Social Enterprise Academy Schools Awards**.

SERVICE OPERATIONS

| Performance Indicator | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Jobs created and safeguarded through inward investment supported by Fife Council | 5 | 0 | 50 | 1,539 | 186 |

2022/23 ACTIVITY UPDATES

InvestFife

- After an unusually slow period for **inward investment** between 2017/18 to 2020/21, there was a high volume of investments (including two large investments) in 2021/22, though a large proportion of projected job numbers related to the development/construction phases of both large projects (National Pride and Brockwell Energy) rather than permanent posts. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, there has been a return to steadier numbers of inward investments.

Business Property

- The Council's **Business Property Portfolio** provides around 400 business units in Fife which at 31 March 2023 were 87% let. New units are being developed in Levenmouth, Fife Interchange North, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath.

Town Centres and Built Heritage Regeneration

- **Dunfermline** was awarded city status in May 2022 and the new Maygate Exchange in the city was opened in October 2022 with all five office units let.
- Work is ongoing with the **Inverkeithing** built heritage programme, with the refurbishment of the Town House progressing well.
- A Round 1 application was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland for the **Buckhaven** Area Heritage Regeneration Scheme.
- Work on **Kirkcaldy** Waterfront Phase 2 Improvements is underway with completion expected by autumn 2023. Approval to develop a business case for the demolition of Kirkcaldy multi-storey car parks has been secured.
- Eight town centre projects were taken forward with £2.75m of funding from the Scottish Government's **Place-Based Investment Fund**.
- **29 small businesses were awarded a grant** to make upgrades to their property.
- A package of support measures was provided to businesses in **Leven** High Street following fires and disruption caused by H100 roadworks and the Bawbee Bridge works.

Vacant and Derelict Land

- Fife continues to make effective use of funding from the **Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF)** funding to support investment in infrastructure and place with around **15 projects** in progress. This is a ringfenced element of the local government budget settlement, as agreed between COSLA and the Scottish Government. Since 2015/16 Fife Council has been one of five local authorities to have access to the fund premised on a needs-based formula applied annually by the Scottish Government Statistical Unit. More information on how the fund is used can be found in the annual Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit Report which is published online.

Strategic Investment

- Following the award of **Forth Green Freeport Status** in January work started on developing the Outline Business Cases for six workstreams.
- Activities funded by Fife's allocation from the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** were delayed due to the late approval of the Investment Plan in December 2022. The Council was able to draw down 49% or £1.006m. The unspent 2022/23 funding has been carried over to 2023/24.
- The Glenrothes UK Parliamentary Constituency Bid to the **UK Levelling Up Fund** was successful and £19.4m was awarded for the regeneration of Riverside Park in Glenrothes and Levenmouth Connectivity projects.

Strategic Investment (continued)

- The **Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal's Regional Prosperity Framework 2023/24** Delivery Plan was published in March. Work is underway to develop the first two regional projects.
- Eight new business units were completed at Hillend and Donibristle Industrial Estate in Dalgety Bay as part of the ten-year **Fife Industrial Investment Innovation Programme** funded by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. This brings the total area of new business space constructed to 3,250m² and 3.89ha of immediately available service employment land is now available. 72 jobs have been created/safeguarded. Construction of new business units also started at Fife Interchange North and Levenmouth Business Park.

Tourism

- The **Fife Tourism Strategy** was refreshed during 2022/23 and a new 2023-30 Fife Tourism Strategy was approved by Cabinet Committee in September 2023.
- Research commissioned to **identify growth opportunities** for tourism in Fife provided a series of recommendations for promoting and developing tourism in Fife.
- The **Fife 191 trail** was relaunched with active travel options.
- **WorldHost customer service** training was delivered to over 50 people working in Fife tourism businesses.
- **Welcome to Fife destination marketing campaigns** included social media partnerships with The Herald and The Scotsman, a series of films for Year of Stories and extensive social media campaigns delivered in partnership with VisitScotland.
- In 2022, £41,570 was awarded to event organisers through the **Fife Strategic Events Fund** which supports events that attract at least 30% of its attendees from outwith Fife.
- The **150th Open** in July 2022, which attracted a record 290,000 fans to St Andrews, brought in £106m and generated over £300m in economic benefit for Scotland – the greatest economic impact in the history of the Championship - according to an independent study commissioned by The R&A, VisitScotland and Fife Council. The study estimated that Fife received £61m of new money from the event.
- A tourism action plan was developed for **Levenmouth** linked to the opening of the new rail link in 2024 and a Tourism Project Co-ordinator (funded by Levenmouth Area Committee) was appointed.
- The **Forth Bridges Trail** was launched in November 2022.
- A promotional campaign for **Kirkcaldy** was delivered for the Adam Smith tercentenary celebrations.

RESOURCES

| Indicator | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Q1 2023/24 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| Business & Employability Service – Average WDL per FTE | N/A | N/A | 8.65 | 9.67 | 10.39 |
| Business & Employability Service – Long Term WDL per FTE | N/A | N/A | 6.99 | 6.98 | 7.64 |
| Business & Employability Workforce who are Female (%) | 49% | 50.3% | 45.1% | 47.4% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Workforce who are Full-time (%) | 81.5% | 80.7% | 76.0% | 79.2% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Workforce who are Permanent Employees (%) | 65.6% | 65.2% | 77.7% | 76.3% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Employees aged 24 and under (%) | 3.8% | 4.3% | 13.7% | 6.4% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Employees aged 29 and under 55(%) | 9.6% | 9.9% | 22.3% | 14.5% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Employees aged 55 and over (%) | 32.5% | 32.9% | 31.4% | 30.6% | N/A |
| Business & Employability Number of Voluntary Redundancies (FTEs) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Business & Employability Number of WYI Bids | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Business & Employability Number of WYI Programme new starts | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |

The table below provides information on Business & Employability workforce data by Budgeted (FTE) for the current year and the last 4 years.

| Budgeted (FTE) April 2019 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2020 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2021 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2022 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2023 | Difference in FTE 2022-2023 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 156.87 | 156.84 | 160.35 | 171.66 | 132.49 | -39.17 |

Business & Employability in line with staffing more broadly within the Council, is demographically more weighted towards an older workforce. The service is recruiting a range of modern apprentices to develop our own for project management, employability and associated skills, together with supporting a progressive recruitment approach to employment.

The FTE figures above reflect posts held by the service for temporary funded roles across the Council, rather than a direct FTE reduction within the service itself.

The priorities for the service in future years will be aligned with the actions set out within the adopted Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2030, with a focus on business support and growth, infrastructure and employability, skills and training, underpinned by a commitment to develop these actions to support community wealth building and addressing climate change.

PLANNING 2022/23

Current Challenges & Priorities

Key challenges over the past year include:

- Addressing the Climate Emergency actions and associated strategic risks if not delivered.
- Delays in recruitment resulted in some underspend. Recruitment completed.
- Demands created by Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; 49 new and unfunded duties, and other legislative requirements relating to climate change.
- Implementing National Planning Framework 4.
- Working collaboratively with other services to deliver on the Housing Infrastructure Fund allocation through Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal for, and progressing delivery of, the strategic transport interventions at Dunfermline as part of strategic growth to ensure integrated delivery of infrastructure with new development consented.
- Progressing delivery solution for new Primary School at Wellwood, Dunfermline to facilitate development and unlock education capacity.
- Managing the number of planning applications and income, at the same time as an increase in the complexity of application assessment.

The current position of the Service reflects the key challenges outlined above. Early work is progressing on the review of the Local Development Plan, with the first key stage; the Evidence Report programmed for Council approval in March 2024. This review provides the Council the opportunity for the Local Development Plan to be the spatial expression of the Plan4Fife and embed Place Leadership. Whilst the Council does not have the resources to assist community groups in detail in preparing Local Place Plans, guidance has been issued together with a workshop and video.

Addressing Climate Emergency is critical for Fife. The Service leads with the Reform and Recovery Board. Further work is being progressed to ensure that actions are worked up to have a lead, costed, and timescales clarified. A refresh of Fife's Climate Strategy will be presented to Cabinet committee later this year.

Housebuilding and other development across Fife is important to Fife's economy, creating jobs and meeting Fife's housing need. Housebuilding activity is buoyant and good progress is being made in realising strategic growth areas as allocated in the Local Development Plan.

Our staff are our most important asset, and we will continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and experience, with a particular focus on growing our workforce and supporting mental health and wellbeing. We have embedded hybrid working.

Monitoring of priorities, performance, and challenges is managed across the Service. Our annual Planning Performance Framework is submitted to Scottish Ministers and sets out the Planning Authorities' performance against a set of national performance targets and criteria. The Minister's feedback to the latest (2022/23) Framework is due soon and will be reported to committee in due course.

Continuous improvement is embedded, with a Planning Improvement plan ongoing. LEAN process reviews are undertaken, ongoing customer feedback is sought, meetings are held with agents and developers to seek feedback, training is provided to Community Councils and elected members, and the Service integrates any learning arising from complaints, appeal decisions and other feedback.

RISKS/EMERGING RISKS

Planning Services review Service risks regularly and will be undertaking a comprehensive Service risk assessment in Spring 2024. Emerging risks primarily relate to increase in costs to deliver new infrastructure and development, resource pressures largely arising from new duties through legislative change.

In respect of infrastructure, this impacts the Council's capital programme and is linked to facilitating development growth as set out in the Local Development Plan, to assist Fife's economic growth.

The Service contributes to strategic risks EE002 Risk to the Fife Economy and EE003 Climate Change. The review of the Local Development Plan (FIFEPlan) has been considerably delayed as a result of a delay in the implementation of National Planning Framework 4 as well as the National Development Plan guidance is being finalised. FIFEPlan is now 6 years old and technically is out of date.

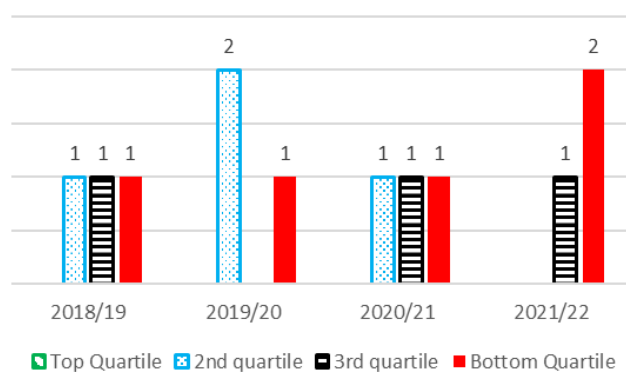
Changes in legislation arising from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 are continuing to come into effect. The risk primarily relates to the impact on resources to deliver the new legislative requirements within set timeframes.

The risk of new development growth slowing is monitored through the annual Housing Land Audit and through regular discussions with the housebuilding industry. This risk is also aligned to the delivery of new strategic transport and education infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of new development. The delivery of the strategic transport intervention measures at Dunfermline is monitored and aligned with the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal grant allocation for Phase 1.

Risks relating to addressing climate emergency will be reported to the Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.

KEY OUTCOMES (LGBF/P4F)

How we compare with other Councils (LGBF)



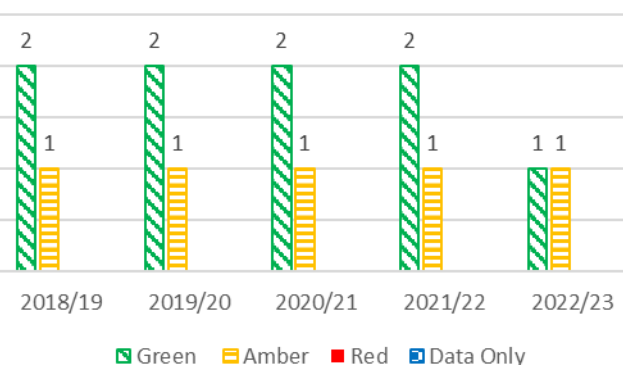
Key - Top quartile - Ranked 1-8 in Scotland

2nd quartile - Ranked 9-16 in Scotland

3rd quartile - Ranked 17-24 in Scotland

Bottom quartile - Ranked 25-32 in Scotland

Progress against P4F outcomes



| LGBF | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| CO2 emissions area wide per capita (LGBF) | 7.47 | 6.58 | 6.7 | N/A |
| Cost per planning application (LGBF) | £3,613.2 | £3,985.32 | £4,511.67 | £4,652.43 |
| Avg Time Per Commercial Planning Application (LGBF) | 9.6 | 8.4 | 11.1 | 16.9 |

| PI Short Name | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Area Wide Emissions (thousand tonnes of Carbon) | 3,174.7 | 2,821.3 | 2,919.8 | 2,840.0 | N/A |
| Total Fife Council Carbon Footprint – tCO2e | 62,484 | 55,784 | 49,655 | 54,358 | 50,142 |
| CO2 emissions area wide: within scope of LA per capita Fife (LGBF) | 4.77 | 4.36 | 4.23 | 4.23 | 4.23 |

- The LGBF indicators as shown above reflect that the cost of processing planning applications is increasing. This is largely because of the greater complexity and more detailed assessments that are required to consider and determine planning applications. The average time for determining commercial applications has fluctuated over the past 4-5 years. This is reflected more generally across all types of planning applications and is reported annually to committee through the Planning Performance Framework.
- The Service's performance has been impacted by the pandemic, which amongst other impacts resulted in the increase in planning applications, particularly householder applications. Applications for major developments remain buoyant, whilst there has been a decrease in local applications. This reflects a national trend, although Fife continues to attract major applications. Monitoring is in place to assist with improving performance with respect to the speed of decision-making. Speed of decision-making must be balanced with achieving quality outcomes.

(Note: indicators relating to climate change will be reported to the Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.)

CUSTOMER

- The figures below illustrate the high level of customer satisfaction that is being maintained.
- A thorough customer complaints process is provided and given the nature of planning a relatively high number of complaints are received (39). Any lessons learnt from these complaints are actioned and where required built into the Service's continual improvements.

| Indicator | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Q1 2023/24 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| Customers satisfied with planning service (%) | 82.02% | 83.09% | 72.73% | 78.57% | 80% |
| Planning Stage 1 Complaints actioned < 5 days | 100% | 100% | 77% | 78% | 100% |
| Planning Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days | 86% | 81% | 77% | 62% | 36% |

RESOURCES

- The Service has been supported through the Workforce Youth Investment programme which has allowed Graduate and Student temporary posts. In several instances, these individuals have progressed into permanent posts within the Service, assisting with the ongoing recruitment within a national/UK environment where there is a severe shortage of qualified Planners. Further work is being done with Fife College and the University of Dundee to create further opportunities. A national Future Planners project has identified a need for 700 Planners over the next 10-15 years, and work is progressing nationally and within Fife to promote the profession. Earlier this year, Sarah Purves, Planner, was awarded Scottish Young Planner of the Year.
- The workforce profile, as set out below, is positive.
- Regular continuous professional development programme is run across the Service and beyond, providing ongoing training and development opportunities. This is operated at a minimal cost.

| Indicator | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Q1 2023/24 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| Planning Service – Average WDL per FTE | | DIV/0 | DIV/0 | 6.51 | 4.52 |
| Planning Service – Long Term WDL per FTE | | DIV/0 | 3.25 | 4.39 | 2 |
| Planning Workforce who are Female (%) | 37.10% | 33.80% | 37.90% | 33.30% | N/A |
| Planning Workforce who are Full-time (%) | 77.10% | 82.40% | 84.80% | 84.60% | N/A |
| Planning Employees aged 24 and under (%) | 10% | 8.80% | 7.60% | 9% | N/A |
| Planning Employees aged 29 and under (%) | 14.30% | 17.60% | 15.20% | 17.90% | N/A |
| Planning Employees aged 55 and over (%) | 21.40% | 22.10% | 31.80% | 26.90% | N/A |
| Planning staff who are happy at work (%) | 87% | 79% | 75% | 92% | N/A |

The table below provides information on **Planning** workforce data by Budgeted (FTE) for the current year and the last 3 years. An increase in staffing was implemented in 2022/23 aligned with an increase in national statutory planning fees to resource pressures arising from new legislation, in particular. The workforce programme of student and graduates continues, to support resourcing and recruitment with some temporary posts to facilitate this programme.

| Budgeted (FTE) April 2019 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2020 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2021 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2022 | Budgeted (FTE) April 2023 | Difference in FTE 2022-23 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 66.34 | 63.55 | 72.09 | 75.66 | 76.79 | 1.13 |

SERVICE OPERATIONS

Whilst the key performance indicators below relate to the speed of decision-making, it is considered that the quality of the outcome of new development is a greater priority.

The Service is performing well in respect of progressing with implementing the Local Development Plan.

FIFEPlan and the allocated development sites including the strategic growth areas. This assists with achieving the Council's outcomes relating to economic growth, meeting housing needs and facilitating with the delivery of strategic infrastructure.

The Table below recognises the increased workload combined with more complex planning assessments of applications. The increase in decision timescales is recognised and the Service continues to implement improvements to seek to improve performance against these national measures.

| Indicator | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Q1 2023/24 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| Avg time per Major planning application – Fife (weeks) | 64.9 | 39.7 | 34.1 | 16.6 | N/A |
| Avg time per Major planning application – Scotland (weeks) | 33.5 | 41.3 | 44.6 | 39.5 | N/A |
| Avg time per Local planning application – Fife (weeks) | 8 | 9.6 | 13 | 12.1 | N/A |
| Avg time per Local planning application – Scotland (weeks) | 9.1 | 10 | 10.8 | 11.5 | N/A |
| Avg time per Minor planning application – Fife (weeks) | 7.3 | 8.2 | 11 | 10.4 | N/A |
| Avg time per Minor planning application – Scotland (weeks) | 7.3 | 8.1 | 8.7 | 8.9 | N/A |
| Avg time per Non Householder planning application – Fife (weeks) | 9 | 13 | 16 | 14 | N/A |
| Avg time per Non Householder planning application – Scotland (weeks) | 10.9 | 12.4 | 13.5 | 14.4 | N/A |
| Number of housing completions per annum – Fife | 1,088 | 818 | 1,096 | 1,246 | N/A |

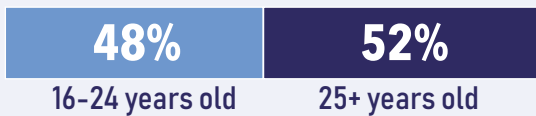
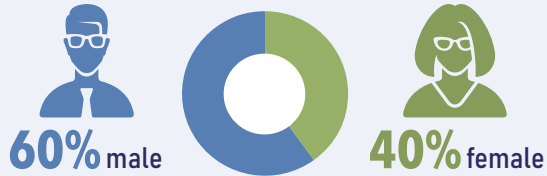
***Please note Q1 data is not available until the end of Q2**

SLAED Indicators Framework: 10 Year Trends (2012-2022)

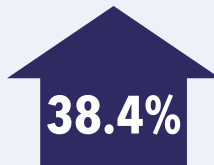
People

515,790 people participated in council funded/operated employability programmes*

173,528 people that participated in employability programmes progressed to employment

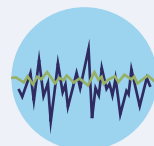


The proportion of participants moving into employment increased by **38.4%** over the decade



4.5% increase in Scotland's employment rate over the decade. Gap between highest and lowest local authorities has narrowed.

Claimant rate has been volatile over the decade, with an **overall increase of 0.4%**. It was severely impacted by the pandemic but showing signs of recovery.



Business

The annual number of business births has **increased by 3 per 10,000** working age population. This was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.



284,517 businesses supported by Business Gateway



134,423 businesses supported by local authorities



The highest proportion of businesses supported were in the Creative Industries, Food & Drink, Tourism, and Local Services sectors.



79,438 Business Gateway start-ups trading

Finance

£2.33 Overall upwards trend in external funding leveraged per £1 council spend

£1.01



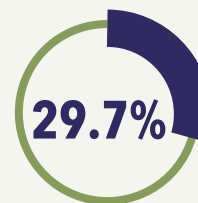
12% decrease in council contributions



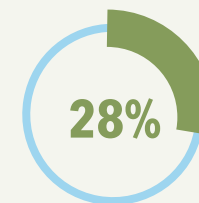
45% increase in council revenue investment in local economies



0.5% increase in economic development spend as a percentage of total council revenue expenditure



increase in the total value of goods and services produced by Scottish local authority areas



increase in productivity

* These are not necessarily 'unique' participants, as people may have participated in more than one programme.

26 October 2023

Agenda Item No. 7

Annual Health and Safety Report 2022-23

Report by: Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources

Wards Affected: None

Purpose

To enable ongoing scrutiny, the report updates Committee on Health and Safety activity since the report to the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 3 November 2022. The report provides high level information with summary detail.

Recommendations

The Scrutiny committee is asked to:

- (1) review performance and activity for the 2022–2023 financial year;
- (2) note the progress made regarding improving workforce practices and performance in the organisation, and advise on any further activity; and
- (3) endorse continued focus on the priorities identified

Resource Implications

None

Legal & Risk Implications

Health and Safety at work is about identification of risk and elimination or management of that risk through control measures. The report identifies key health and safety challenges through 2022-2023.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

This report has been shared with the Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group, which includes Trade Union representation. Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders will continue to be a feature of the Council's shared commitment to working together.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the council's health and safety performance during 2022/3. This was another year of change and challenge for Fife Council as pandemic measures scaled down and we reset our efforts to safeguard the health and safety of employees, clients, and service users across Fife. This annual report focusses on the challenges and achievements of 2022/23.
- 1.2 Fife Council is committed to a positive health and safety culture and continual improvement in its health and safety performance.
- 1.3 Health and Safety has both generic provision at a corporate level and teams with specialist knowledge aligned to service delivery. This model remained in place when other functional support was realigned in 2016/17. The HR or 'corporate' Health and Safety Team manages the governance of the Health and Safety function through:
 - The Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group (CHSSG)
 - Annual Report to Scrutiny Committee
 - Policy and processes agreed by the CHSSG and deployed by Heads of Service
 - Provision of advice and guidance through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing tile on the intranet
 - Attendance and support at H&S Forums
 - First Contact queries and a range of investigations
 - Projects and improvement activity across all directorates
- 1.4 In addition, there is a Team Manager Compliance & Risk (which includes H&S) in Education and Children's Services who is the main point of contact for Education related activity; and a H&S Team Manager and support posts in Enterprise and Environment, focussed on frontline service delivery. Both positions supplement and compliment corporate processes and guidance where required and provide advice and information relevant to their roles with a similar improvement focus. Given the respective specialisms there is little overlap in practice and collaborative and supportive working with colleagues when required.
- 1.5 During the 22/23 year, the Corporate team worked with Services reviewing 6350 recorded incidents and 681 enquiries. The Policy, Procedures and Guidance documents were reviewed and updated where required. Focus was also given to Lone Working solutions and associated procedures and guidance documents. During the last quarter there has been a particular focus on enhancing existing solutions to record Violence and Aggression related incidents through work with Education and Children's Services.

2.0 Priorities and Continuous Improvement

- 2.1 Driving at Work
 - 2.1.1 Fife Council has been rolling out a programme of checking driving licences through a third-party provider, Licence Check Ltd, known as DAVIS. As driving is an activity many employees undertake, the actual level of risk is high and sometimes can be overlooked.
 - 2.1.2 The rollout of the DAVIS system was completed, except for Education Services who continue to undertake a manual checking process. Activities moved to the Shared Service Centre from 1 April 2023 and compliance checking is monitored by the HR Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team (the HSW team).

2.2 Violent Marker System

- 2.2.1 The Violent Marker System (VMS), holds the addresses of individuals that may put employees at risk during home visits or remote working. This is managed by a cross-service Violent Marker Review Group (VMRG) who ensure referred incidents are considered and to ensure named individuals added to VMS are advised. Risk is minimised by adhering to instructions on the VMS and other control measures such as Lone Working procedures (including individual use of a fob) and risk assessments.
- 2.2.2 The HSW team continued to review and refer incidents to the VMRG. At the start of April 2022 there were 12 addresses recorded on the VMS, at the end of the financial year in March 2023, this had increased to 47, of which, 75% were reported through Housing Services. Whether it is because of better reporting, an increase in extreme behavioural issues or a combination of the two, is unclear. It is worth noting many of those on the VMS have mental health issues and/or involvement with Social Work. Health issues may be partly due to the legacy of the COVID lockdowns. A digital development request is in the pipeline with BTS to automate the transfer of flags from other systems to maximise information.
- 2.2.3 With increasing levels of violence, aggression and threat being reported, awareness and safe personal safety practice is important, as is the use of the Lone Worker fobs. Elected Members can use a Lone Worker fob and can also contact Legal and Democratic Services before undertaking home visits who will access relevant information on the VMS on their behalf.

2.3 Lone and Remote Workers

- 2.3.1 During the year, the team worked with Lone Working Solutions and HSCP to update records of all lone workers within HSCP.
- 2.3.2 Work is ongoing to encourage Services to review Risk Assessments to ensure control measures are suitable and sufficient for lone workers.
- 2.3.3 Training for users of fobs and those supervising the users was available throughout the year and advertised on the Intranet. Intranet information is regularly updated to ensure currency.
- 2.3.4 The regular reports from LWS indicated a low usage and the Lone Working Project Group initiated action within the relevant services to identify the reason and increase proactive supervision and use. The usage of fobs has increased during the last 6 months of the year. Action is continuing to ensure good levels of use continue in an upward trend.

2.4 Fire Safety

- 2.4.1 The Corporate Fire Safety Management Group meets regularly and oversees prioritised risk assessments and periodic document reviews.
- 2.4.2 The purpose of the Fire Safety Strategy is to ensure council compliance with the Fire Scotland Act Part 3 and Fire Safety Scotland Regulations, ensuring all relevant premises are competently assessed and fire precautions are identified and maintained.
- 2.4.3 The arrangements for managing life safety risk in our premises are well established, with the fire risk assessment programme, regular reviews, maintenance of precautions and staff training. The focus over the year was catching up with the post pandemic Corporate Fire Safety Risk Assessment review programme, with all Primary and Nursery Schools visited. These visits support the existing annual reviews and regular inspections undertaken by Business Managers and Administration Coordinators.

- 2.4.4 Insurance Surveys - following a Zurich Municipal insurance visit a survey programme for 2022/23 was initiated and completed with one premises visit cancelled by the insurer. Findings indicated much improved standards of prevention and property protection. Risks can be introduced by people looking for a corner to store an item (e.g., Christmas decorations) so continued vigilance and improvements are required to reduce the storage of combustibles, in particular in school switch rooms and electrical cupboards. To promote safe practice Electrical Cupboard safe use and access guidance was issued to all schools.
- 2.4.5 Blended Working in Corporate Buildings - new Fire Warden procedures were issued and tested successfully to accommodate blended work styles for corporate buildings.
- 2.4.6 Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Response – in 2022 the Fire Service took action to manage the number of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) i.e. false alarms. They advised they would be changing their response to automatic fire alarm signals for non-domestic and non-sleeping premises to a call challenge with no attendance unless the questioning confirms signs of a fire. The change, initially due to start in April 2023 was delayed until 1st July 2023. A UFAS Implementation Working Group was convened as a sub-group of the Council's Fire Safety Group. The group are supporting Services roll out of changes, including the review of Fire Safety management and evacuation procedures, investigation of fire alarm configuration options, and liaison with other local authorities. Fire alarm investigation training and out of hours call out procedures for staff are being evaluated.
- 2.4.7 The Tower Block Review Group has reviewed and updated their Action Plan with the latest guidance from Grenfell Enquiry Response and Advisory Boards.

2.5 Manual Handling (People and Inanimate Loads)

- 2.5.1 Manual Handling training and Display Screen Equipment assessments are activities that prevent the occurrence of musculoskeletal disorders, which account for around a third of absences. During 2022/23, there was a continued focus on supporting care staff and those working at home.
- 2.5.2 Moving & Handling foundation training remained busy with an increase in places from 2021/22 to 449. Since the end of the HSCP funding for additional temporary capacity in October 2022, waiting times for training have been increasing from 2 to 5 weeks as demand exceeds capacity. Demand is planned to meet the required refresh cycle but increases with higher turnover as new start training is required and when scheduled training places cannot be filled due to operational priorities on the day.
- 2.5.3 Attendance at Moving & Handling Small Child training has continued to increase - up 161 spaces from the previous year's 99 spaces. This may be due to a continuing increase in nursery places but also possibly due to a concerted push from mainstream schools across Fife to have staff appropriately trained.
- 2.5.4 Moving & Handling Key Worker Training recommenced in February 2023 following a 3-year period of alternative arrangements during the pandemic. A further 5 Key trainers have been added to HSC services. Existing Key trainers have also returned to the classroom and their re-accreditation is being supported by Moving & Handling Advisers in HR.
- 2.5.5 The number of Link Workers increased by a further 58 to 333. They support HSCP services complete risk assessments and on-site competency assessment of staff.

2.6 Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

- 2.6.1 The interim process for DSE implemented in 2020 continued into 2022/23 with HR providing ongoing advice with DSE set up to around 2500 employees working at home. Most office-based staff have elected to move to a Blended Workstyle contract which balances business need to meet face-to-face with continued opportunities to work at home.

- 2.6.2 The task for the HSW team was to verify DSE Compliance by reviewing approved Blended Applications. Initially the task was for 3 months however the initial sampling highlighted sufficient issues to require a 100% check.
- 2.6.3 Actions from the work carried out include:
- Advising on non-compliance including where applications cannot be approved.
 - Process developed for Assessor concerns/recommendations follow up.
 - DSE on-line training reviewed for effectiveness.
 - Quality control measures to increase consistent assessments.
- 2.6.4 Finance and Corporate Services were the ‘test vehicle’ for full compliance and with the knowledge from this, a revised Blended Application process including DSE checks will be implemented from autumn 2023.
- 2.6.5 DSE eLearning continued to be promoted with employees reporting issues through First Contact. Managers and the HSW Team are made aware of issues raised and then provided with advice to resolve issues.

3.0 Health and Safety Risk Management

- 3.1 Incidents reported through the First Contact incident reporting software, Assyst, are reviewed by the Health and Safety team. Incident reporting information has been developed using Power Bi to enable up to date reports for Directorates/Services including previous 23 months for comparison.
- 3.2 The table below shows all Health and Safety incidents reported by Directorate, highlighting a 68% increase in reporting from 2021/22, with reported incidents in Education and Children’s Services nearly doubling. Staff have been encouraged to report all incidents, as well as there being more incidents. The increase in Violence and Aggression is covered in more detail in section 3.8.

| ALL Incidents by Directorate | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| COMMUNITIES | 264 | 228 | 80 | 136 | 199 |
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 2475 | 2758 | 1307 | 2519 | 4992 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 505 | 433 | 262 | 298 | 330 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 25 | 43 | 10 | 9 | 15 |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 1640 | 1180 | 840 | 804 | 814 |
| Grand Total | 4909 | 4642 | 2499 | 3766 | 6350 |

- 3.3 The table below shows the same incidents by reporting Category. The increase in Violence and Aggression or Threat is accountable for 61% of the increase and Injury or Harm for the other 7%.

| ALL Incidents by Category | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| DANGEROUS OCCURRENCE | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| DEATH | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| INJURY OR HARM | 1657 | 1577 | 1016 | 1280 | 1540 |
| NEAR MISS/PROPERTY DAMAGE | 928 | 373 | 232 | 263 | 296 |

| ALL Incidents by Category | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE | 1 | | 46 | 7 | 2 |
| VIOLENCE, AGGRESSION OR THREAT | 2322 | 2689 | 1200 | 2214 | 4510 |
| Grand Total | 4909 | 4642 | 2499 | 3766 | 6350 |

- 3.4 The table below shows DSE enquiries reported by Directorate, a 61% increase in employees reporting a need for assistance on DSE equipment indicating an increasing understanding of the importance of a correctly set up workstation for long term health.

| DSE Enquiries | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| COMMUNITIES | 0 | 8 | 11 | 16 | 32 |
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 0 | 8 | 11 | 24 | 27 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 0 | 16 | 37 | 18 | 42 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 0 | 46 | 25 | 42 | 46 |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 0 | 7 | 20 | 16 | 40 |
| Grand Total | 0 | 85 | 104 | 116 | 187 |

3.5 Reportable Incident Reports

- 3.5.1 Fife Council is required to report more serious accidents and incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations (RIDDOR)¹. We report incidents to employees and members of the public.
- 3.5.2 RIDDOR (Excluding COVID). This graph relates to employees only. This shows a 34% increase in reporting from 2021/22 – and an increase from pre-covid. The definition of when COVID should be reported was changed in 2021/22. There were no reportable COVID incidents in 2022/23.

| RIDDOR - Excluding COVID Employee Incidents | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| COMMUNITIES | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 15 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 30 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 26 | 24 | 19 | 26 | 21 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 11 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 28 |
| Grand Total | 54 | 53 | 45 | 59 | 79 |

¹ RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in control of work premises, to report and keep records of work-related accidents: which cause death; work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (specified injuries); diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm).

3.5.3 Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, 79 incidents were reported to the HSE. The breakdown was as follows; 66 Injury/Harm, 1 Occupational Disease and 12 Violence related incidents. This is an increase of 20 employee related incidents compared to 2020/2021.

| RIDDOR - By Category or Cause | |
|---|-----------|
| SLIPPED, TRIPPED OR FELL ON THE SAME LEVEL | 38 |
| VIOLENCE, AGGRESSION OR THREAT | 12 |
| HANDLING, LIFTING OR CARRYING ACTIVITY | 10 |
| HIT BY MOVING, FLYING OR FALLING OBJECT | 4 |
| SERVICE USER ACTIONS/BEHAVIOUR | 4 |
| FELL FROM A HEIGHT | 3 |
| OTHER | 3 |
| CONTACT WITH ELECTRICITY OR AN ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE | 2 |
| HIT SOMETHING FIXED OR STATIONARY | 2 |
| OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE | 1 |
| Grand Total | 79 |

3.5.4 RIDDOR On Time Reporting. We continue to work with services to ensure effective investigation and timely reporting of 95% of incidents within the 4-week target period. 72% was achieved within the period.

3.6 Moving and Handling - Employee Incidents

3.6.1 The positive trend in Lifting and Handling incidents continues with another 8% decrease following the 33% decrease last year. This can, in part, be attributed to the ongoing training.

| Lifting and Handling Employee Incidents | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| COMMUNITIES | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 15 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 5 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 66 | 49 | 35 | 24 | 22 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 1 | | | 1 | |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 15 | 29 | 30 | 15 | 17 |
| Grand Total | 101 | 88 | 73 | 49 | 45 |

3.7 Violence, Aggression and Threat (VAT) – Employee Incidents (included in the tables in 3.2 and 3.3 but excluding incidents not involving staff)

3.7.1 As anticipated after the reduction during the pandemic and reported negative consequences of lockdown, there has been a significant increase in the number of VAT incidents recorded in Education and Children and Families. Full reporting has been encouraged to help understand the full picture. Staff are debriefed following incidents to allow control measures to be reviewed.

| Violence, Aggression and Threat Employee Incidents | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| COMMUNITIES | 78 | 42 | 17 | 37 | 59 |
| Physical | 12 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 11 |
| Verbal | 66 | 38 | 15 | 31 | 48 |

| Violence, Aggression and Threat Employee Incidents | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 1406 | 1743 | 744 | 1409 | 3457 |
| Physical | 1095 | 1398 | 632 | 1127 | 2823 |
| Verbal | 311 | 345 | 112 | 282 | 634 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 59 | 71 | 42 | 55 | 42 |
| Physical | 19 | 15 | 10 | 20 | 10 |
| Verbal | 32 | 53 | 29 | 35 | 32 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 4 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| Physical | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Verbal | 4 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 266 | 277 | 191 | 179 | 178 |
| Physical | 183 | 237 | 151 | 143 | 130 |
| Verbal | 83 | 40 | 40 | 36 | 48 |
| Total | 1813 | 2142 | 998 | 1681 | 3743 |

3.7.2 Reduction of Workplace Violence

Reducing workplace violence continues to be a key focus within Fife Council and is one of 4 areas identified as a Health, Safety and Wellbeing priority. Recorded incidents saw a significant increase during the year in Education and Children's Services who initiated a short working life group to provide solutions to the issue.

3.7.3 Education and Children's Services recognize the significant challenge in this area and there is national analysis and review. In Fife, the proposed solutions from the short life working group will feed into the Relationship and Behaviours Strategy Group. The Education Scrutiny Committee ([link to committee papers](#)) at its meeting on 21st March 2023, considered 2 papers on Relationships and Behaviours. One regarding Support for School Staff and the other Support for Pupils.

The Education and Children's Services approach to responding to violence and aggression has been.

- Streamlining and embedding procedures for incident reporting across the teams of the Directorate.
- Providing guidance to team managers and leaders, guides for staff on how to report incidents of violence and aggression and developed a programme of training for all Directorate staff.
- Supporting local settings to monitor and review approaches to promoting positive relationships and behaviors in their establishments.

The outcomes and key objectives are:

- Providing clarity on how and when to report incidents of violence and aggression.
- Consistent approaches to reporting violence and aggression across all teams.
- Supporting managers to provide feedback to staff who report an incident of V&A
- Monitoring data to determine the level of the incident being reported and the teams reporting those incidents.
- A consistent approach to the level of training that should be completed by each team across the Directorate.
- Targeted approaches to 'additional' training for those most in need
- Developing robust guidance on implementing effective relationships and behaviours policy

3.8 Slips, Trips and Falls - Employee Incidents

3.8.1 This table highlights a 17% increase in Slip, Trip or Fall incidents on the previous year. 16% of the increase was in Health and Social Care. There is no single incident cause within this category. Slips can be a result of wet surfaces (flooring/grass), food residue, ice, and other environmental factors. In each case, the incident was reviewed, and corrective action taken where required to prevent a recurrence.

| Slip, Trip, Fall Employee Incidents | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| COMMUNITIES | 15 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| EDUCATION & CHILDREN | 42 | 57 | 38 | 62 | 70 |
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | 78 | 61 | 57 | 52 | 45 |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 3 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | 40 | 32 | 37 | 32 | 57 |
| Grand Total | 178 | 170 | 142 | 150 | 176 |

3.9 Accident Investigation and Reporting

3.9.1 All specified injuries and dangerous occurrences should have an investigation report completed within 4-weeks. Because a thorough investigation is also of importance, we aim for 95% to be completed within 4-weeks. CHSSG review late reporting and the team, work with services to understand delays and improve timescales. The investigation time within Education can be affected by availability of staff over school holiday periods.

3.10 Employer's Liability Claims

3.10.1 Although the cost of claims is a performance indicator, it is generally outwith the influence of current managers. We aim to reduce accidents and occupational diseases through risk management, but the likelihood of an employee claiming, the claim amount and the historic nature of many claims is driven by a range of other factors.

3.10.2 There was a decrease in the cost of claim settlements from £2,097,981 in 2021/22 to £722,122 (awards varied from £167,741 for asbestos related disease to £275 related to a slip/trip/fall incident in the back of a works van). As advised in previous years, individual claims vary significantly, which is why a local trend, i.e., at council level, would be difficult to discern for any reason. Some claims are the result of occupational exposure many years ago and ill health effects, like exposure to asbestos, may not manifest until a considerable period has elapsed. We hope that the diligent approach to DSE homeworking assessments now reduces the potential for future claims.

The number of claims closed during the year also reduced year on year from 45 to 39.

| Employers Liability Claims | |
|---|---|
| Industrial disease - 7 claims: | |
| Related to asbestos | 2 |
| Related to (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) | 2 |
| Related to noise induced hearing loss | 1 |
| Related to Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) | 1 |
| Related to Coronavirus | 1 |
| Claims relating to Incident Cause – 32 Claims | |
| Moving and handling | 4 |

| Employers Liability Claims | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Industrial disease - 7 claims: | |
| Slip, Trip, Fall | 15 |
| Claims classified as "Other" | 13 |
| Related to Lifting | 1 |
| Related to Equipment/Machinery | 6 |
| Related to Bullying and Harassment | 1 |
| Related to Violence | 2 |
| Related to Needlestick injury | 2 |
| Related to cuts | 1 |
| Grand total | 39 |

3.11

Health and Safety Executive Enforcement Notices

3.11.1 Where the Health and Safety Executive find a serious failing in the Council's management of health and safety; they can serve a:

Prohibition Notice – is a situation where the HSE have immediate concerns and will ask for the situation to be made safe, activity stopped, or equipment turned off and isolated until it is made safe. You cannot do anything with this process or activity until the HSE remove the prohibition notice.

Improvement Notice – is a formal notice stating that you MUST improve the situation and will issue specific objectives for you to take, within a strict deadline. The HSE may revisit to check everything is up to date.

Notification of Contravention (NOC) – is a letter explaining and identifying material breaches of health and safety laws, how they have been broken, the required actions and the costs to pay for the visit.

In 2021/22, we received a NOC in September 2021. During 2022/23 we received one NOC and one Improvement Notice

- August 2022- Ground Maintenance Services – Notice of Contravention - Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)
- March 2023 - Education – Improvement Notice – Ionising Radiation

3.12 Health and Safety Governance

3.12.1 The Council's Health and Safety Team continue to work with all services within Fife Council. Close working was strengthened during the pandemic, and this continues.

3.12.2 During 2021/22, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team (HSW) assisted services to refresh or develop Risk Profiles to support and complement the Council's Risk Assessment process by enabling the identification, evaluation and management of service-specific and service-wide occupational health or safety risks. H&S risk profiling provides Senior Managers with an overview of risk with which to review their controls. The HSW team will work with Directorate and Services advising on action plans to address gaps identified from the profiling exercise.

3.13 Occupational Health

3.13.1 The current health surveillance programme has been operating since May 2017 with the re-appointment of the providers in April 2022. Collaborative working continues to improve the health surveillance process and systems to achieve an efficient and effective service for all parties involved despite national staff shortages affecting all occupational health providers. The process for following appointments not attended has been reviewed.

3.13.2 During the course of 2022/2023 all final COVID control measure were lifted and in person appointments resumed. Appointments are conducted at the providers premises in Glenrothes or at Fife Council locations that have been deemed suitable for this purpose.

Figures for the period 2022 / 2023

Appointments attended: 1706

Cancelled: 12

Failed to Attend: 181

3.14 Stress Management

3.14.1 Stress isn't the same as pressure, which can be a positive force if managed well. Stress is an adverse reaction to excessive pressure or other types of demands which can cause physical or psychological harm leading to ill-health.

3.14.2 Fife Council has the same commitment to managing and mitigating the psychological risk of workplace stress as it does to other occupational health and safety risks. In addition to reference in task risk assessments, there is guidance for employees and managers on preventing stress (causes of stress at work, manager responsibilities and using the HSE's stress management standards, Council's individual stress risk assessment and HSE tools). In addition, we have published the organisational risk assessment and a template for Directorate/Service risk assessments with guidance.

3.14.3 Activity during the pandemic was predominantly around raising awareness of the importance of good mental health. One of CET's specific commitments was to the stress risk assessment process being used as a preventative measure, particularly when managing change, consistent with existing policy provision. As change activity starts to take place the expectation is that it will be undertaken using stress tools and thinking and acting with an increasing focus on prevention.

3.14.4 The Stress Overview Group comprising directorate senior managers has a remit to review and agree corporate priorities and actions. Directorate/Service stress risk assessments have been promoted through this group to confirm the deployment of existing mitigation controls. In view of the slowly increasing levels of work-related stress in the organisation, CET recently agreed to strengthen the approach requiring all Directorates to complete a Directorate or Service level Stress Risk Assessments covering all employees by 31 October 2024. These will identify the controls in use to mitigate stress confirming deployment, with an action plan to remedy omissions identified during completion and delivered as soon as possible thereafter. A crucial part of the Risk Assessment exercise is consultation and discussion with staff through teams and H&S forums so that there is feedback to confirm that what has been described in the Risk Assessment is deployed in practice.

3.14.5 Staff views are also obtained, and hot spots or issues identified, through local surveys using questions from the HSE's 35-question stress questionnaire. This enables directorate analysis and local action planning which, along with council wide surveys for policy development and workforce strategy purposes, provides both deep dives and comparative overview to support a range of purposes and different perspectives.

3.15 Service Reports

3.15.1 As in previous years, Services were asked to report on their performance during this period and identify successes and areas for improvement. Illustrative examples are included.

3.15.2 Services found the rapid changes and changing guidance stepping up to and down from the pandemic challenging along with safely mobilising the workforce to point of need. This was undertaken and represents a success. However, there is still some legacy work due to the additional workload at the time and suspended provision to be reviewed and recovered. Services are now seeing more of the impact on individuals, particularly as face-to-face discussion becomes possible. Impacts vary; however,

services are alert to the potential for staff requiring personal support and the consequences impacting for some time.

3.15.3 During the reporting period control measures (e.g., use of face masks) depended on the work activity. Some control measures were still mandatory or, where the risk was less, available to the individual as good practice. The World Health Organisation (WHO) was still reporting statistics on the pandemic until 5th of May 2023 when WHO advised the global emergency was over, although a covid danger remained and could return. In the UK the incidence of deaths, hospitalisation and where still conducted – testing, has been currently showing an overall reduction consistent with the high rates of immunisation (89.7% first dose, 85.7% second dose and 73.5% booster). Public Health Scotland confirmed in their published information on 5 October 2023 that PHS will continue to monitor COVID-19 and other respiratory infection levels and publish additional narrative reports if necessary.

3.15.4 In general terms, illustrative pressures in services included:

- Unplanned sickness putting pressure on teams.
- Difficulties recruiting to some roles, e.g., LGV drivers.
- Some increased aggression, particularly Education and Children's Services (ECS) directorate - covered in section 3.8.2 above.
- Releasing staff for training because of staff absences, Particularly HSCP

3.15.5 Successes included:

- Use of technology e.g., reporting, drone Survey Team in Building Services reducing need to work at height (and cost savings on safe access like scaffolds).
- Significant focus on face-to-face training so all mandatory training up to date by the end of the 2023 financial year.
- Innovations - e.g., training for safe working on live roads enabling verge teams to target high littered areas around Fife.
- Reviewing need following the experience of the pandemic. E.g., ECS have agreed a refreshed mandatory Staff Training matrix.
- Regular newsletters

3.15.6 Service Objectives for 2023/24 include:

- Review of all Fleet Services and Grounds Maintenance risk assessments and safe systems of work during 2023/24
- Building Services to compete the Moving and Handling Passport Scheme during 2023.
- Extending the previous roll out of the Health and Safety Management Framework Part 2 through school operational meetings with Part 3, Persons in Control of Buildings checklist, to be completed in all establishments. HSCP will likewise be focussing on Part 3 across services.
- Joint working between ECS and the corporate H&S team is progressing to look at ways to support schools and residential homes with violent and aggressive incidents.
- ECS will undertake a Stress Risk Assessment along with other Safety and Wellbeing Priorities.

3.16 Learning and Development

3.16.1 As highlighted in section 2.8 significant effort continued to be put into people moving and handling training. Face to face courses in First Aid, Manual Handling and Food Hygiene at both Elementary and Intermediate levels are now being provided. The teams have

increased hybrid training where part of the course is completed via eLearning with tutorials or practical sessions held either via Teams, where appropriate, or face-to-face.

- 3.16.2 The Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group (CHSSG) recognise that H&S training is a risk to the organisation and have this as a standing item at meetings to review progress. Oracle Learn dashboards are scheduled for development which should make information on training compliance much easier to access.

4.0 Continuing and Future Work Priorities

4.1 Priorities For 2022-23

- 4.1.1 The priorities for the next year are to continue to manage and monitor our health and safety risks. We will focus on risk identification, particularly areas impacted from the consequences of the pandemic. We will also continue our focus on occupational health, safety, and other prevention activities.
- 4.1.2 We will continue expanding the work of Violence, Aggression and Threat including working with any national guidance.

4.2 Workforce Strategy – Our People Matter

- 4.2.1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing are now included in the Workforce Strategy ‘Our People Matter’. The identified priorities - Stress, Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD), Violence & Aggression and effective Management of Health & Safety have not changed. Work related stress remains a priority as it contributes to, and in extreme cases can cause, poor mental health. It is an appropriate focus as we have a notable change agenda and change is a recognised cause of pressures to organisations and individuals which in turn has the potential to impact service delivery.
- 4.2.2 As more detailed scrutiny is through the Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group, CET and Scrutiny committee, the focus in the OPM for Health and Safety is the strength and maintenance of this governance. The summary data on Our Success Measures for the first year of the OPM were assessed as ‘green’ in terms of RAG status for
- Regular performance reporting to Corporate H&S Strategy Group by all Directorates
 - Annual H&S reporting to Scrutiny Committee undertaken by HR.

PowerBi reports with daily updates from incident reporting data are available to all services and presented at each CHSSG meeting. Further information will be provided from the survey replacing the Health Needs Analysis. This will be run every 2 years in November but initially be deferred to January 2024 to avoid a survey overlap. The survey which covers a range of Health, Safety and Wellbeing areas has been designed so that services can choose to run individual sections, like Occupational Health and Safety, as a short (8 question) pulse survey. The Occupational Health and Safety question set will also be used by Health and Safety Advisors from time to time when undertaking site visits, so we get a good baseline.

4.3 Managing Risk

- 4.3.1 Over the next year, we will continue to consider how to improve the management and deployment of the systems underpinning those priority areas identified earlier in the report e.g., reduction of workplace violence, lone and remote working.
- 4.3.2 Work will also continue to identify risks where controls require improvement and work with services to implement strengthened measures.

4.4 Digital Solutions Projects with BTS

- 4.4.1 The team will be working with BTS colleagues to implement the following digital improvement projects.

- 4.4.2 H&S Compliance Visits Tool (scheduled by BTS for 2024/25). This digital project is to identify and make available an efficient and effective corporate application that would allow direct entry during compliance site visits, inspections, and audits with a dataflow to be accessed by Power Bi.
- 4.4.3 H&S Consolidation of Safety Warnings (scheduled by BTS for 2023/24). The aim of this project is to share existing risk information across all Services and to all employees, thereby reducing the risk. An opportunity to progress this through a CIVTEC programme is being explored.
- 4.4.4 H&S Moving & Handling App (scheduled by BTS for 2023/24) - This will introduce an app that can be used on a smart phone or tablet by staff carrying out moving and handling competency assessments in domestic or council locations. The app would capture the results of the assessment and upload the information to the main 'system' reducing paper information requiring upload into computer systems.
- 4.4.5 H&S – Integrate SEEMiS (an Education system) with First Contact for incident reporting (scheduled by BTS for in 2023/24). The aim is to minimise duplicate reporting whilst maintaining the integrity of reporting systems.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report presents information on key health and safety activities within Fife Council in another year of challenges. Occupational health and safety risks continue to be managed to protect the health and wellbeing of Fife Council employees and those who use our services.
- 5.2 We have been concentrating focus on strategic priorities and operational delivery as we have moved out of the pandemic. Services are responding to challenges however in many areas post pandemic consequences, such as high levels of staff turnover and absences are exacerbating the difficulties for services managing risks locally. Hopefully, we will continue to make progress and the 23/24 report will include more successes.

Report Contacts

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26 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 8

2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Planning Service, Business and Employability Service

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to give members an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the projected outturn for the Executive Director, Planning, and Business and Employability Services, for the 2023-24 Revenue Budget, and to highlight the major variances as at August 2023. This is the second monitoring report to the Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.2 The preparation of the 2023-24 Revenue Budget focussed on applying service underspends, budget realignment and vacancy factors to close the budget gap, and as such no specific savings proposals were approved by the Council as part of the Revenue Budget. There is therefore no requirement to include a Savings Tracker as part of financial reporting for the 2023-24 financial year.

2.0 Issues

2.1 Projected Outturn

- 2.1.1 There is no projected variance for the areas falling under the scope of this committee. A summary of the 2023/24 projected out-turn for the areas under the scope of this committee is detailed in Appendix 1. This shows projected expenditure against budget across the service headings within the Directorate. It should be noted that the balances are extracted from the ledger system and are shown as rounded thousands. This may mean that there are some rounding differences contained within the appendices, but these are immaterial values that do not impact on the overall financial position. The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of the main areas where there are significant variances (+/-£0.250m) to budgets.

3.0 Major Variances

- 3.1 There are no major variances to report as at August 2023.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The projected outturn position for the areas under the scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee is on budget and no variances to report.

List of Appendices

- 1 Projected Outturn 2023/24 Summary

Background Papers

None

Report Contact

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| BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY FINANCE, ECONOMY & CORPORATE SERVICES | | | | | Appendix 1 | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT | CURRENT BUDGET 2023-24 £m | FORECAST 2023-24 £m | VARIANCE £m | VARIANCE % | PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m | MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m |
| TOTAL COST OF SERVICES | 31.512 | 31.378 | (0.134) | -0.43% | 0.000 | (0.134) |
| LESS: CORPORATELY MANAGED ITEMS | 23.808 | 23.808 | 0.000 | 0.00% | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET | 7.704 | 7.570 | (0.134) | -1.74% | 0.000 | (0.134) |
| <u>ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET</u> | | | | | | |
| EE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | 0.449 | 0.368 | (0.081) | -18.00% | 0.000 | (0.081) |
| PLANNING | 1.209 | 1.199 | (0.010) | -0.81% | 0.000 | (0.010) |
| BUSINESS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE | 6.047 | 6.003 | (0.044) | -0.72% | 0.000 | (0.044) |
| | 7.704 | 7.570 | (0.134) | -1.74% | 0.000 | (0.134) |

26 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 9

2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Business and Employability Service

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advise on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation(s)

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

None.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report summarises the projected capital outturn for the areas falling under the scope of this Committee for 2023/24. Projected expenditure is £12.889m, representing 87% of the approved capital programme for 2023/24.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 shows an analysis of specific projects in the current capital investment plan which have a budget greater than £1.000m and analyses total project cost rather than only in year spend.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 details the projected expenditure against budget for each project, along with any associated income.

2.0 Issues, Achievements & Financial Performance

2.1 Key Issues / Risks

- 2.1.1 Appendix 1 details the total cost forecast position for all capital projects within the areas under the scope of the Committee with an overall value of £1.000m and over. The key risks associated with the major projects are noted below.
- 2.1.2 Across the Capital Investment Plan there continues to be risk that both the timing and the costs of projects are adversely affected by the current economic climate. Throughout the programme, issues are continuing to be identified in relation to the supply of construction materials, the consequences of which have been considered and reflected in the Capital Investment Plan review which was approved by Fife Council on 22 June, 2023. Monitoring of the impact of any additional costs on projects still in their infancy will continue and any significant impact on timescales and associated risks will be reported to this committee. Where appropriate, any known impact on timing of delivery of projects has been built in to the rephased plan and the overall scale of any additional costs or further delays will be considered as part of the review of the Capital Investment Plan.

2.2 Major Projects – Potential Risks and Actions

- 2.2.1 There are no additional or new risks arising in the current reporting period from any of the major projects being progressed.

2.3 Financial Performance – 2023/24 Projected Outturn

- 2.3.1 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the projected outturn for each project for the financial year 2023/24. The appendix shows a projected outturn of £12.889m against a Capital Investment plan of £14.858m, a spending level of 87%. The variance of (£1.969m) is slippage which relates to delays in delivery and projects are still expected to be delivered in full and within budget, albeit over a longer timeframe.
- 2.3.2 Appendix 2 also provides a summary of the projected outturn for each project for the financial year 2023/24 for capital income. The appendix shows a projected outturn of £10.234m against a capital income budget of £11.897m.
- 2.3.3 The reasons for significant variances (+/-£0.500m) are detailed in paragraph 2.4.

2.3.4 Slippage is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend less than the budget allocation in a particular year due to a delay in timing on the delivery of the project. This is not uncommon in the capital programme and the reasons for this can be wide and varied. Advancement is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend more than the budget allocation in a particular year due to an acceleration of the budget from future years.

2.4 Significant Variances

2.4.1 Industrial Investment Programme – slippage of (£1.068m)

The main reason for slippage is delay at Fife Interchange North where a new contractor for groundworks was required and is now in place, resulting in slippage of £0.766m. Other slippage of £0.227m is a result of delay at Glenrothes Flemington Road project where there had been difficulty in accessing third party premises and delayed responses to requests for information. These issues have been resolved and the project is progressing to the next stage.

2.4.2 Industrial Investment Programme income – shortfall of £1.028m

The Industrial Investment Programme is funded by East of Edinburgh City Region Deal grant. The reduction in programme expenditure reported at paragraph 2.4.1 reduces the level of grant which can be claimed in this financial year, however, this does not reduce the overall funding to the programme and the shortfall will be recovered in future years.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The total 2023/24 approved programme for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee is £14.858m. The projected level of expenditure is £12.889m, which represents 87% of the total programme, resulting in slippage of (£1.969m).
- 3.2 The management of capital resources require us to look across financial years, as well as within individual years. The current year performance is only a snapshot of the existing plan and the Directorate will adjust expenditure levels within future years of the plan to accommodate the advancement or slippage of projects.

List of Appendices

1. Total Cost Monitor
2. Capital Monitoring Report

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FIFE COUNCIL
 FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT - BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE
 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33
 TOTAL COST MONITOR - MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

| Project | Service | Original Approved Budget £m | Current Project Budget £m | Total Outturn £m | Variance £m | Variance % | Current Project Status | Expected Project Completion Date |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Fife Interchange Business Units - Phase 1 & 2 | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 8.130 | 11.518 | 11.518 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2024-25 |
| John Smith Business Park Business Units | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 3.644 | 5.517 | 5.517 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2026-27 |
| Total Major Projects over £5.000m | | 11.774 | 17.035 | 17.035 | - | 0.00% | | |
| Queensway Refurbishment | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 1.380 | 2.451 | 2.451 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2024.25 |
| Levenmouth Business Units - Phase 1 | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 1.602 | 3.674 | 3.674 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2023-24 |
| Queensway Development Site | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 2.113 | 3.399 | 3.399 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2023-24 |
| Fife Interchange North Site Servicing | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 3.046 | 1.511 | 1.511 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2024-25 |
| Levenmouth Business Units - Phase 2 | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 2.898 | 3.135 | 3.135 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2025-26 |
| Dalgety Bay Business Units - Phase 2 | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 2.853 | 3.980 | 3.980 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2023-24 |
| Kirkcaldy Flexible Business Premises | Inclusive Growth and Jobs | 1.686 | 1.686 | 1.686 | - | 0.00% | Future Project | 2028-29 |
| SE Joint Venuture - Fife Interchange South | Thriving Places | 1.138 | 1.138 | 1.138 | - | 0.00% | Future Project | 2024.25 |
| Inverkeithing Built Heritage | Thriving Places | 1.176 | 1.168 | 1.168 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2024-25 |
| Kirkcaldy Esplanade Phase 3 | Thriving Places | 1.500 | 1.302 | 1.302 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2023-24 |
| Total Major Projects over £1.000m | | 19.392 | 23.443 | 23.443 | - | 0.00% | | |
| Total Major Projects | | 31.166 | 40.478 | 40.478 | - | 0.00% | | |

**FIFE COUNCIL
FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT - BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE
CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33
MONITORING REPORT 2023-24**

Appendix 2

| Expenditure | Current Budget £m | Actual to Date £m | Total Outturn £m | Variance £m | Outturn as % of Plan |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Regeneration - Town Centres | 2.503 | 0.514 | 2.182 | (0.321) | 87% |
| Regeneration - Other | 0.173 | - | 0.173 | - | 100% |
| Business Premises Refurbishment Programme | 0.479 | 0.009 | 0.550 | 0.072 | 115% |
| Growing the Economy | 0.547 | 0.320 | 0.284 | (0.263) | 52% |
| Place Based Investment Programme | 1.213 | 0.529 | 1.005 | (0.208) | 83% |
| Business Property Portfolio | 0.128 | - | 0.128 | - | 100% |
| Site Servicing Rolling Programme | 0.280 | - | 0.100 | (0.180) | 36% |
| Vacant/Derelict Land | 0.010 | 0.138 | 0.010 | - | 100% |
| Industrial Investment Programme | 9.259 | 2.781 | 8.191 | (1.068) | 88% |
| Business Portfolio Energy Efficiency | 0.266 | - | 0.266 | - | 100% |
| TOTAL BUSINESS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE | 14.858 | 4.291 | 12.889 | (1.969) | 87% |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 14.858 | 4.291 | 12.889 | (1.969) | 87% |

| Income | Current Budget £m | Actual to Date £m | Total Outturn £m | Variance £m | Outturn as % of Plan |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Regeneration - Town Centres | (1.057) | (2.231) | (0.872) | 0.186 | 82% |
| Regeneration - Other | (0.050) | (0.050) | (0.050) | - | 100% |
| Business Premises Refurbishment Programme | - | (0.115) | - | - | 0% |
| Growing the Economy | (0.140) | 0.354 | (0.140) | - | 0% |
| Place Based Investment Programme | (2.282) | (1.915) | (1.833) | 0.449 | 0% |
| Industrial Investment Programme | (8.368) | (1.210) | (7.340) | 1.028 | 88% |
| TOTAL BUSINESS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE | (11.897) | (5.167) | (10.234) | 1.663 | 86% |
| TOTAL INCOME | (11.897) | (5.167) | (10.234) | 1.663 | 86% |

26th October 2023
Agenda Item No. 10

2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to give members an update on the projected outturn financial position for 2023/24 for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The report summarises the projected outturn position for 2023/24, taking into account the actual expenditure incurred, and provides an explanation of the main budget variances at section 3. This is the second monitoring report to the Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.2 The preparation of the 2023-24 Revenue Budget focussed on applying service underspends, budget realignment and vacancy factors to close the budget gap, and as such no specific savings proposals were approved by the Council as part of the Revenue Budget. There is therefore no requirement to include a Savings Tracker as part of financial reporting for the 2023-24 financial year.

2.0 Issues

2.1 Projected Outturn

- 2.1.1 Based on current information for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate, of a service managed net expenditure budget of £52.703m the position across all Services is a projected expenditure of £52.413m resulting in a projected net underspend of (£0.290m) (0.55%). This projected underspend includes COVID-19 financial pressures of £0.335m.
- 2.1.2 Also, within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate, there is a net expenditure budget of £6.814m for Benefits & Council Tax and Miscellaneous Services which is currently forecasting a breakeven position. This budget sits within the Directorate but is managed corporately. Therefore, the Services within Finance and Corporate Services do not have a direct influence on these budgets.

Within the net expenditure budget of £6.814m there is an expenditure budget of £88.352m, mainly for Housing Benefit (HB) payments and Empty Property Relief, and income targets of (£81.724m) which includes the corresponding HB subsidy claim and the eligible HB Administration Fee.

- 2.1.3 Appendix 1 shows projected expenditure against budget across the various Services within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate. Section 3 provides a brief explanation of the main areas where there are significant variances (+/-£0.250m) between planned and projected expenditure and income across service managed budgets.

3.0 Major Variances

- 3.1 Directorate position – Variance (£0.290m) underspend, Movement (£0.800m)
- 3.1.1 Directorate Service Managed position (£0.290m) underspend, Movement (£0.800m)

Finance is projecting an underspend of (£0.181m), which mainly relates to staff vacancies in Internal Audit & Corporate Fraud, who are currently going through a restructure. The projected underspend in Revenue and Commercial Services is (£0.352m) which is also related to staff vacancies. Staff turnover still remains high,

particularly in Business Support. There are still significant challenges facing Business Support in the employment marketplace which has resulted in difficulties recruiting staff.

The COVID-19 pressures of £0.335m, relate to home and remote working and additional staffing resources. These pressures are mainly within Human Resources.

The movement mainly relates to staff vacancies across the Directorate.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The projected outturn position for the service managed budget within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate is a net underspend of (£0.290m) (0.55%), which includes COVID-19 financial pressures of £0.335m. Benefits & Council Tax and Miscellaneous Services are projecting a breakeven position.

List of Appendices

- 1 Projected Outturn 2023/24 Summary

Background Papers

None

Report Contact

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| BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY FINANCE, ECONOMY & CORPORATE SERVICES | | | | | Appendix 1 | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|---|
| | CURRENT BUDGET | FORECAST | VARIANCE | VARIANCE | PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE | MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE |
| FINANCE AND COPORATE SERVICES | 2023-24 | 2023-24 | £m | % | £m | £m |
| TOTAL COST OF SERVICES | 70.626 | 70.336 | (0.290) | -0.41% | 0.510 | (0.800) |
| LESS: CORPORATELY MANAGED ITEMS | 11.109 | 11.109 | 0.000 | 0.00% | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET | 59.517 | 59.226 | (0.291) | -0.49% | 0.510 | (0.801) |
| <u>ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET</u> | | | | | | |
| FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGEMENT | 1.763 | 1.729 | (0.034) | -1.90% | 0.000 | (0.034) |
| ASSESSORS SERVICE | 1.980 | 2.060 | 0.080 | 4.03% | 0.052 | 0.028 |
| FINANCE | 3.645 | 3.465 | (0.181) | -4.95% | 0.000 | (0.181) |
| REVENUE & COMMERCIAL SERVICES | 15.612 | 15.260 | (0.352) | -2.25% | 0.000 | (0.352) |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 6.829 | 7.079 | 0.250 | 3.66% | 0.250 | 0.000 |
| BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS | 18.639 | 18.532 | (0.107) | -0.58% | 0.208 | (0.315) |
| LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES | 4.235 | 4.288 | 0.053 | 1.25% | 0.000 | 0.053 |
| | 52.703 | 52.413 | (0.290) | -0.55% | 0.510 | (0.800) |
| BENEFITS & COUNCIL TAX | 6.628 | 6.628 | 0.000 | 0.00% | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES | 0.186 | 0.186 | 0.000 | 0.00% | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | 6.814 | 6.814 | 0.000 | 0.00% | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES | 59.517 | 59.226 | (0.290) | -0.49% | 0.510 | (0.800) |

26th October 2023
Agenda Item No. 11

2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services Directorate

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advise on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

Recommendation(s)

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

None.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report summarises the projected capital outturn for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate for 2023/24. At this stage, it is forecast that expenditure will be £3.064m against a budget of £3.069m, representing 99.8% of the approved capital programme for 2023-24.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 shows an analysis of specific projects in the current capital investment plan which have a budget greater than £1m and analyses total project cost rather than only in year spend.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 details the forecast expenditure against budget for each project. A brief explanation of any significant forecast variances is provided at section 2 within this report.

2.0 Issues, Achievements & Financial Performance

2.1 Key Issues / Risks

- 2.1.1 Appendix 1 details the total cost forecast position for all capital projects within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate with an overall value of £1m and over. The key risks associated with the major projects are noted below.
- 2.1.2 Across the Capital Investment Plan there continues to be risk that both the timing and the costs of projects are adversely affected by the current economic climate. Throughout the programme, issues are continuing to be identified in relation to the supply of construction materials, the consequences of which have been considered and reflected in the Capital Investment Plan review which was approved by Fife Council on 22 June 2023. Monitoring of the impact of any additional costs on projects still in their infancy will continue and any significant impact on timescales and associated risks will be reported to this committee. Where appropriate, any known impact on timing of delivery of projects has been built in to the rephased plan and the overall scale of any additional costs or further delays will be considered as part of the review of the Capital Investment Plan.

2.2 Major Projects – Potential Risks and Actions

- 2.2.1 There are no additional or new risks arising in the current reporting period from any of the major projects being progressed.
- 2.2.2 There is one major project with a budget of over £1m for Finance and Corporate Services. This project relates to the Local Area Network (LAN) as detailed in Appendix 1. The total budget is £7.314m over the life of the project. The projected spend for this project is on budget.

2.3 Financial Performance – 2023/24 Projected Outturn

- 2.3.1 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the projected outturn for each project for the financial year 2023/24.
- 2.3.2 Slippage is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend less than the budget allocation in a particular year due to a delay in timing on the delivery of the project. This is not uncommon in the capital programme and the reasons for this can

be wide and varied. Advancement is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend more than the budget allocation in a particular year due to an acceleration of the budget from future years.

2.3.3 There are no major variances within the current approved programme.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The total 2023/24 approved programme for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate is £3.069m, with a forecasted level of expenditure of £3.064m.
- 3.2 The management of capital resources require us to look across financial years, as well as within individual years. The current year performance is only a snapshot of the existing plan, and the Directorate will adjust expenditure levels within future years of the plan to accommodate the advancement or slippage of projects.

List of Appendices

- 1. Total Cost Monitor
- 2. Capital Monitoring Report

Report Contact

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FIFE COUNCIL
 FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES
 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33
 TOTAL COST MONITOR - MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

| Project | Service | Original Approved Budget £m | Current Project Budget £m | Total Outturn £m | Variance £m | Variance % | Current Project Status | Expected Project Completion Date |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Local Area Network | Maintaining Our Assets | 7.200 | 7.314 | 7.314 | - | 0.00% | Current Project | 2029-30 |
| Total Major Projects over £5.000m | | 7.200 | 7.314 | 7.314 | - | 0.00% | | |

**FIFE COUNCIL
 FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES
 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33
 MONITORING REPORT 2023-24**

Appendix 2

| Expenditure | Current Budget £m | Actual to Date £m | Total Outturn £m | Variance £m | Outturn as % of Plan |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| ICT Programme | 1.592 | 0.874 | 1.592 | - | 100% |
| BTS Capital | 1.000 | 0.171 | 1.000 | - | 100% |
| BTS Rolling Programme | 0.478 | 0.049 | 0.472 | (0.005) | 99% |
| TOTAL FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES | 3.069 | 1.094 | 3.064 | (0.005) | 100% |
| | | | | | |

26 October, 2023

Agenda Item No. 12

Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report supports the Committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the Committee.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Committee review the workplan and that members come forward with suggestions for areas of scrutiny.

Resource Implications

Committee should consider the resource implication for Council staff of any request for future reports.

Legal & Risk Implications

Committee should consider seeking inclusion of future items on the workplan by prioritising those which have the biggest impact and those which seek to deal with the highest level of risk.

Impact Assessment

None required for this paper.

Consultation

The purpose of the paper is to support the Committee's discussion and therefore no consultation is necessary.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Each Scrutiny Committee operates a workplan which contains items that fall under three broad headings: performance reporting, planning and improvement work. These items will often lead to reactive rather than proactive scrutiny. Discussion on the workplan agenda item will afford members the opportunity to shape, as a committee, the agenda with future items of business it wishes to review in more detail.

2.0 Conclusions

- 2.1 The current workplan is included as Appendix one and should be reviewed by the committee to help inform scrutiny activity.

List of Appendices

1. Workplan

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

None

Report Contact

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| Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 25 January 2024 | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| Annual Report - Finance and Corporate Services Directorate Performance Report | Finance and Corporate Services | Eileen Rowand | Annual Report 2022/23 Expected approx Oct 2023 - to be allocated. Eileen confirmed October. 2/8/23. Convener and Eileen agreed to move to January 2024 at agenda planning meeting on 9/8/23. |
| Annual Report - Business Gateway Fife Annual Performance Report | Business and Employability | Pamela Stevenson | Annual Report 2022/23 - Expected approx Oct 2023 - to be allocated. Gordon Mole advised January 2024. Email 5/7/23. Pamela Stevenson suggested may be a bit out of date as the report data is April 22 - March 23 - move to October? Eileen confirmed leave as January. 2/8/23. |
| Annual Report - Procurement Performance Report | Finance and Corporate Services | Caroline Macdonald | Annual Report 2022/23 - Expected approx Oct 2023 - to be allocated. Caroline Macdonald advised October would be her preference but this could be moved to January if necessary. 20/7/23. Eileen advised move to January. 2/8/23. |
| Annual Report - Business and Employability: Service Performance Report | Business and Employability | Peter Corbett | Annual Report 2022/23 - expected approx Oct 2023 - to be allocated. Gordon Mole advised January 2024. Email 5/7/23. Eileen confirmed January. 2/8/23. |
| Forth Green Freeport | Business and Employability | Gordon Mole | Report expected end of 2023 - The governance of the Forth Green Freeport will be led by Forth Ports and Falkirk Council, with Fife participating in an officer capacity and member attendance |

| Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 25 January 2024 | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| | | | via the Cabinet Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Planning. This would fall at a Fife level within the scope of FECS. It may take several months for Forth Ports to develop the next stage of work for UK Government, update end of 2023. Eileen confirmed January. 2/8/23. |
| Ethics & Fair Tax in Fife Council Procurement | Finance and Corporate Services | Caroline Macdonald | Suggestion from Cllr Downie - email 29/3/23. Les Robertson advised that Caroline Macdonald taking this one forward. Emailed her for update. 5/7/23. Caroline advised either October or January. 20/7/23. Eileen confirmed October. 2/8/23. Agreed to move to January following agenda-planning meeting and discussion with Convener. |
| 2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Business and Employability Service | Finance and Corporate Services | Ashleigh Allan | |
| 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Planning Service, Business and Employability Service | Finance and Corporate Services | Ashleigh Allan | |
| 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services | Finance and Corporate Services | Tracy Hirst | |
| 2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services Directorate | Finance and Corporate Services | Tracy Hirst | |

| Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 18 April 2024 | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| Annual Report - Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal | Business and Employability | Morag Millar | Annual Report - reported to Committee Nov 2022, expected approx Nov 2023 - to be allocated. Confirmed April 2024 by Morag Millar and Gordon Mole. 2/8/24. |
| Opportunities Fife | Business and Employability | Gordon Mole | Suggestions from Cllr Downie - progress report on sites of strategic economic importance for Fife and Skills pipeline for Fife: Engaging with FE/HE and businesses - email 29/3/23. Gordon taking forward - see email from Cllr Knox 15/6/23. Gordon advised that this would come under the annual performance report and a new report on 'Opportunities Fife' in April 24. Email 5/7/23. |
| Absence and Wellbeing Interim Progress Report | Human Resources | Barbara Cooper | Agreed at meeting on 15/6/23. Moved to April 2024 at agenda-planning meeting on 9/8/23. |
| Tay Cities Deal Annual Report | Business and Employability | Morag Millar | Last report 30/3/23. Morag Millar and Gordon Mole confirmed April 2024. 2/8/23. |
| 2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Business and Employability Service | Finance and Corporate Services | Ashleigh Allan | |
| 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Planning Service, Business and Employability Service | Finance and Corporate Services | Ashleigh Allan | |
| 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services | Finance and Corporate Services | Tracy Hirst | |

| Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 18 April 2024 | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| 2023/24 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn – Finance and Corporate Services Directorate | Finance and Corporate Services | Tracy Hirst | |

| Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 13 June 2024 | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| Minute | | | |
| Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Forward Work Programme | | | |

| Unallocated | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Title | Service(s) | Contact(s) | Comments |
| Vacant Property Update | Property Services | Michael O'Gorman | Previously covered by Assets Committee. Agreed at meeting on 22/4/21 to have annual report. Was due April 2022. Eileen suggested asking Convener if he still wants this report to come to committee as no report last year. Discuss at agenda-planning meeting on 9 August. 2/8/23. Michael O'Gorman we have now agreed to taken an annual report date to be advised. |
| Asset Management Strategy 2023 – 2028 | | | Asset Management Strategy 2023 – 2028 - Annual update to committee detailing activity and progress during the year whilst identifying immediate challenges and opportunities. |