

Creating a new Plan for Fife



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What everyone working in Fife's public sector needs to know

Quick overview: our shared task for 2026-27

2026 is a big year for Fife. We've got a real chance to design a better system of public services for the next generation - one that makes it easier to do the right thing, earlier and together.

Things are in flux all around us - change and transition in politics, legislation, finance, technology, communities and working relationships. It's our job to help people through all this and, either directly or indirectly, improve Fife's health and wellbeing.

We all know public services are under huge pressure. Expectations are changing, and there's a national push for reform and more joined-up funding and delivery. Parallel strands of work across our organisations need to converge.

The current Plan for Fife 2017–27 is in its final year, so we literally need a new plan from 2027 onwards (for ease we'll call it Plan 27 just now).

Creating **Plan 27** is about more than writing a document. It's a chance to reset how we work together across Fife's public services and third sector (community planning). We need a joint plan that sets a clear long-term direction, helps partners act as one system, focusses action on what matters most in the short-medium term and makes it easier for staff and communities to get involved.

2026-27 is a critical window for better, system-wide conversations about the future: what genuinely needs to change, what we should stop doing, and what we need to start doing differently to meet the challenges ahead.

The opportunity: designing a better system together

Fife has huge strengths. We have talented staff, strong communities, and a track record of partnership working. We benefit from shared public service boundaries that many other places don't have - a real advantage if we choose to use it well.

Across organisations our aims overlap more than we sometimes acknowledge. At the highest level, we're all working towards the same broad ambitions:

- **Healthier people**
- **Healthier places**
- **Healthier organisations**

If we join forces more systematically around the needs of Fife's people and places, everyone can benefit. Let's build relationships, focus and simplify.

By sharing insight and knowledge, we can target our effort better and help people sooner. By designing services and infrastructure around prevention and positive intervention - not just crisis response - we can stop avoidable problems escalating. And by sharing skills, funding, buildings and other assets, we can run operations more efficiently and reduce duplication.



Our common challenges

The same pressures are shaping demand, budgets and capacity for all partner organisations. Carrying on as we are will only get harder and less productive. This is an opportunity to think about how we tackle these challenges together – a problem shared is a problem halved...

- **Demography and demand:** More people are living longer in poorer health, increasing sustained demand for health, care and wider public services.
- **Persistent inequality:** Health inequalities remain wide and stubborn. Healthy life expectancy is falling fastest in our most disadvantaged communities.
- **Poverty and cost pressures:** Poverty is structural and persistent, including child poverty. Households are living with constant strain not one-off crises.
- **More complexity, not just more volume:** More people and families are living with multiple needs that cut across service lines (housing, health, mental wellbeing, income, employability, education).
- **Place pressures:** Town centres, housing, jobs, transport and digital connectivity all shape inclusive growth and wellbeing - and the pressures differ by place.
- **Climate and transition:** Climate impacts and the transition to net zero need to be fair, protect the most vulnerable, and build green skills.
- **Workforce and funding constraints:** Budgets are stretched and recruiting / retaining staff is harder. We're trying to do more with less while reforming at pace.
- **Digital and AI:** Technology can improve resilience and efficiency, but we need to manage inclusion, ethics, cyber security and trust.
- **Trust and cohesion:** Polarisation and declining trust can make it harder to lead change and sustain public confidence.

What Plan 27 could look like

We need to shape it together. But Fife Partnership Board has agreed the direction of travel: a plan that links long-term ambition for people and place to focused, medium-term action - and makes it easier to work as one system, monitoring progress and tacking towards the shared vision.

1) A clear, long-term direction – possibly a vision for 2050

We're exploring a shared, generational vision for Fife - looking 20–25 years ahead. The point isn't to predict everything; it's to agree the kind of place we're trying to build, and to keep ourselves honest about fairness. That means paying attention to the things that shape health and life chances: good homes, good work, strong economy, resilient communities, and support that reaches people early. The shared vision would be clearly reflected in every partner organisation's plan and strategies.

2) A smaller number of shared priorities (“missions”) for 3–5 years at a time

Alongside the long-term direction, we're considering a more focused way of working in the medium term - agreeing a small number of shared priorities, for example 3–5 missions. These would be areas where we think collaboration will have the biggest impact. They would run for a set period (for example, 3–5 years), with clear outcomes, leadership, resource alignment and measures of success. Then we'd review and set new missions.

The kind of “wicked issues” we may choose to tackle with early missions include:

- Redesigning the child poverty and family support system
- Improving early child development
- Reducing emergency admissions and delayed discharge by strengthening support at home / in communities
- Enhancing community-based mental health support
- Improving school attendance and positive destinations
- Improving economic opportunities in priority places
- Maximising renewable energy opportunities in a way that retains value locally

3) Simpler partnership working - less clutter, more delivery

When community planning works well, it helps organisations align effort, work across boundaries and intervene earlier. But we know the current system can feel fragmented and hard to navigate. Plan 27 is a chance to simplify by establishing clearer roles and fewer overlapping groups, with more time spent designing and delivering joined-up, mainstreamed solutions. The focus should be on governance that drives collaboration and accountability for results.

4) A shared way of measuring progress using data and lived experience

To act as one system, we need a shared language to describe performance and impact. If we can agree what success looks like, we can align plans, funding and activity more confidently. It's not all about spreadsheets. It will mean combining good data and evidence with lived experience, staff insight, and what communities tell us - and getting better at learning from evaluation to adjust our practice.

What will happen through 2026

All of this is up for discussion. A cross-partnership group has helped build the early thinking. Now we need wider input to test the case for change, shape the options, and co-create the new plan to be adopted in 2027.

We expect the year to feel like a series of connected conversations rather than one big consultation. The rough flow looks like this:

2026 - Development

June	July	September	November
Strategic conversations across Partnership leadership groups	Review of feedback and evidence base including existing content from community consultations	Policy & system development propositions and impact assessments	Engagement Linking as appropriate to public engagement on local development

2027 – Drafting

February	Spring	Summer	Autumn
First draft plan for internal / peer review	Refined draft and second phase of public engagement	Formal consultation	Approval / Adoption

What it means for you

Plan 27 will only be useful if it helps people doing the job and facing the challenges every day – people in operations, in communities, in support roles across the partnership. You don't need to be a “community planning person” to get involved.

- **Step back for a moment:** What pressures are you seeing in your area? What's driving repeat demand? What gets in the way of early help?
- **Join up the conversations:** If you're talking about service plans, savings, workforce, digital, estates, or reform - treat it as part of the same system story, not separate workstreams – and bring it to the table as we discuss Plan 27.
- **Be open to challenge:** Some things that made sense years ago may not fit today. Being willing to change course is a strength, not a criticism.
- **Share what you know:** Frontline insight, operational know-how, and local knowledge are exactly what we need to design something workable.
- **Keep it human:** Behind every performance measure is someone trying to live their life. Our job is to make the system easier to navigate and more supportive, especially for people experiencing inequality.
- **Bring others with you:** The way leaders at every level connect the big picture to everyday decisions matters. Clarity, openness and positive energy help.

The year ahead will stretch us. But it also gives us a genuine opportunity to improve public services and the future health and wellbeing of Fife.

In summary: what is Plan 27 and the ask?

Plan 27 is a shorthand working title for our next Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) - the shared plan that Fife's community planning partnership (the Fife Partnership) will work to from 2027 onwards.

By law, community planning partnerships have to set and report on a joint plan. Fife Partnership includes: NHS Fife, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership, Fife Voluntary Action, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, Fife College, St Andrews University, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Fife Council.

Through 2026 we need you to get involved in conversations and help develop the detail of Plan 27 so that it:

- sets out **where we're trying to get to, what's critical for us to collaborate on,** and **how we'll work together** to improve outcomes for people and places in Fife
- **draws on voices and lived experience** from right across our organisations and communities
- **honestly addresses challenges** - what's changing in the world and what's not working as well as it should
- establishes a **new system of joint working** and helps reduce strategies, plans and governance rather than being just a refresh of an old document
- helps to **connect the bigger picture to everyday decisions** - so teams can see how their work contributes and start to embed whole system thinking as the norm.