

Fife Partnership Public Performance Report 2024-2025

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Executive Summary

Building on the 2021-24 Recovery and Renewal Plan, the Fife Partnership Board in May 2024 committed to continuing its focus on key priorities for 2024-27, with an emphasis on refining delivery mechanisms. The core priorities remain tackling the root cause of poverty and inequality, strengthening the local economy and community wealth, and addressing climate change impacts. The established outcomes from the Recovery and Renewal Plan continue to guide the Delivery Boards through 2025.

This report highlights mixed progress across these priorities amid ongoing challenges including post-Covid recovery and the cost of living crisis. While some areas show improvement, others reveal persistent issues requiring sustained attention.

The report underscores the ongoing challenges faced by partners across Fife but also highlights opportunities arising from enhanced collaboration. This cooperative approach will be vital as the partnership advances into the final phase of delivering the current plan's ambitions.

This document is part of a suite of products providing information and updates on Fife's performance throughout 2024/25. The data used to develop this report was correct as at 19th May 2025.

For information on current and ongoing activity across Partners please visit ourfife.scot/plan4fife/progress

Key findings include:

 Opportunities for all	Despite levels of child poverty, educational attainment and positive destinations for school leavers—especially from deprived areas—have improved.
 Thriving places	Homelessness and temporary accommodation cases have decreased, though levels remain high; crime and anti-social behavior have declined; cultural and leisure participation has grown despite reduced physical activity.
 Inclusive growth & jobs	Employment rates have increased, exceeding Scottish averages, with unemployment falling below pre-Covid levels. Business survival rates have improved but lag behind Scotland overall. Visitor numbers and spending have surpassed pre-pandemic figures.
 Community led services	Crisis grant reliance has declined, while public engagement in local decision-making has risen.
 Addressing climate change	Carbon emissions continue to fall, though the overall carbon footprint has slightly increased but remains below pre-Covid levels.

Economy and Community Wealth Building

Progress 2024/25

- The Leading Economic Recovery Board and Community Wealth Building Support Group merged to form the new Economy & Community Wealth Building Board, strengthening the alignment of delivery of the Fife Economic Strategy with Community Wealth Building
- Business Gateway Fife (BGF) supported a total of 563 new business start-ups, 51 fewer start-ups than the previous year, but the highest number of any local authority area in Scotland by a significant margin (the next highest was Glasgow City with 434 starts). It is expected that this support will have helped create 682.5 full-time employment new jobs; 53% of starts supported were female-led businesses.
- Phase 1 of the regeneration of Riverside Park in Glenrothes was opened to the public in April.
- Over 6,300 people facing barriers to employment participated in employability programmes commissioned by the Opportunities Fife Partnership which ran throughout Fife with enhanced activity focused on Kirkcaldy, Levenmouth and Cowdenbeath. 2,400 or 38% of participants progressed into employment or self-employment.
- The Life Chances progressive approach to recruitment surpassed its target of 60 paid placements in 2024/25, providing opportunities for 77 individuals who received placements in Fife Council services, the third sector or NHS Fife. 23 have now moved into employment with Fife Council, 18 have had their placements extended, and 2 have gone into further / higher education.
- Completion of the Dunfermline Learning Campus and the creation of significant local economic growth through the project delivery and community benefits. The project delivered over £34m of Social, Local and Economic Value, including over £20m spend in local supply chain.

Opportunities

- The Forth Green Freeport, which became fully operational in June 2024, offers significant employment and investment opportunities for Rosyth and Burntisland and surrounding areas.
- Opportunity to scale successful projects from learning and putting into practice what works. Local successes and shared learning across Scotland and beyond can lead to further opportunities to deliver the Community Wealth Building model at scale and increase impact.
- Community Wealth Building legislation introduced to Scottish Parliament in March 2025 will give added weight to community wealth building activity and the requirement for action plans and implementation locally, regionally and nationally, providing both opportunities and challenges for Fife.

Challenges

- Leadership, behaviour and culture is required to fully embed Community Wealth Building in mainstream practice, backed up by measurable success and impact. Challenges remain in embedding CWB at scale due to established policy approaches, systems and processes
- Continued uncertainty around of funding of future UK and Scottish Government for economic development and employability programmes
- In 2024, the total number of businesses in Fife decreased for the fourth consecutive year although the number of small and medium sized companies increased.
- The economic inactivity rate in Fife decreased to 21.1% of the working age population, after reaching a record high of 26.9% in 2022. There are however still just under 48,000 people aged 16-64 who are economically inactive in the region, 42% of whom (an estimated 20,300 people), cited long-term ill-health as the reason for their inactivity.

Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis

Progress 2024/25

- The 2024/25 Cost-of-Living Programme was supported with £3.6 million of funding in the areas of fuel, food and cash support – mostly at the point of crisis.
- Fife added £2 million to the existing Scottish Welfare Fund allocation from the Scottish Government.
- There is a high number of repeat applications for cash help from the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- Further preventative measures focus on benefit maximisation campaigns and energy advice and fuel top-ups.
- The benefit take up campaigns are bringing significant financial gain for people -the campaign of the new Carers Support payment ran 2024/25 and brought in £1.9 million for unpaid carers in Fife.
- The 89 Warm and welcoming places have helped bring people together, reduce isolation and improve connectedness.
- The Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) has provided evidence of current and future need, helping to target for example, pensioners entitled but not claiming pension credit . Pension Credit gains for the last financial year only is over £2.2 million.

Opportunities

- The implementation of the, 'No Wrong Door' approach is offering early advice and support to households to address issues related to housing, employment, income maximisation, fuel/ food poverty and family issues.
- Priority is being given to delivering the Scottish Welfare Fund differently with early support built in to ensure there is preventative action for those reaching financial crisis points.
- The benefit take up campaigns are bringing significant financial gain for people -the campaign of the new Carers Support payment ran 2024/25 and brought in £1.9 million for unpaid carers in Fife.

Challenges

- The Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis Board has identified learning and lessons from the considerable resource investment in crisis support in recent years including the need for greater understanding on impact and fragmented funding investment and commissioning across partners.

Addressing the Climate Emergency

Progress 2024/25

- Grid assessments are being conducted at three priority locations to progress renewable energy and battery storage projects, supporting decarbonisation and potential heat network zones. This initiative will integrate with other models, including Fife Council's energy business model work, rather than functioning as a standalone project.
- To enhance climate resilience and improve our capacity to withstand and recover from climate impacts, we are currently evaluating our resilience maturity using the Adaptation Capability Framework. This tool will not only determine our maturity level but also identify strengths, weaknesses, and necessary measures for improvement.
- An Energy Vision Prospectus was carried out in Dunfermline and Rosyth Area to highlight a scenario for heat network and energy which best meets local needs. This area was chosen as there is already an existing heat network which can be expanded and has multiple new developments – both social and industrial – which would benefit from and/or contribute to this energy plan. It is hoped by summer 2025, that Fife Council will have developed a full heat network vision and Dunfermline & Rosyth Energy Plan.

Opportunities

- Potential of combining energy projects with nature, landscape and community initiatives to leverage and attract more funding and enable larger scale projects.

Challenges

- To effectively tackle the climate emergency, it is crucial to shift cultures to recognise it as a core issue. To do this will involve raising awareness, embedding climate related goals into strategic plans, a commitment from leadership, promoting more collaborative efforts to develop solutions and establishing systems to monitor, track and report on climate-related initiatives.

Review of Ambitions Progress

This review of progress against the ambitions aligned with the Plan for Fife combines data against performance indicators which have been listed under each ambition.

Opportunities for All



Ambition	Progress
Fife has lower levels of poverty in line with national targets - Median weekly earnings % of children living in low-income households - Fuel poor and extreme fuel poor households % of children with health concerns at 27-30 months - Number of children meeting developmental milestones - Number of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	- The percentage of Fife's children living in low-income households has reduced from the previous year, although both relative and absolute poverty levels remain above the Scottish rates. Fife has also seen a slightly larger decrease in the rate of children living in relative poverty compared to Scotland. - It should be noted that these new child poverty figures now take account of the introduction of the Scottish Child Payment, and are therefore not directly comparable with previous years' figures.
Educational Attainment continues to improve for all groups - School attendance rates % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils achieving desired literacy and numeracy levels % of young people achieving SCQF level 5 literacy and numeracy levels by end of S4 - Pupils entering positive destination, and those from most deprived areas	- Numbers of young people achieving Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 5 has increased overall since 2018/19, although levels for the latest year have reduced from the previous year. - The percentage of Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 pupils achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) level in Literacy and Numeracy has increased over the last four years, although current levels are still below those of 2018/19. - The proportion of Fife pupils entering positive destinations has increased from 2019/20, while those (most deprived) have also shown a slight increase from the previous year and remain above pre-Covid levels.
Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities - Life expectancy in males and females - All cause premature mortality rate in under 75s	Current rates of All Cause Premature Mortality for under 75s in Fife, show a continuing increase from 2018/19, with the Covid year showing the highest levels.

Review of Ambitions Progress

Thriving Places



Ambition

Progress

Everyone has access to affordable housing options

- ⊙ Number of children experiencing homelessness or in temporary accommodation
- ⊙ % occupancy in temporary accommodation
- ⊙ Number of people rough sleeping
- ⊙ Number of Housing Option Plans completed via the Fife Housing Register website
- ⊙ Number of new affordable housing units delivered
- ⊙ Cumulative number of new affordable housing units delivered
- ⊙ Number of households homeless/potentially homeless
- ⊙ Homeless allocations
- ⊙ New tenancies sustained for more than one year by source of let

- While the cumulative number of new affordable housing units delivered in Fife has shown year-on-year increases since 2018/19, the number of housing units delivered each year peaked in 2022/23, and since then the number has reduced year-on-year.
- The current number of Fife households that are homeless, potentially homeless, or have children that are homeless, has shown continued reductions since 2022/23, with reductions also seen in numbers of people in temporary accommodation since 2018/19.
- The proportion of homeless allocations in Fife has reduced from the previous year but remain above levels in 2018/19.

Fife's main town centres stand out as attractive places to live, work and visit

- ⊙ Retail vacancy rates (Kirkcaldy, Leven, Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Cowdenbeath and St. Andrews)

- Between 2020 and 2024, retail vacancy rates fell in Leven, Cowdenbeath, Burntisland and St Andrews. Over the same period, Kincardine, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Dunfermline continued to have high vacancy rates.

All our communities benefit from low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

- ⊙ Recorded crimes by Police Scotland (Fife Division)
- ⊙ Number of anti-social behaviour cases reported
- ⊙ % of reported anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved
- ⊙ Perception of prevalence of neighbourhood problems; vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property

- Recorded crime levels show a reduction from the previous year, although levels are higher than in 2018/19.
- The proportion of anti-social behaviour cases resolved has continued to reduce since 2018/19 and are now at significantly lower levels. This is against a backdrop of reducing numbers of anti-social behaviour cases being reported in recent years.
- Prevalence of neighbourhood problems, e.g. vandalism, graffiti, etc, has reduced from the previous year, but remains above 2018/19 levels.

Review of Ambitions Progress

Thriving Places



Ambition

Every Community has access to high quality outdoor, cultural and leisure opportunities

- ⦿ Male and female participation in physical activity
- ⦿ Satisfaction rates in museums and galleries, parks and open spaces, and leisure facilities
- ⦿ Attendance at all outdoor sport and leisure facilities
- ⦿ OnFife Theatre visitor numbers
- ⦿ Visits to/usage of Council funded or part-funded museums

Progress

- Participation among both men and women has seen a marked rise, with engagement levels steadily climbing back toward those seen before the pandemic. This is mirrored in the growing number of visits to outdoor and leisure facilities, which have also experienced a notable increase in attendance.
- Library visits have continued to increase year-on-year since the Covid period, although are currently lower than pre-Covid years.
- Visits to Fife's theatres and museums have both shown increases since the post-Covid period, but museum visits remain below the levels seen before Covid.

Review of Ambitions Progress

Inclusive Growth and Jobs



Ambition

Progress

Economic Activity and Employment in Fife is improving faster than the rest of Scotland

- ⦿ New business start-ups supported by Business Gateway
- ⦿ New businesses surviving at least 3 years
- ⦿ Employment rate
- ⦿ Unemployment rate
- ⦿ Claimant count as a % of Working Age Population
- ⦿ Immediate available land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes
- ⦿ Number of properties receiving Superfast Broadband
- ⦿ Number of businesses participating in Supplier Development Programme
- ⦿ Number of participants progressing from Fife Council funded/operated employability programmes into employment

- Fife's latest employment rate is slightly higher than that for Scotland as a whole, and is the same as the previous year, in contrast to Scotland which has seen a very slight decrease.
- Fife's unemployment rate is slightly higher than that for Scotland, but is lower than the previous year. Both Fife and Scotland's unemployment rates are now lower than prior to the Covid pandemic.
- Levenmouth and Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath areas continue to have a high number and rate of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Fife; this has been the case for some time.
- The proportion of new Fife businesses surviving for at least 3 years has been lower than at the Scottish level for the last few years. This is in contrast to the pre-Covid period, where Fife's survival rates were higher than Scottish rates. While Fife's business survival rates have improved in the most recent year, from the previous year, survival rates still remain below pre-Covid levels.

Economic Activity and Employment in Mid-Fife is catching up with the rest of Fife and Scotland

Economic Activity and Employment in Mid-Fife is catching up with the rest of Fife and Scotland. Differences between areas are tracked through Local Economic Profiles and Quarterly Labour Market Updates.

- Fife Council's town centre capital investment continues to be used to lever additional external funding. Recent investment includes the completion of the Adam Smith Theatre refurbishment in Kirkcaldy and the delivery of a place making project in Leven between the railway and bus stations. The second phase of public realm improvements at Kirkcaldy waterfront and Volunteer's Green are also now complete.

Fife has year on year increase in visitor numbers and tourism spend

- ⦿ Total number of visitors to Fife
- ⦿ Total full-time employment supported by Tourism in Fife
- ⦿ Economic impact of Tourism in Fife

- Visitor numbers to Fife continue to increase year-on-year and remain above pre-Covid levels.
- Tourism spending in Fife continues to increase post-Covid and remains above the level seen prior to Covid.

Review of Ambitions Progress

Community-Led Services



Ambition

Progress

Our public services are more joined up and acting 'one step sooner'

- ⦿ Number of Crisis Grants
- ⦿ Spend on Crisis Grants
- ⦿ Number of Community Care Grants
- ⦿ Spend on Community Care Grants

- The number of crises grants continues to reduce from 2022/23 onwards, and spending on crises grants during this time has also reduced.
- While the number of community care grants has reduced by around one-third since Covid, the amount of spend has increased three-fold.

Fife's communities and individuals are more involved in local decision making and in helping to plan and deliver local services

- ⦿ % of people agreeing they can influence decisions and in 20% most deprived

- The proportion of people saying that they can influence local decision-making has increased in recent years and is now at a higher level than pre-Covid.

Addressing the Climate Emergency



Ambition

Progress

Fife has lower levels of carbon emissions in line with national targets

- ⦿ CO² emissions area wide within scope of LA per capita
- ⦿ Area Wide Emissions
- ⦿ Total Fife Council Carbon Footprint – tCO₂e (tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent)

- Fife's carbon emissions continue to reduce year-on-year and are now at their lowest levels since 2018/19.
- Fife's carbon footprint, while increasing from the previous year, still remains below pre-Covid levels.

Fife Partnership Public Performance Report 2024-25

If you would like any further information about this report or the work of the Fife Partnership please visit the Fife Council Community Portal at our.fife.scot or email: fife.partnership@fife.gov.uk



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