

# KIRKCALDY AREA

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# LOCAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

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2022

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Fife Council Research Team

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**About this document:**

We are looking for your input for how we might improve this assessment, including the strategic map which we hope to improve over time.

The Local Strategic Assessment provides an overview of how a Local Area is doing. It collates and updates a wide range of information to give key input for the refresh of Local Community Plans.

It is intended to inform and support local conversations about the issues that need to be addressed in the Area, in terms of both People and Place.

Feedback on this document can be provided directly to the Community Manager for the Area or by email to [research.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto:research.enquiries@fife.gov.uk)



# 1. Overview

The Local Strategic Assessment provides an overview of how a Local Area is doing. It collates and updates a wide range of information to give key input for the refresh of Local Community Plans.

In the last two years, our communities have experienced unprecedented change and responded in remarkable ways. The pandemic has highlighted the need for a greater focus on place and the role communities can play in developing joint responses and solutions to the Plan4Fife's 2021-2024 Recovery and Renewal Priorities of tackling poverty, building future economic success, and addressing climate change, all of which can be supported by an overarching approach of community wealth building.

The Plan 4 Kirkcaldy Area 2019-2022 set out how public, private and voluntary organisations needed to work together with our communities to deliver the ambitions of the Plan4Fife and make Kirkcaldy Area a better, cleaner, safer, stronger, and more vibrant place to live and visit.

## Our Vision

*We want the Kirkcaldy area to be a place where communities support each other and feel enabled to bring about change. We want partnerships to flourish, with benefits for the whole area, particularly those residents who experience the greatest inequality and effects of poverty. We want to promote and raise awareness of the strengths of communities across the Kirkcaldy area including the facilities, services and community activities. The Kirkcaldy area also has a rich heritage and historic roots which have the potential to attract visitors and enhance the area as a thriving place to live, work and visit.*

**Plan 4 Kirkcaldy Area, 2019-2022**

The purpose of this document is to inform discussions about the priorities and actions that need to be addressed in a refreshed Local Community Plan for the Area covering the period 2022 to 2025.

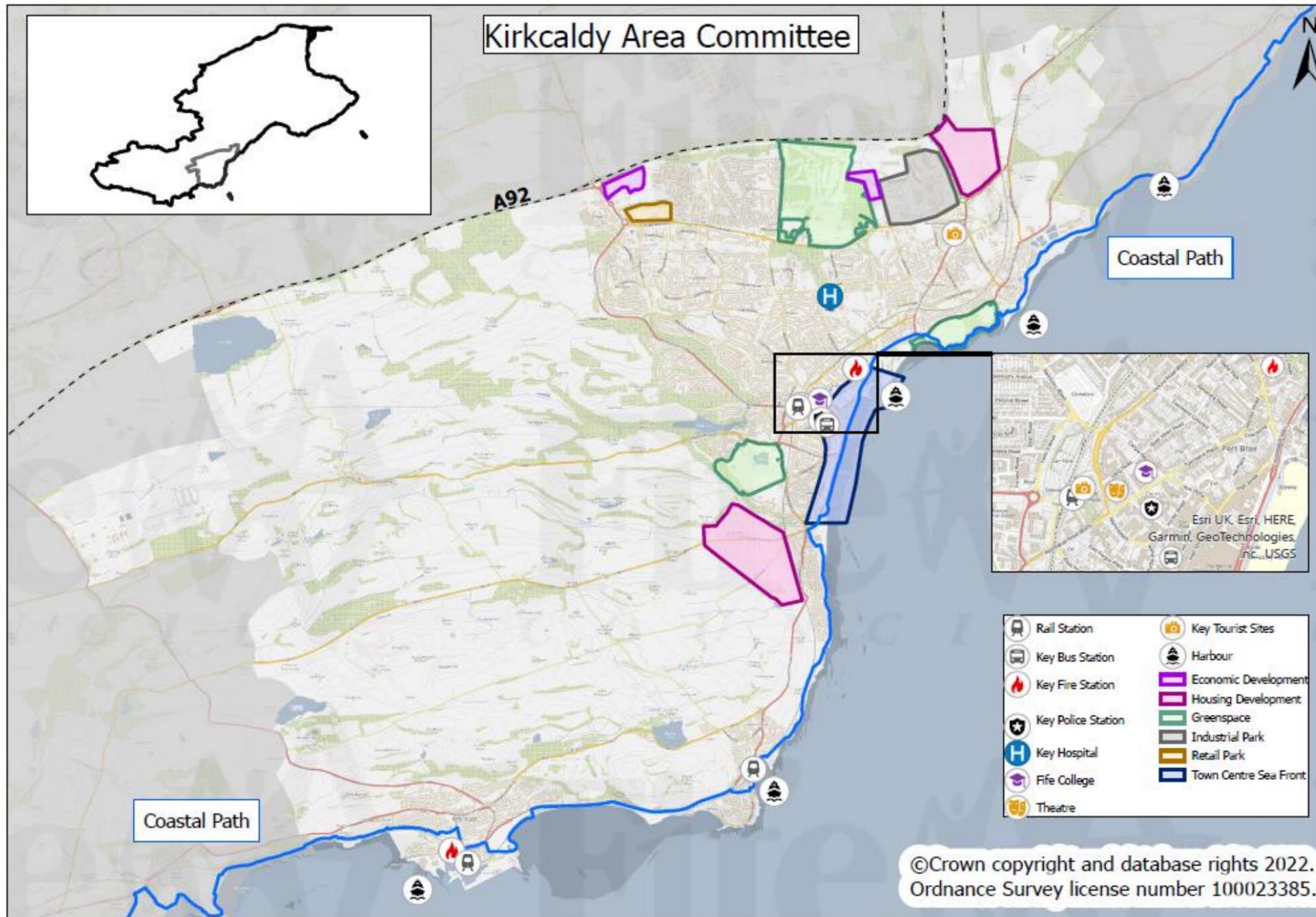
People and Place Leadership groups have been established across Fife's seven local community planning areas, building on models established during the pandemic response. These groups will have a key role to play in providing effective local leadership and collaboration to ensure plans and strategies are aligned to deliver agreed priorities and ambitions.



Kirkcaldy Waterfront, Picture Credit - Andrew Beveridge

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**Figure 1.1 Strategic Overview of Kirkcaldy Area**

The Kirkcaldy Area sits in the south of Fife. The town of Kirkcaldy is the second largest settlement in Fife and is located around 12 miles north of Edinburgh. The area has a long tradition of heavy industry, such as coal mining and manufacturing, in particular linoleum. The area serves as a major hub for central Fife for both jobs and social and leisure facilities.

## 2. Local Assessment Findings

### 3. Profile

With a population of 60,417, in 30,287 households, Kirkcaldy is the second most populated area in Fife, after North East Fife. 61% of the population is made up of those aged 16-64 years. 58% of households are owner-occupied and 27% are social rented.

Kirkcaldy is one of the most deprived areas of Fife, after Levenmouth, with 11.4% employment deprived and 14.9% income deprived. Employment rate (63.6%) is lower than that of Fife, with a larger proportion of residents classed as economically inactive (33.3%). The claimant rate is 6.6%. 89% of 16-19 year olds are participating in education, employment or training which is below Fife.

### 4. Place

Natural Space, Feeling Safe and Identity and Belonging are identified as needing the least improvement.

Improvements in the area in relation to Moving Around appear to have been sustained. The areas with the greatest need for improvement are Influence and Sense of Control, Traffic and Parking, and Care and Maintenance.

### 5. People

A study to explore the impact of COVID-19 for residents, including vulnerable and disadvantaged people, found that the issue of social isolation came through particularly strongly in the Kirkcaldy Area, as did a sense of anger. There is a need to raise the voices of the people of Kirkcaldy through community engagement to promote community resilience. Positive findings included the gratitude people had for the services they had received from the Council, community staff and third sector during the pandemic: in particular for support with food.

Strong social connections are seen as a cornerstone of mental health and wellbeing and community resilience. Many people would be willing to work together with others to improve their neighbourhood, despite feeling less connected to their neighbourhood now than they did in 2016.

Technology has become a necessity for keeping connected, working remotely and accessing vital information. Personal use of the internet in the Area is lower than Fife. While levels of internet use continue to grow, people can still be digitally excluded because they lack the skills to confidently and safely navigate the digital world.

### 6. Community

In 2022, cost of living has replaced NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare as the main issue facing all Areas of Fife. Other main issues for the Kirkcaldy Area include crime / antisocial behaviour and funding for public services.

The majority of local people in Kirkcaldy Area would like more involvement in decisions that the Council makes that affect their local area. 38.5% report that they provide some kind of unpaid (voluntary) help to a group or organisation.

Within Kirkcaldy Area, less than half of local people believe the Council does the best it can with money available, provides high quality services, or is good at letting people know about the kind of services that it provides. Fewer people believe that the Council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their local neighbourhood, letting people know how well it is performing, designing its services around the needs of people who use them, or listening to local people's views before it takes decisions.

### 7. Local Outcomes

53% of communities in Kirkcaldy Area are doing better than expected compared to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland, compared to 50% of communities for Fife as a whole.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Kirkcaldy Area continue to be Hayfield and Smeaton, Gallatown and Sinclairtown, and Templehall. With the exception of Hayfield and Smeaton, this is consistent with areas already identified as a priority for neighbourhood development and local action plans. Areas with better life outcomes include the Dunnikier, Raith, and Chapel areas of Kirkcaldy.

### 8. Horizons

The extent of uncertainty that Fife's communities will need to face in the coming years is unprecedented. The impact of wider events (i.e. pandemic, Brexit) will continue to be felt at a very local level. Although Kirkcaldy's population is expected to reduce in future years, it will see less of a change than the other six areas in Fife.

Reductions in healthy life expectancy are expected to impact on people's quality of life. While much of the coronavirus pandemic has heavily influenced people's health, and their broader wellbeing, it has also had a major impact on people's jobs, and businesses and industries, with many facing a much less certain future than even a few years ago.

Rising living costs are adding to the pressures felt by individual households. It is unclear when this situation will stabilise, and how this will impact on widening inequalities within Fife's communities. There is a need to anticipate and plan for the more pressing implications of climate change and how it will affect peoples' lives.

### 3. Profile

TOTAL POPULATION	
60,417	374,130
Kirkcaldy	Fife

Children (0-15yrs)		Working Age (16-64yrs)		Older Adults (65+yrs)	
10,949	64,152	36,634	231,809	12,834	78,169
(18%)	(17%)	(61%)	(62%)	(21%)	(20%)
Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife

Figure 3.1 – Mid-year 2020 Population Estimates (Source: [National Records of Scotland](#))

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	
30,287	180,431
Kirkcaldy	Fife

Owner / Occupier		Private Rented		Social Rented	
58%	61%	12%	11%	27%	23%
Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife

Figure 3.2 – Housing Tenure 2021 (Source: Fife Council Housing Tenure Database)

Employment Rate		Economically Inactive		Claimant Rate	
69.2%	68.3%	26.3%	26.2%	5.8%	3.9%
Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife

Figure 3.3 – Employment and Economically inactive for Jan – Dec 2021; Claimant Rate for April 2022 (Source: NOMIS / [Fife Local Economic Profiles](#))

TOTAL PARTICIPATING					
89%		91%		Training / Personal Development	
Kirkcaldy		Fife			
Education		Employment		Training / Personal Development	
72.9%	73%	14.1%	16.2%	2%	1.8%
Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife

Figure 3.4 - Annual Participation Measure (16-19 year olds) 2021 (Source: [Skills Development Scotland](#))

Employment Deprived		Income Deprived	
11.4%	9.4%	14.9%	11.9%
Kirkcaldy	Fife	Kirkcaldy	Fife

Figure 3.5 – Employment and Income Deprivation rates (Source: SIMD 2020/ [ScotPHO](#))

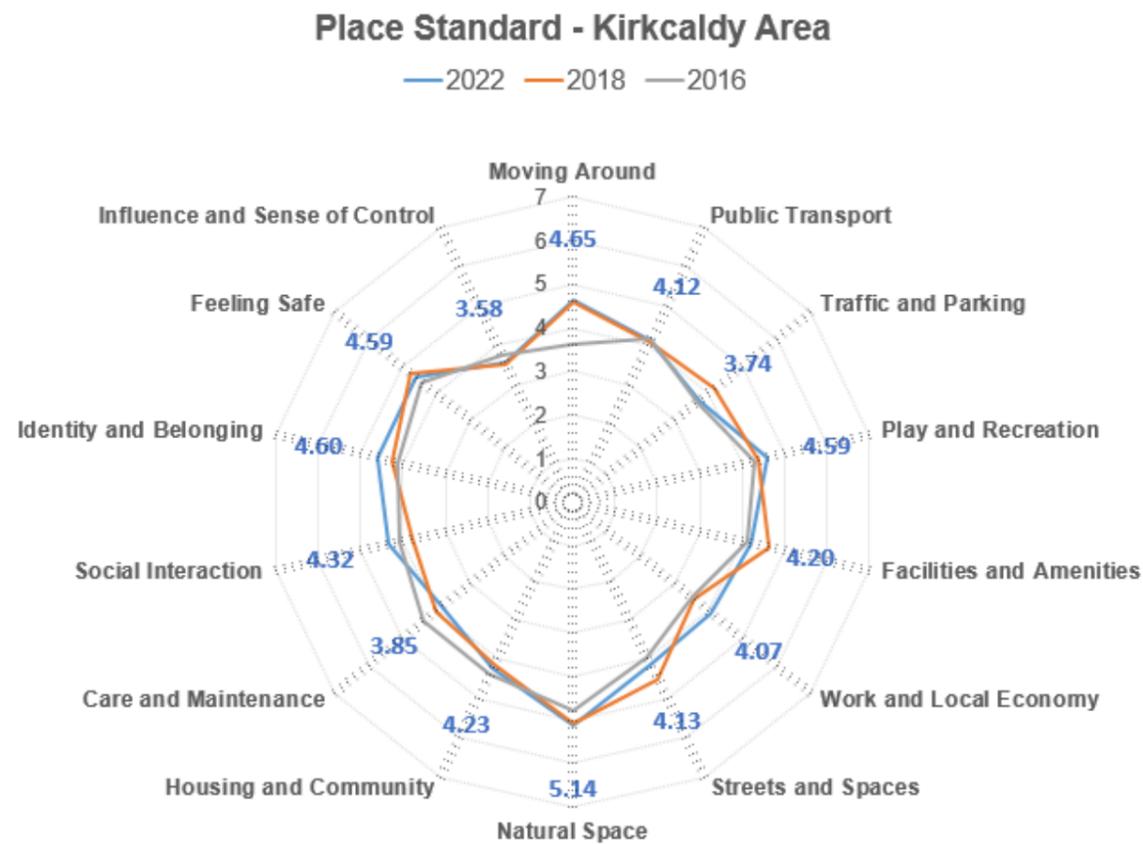
Additional information can be found via the KnowFife Hub (<https://know.fife.scot>).

# 4. Place

Place is an important element of Local Community Planning. 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. Through comparing the results of Place Surveys in 2016, 2018 and 2022 we can get a picture of how the Area is changing, and use this snapshot as a background benchmark for any local use of the Place Standard within local communities across the Area.

In the Kirkcaldy Area in 2022, a relatively consistent picture emerges in relation to local people's perception of place, compared to the results of previous Place Surveys in 2016 and 2018.

Natural Space, Feeling Safe and Identity and Belonging are identified as needing the least improvement. Improvements in the area in relation to Moving Around appear to have been sustained.



**Figure 4.1 – Community perceptions of where improvement is needed in the area using the Place Standard, and how it has changed between 2016, 2018 and 2022. The outer part of the diagram (score 7) means little room for improvement, while the inner part (score 1) represents most need for improvement (Fife People's Panel, Survey 34, 2022)**

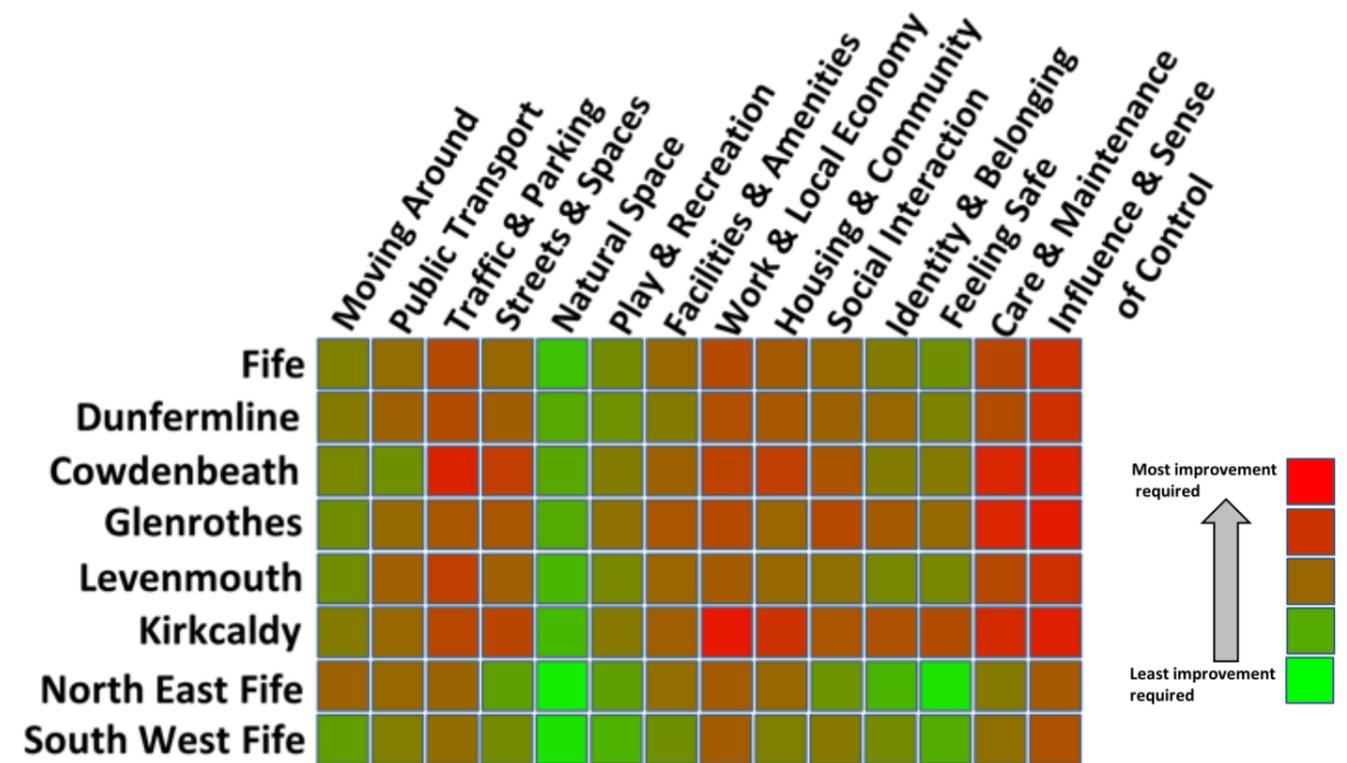
Note: given sampling variability and variation within each area we cannot at this stage say with any certainty if change between 2016, 2018 and 2022 has been significant.

The areas with the greatest need for improvement are Influence and Sense of Control, Traffic and Parking, and Care and Maintenance.

Compared to other areas of Fife, Kirkcaldy Area shows a more mixed picture in relation to aspects of place that are in need of improvements.

While the Area's Play and Recreation and Facilities and Amenities are generally viewed positively, areas in particular need of improvement include Work and Local Economy, Housing and Community, Care and Maintenance, and Influence and Sense of Control. Residents feel that their opinions are often ignored when decisions are made about the local area, for example, changes in access to Burntisland harbour / docks.

Like other areas of Fife, Natural Space is rated highly within the Kirkcaldy Area. While there has been little actual change, there does appear to be a greater relative need for improvement in Feeling Safe in Kirkcaldy Area relative to other areas of Fife. Parking on pavements is an issue that is contributing to a sense of lack of safety.



**Figure 4.2 – Colour shaded diagram of how different aspects of Place are viewed across Fife (Place Standard, Fife People's Panel, Survey 34, 2022)**

## 5. People

Simply looking at where people live only gives part of the picture. During 2020, Fife Council commissioned a study to explore the impact of COVID-19 for residents, including vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Kirkcaldy. The research was undertaken post the initial lockdown and just as a second round of measures to prevent the virus spreading was being implemented.

This used Narrative Inquiry to focus on the past (experiences prior to COVID-19); the present (experience of COVID-19); and the future (what will it be like post the virus?). The research questions were:

- What has been the experience of residents of Kirkcaldy during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are the key issues these people face?
- What will the needs be of these residents, post COVID-19?
- What are the implications for Fife Council, in particular the Community Team, in Kirkcaldy?

The report for Kirkcaldy Area encouraged organisations and local communities to 'Pause, Take Stock and Reconsider'. A number of themes emerged through conversations with residents including: Mood (with people experiencing complex competing emotions that were in the main overwhelmingly negative); Relationships (which were particularly difficult during lockdown and exacerbated both by proximity and social isolation); Finances (poverty and financial security and issues with Universal Credit); Food (highlighting a reliance on community food support including food banks); and concerns about the Future. Positive findings included the gratitude people had for the services they had received from the Council, community staff and third sector during the pandemic: in particular for support with food.

Findings were explored with groups with local knowledge and experience of providing services in the area during the pandemic. Community groups mentioned a wide range of issues that they saw as particularly challenging for individuals and groups during COVID-19. Those identified included social isolation and its subsequent impact on mental health; food poverty; financial strains; lack of employment opportunities; digital literacy, or lack thereof. Community groups were more likely to mention low income than residents with food insecurity increasing and poverty underpinning many other problems that people are facing. Mental health issues linked to social isolation were identified in relation to both young people and older adults. There was a sense that a shared experience (of the pandemic) had brought the community closer together and the future could be more positive. Focusing on key aspects such as food poverty, isolation and mental health seemed to be key.

Community organisations were asked how they and the Council could contribute to a 'good future'. The theme of dependency on support was raised. There was a strong sense that community organisations want communities to own their own future and be involved in providing this support. There is a need to raise the voices of the people of Kirkcaldy through community engagement to promote community resilience. The issue of social isolation came through particularly strongly in the Kirkcaldy Area, as did a sense of anger. There is a need to design a community led approach to mental health and wellbeing, embedding resilience and coping within community development approaches.

The implications of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to affect life outcomes for people for some time after it ends. The need for support post-lockdown will be very strong, particularly in the Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth areas, both for those with pre-existing conditions and those affected by COVID-19. This will be seen through increased or changed demand for services and poorer outcomes across a range of indicators. In particular, this is expected to impact on health, jobs, poverty, and inequalities. The challenge will be to move from crisis support to prevention.

### **MOOD:**

*"I'm quite social like. So, I feel like it's totally changed us all in quite a dramatic way, especially my son he's like drawn into himself now. He used to be quite outgoing, my girls seem to be really phased by it. My mental health was all over the place. It was often up and down all the way through lockdown. I actually thought I was going insane at one point. I had to get quite a bit of help from my doctor over, I went back on medication and that, so it was pretty rubbish."  
(Woman, 35, Kirkcaldy)*

### **RELATIONSHIPS:**

*"I was able to speak to family on the phone and my daughter who lives in Dunfermline. She was the one who came and dropped off food for me. I would just write out a wee list, send a photo and send it to her. At first, she was just totally dropping it off on the step but after that we were opening the door and, and, if it was nice weather I could sit at the top and she could sit on the bottom. ... but she would come with a mask on and everything... But it wasnae like every week it was like every fortnight . . ."*

### **FINANCES:**

*"I was furloughed, so I am still getting some money coming in.... I just signed onto Universal Credit because I'm going to have to do something if I'm no going to get the work. I signed on to that and they've sorted that more or less, the first payment, but I had to take an advance because I had to like cover my overdraft. . . Things are getting sorted out noo as I am getting Universal Credit. It's just something you never thought you would have to go back and do, you know but it's circumstances."  
(Woman, 56, Kinghorn)*

### **FOOD:**

*"I use the food banks . . . if I think I have more than enough I try to collaborate with other people. You cannot put items into the bin because you don't like it, no. You know it's very important I can say to you, 'B, don't give me any milk. You can use it for another one'. Decency is something that unfortunately has disappeared. . . But I feel very grateful with the food bank, very grateful. . . Honey, when you are getting something for free, the minimum you can say is thank you very much."  
(Man, 59, Kirkcaldy)*

### **FUTURE:**

*"If the virus continues, we just have to get on with it. We can't change what's going to happen. It's going to happen anyway. I don't think the virus will go away anytime soon . . . I'll make sure there's plenty food in the cupboards this time".  
(Woman, 35, Burntisland)*

Figure 5.1 – Example of residents' comments gathered through the Narrative Inquiry Process

Strong social connections are seen as a cornerstone of mental health and wellbeing and community resilience. In early 2022, we asked local people about neighbourhood connections, and compared this with what people said in 2016. Across a number of aspects of neighbourhood connection, local people feel less connected to their neighbourhood now than they did in 2016. While many people would be willing to work together with others on something to improve their neighbourhood, there continues to be a perception that other people in the area are less likely to pull together to improve their neighbourhood. Many people plan to remain a resident of their neighbourhood for a number of years, and value the friendships and connections they have with other people in their neighbourhood, with the majority of people regularly stopping and talking with others in their neighbourhood.

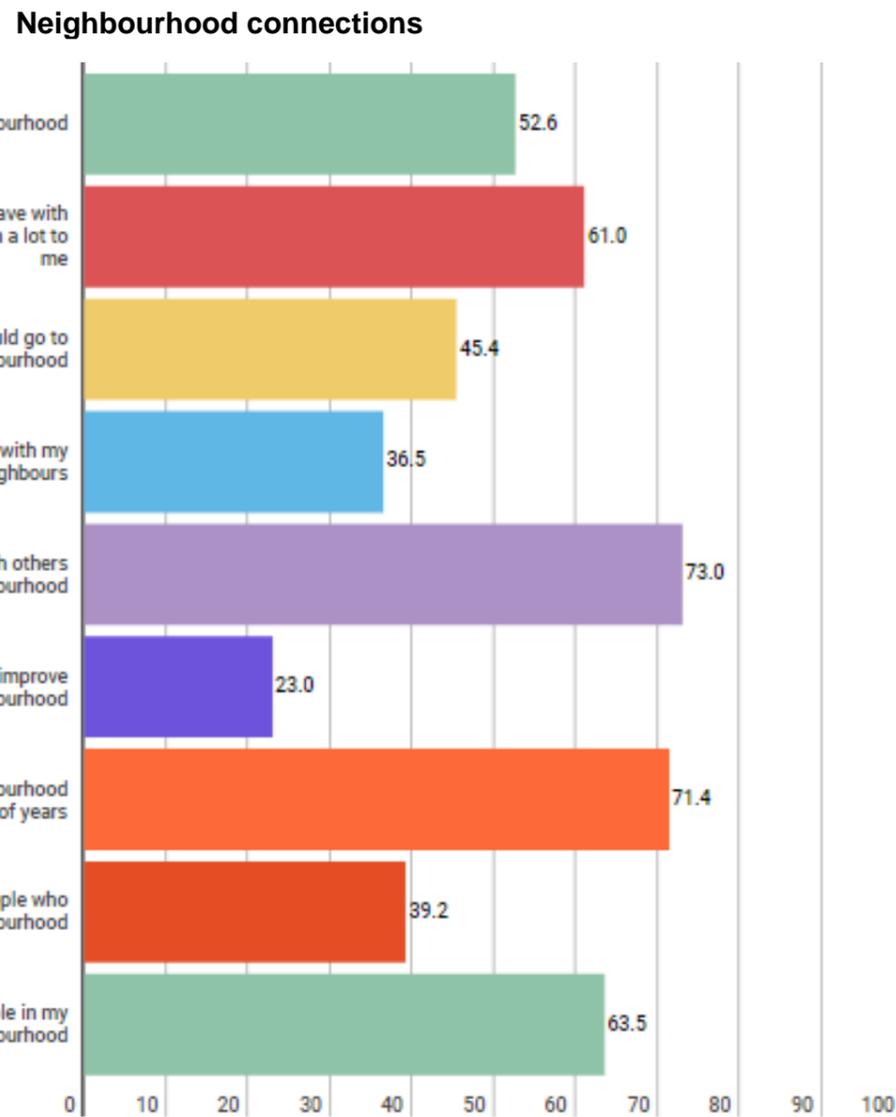


Figure 5.2 – Perceptions of neighbourhood connections (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

Over the last couple of years, while people have been encouraged to stay at home to stay safe, technology has become a necessity for keeping connected, working remotely and accessing vital information. Personal use of the internet in the Area is 91.2% compared to 93.9% for Fife. The main uses of the internet are to search for information, send and receive emails, and buy goods or services. While levels of internet use continue to grow, people can still be digitally excluded because they lack the skills to be able to confidently and safely navigate the digital world.

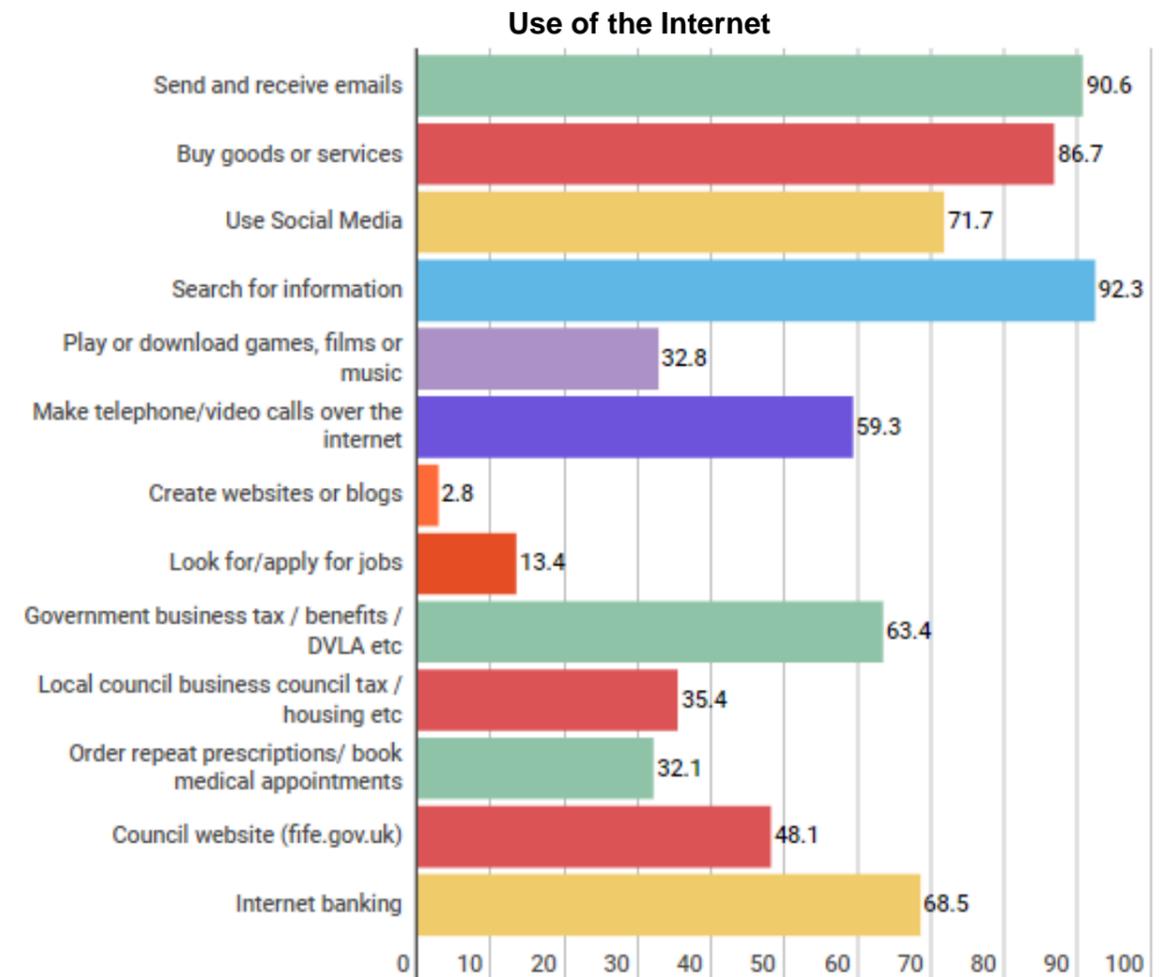
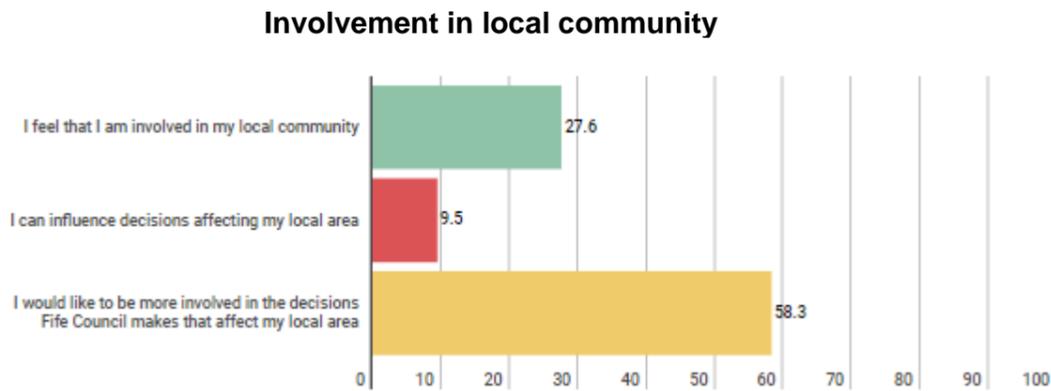


Figure 5.3 – Use of the Internet (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

# 6. Community

Insights into how communities are faring are a critical input when considering local places. As with all areas of Fife, the majority of local people in Kirkcaldy Area would like more involvement in decisions that the Council makes that affect their local area. 9.5% of people in Kirkcaldy Area feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area (compared to 13.7% for Fife).



**Figure 6.1 – Involvement in local community (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)**

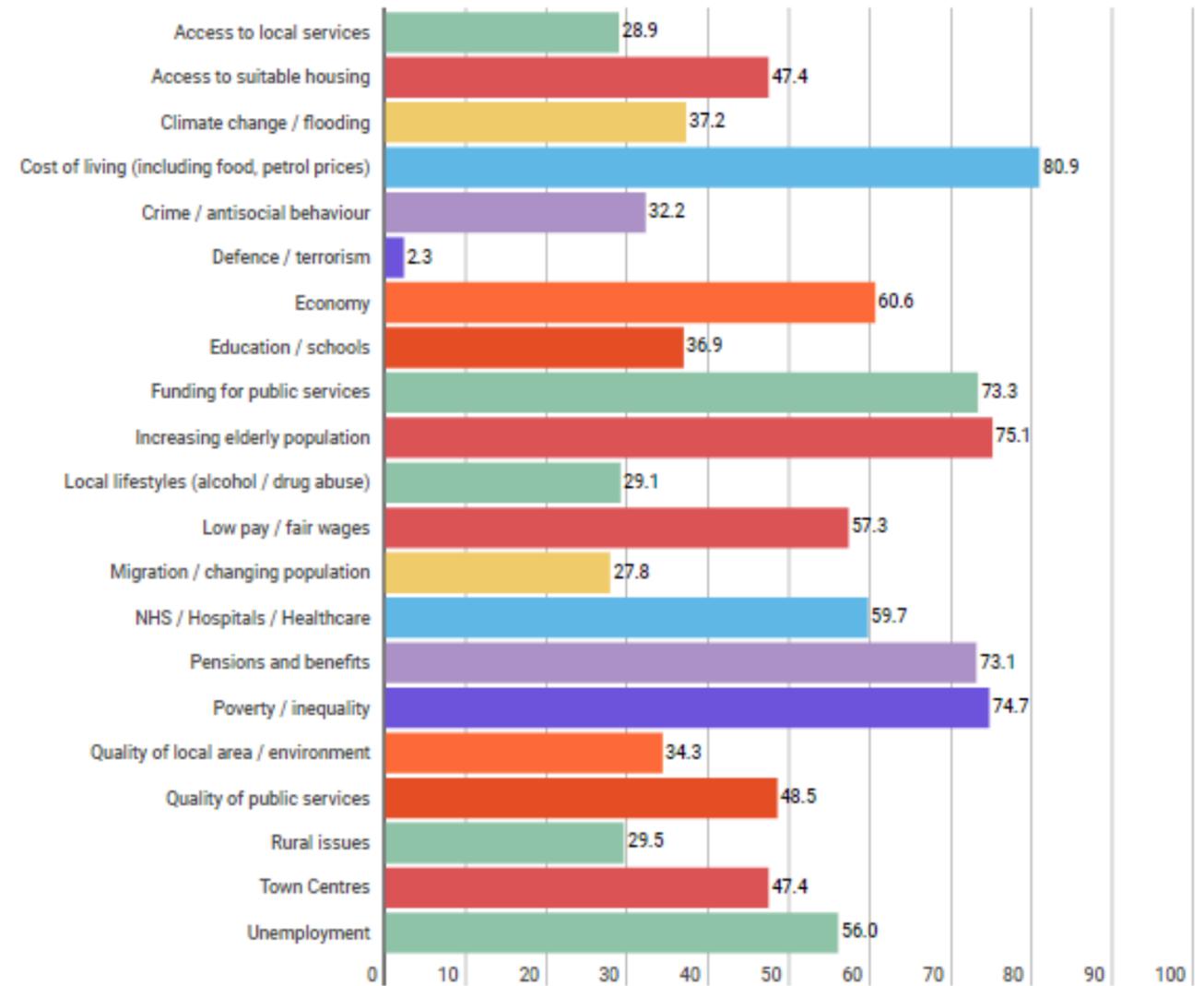
We asked local people about a range of issues, particularly whether they saw this as a major issue, a minor issue, or not an issue in their local area.

The top five major issues for Kirkcaldy Area are:

- cost of living (including food, petrol prices),
- increasing elderly population,
- poverty / inequality,
- funding for public services, and
- pensions and benefits.

In 2022, cost of living has replaced NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare as the main issue facing all Areas of Fife. Other main issues for the Kirkcaldy Area include crime / antisocial behaviour and funding for public services.

## To what extent is this a major issue in local area?



**Figure 6.2 – Community perceptions of what is a major issue in the area (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)**

Of those surveyed, 38.5% report that they provide some kind of unpaid (voluntary) help to a group or organisation. This compares with 46% of Fife as a whole. The most common areas in which unpaid (voluntary) help is given to groups and organisations are religious groups, hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs, and older people's groups.

### Unpaid (voluntary) help to groups and organisations

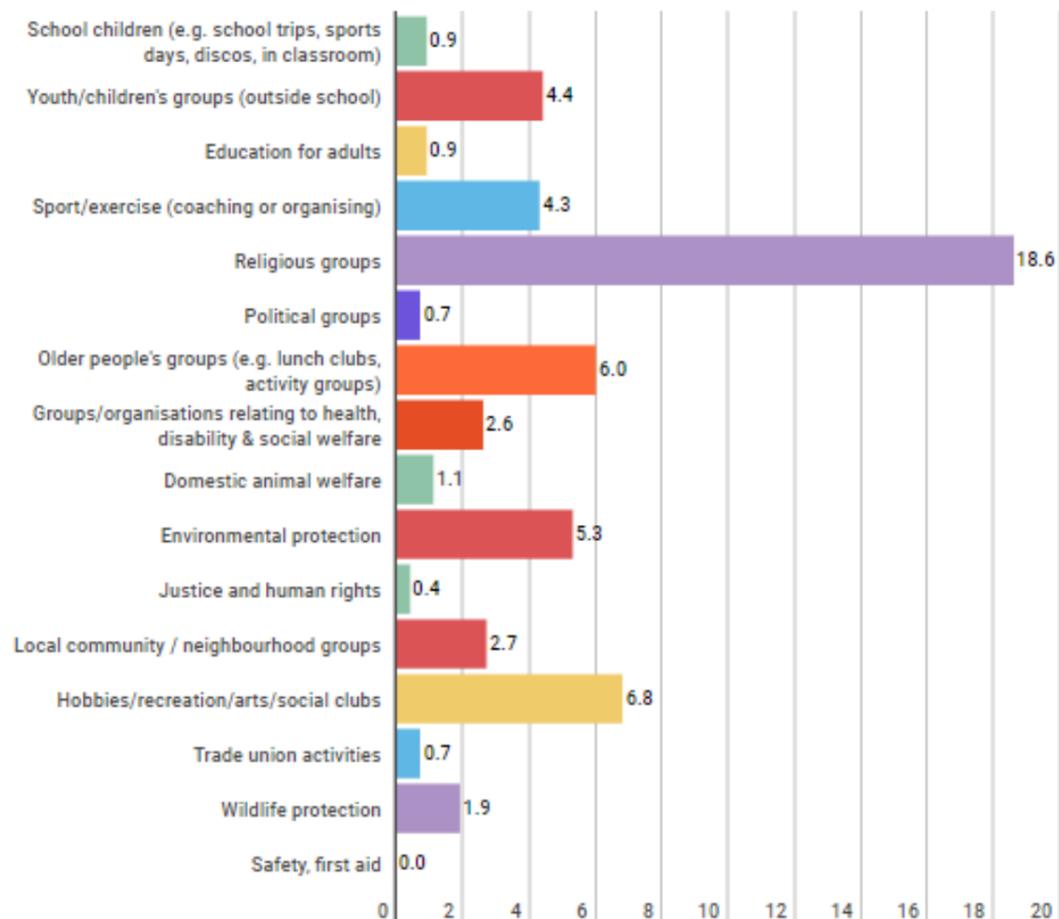


Figure 6.3 – Types of groups/organisations supported through unpaid (voluntary) help (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

Within Kirkcaldy Area, less than half of local people believe the Council does the best it can with money available, provides high quality services, and is good at letting people know about the kind of services that it provides.

Within the area, fewer people believe that the Council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their local neighbourhood, letting people know how well it is performing, designing its services around the needs of people who use them, or listening to local people's views before it takes decisions.

### Views on local Council and services it provides

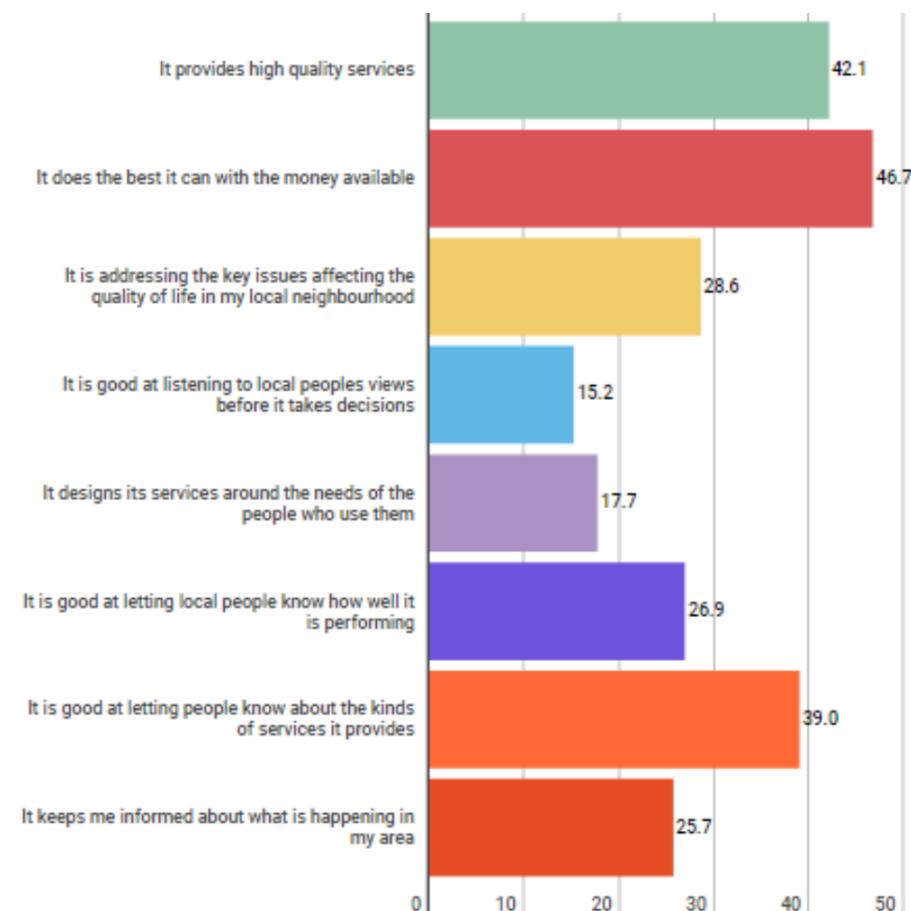


Figure 6.4 – Views on local Council and services it provides (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

# 7. Local Outcomes

Local community planning requires a good understanding of differences within and between neighbourhoods. The table below shows the overall pattern of outcomes for neighbourhoods in the area, and whether local neighbourhoods are improving over time.

It identifies how different neighbourhoods within the area are faring in relation to key life outcomes. This includes outcomes across early years, older people, safer and stronger communities, health and wellbeing, employment and economy.

Kirkcaldy Area has a particular focus on anti-poverty strategies and has identified four Neighbourhood Development Areas where inequalities are greatest and employment lowest: Gallatown area / Linktown and Inveriel / Templehall; Burntisland Castle area.

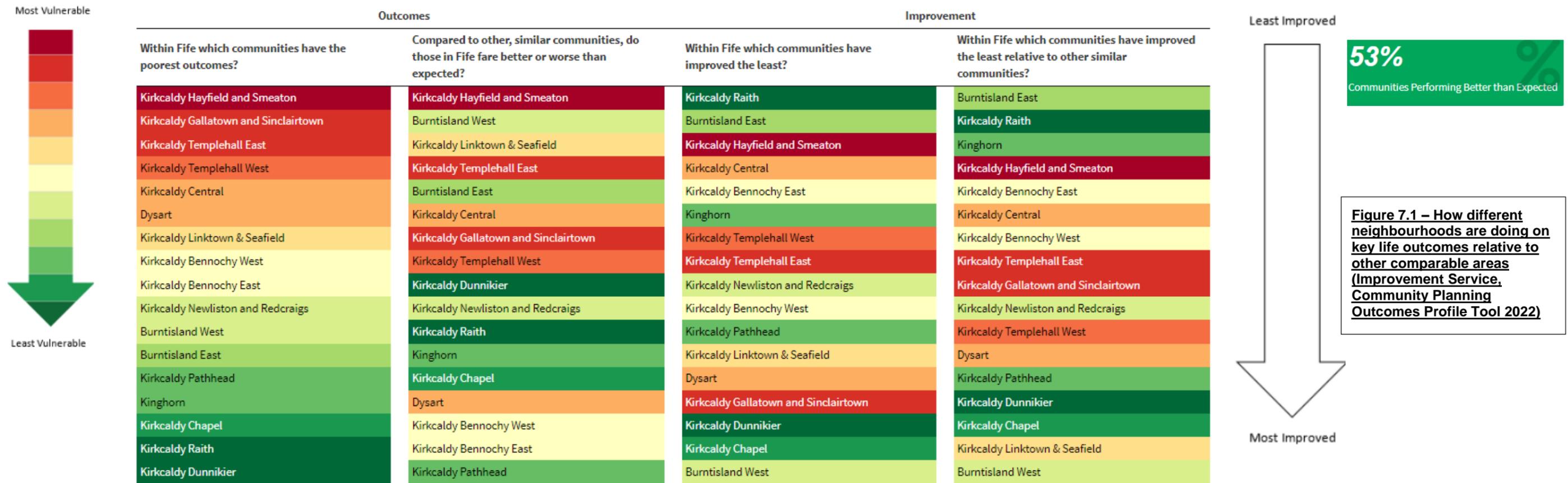
According to the Community Planning Outcome Profile Tool (Improvement Service, 2022), 53% of communities in Kirkcaldy Area are doing better than expected compared to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland, compared to 50% of communities for Fife as a whole.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Kirkcaldy Area continue to be Hayfield and Smeaton, Gallatown and Sinclairtown, and Templehall. With the exception of Hayfield and Smeaton, this is consistent with areas already identified as a priority for neighbourhood development and local action plans.

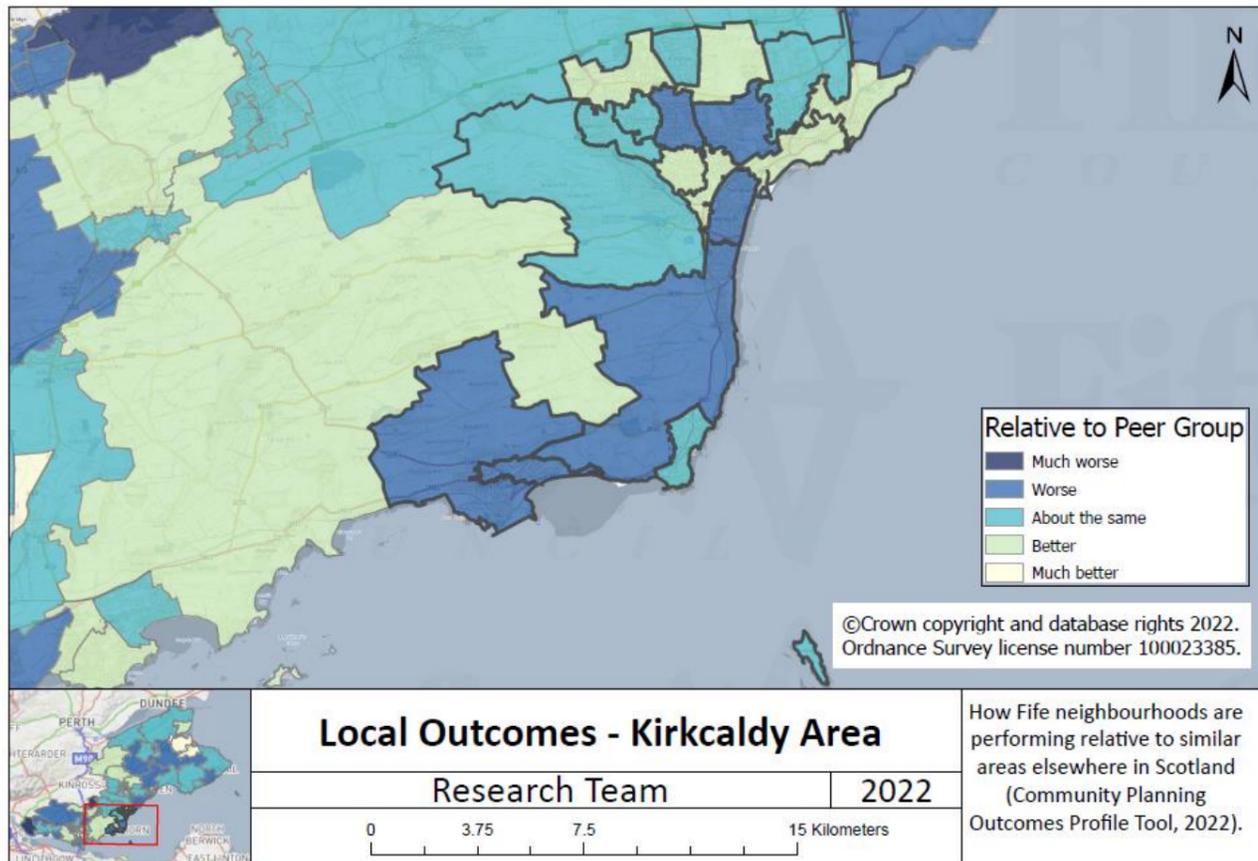
Areas with better life outcomes include the Dunnikier, Raith, and Chapel areas of Kirkcaldy.

Neighbourhoods showing the least improvement in life outcomes include Raith, Burntisland East, and Hayfield and Smeaton. The greatest improvement in life outcomes is seen in Burntisland West, and the Chapel and Dunnikier areas of Kirkcaldy.

Burntisland West and Linktown and Seafiel are showing greater improvement than comparable neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland, while Burntisland East, and the Raith area of Kirkcaldy are improving the least compared to other similar neighbourhoods.

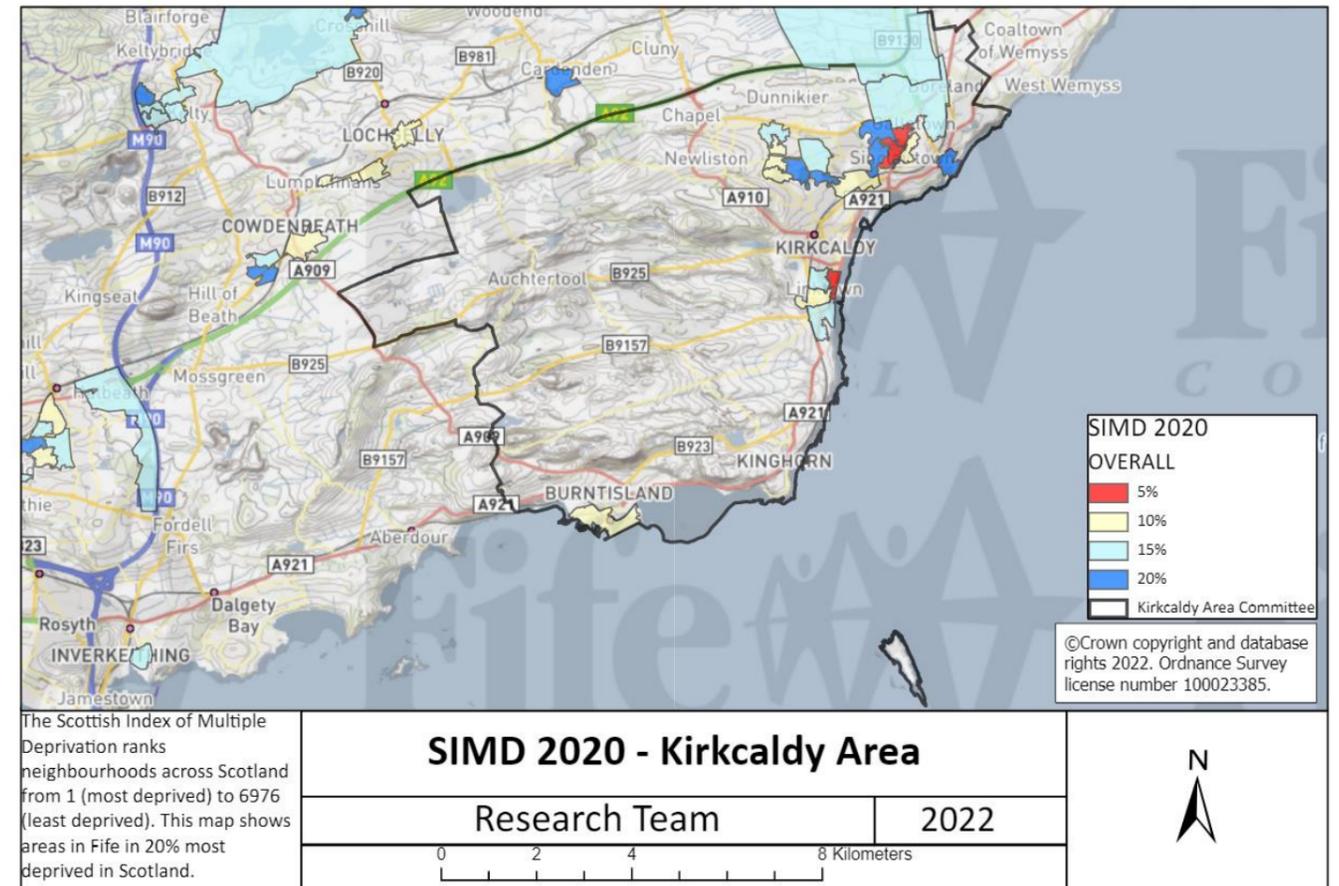


The map below (Figure 7.2) shows how local outcomes for neighbourhoods within the Area compare to other similar types of communities elsewhere in Scotland. It is a mixed picture for Kirkcaldy Area with some areas performing better than other similar communities in terms of local outcomes (including Pathhead, Dysart, Bennochy, and Chapel), and other areas doing less well compared to other similar types of neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland (including Hayfield and Smeaton, Linktown and Burntisland).

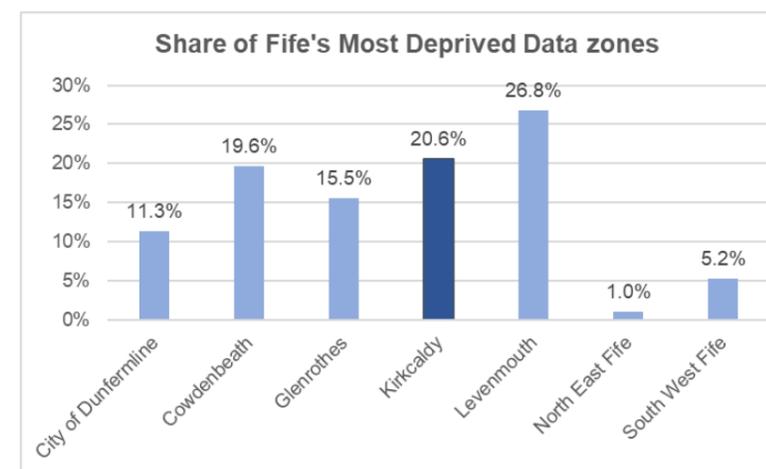


**Figure 7.2 – How neighbourhoods are performing relative to similar areas elsewhere in Scotland (Community Planning Outcomes Profile 2022)**

Kirkcaldy Area is among the most deprived areas of Fife, with the majority of Fife’s most deprived areas continue to be concentrated in Mid Fife, across the Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes areas. 20 of 80 data zones in the area feature in the 20% most deprived for Scotland (SIMD 2020), accounting for one in five of Fife’s deprived neighbourhoods in the Kirkcaldy Area (see Figure 7.4).



**Figure 7.3 – Map highlighting the 5, 10, 15 and 20% most deprived datazones in Area, SIMD 2020**

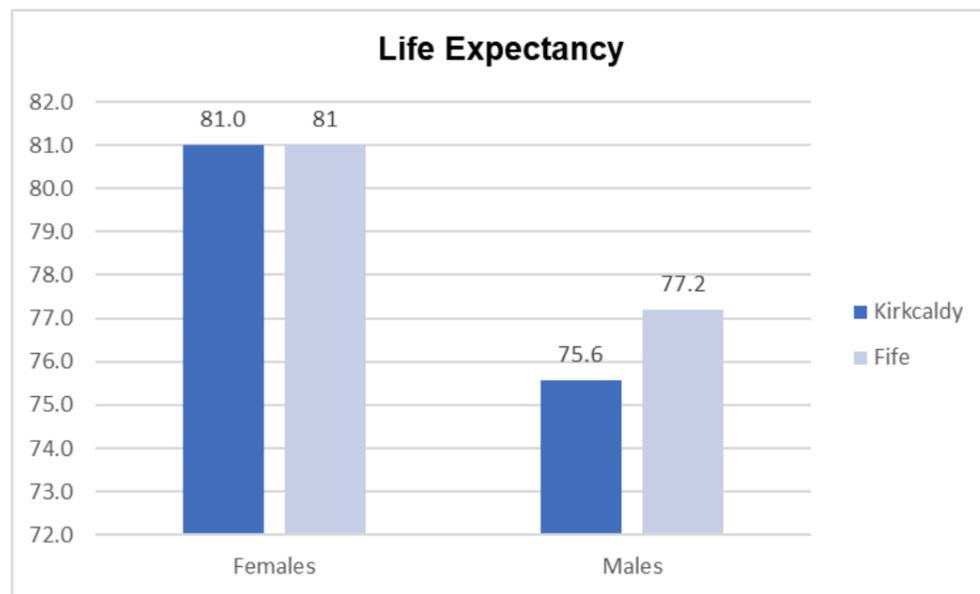


**Figure 7.4 – Area share of Fife’s most deprived datazones, SIMD 2020**  
See [SIMD-2020v2-Focus-on-Kirkcaldy.pdf](https://know.fife.scot/SIMD-2020v2-Focus-on-Kirkcaldy.pdf) (<https://know.fife.scot>)

# 8. Horizons

It is nearly impossible to predict the future, however it is possible to identify challenges which are already on the horizon. While change is always constant, the extent of uncertainty that Fife's communities will need to face in the coming years is unlike anything that has been seen for several decades. The impact of national and international events – such as the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the restrictions and changes in the movement of goods and people resulting from Brexit - will continue to be felt at a very local level impacting on issues such as poverty, health inequality, the environment and the economy.

The health and wellbeing of any community is an important strategic priority. Following many years of continual increases in life expectancy, the number of years that people are expected to live is beginning to level off, and in some of Fife's poorer areas, decrease. Healthy life expectancy (the number of years a person can expect to live in good health) is also reducing in many areas across Fife. This has major negative implications for people's quality of life. While much attention has been placed on the immediate and short-term implications of coronavirus and how it affects the population, this is also expected to impact on people's health and wellbeing outcomes in the longer-term, owing to delays in seeking or providing health services.



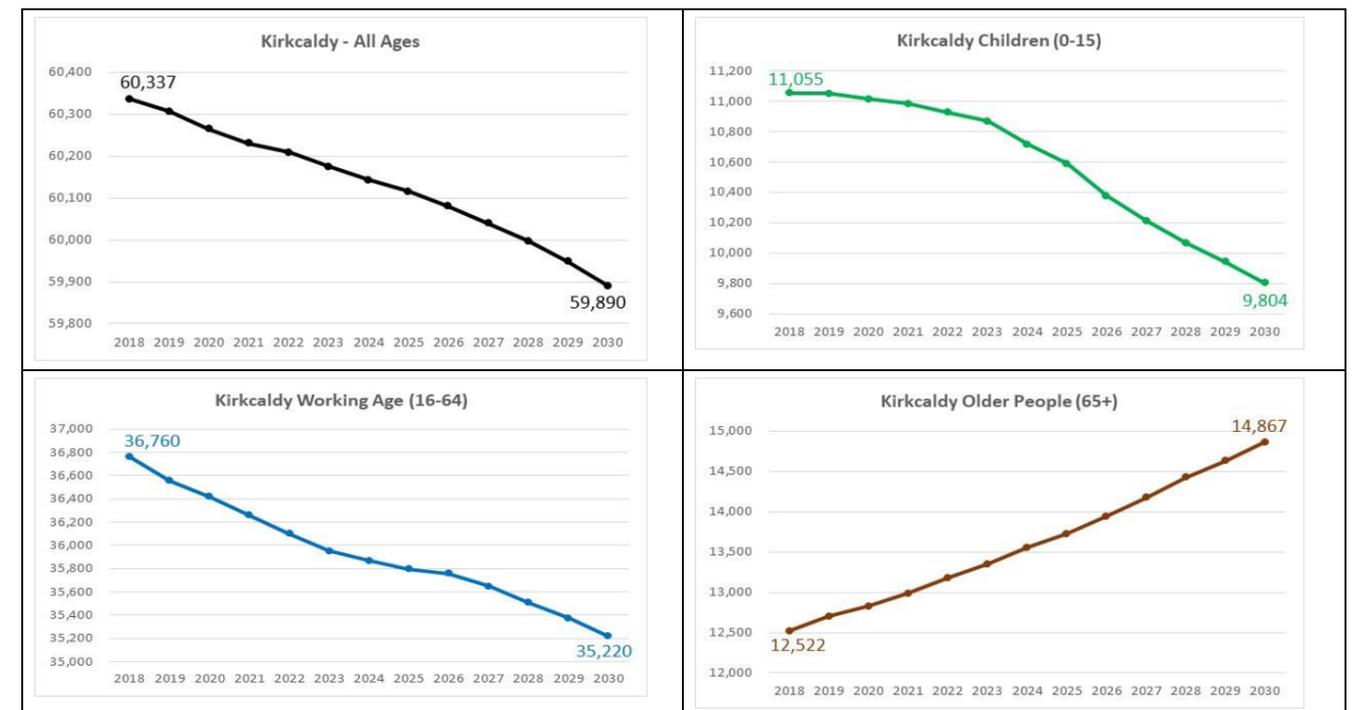
**Figure 8.1 – Life Expectancy at birth for males and females (2016-2020) (Source: ScotPHO)**

The most fundamental element of any area's make-up is its people, and so it is crucial that there is a good understanding of what that population looks like and how it is likely to change in the future. Kirkcaldy Area, like Fife, has seen its population grow for several decades, however, over the next 10 years Kirkcaldy's population is estimated to reduce in size, and after 2030, it is expected to reduce at a faster pace. Although Kirkcaldy's population is expected to reduce in future years, it will see less of a change than the other six areas in Fife.

Kirkcaldy's overall population is projected to decrease by around 450 people (-0.7%) by 2030, however, not all Wards are predicted to see a reduction, with Kirkcaldy East Ward projected to increase in population by 1,250 (8%), and Kirkcaldy Central Ward to see the largest decrease of around -1,100 (-0.8%).

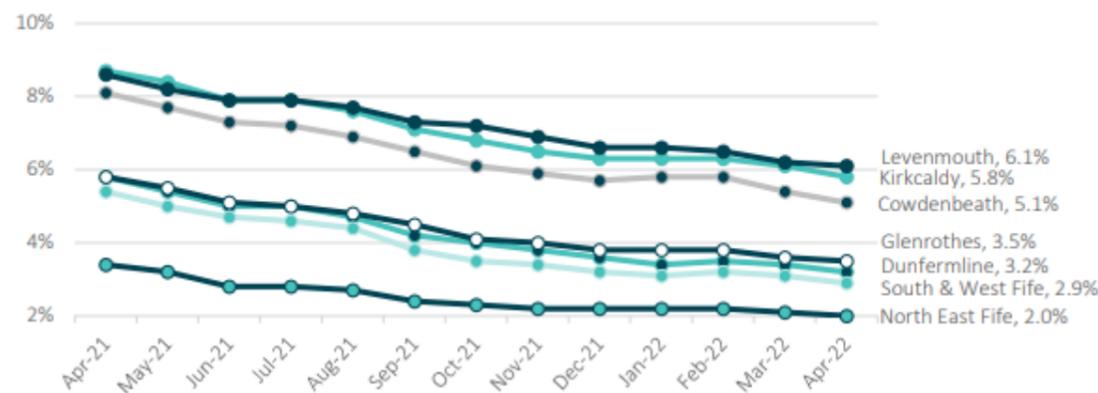
Kirkcaldy's overall population reduction is mainly due to a reduction in the numbers of Children and Working Ages, with Working Age groups showing the largest decrease in numbers of -1,540 (-4%), while Children will decrease by -1,251 (-11%). Although the reduction in child numbers is not as high as for working ages, the proportion of children that will reduce in the Kirkcaldy Area is nearly three times that of Working Ages. To off-set the reduction in population for children and working ages, older people are expected to increase in number by 2,345 (19%) by 2030, and for this proportion to increase after this time.

Three of the four Kirkcaldy Wards will show a reduction in both children and working age numbers, while Kirkcaldy East will see a very slight increase for children and a modest increase in working ages. All four Kirkcaldy Wards will see an increase in older people numbers, with the largest increase in Burntisland Kinghorn & Kirkcaldy West, increasing by 912 (28%).



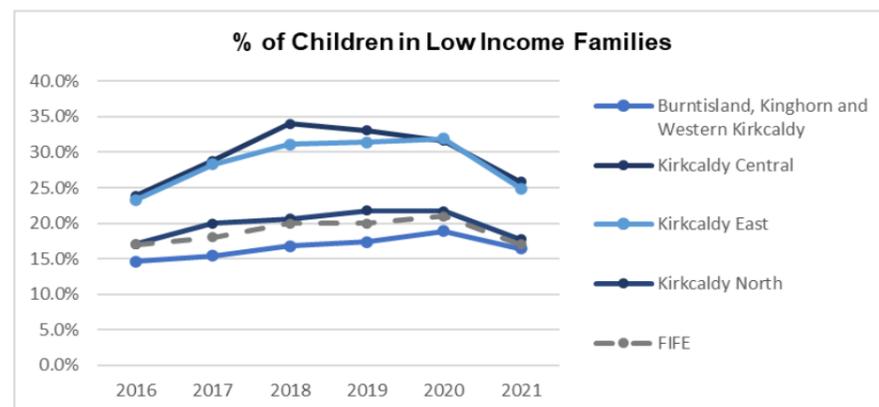
**Figure 8.2 – Projected change in population of the area over the period 2018 to 2030 (Fife Council Research)**

While much of the coronavirus pandemic has heavily influenced people’s health, and their broader wellbeing, it has also had a major impact on people’s jobs, and businesses and industries, with many facing a much less certain future than even a few years ago. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of businesses fell in all parts of Fife and whilst claimant rates have now returned to pre-pandemic levels in some parts of Fife, employment rates are still generally lower than in 2019, and most areas have seen an increase in the number of people who are economic inactive. The pandemic has also accelerated changes in the ways in which people work and their working lives, with much more emphasis on working from home and other hybrid models of work. The full implications of this new style of working life may have many benefits, but may also create some unforeseen issues, and many businesses and organisations will need time in which to adapt and adjust to this new environment.



**Figure 8.3 – Claimant Rate by Area Committee (Source: Monthly Economic Update, April 2022)**

The current rise in living costs that people are experiencing for everyday goods and services is an example of how easily local people’s lives can be impacted by global events in a relatively short period of time. Levels of poverty were increasing before the pandemic, with rates of child poverty in Kirkcaldy Central and East being well above Fife. Now high levels of inflation and substantial increases in the cost of living for basic necessities, such as food and fuel, are adding to the pressures felt by individual households. It is unclear when this situation will stabilise, and how this will impact on widening inequalities within Fife’s communities.



**Figure 8.4 – Children in low income families by Ward (Source: Department of Work and Pensions)**

There is a need to anticipate and plan for the more pressing implications of climate change and how this will affect people’s lives, particularly in the areas of Adaptation and Community priorities:

Climate Fife Theme	Classification
Adaptation	Critical
Energy Consumption	High
Transport Consumption	High
SIMD	High
Community priorities	Critical

**Figure 8.5 – Area Summary by Climate Fife Theme (Source: Climate Change and Zero Waste Team)**

As with many parts of Fife, the Area’s built assets, including its buildings and property, are not resilient or easily adapted to increased surface water, rainfall or storm surges. In some cases, the buildings’ construction may not be sufficient, for example, old or unsuitable gutters, and their location may suffer from poor performing drainage systems and sewer infrastructure. Many homes, premises and other buildings, are not resilient to high temperatures. Due to the construction of these buildings, it would be difficult or costly to install measures that would alleviate excessive heat, or provide other facilitation that would allow them to be cooled.

Kirkcaldy also has high rates of challenging home types, including older properties, listed or restricted buildings status, and non-traditional properties, that make energy efficiency improvements expensive or prohibited. An investment portfolio blending public and private investment will be essential for homes of all tenures and non-domestic buildings, to reduce energy demand and decarbonise remaining energy consumption. There will need to be a significant increase in the pace and scale of progress on transition of buildings to decarbonise energy required if we are to meet new building criteria and the Scottish Government’s targets. This will be hampered to some extent by a lack of sufficient skills and suitable supplies. The cost of energy transition will be significant against existing income and spend opportunities across the area, and large-scale improvement initiatives will be needed as small-scale improvements tend to be less cost effective in the long run. In the short-term, there is likely to be significant increase in fuel poverty due to increasing energy prices.

Given the location of the Kirkcaldy area, it has a large extent of its boundary next to coastal areas, that are classified as high exposure to coastal flooding and erosion. Kirkcaldy Area has a number of high socioeconomic flood vulnerability areas. This involves a number of areas which are not only prone to physical flooding, but the people that live there, mainly in areas of multiple deprivation (SIMD), are also the most vulnerable to these episodes of flooding. People living in SIMD areas are the least likely to be able to cope and are less resilient than more affluent areas in dealing with future repeat episodes of flooding. Other flooding infrastructure problems include the area’s cycle networks, particularly those used for commuting, many of which are located in high flood risk areas.

In terms of transport and infrastructure, Kirkcaldy Area benefits from good rail access but with improvements to the rail infrastructure, for example the electrification of the Fife Circle, a reduction in frequency and availability may be an issue going forward. As with other areas in Fife, Kirkcaldy will need to decarbonise its various forms of transport including private and public methods and to increase options and facilities for walking and cycling. Fife is well placed to take advantage of more renewable energy generation in the form of Solar farms, and Kirkcaldy’s south-facing coastline is in a prime location to exploit this opportunity.