

“Pause, Take Stock and Reconsider”

Kirkcaldy
A Research Report
For
Fife Council



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1. Introduction

This report is an inquiry into experiences of Covid 19 for residents, including vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Kirkcaldy in Fife, Scotland. The study was commissioned by the Team Leader (Community Development), Julie Dickson for the Communities and Neighbourhood Directorate in Fife Council, Fife, Scotland, in order to assist with planning for the Community Team. The title of the report, “**Pause, Take Stock and Reconsider,**” is a quotation from a Community group respondent who saw the need for pause and reflection, as a consequence of the Coronavirus. It also constitutes one of the recommendations of this report and represents the spirit that underpins the consultation of residents concerning the impact of Covid 19.

Fife Council has established seven area committees, based upon recognised groupings of the 22 wards. The Area Committee structure reinforces the Council’s commitment to localised decision making, in addressing the differing needs of the communities. The Kirkcaldy area, which stretches from Dysart to Burntisland and includes Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn, and Auchtertool, is served by Fife Council’s Kirkcaldy Area Committee. Kirkcaldy has a population of 60,337. The Local Community Plan describes it as home to many desirable natural assets, including a beautiful coastline, well-maintained parks, coastal walks and historic attractions. Known worldwide as the birthplace of Adam Smith, the area has a rich cultural and manufacturing heritage, while impressive theatre, gallery and museum facilities offer a range of events and attractions.

Kirkcaldy is a town and former royal burgh in Fife, on the East coast of Scotland. It is about 11.6 miles (19 km) north of Edinburgh and 27.6 miles (44 km) South-Southwest of Dundee. The town is Fife's second-largest settlement and the 12th most populous settlement in Scotland. Kirkcaldy has long been nicknamed the Lang Toun in reference to the early town's 0.9-mile (1.4 km) main street, as indicated on maps from the 16th and 17th centuries. The street reaches a length of nearly 4 miles (6.4 km), connecting the burgh to the neighbouring settlements

The Local Plan describes challenges facing the Kirkcaldy areas. Kirkcaldy has a mixed population, but poverty and inequality remain a pressing challenge, with concern around the continuing impact of welfare reform. Challenges the Council seeks to address:

- The increase in the number of people needing support with debilitating mental health and the apparent links to poverty and social isolation.
- Creating a culture where consistent and high-quality opportunities stimulate active participation in decision making processes which impact local neighbourhoods and communities.
- A significant new housing development in Kirkcaldy East - Kingdom Park may present challenges for the provision of health care facilities.
- The changing nature of training and employment will present a challenge in ensuring that no resident or group is left behind, particularly with the advancement of new technology.
- Children and young people are not all thriving as well as they could be, with 1 in 5 living in poverty.
- There is a need to increase opportunities for people to develop their employability

The Scottish Government launched its latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) – SIMD20 – on 28 January 2020. SIMD is a tool for identifying the places in Scotland where people are experiencing disadvantage across different aspects of their lives. It is a relative measure of deprivation, ranking data zones across Scotland from 1 (most deprived) to 6976 (least deprived). The majority of Fife’s most deprived areas continue to be concentrated in Mid Fife, across the Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes areas.

The period in which this study was undertaken has been a time of upheaval and trouble for most people in Scotland and a very challenging time for governments at all levels. This research was undertaken post the initial Covid 19 lockdown and just as a second round of measures to prevent the virus spreading was being implemented. The report was written in the midst of what is known as the ‘second wave of the virus.’ The study was, of necessity, undertaken in a compressed timescale to ensure the results could be used to inform decision making post-lockdown, to support people in complex and difficult times. The research is, both robust and authentic, with the voice of people from Kirkcaldy; and will no doubt ring true with others who work in Covid 19 affected communities in Fife and Scotland.

Programmes for the communities, which are the subject of this report, are provided by the Council in partnership with the third sector. This research was commissioned to assist the existing partnership groups in Kirkcaldy to plan delivery of community services across the area. Community work in Scotland has a strong tradition of community development; youth work; second chance education; literacy and numeracy; and adult learning programmes, which include the arts, for example; employment programmes; life skills; and more recently ESOL. This is the working and understandable definition of Community Learning and Development (CLD) work used for this study.

At national level, the Scottish Government emphasises the significance of adult learning to its agenda for social justice, as outlined in its ‘Statement of Ambition’, which is currently being updated. Programmes of local government adult learning are regularly reviewed by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Community work is also included in the profile of Community Empowerment Plans; plans which are required through Scottish Government legislation. Accordingly, CLD work has a strong policy and social presence in Scottish politics at local and national levels. It is closely linked to community development, adult learning and youth work services in particular.

The Scottish Government in analysing responses to the consultation, “A Connected Scotland,” has drafted a strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness, “People, Communities and Places” (2018). It refers to the need for empowering communities and that local authorities should take a leadership role in facilitating social connectedness. Missing is an indication of exactly how this empowerment process should be achieved.

2. The Researcher

Professor (Emerita) Karen McArdle, University of Aberdeen, who has directed and implemented the study, which is the subject of this report, has more than 30 years’ experience of working in the community conducting research, in Scotland and Australia, and has taught research methods in community development contexts for more than 20 of these years. She is the author of text books on both the impact of community learning and development and research methods; most recently “*The impact of Community Work: How to Gather Evidence* (2020, Policy Press).” She has lived in Fife for three years, and has worked there in the past and knows the Fife area quite well.

3. Background

The study, which is the subject of this report, sought to explore the experiences of disadvantaged people, in particular, during the lockdown period of Covid 19. We anticipated

previous disadvantage would have been exacerbated by the pandemic and we sought to look to the future to identify needs that would need to be met post-lockdown. We sought to speak to those residents in particular, whose voices might be seldom heard. The Covid 19 pandemic, it is argued, “*exposes and amplifies inequalities in society*” and “*health inequalities tell us about inequalities in society,*” (Marmot, 2020).

This study sought to explore the particular impact of COVID 19, using Narrative Inquiry to consider the experience of Covid 19, focusing 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 research required the direct participation of the staff from Community Teams to manage the particular demands of interviewing significantly vulnerable people. The community learning and development (CLD) staff were well able to manage the difficult conversations that emerged from the research. Staff were trained over 2 days in Narrative Inquiry and the ethical requirements of the research. Thanks are due to the staff who undertook these interviews and to the residents of Kirkcaldy who were so generous with their opinions and their time.

The sample, that was chosen, as the focus of the study, was a sample of people experiencing some form of disadvantage and vulnerability because of Covid 19. In order to find these people, who are seldom heard, we chose to interview people, who had had food boxes from the Council; or who had accessed other forms of Council support during Covid 19 lockdown. This was considered to be a good indicator of experience of need and difficulty. In some cases, these people were already known to community learning and development staff.

We interviewed 32 people with a good spread of age and circumstances, such as being alone, being a couple, a young person, a single parent or a family with children and both men and women. We reached saturation point with the data at this number and could have interviewed many more people, but time and the urgency of the situation did not allow for this. The sample was biased in favour of women, which may have been, because they were the ones who would traditionally seek food for the family, so had used food banks, a source for our sample.

We chose to use narrative inquiry, as the best means of finding out about the complex and interrelated issues that affect people’s lives. Narrative inquiry seeks rich, in-depth case studies, so does not require a large sample, as it does not seek to be representative of a population. Issues which emerge, however, may well be transferable to other people’s contexts. A person is not comparable with another person but, just as stars are all different but shine with the same light, so narrative inquiry case studies may be viewed as a constellation, with similarities between people being the shining light. We wanted to get a broad view of the issues present in Kirkcaldy, so chose to have a larger sample than that usually required for Narrative Inquiry studies. Small samples of single digits are usually required for case study research of this kind.

We chose to use Narrative Inquiry, because of its accessibility and because it would allow respondents to frame the issues that were discussed in their own terms. It is truly starting from silence. We do not predispose discussion of particular topics; rather the methodology allows the respondent to determine how the conversation is framed and its content. As we also had themes we wished to discuss, the interviews were in two parts, with the opportunity for narrative in the first part and closer questioning in the second part, for any topics not yet covered in the narrative inquiry.

Interviews were, in the main, recorded and were partially transcribed by Professor McArdle, who analysed and interpreted the data using coding for thematic and discourse analysis. Interviewers provided reflections on the process to assist with analysis and Professor McArdle interviewed a sample of community organisations in the Kirkcaldy area. This data provided the framework for interpretation of the residents' data, providing a professional, volunteering and local view of the impact of Covid 19 and also triangulated the data.

Ethical training was provided for interviewers, who promised respondents confidentiality and that nobody other than the interviewer and Senior Researcher would hear the recordings. All recordings were password protected. Careful explanations of the research were provided to ensure informed consent. As a part of the population was vulnerable, Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff were well able, and did choose when, to stop interviews if respondents became distressed and these staff were able to provide and did provide guidance and advice of sources of support for issues raised. The interviews were handled sensitively and interviewers actively sought to provide positive assistance to people where need was expressed.

Many of the interviews lasted longer than the half hour expected and were seemingly cathartic for the respondents, who appeared to welcome the opportunity to discuss troubling issues with a sympathetic listener. Accordingly, the research is considered to be both robust and authentic, as a product of the rich data secured by the community workers.

The sample, though small, was very strong for Narrative Inquiry and provided in-depth and rich case studies of the interrelated and multifaceted problems that vulnerable people face in their lives. The interviews were highly authentic and trustworthy and provide an overview of the character of complex issues individuals face in Kirkcaldy in the pandemic and an insight into its likely impact post-lockdown. Narrative Inquiry is particularly interesting, as the respondents themselves determine the topics discussed. The agenda is set by the interviewee and there is no chance of leading the conversation to a Fife Council agenda. The views expressed in this report were the veritable opinions of the residents of the areas.

Interviews were also held with representatives of third sector groups to assist with framing the interpretation of the data, using their local knowledge and experience of service provision during the pandemic. Interviewees came from Fife Voluntary Action, Kirkcaldy Food Bank, Greener Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn Community Council.

Interview schedules outlining the questions used are included as Appendices A, B.

4. Findings - Residents

It is characteristic of Narrative Inquiry to provide longer and more detailed quotations and this has been done here. It serves to show how themes are interrelated and to give a perspective on a whole life. The findings are presented in some detail to provide the reader with a flavour of the kinds of issues raised.

The quotations in this section, have been selected to show the range and frequency of ideas. We have indicated the sex, age and dwelling of the individuals quoted where these

were available. Where necessary details have been omitted to prevent identification of individuals. Where these details were not available, a designation such as single mother or older man is given to provide more demographic information.

4.1 Mood during Covid 19

People's mood during lockdown was complex, with competing emotions but overwhelmingly negative, as the quotations below illustrate. They show the sources of people's disquiet, coming from a range of challenges, such as isolation in particular and anxiety about catching the virus. Other similar research undertaken by Professor McArdle concerning Covid 19, has shown mental health issues but the issue of isolation was particularly strong in Kirkcaldy. Some people did however seek to express their resilience, trying to shine at least some positive light on their experience.

"It's a caravan I stay in and I was shielding. Just myself on my own. But first it was okay I thought, oh well I'm getting a wee break, without working and that but ehm, but after that it got kind of like, well you weren't really seeing people. At that time at the site, there wasn't very many people here, but I was able to go out on the verandah and of course you were able to go for a wee walk. At first, I wasn't keen on going out walking, I think everybody was a wee bit like this at the start. But eventually I did go out and take a walk around the site. . . it was a few weeks anyway before I was happy to go for a walk. Do you know when I first went out at the start there was hardly anybody, you know, It was really, really quiet. When I was sometimes out on the verandah, I'd maybe see a couple of folk walking past and just say hello; there was never any big conversations or anything." (Woman, 56, Kinghorn)

Life before the virus was a bit better. . . It's still a bit hard, I can't see much folk. . . " (Woman, 17, Kirkcaldy)

You know I have never been in lockdown because when I got . . . I don't touch anything I keep a long distance if I see anyone, two metres distance, a crocodile as a minimum. And I should be in the Guinness Records, because last time when I got this cold it was in 1994 . . . No, no, no, no, no, I was not shielding. I go only to my partner and with the dog of course. And when we finish the High Street, we take the prom on the other side. Only for the dog, of course, if it was for me I'd be at home all the time. Of course, I need to breathe fresh air to see the people all my life but of course keeping the distance respecting the rules." (Man, 59, Kirkcaldy)

"At first it was just a nightmare going to Aldi's and getting shopping there. Wi' like folk nicking all the food. Being greedy and that, but apart from that he's been alright wi' us, we coped really. We keep to ourselves generally; we only go out when we have to. . . If we do go out it's not in public. We like to do in the woods and explore cemeteries. We're always away from the public anyway . . . I do witchcraft and all, an' a lot of my work is outside in graveyards. I only do witchcraft for my own personal use, but if anybody else wants it or my family." (Woman, 37, Burntisland)

"I'm unemployed and on Universal Credit . . . I'm all alone. I've lived alone for just over the last 3 1/2 years . . . I was due to start a job in Edinburgh I had a work trial. But I got a cold and people don't like to

see it in the kitchen, coughing and sneezing. However, you phone off sick 'I've got a cold'. 'Oh it's a cold you can still come in.' So, because it was scaremongering and everybody's got symptoms, I took two weeks off work, isolation. But I wasn't getting paid. It was quite stressful and then there was lockdown and I was under pressure, I nearly hit the roof. . . It was stressful but I haven't been in work since November last year. It was a little bit easier, but I was so frustrated with not being able to get to work.

"There were a lot of negatives, but I had to stay positive it was lucky if you got social media. But like a lot of people I put on weight. . . It was frustrating because nobody knew what was going on. And how to deal with stuff and the paranoia.

. . . I became a bit of a hermit. I barely left the house got in a bad way getting up late. . . ." (Man, 46, Kirkcaldy)

"When I phoned the surgery about my condition, they said I should get a letter about it but I never got the letter. And I should be shielding anyway that's what they said on the phone, when I phoned them. It would be the end of March that I've found themselves wondering why I wasn't getting anything through the post. And that's when I phoned the doctors. . . . The condition I had was bad. I didn't know what was causing it but it was getting worse . . . The experience between us all was, we didn't know what to do. It was change as well because S lost her job in February. And moved moved over into Universal Credit That was hard, there was hardship, it was very, very . . she was alone couldn't buy anything. We didn't know what to do we didn't know what to do it was really hard.

My wife, what with losing her job and her mother dying, these things have come into her mind and her doctor's given her tablets. . . She's been for help and that, but she thinks she can speak to me better than she can speak to them. The doctor gives her a phone now and then for her tablets and to ask her how she is." (Man, 56, Burntisland)

"I've got anxiety and depression I felt quite, desperation, but I coped with it. I'm going to see the doctor shortly. I think it's going to last 'cos it's kicked in again. It's getting worse. I stopped drinking during lockdown." (Man, 61, Kirkcaldy)

"I was scared, very scared. Well death, death we were cheating every day. I felt there was something really bad going on. I was really well worried about mesel. . . I was by mesel so I was spending three or four weeks at a time in the house. . . Ah it was terrible, terrible, terrible. I suffer from COPD and PTSD and so I went to the doctor's. For depression and that, eh. Nobody came near because we dinnae live near anybody else." (Man, 62, Kirkcaldy)

"I was in lockdown with my husband and my three kids. . . We were self isolating at the beginning 'cause you don't have that much information on it and my kids had been unwell three of them back to back. For about 3 or 4 weeks. And then again, just recently, when the school started. We had to go back into self isolation again 'cause my daughter had symptoms. I mean my son, sorry. . . . It's been hellish.

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)

4.2 Relationships

Apart from being part of the general mood of respondents, relationships have been particularly difficult during lockdown for many people, exacerbated by proximity and, contrastingly, by the aforementioned isolation.

“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 was nae like every week it was like every fortnight . . . ”

“ . . . I used my phone but I've not got a big contract I've only got so many gigabytes. I didn't have a lot of that so that went doon quick, ken, because we're on FaceTime and things like that. . . . It would go away wi' it quite quickly. There were a couple of times when I had bought a little bit more, but you cannae afford to do that.” (Woman, 56, Kinghorn)

“I was in lockdown for a couple of weeks, just a couple of weeks. With my mum and my dad. . . It was a bit boring . . . watching films . . . I was sleeping . . I phoned my grandad a lot.” (Woman, 17, Kirkcaldy)

“It (lockdown) was a bit stressful. It felt weird for me. Like at the weekend, I usually get a cupcake or something, and I usually get a sweetie or pizza or I usually get tomatoes. It didn't feel that good to be like stuck in the house. I did really want to go shopping in the car but like . . . “

[other people] they've probably still gone to work. Got on well and that. They've probably ended up getting a little bit bored maybe, doing up their living room or their kitchen . . . I'm sure Auntie N has done it because she's got different coloured couches now, and my Auntie S as well. . . They did it because they are that bored, and they got fed up.

We've got these counts in the playground, as one side for some and one side for others. Like the younger side, we're the first class that goes out and primary four goes out like on the other side. And we've got a teacher in our side as well as a teacher on the other side as well. It kind of feels OK 'cos we're getting used to it now. But the only thing is like we're not allowed to go inside like the porches, cause

we've got porches and we could not allowed to go in them we have to stay in the playground. . . . ”

“In lockdown it was my mom and my dad and my little brother. . . No, I don't get on with my wee brother I just hate him. . . I didn't go out with my friends, it was quite boring. I played my Xbox all day long. . . .I don't really have any friends. I just really turn my mic off and play. . . It was kind of easy the whole thing coz I just played my Xbox. . . . it made me feel quite sad and quite lonely. . . Very much the same before the virus. I used to just sit and eat and play My Xbox.” (Teenager, Boy, Kirkcaldy)

“You know it's not a problem for me if the government forces me to lockdown 'cause I have plenty to do at home. . . You know most of my clothes are made by myself, so I have no time to be worried.

Many of the elderly people are in panic I have a friend who is 80 years old and she is in panic . . . I have a telephone I'm in touch with everybody around the world. To be honest my life has not changed.” (Man, 59, Kirkcaldy)

“My daughters, as far as I know the oldest one's okay, but the wee one, she had relationship problems with the boyfriend, she's just not used to being in all the time.

I'm always just a loner you know all the people I grew up with went different ways. You dinnae see them any mair and, when you do see them, when you're oot in the toon and that, they're in jail or half of them are smack heads . . . I'm like 'wow I'm glad I pulled away from all of them' . . . My family say to me, 'you push yourself away.' but I just want to be in my own company and that, being alone and not being around people that's my choice. I've just been hurt too much in the past by my mum, eh. I never had a nice upbringing with her. My dad worked away from home and I put myself into care and that. I went through critical emotional abuse with my mum. I kept myself to myself for years and it all came out in . . . It's affected me but I'm not going to trust anyone. No, I just don't want to mix with anyone, eh. I'm just happy to be a loner.” (Woman, 37, Burntisland)

“My mother she's 84 She's on her own. Family are over in East Lothian, not in Fife. I like to go across every month and spend a few days with her, with my mum, Just to catch up and to see her . . . and that's what I miss the most. My family was here, but I missed my mother and my sisters. But my mum she was shielding she had her meals brought in every day. And that's what I miss the most.” (Man, 56 Burntisland)

“I was on my own . . . I was shielding. I've been shielding ever since really. I'm not saying I've never been out because that would be a lie but I'm saying I haven't been back to work since February. But I think I did quite well with my mental health and that and with my money. In the household it was just me and the help was there if you needed it. . I got food parcels. And that was really good. . .

. . . Oh and I've missed seeing other people definitely but there's so many gadgets now that you can keep in touch with them can't you? But I do miss the grandchildren because they . . . their ways, and the way they collect things. . . No I don't have any of those gadget things I have a mobile phone my daughter insisted I get one but I don't know how to use it. I'd rather talk to people face to face or on the phone. I suppose if I was on face to face virtual-wise I would enjoy that. I'm not technically minded. Really not, so it would be a waste of time and money." (Woman, 64 Kirkcaldy)

"Both of the kids were at home with me and it was just the 3 of us. The hardest bit was that they are quite different in age 8 and 17, so they really didn't want to do anything together. Or with me to be perfectly honest. Teenager was mostly on his Xbox and video calls, mostly mid afternoon, till through the night as it seems he and all his friends had turned night into day. The eight year old watched a lot of Disney plus, her grandparents bought her a year's subscription for her birthday, and when the internet was fine, all was good but that didn't last long. Sky were not working the same way as usual either so calling them was pointless. When I did I just held on for ages for nothing!

We had issues every single day and that just led to frustration and annoyance from the teenager! He has a punch bag in the garden and spent a lot of time out there punching away, skipping and tinkering with his push bike. He has ADHD and so has a short attention span and was always looking for something to do! He has recently come off his medication so was just adjusting to life with no meds and a routine, this really knocked him, and me, for six." (Woman, 41, Kirkcaldy)

"I was annoyed because I felt I couldn't get food. I was also annoyed with the fact I didn't see my family. That's when I've got older kids who don't stay with me . . . Myself and my kids in lockdown. My youngest is six and my oldest is seven. . . There were two feelings, one I felt relaxed and I knew where my kids were, beside me. Two, I was stressed in lockdown and the kids weren't going to school. The kids loved it, they thought it was perfect. They were beside me. No school. But once I discovered about Glow, I was doing the school work on that. The kids didn't enjoy that, but I wasn't letting them away with it because I didn't want them to fall behind. They weren't missing out on anything." (Woman, 35, Burntisland)

"Well my mum, she is shielding and so is my nephew and my sister; she lives with my mum just now and so they were really, really struggling. My mum's mental health was really bad. I mean she's turned into like, we're kind of an affectionate family but she's turned into she's changed so much she's like, actually I'm scared for the future for her. I feel she's got so caught up in what might happen she's actually living her life on a daily basis. And then my sister's kids are so active that she's got to let her oldest one go out and have a social life. But she's constantly like troubled with the worry that he catches it, being that one or other is going to die. And he's got problems with his airways." (Woman, 35, Kirkcaldy)

4.3 Finances

Poverty was an issue for some people. In the main, financial insecurity was mentioned unprompted by people who were new to this challenge. Universal Credit was generally seen as problematical, not enough and the means of getting it were seemingly not straightforward.

“I was furloughed, so I 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)

“Well to be honest, in my case again, I behaved very well. I didn't have any reducing of my payments nothing, nothing. I can say I'm better because, now because, of the virus I have your (Community Team) help. So, the virus has been very, very generous with me. . . well my income comes from the job centre plus and I have my PIP as well. 5% for incapacity. But then I tell you, I know I manage my money very well; I have no problem.” (Man, 59, Kirkcaldy)

“The government doesn't give you enough money. I've got to survive on 20 pounds a month. 200 pounds goes on your rent. It's quite difficult. I've been a chef for 25 years now, till November last year. Then nothing happened. . . I was on an HND, so on an HND you don't qualify for a bursary. You get an allowance which is 200 pounds a month. Towards your rent as well. My rent is 400 pounds. . . I used the Scottish Welfare Fund a couple of times. It's an emergency situation but I've, you can't just use it every month. I've been borrowing money off people. I was at college three days a week and I was working four days a week so literally I was doing 7 day week. Work, college, work, college, work, college which isn't good for your mental health. I was severely stressed out.

Now I'm bankrupt my bank accounts being frozen . . . I've been in debt for quite a few years it's better for my mental health. That's all my debts, a five-figure sum, all cleared. Universal Credit can go in, but I can't access it until I get a new account. It's crazy.” (Man, 46, Kirkcaldy)

“We had to pay our rent on Universal Credit for four or five months and that was breaking us; that was really hard.” (Man, 56, Burntisland)

“I have my Universal Credit and I'm, I'm, I'm not sure that's fantastic but I had it every fortnight. I got that just before the lockdown happened. My Universal Credit was still monthly, but I was monthly to start off with then I changed it to fortnightly. And that was a lot easier. I'm pretty glad I did that, changed

the Universal Credit from monthly to fortnightly.” (Woman, 35, Burntisland)

4.4. Food

Whilst financial security may not have been seen as an issue by all people, reliance on food banks was a strong theme for people in Kirkcaldy.

“No, I never used the food banks during lockdown and that was because, in a way I still was getting paid. You don't need to do that, eh? I could still manage but obviously I wasn't paying for buses going back and forth, I hadn't been on a bus, so. 'Cause it's just myself, I can make dae with things just myself. You can just get something and make it last a few days. I'm good at that kind of thing so. It was only recently, ken, that I thought what am I going to do? Having somebody else to look after, you're responsible for somebody else you need to ensure that they are fed and clothed. It's okay for me saying 'Och! I'll really manage wi' that,' but a 6 year old is nae wanting the same soup for three days. . . .” (Woman, 56, Kinghorn)

“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)

“Well I'd recommend it to anyone. You need to not be too proud. I know there's a lot of people a lot worse off than me. However, there's a lot of people taking a loan off it. It's not a supermarket, these guys are volunteers I respect that. It's so friendly, it's nice to sit and talk with someone, they respect you. The only thing is I don't eat porridge but everything else wow I've got so much.” (Man, 46, Kirkcaldy)

“But the emergency food I wasn't very impressed with how I was treated. I felt as though I was begging for food, for the food. The experience other than that has been quite good . . . I don't think the girl involved had any experience with communication-wise, which left a lot to be desired when you're talking to people. You like to be spoken to quite nicely.” (Man, 56, Burntisland)

“If it wasn't what I normally have, I tried it. It was quite interesting seeing what was going in the pot every day. You know, what am I going to eat with this? And I quite liked it and it didn't really bother me that much. . . . And I'm not saying I didn't have help outside. I did. I had help from my daughter. She was also shielding but it was her husband and once a

week he did all the shopping for mum and dad and me if I needed anything.

I've used a food bank sometimes but not since lockdown. No don't get supermarket vouchers. I went in person to the food bank the bus stop's not far from there . . . er it makes me feel stupid. . . I do see people misuse it and then I've seen people going around selling stuff out of it." (Man, 61, Kirkcaldy)

"Food wise I did get a delivery, a box. Delivered to me once I don't really know who it was from. One of the charities like, eh? It was really touching. . . Somebody phoned me I don't know, I'm useless on the phone . . . after a while the box arrived. They came and delivered it, eh? Touching . . . I've no Internet access, I cannae work things like that. I've just got a phone." (Man, 62, Kirkcaldy)

"The kids are at home every day, saying 'I'm hungry I'm hungry.' They just need to wait. Space on the Asda delivery was just a nightmare. It's more expensive from the local shops than having to get to the supermarket. But you have to do what you do in these circumstances. I received a food box from the council, and that was helpful, as it kept me going for a few days." (Woman, 35, Burntisland)

4.5 Future

The interviewers asked about people's views of the future. The overwhelming mood was one of gloom about the future, but people did strive to see the positives, as the quotations below illustrate.

"if it goes on, I don't know, I think I have to be thankful I've got the beach beside me. But if you need to walk from the caravans, there's a wee path to the beach and you've got that wide, open space. I am thankful for that and the wee one he really likes the beach. Even if it was horrible weather, he'll (grandson) put his wellies on and come down. So, I know I probably won't be able to get out, maybe once a day and that or maybe if you were nae getting to see people less and stuff, you just have to make what you could have it eh? I'm very good at adapting I am good at that kind of thing. But obviously you do miss your family and that kind of thing. . . I have got a good family and I missed them; I do not really want to think about that.

". . . Well my electricity bill was a bit higher this time than I thought it should have been. In a way that's, but I've been in all the time. And the TVs been on constant. Music and you're boiling the kettle and stuff like that. But I thought February to March to now would be a bit cheaper, because I've not had on any heating. It's just been really warm and the sun just shines through the window, it's been really great. I could not understand why my bill was a bit dearer than, than the winter one when I did have heating on. I'd got myself a couple of they oil-filled heaters, just like taking the coldness off of the air.

I have been putting on the gas heaters 'cause we have got gas heating. You really go through them in the winter, you really go through them. That's why I got the electric heaters. The electric bill was £314 or something but then in the summer it was £384. I wonder why that was but there would be a wee bit of lap over. I'll have to work it out.” {CLD staff member tells her about Cosy Kingdom}. (Woman, 56, Kinghorn)

“Honestly when on lockdown, I prefer it that way, I don't see anyone. I'm not really a people-ey person. The only thing that would affect us is work; the two of us both want to get back into work. I mean I've worked all my days, since 14 year old. Now I'm trying to get back into work, before I had a couple of jobs in Kirkcaldy but after my three months they laid me off eh? So, it's been hard to get a job, and keeping it, eh.” (Woman, 37, Burntisland)

“If it happened again in the future, I don't think it could be a better experience I manage always the same, the same, although If we go into lockdown again it'll be just the same as it was before.” (Man, 56, Burntisland)

“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)

“I think I'm like going to get politically active if the virus continues. Because I don't like, I don't think the government is making the right choices for us. I've done my reading, I've done my research, I've looked at arguments, I've looked at all angles and, like I say, I'm not, but I genuinely feel that if this continues I'm going to have to start verbalising how I feel about it. Probably even, break some rules (laughs). I should nae say that but that's how I feel about it. I'm disgusted with watching; like I work with young people . . . So, like the kids I'm working with through the holidays you can tell that in fact, I know for a fact, that these children are genuinely suffering during lockdown. Emotionally, physically, poverty-wise . . . I work quite a lot with the younger kids as well, so affectionate, they were craving affection, to the point where it was so difficult to maintain distance with these kids. They wanted to be around adults that were giving the kind of attention that they wanted that they were obviously getting from schools and stuff like that. It makes me angry that, it makes me angry that these kids are being forgotten. I don't care what anybody says, there's not enough being done.” (Woman, 35, Kirkcaldy)

4.6 Future Services

Respondents were asked what services there should be in the future and who should provide them. People's ideas were quite clear about what could be provided and to a lesser

extent by whom, but there were no patterns emerging about services, other than a concern for mental health and well being.

"I think the people in Kirkcaldy have been very, very civilised, they respect the rules to wear face mask to any store . . . Sometimes the people abuse a little bit. Because I will go to you or Fife council with the evidence of what I really need and it's very easy to abuse 'cause it's for free, it's for free. No, we cannot abuse, no, no.

Of course, if I need something. I will go to the Fife council. Well I usually use the phone because the Town House is closed now. I know tons of people at the Fife Council and they are very friendly." (Man, 59, Kirkcaldy)

"I think there's need for more outdoors stuff. Yes, more outdoors . . . When we came here, we had rent arrears and they're (Housing) quick enough on our backs, but now when we need them, they're not here. The house is cold and it's nearly winter time; our health is more important than rent arrears, I think anyway. . ." (Woman, Burntisland, 37)

"I know there's Greener Kirkcaldy and I think that should be marketed more as it does good work. It's just word of mouth that I knew about it because people told me about it. To me that needs to be promoted more. . . It's just not everyone has Facebook and if there's adverts in local papers. The more people know the better.

"There's a fantastic thing going on in England. Obviously, you have to get someone experienced and qualified but there's a military experience to get you out in the open air. . . Very very healthy as well. There's a little beach there down by D (inaudible) Harbour. You know how busy the car park gets but there's nobody that sits down on the beach. I sat there for 2 hours and there be nobody passing me for two hours. . . Getting out and seeing people that's your therapy even if people don't realise it that's your therapy.

There's not a lot of stickers on the buses that's actually not a lot of people know the procedure on buses with Covid. After lockdown I gotta bus doon to Glasgow, every second seat, and people just don't know that. It's not their fault. . . More facts less propaganda and scaremongering." (Man, 46, Kirkcaldy)

"I think the council were brilliant! I do, I really do think they did a good job. I know that there's things that, they shut a lot of places down. I'm sure they paid a lot of people off because of the money but I still think they did a brilliant job. Yeah, I really do . . . Keeping the house warm is a worry because I've got the heating on all the time. I've had it on quite a few weeks now 'cause I feel the cold. And if you're out and about and going shopping and that you don't feel the cold as much as if you're in the house. . . i don't know where to get help. I'm retiring through medical grounds. I have tried, believe me. I have tried

to get some support, information. I can't get that I don't know where I'd go for help. Council tax I'm still paying council tax and I don't know whether I should be doing that or not . . . If I got money sent to me, it will be spent on electricity and gas. It would still go to keeping the house a bit warmer, you know." (Woman, 64, Kirkcaldy)

"Yes I need more money, the money we get it's benefits for a couple at 600 pounds per month. I think they should up that a wee bit. For a couple it's not enough money to live on. Supermarket vouchers would be helpful, I dare say. Food banks are really struggling. I don't like going to food bank, banks as I already said. I would go if I needed to go. Needs must." (Man, 61, Kirkcaldy)

"Well if you've got a query and you phone, It's a nightmare! The phone will ring and ring and ring and ring. And it will ring and ring and ring and ring. There's nobody answers it. It's so frustrating, I went doon one day thinking they were open. It was open but I never got in. The guy at the door gave me a piece of paper and a pen for my complaint. I put it through the main door of the letterbox in the Town House. But they did get back to us that day, which was very surprising. As I say it's no just me it's going all over the place actually. . . They could answer the phone and speak to people." (Man, 62, Kirkcaldy)

"Mental well being? I think there should be more support for access for the elderly to get support. Specially, the ones who are in care. Um I've got a lovely next-door neighbour her mother's in care. And she's not allowed in to visit her, whatsoever. So, I feel that's really bad on her (the mother), she has dementia and that's a major impact on her. She just doesn't understand why she can't see anybody.

I used the Family Help Fund when I needed somebody to speak to and they helped me find somebody to speak to they were fantastic. The response that I did get from them was fantastic.

Um I seeing the mental side of it. The mental side of trauma that people have been doing during lockdown; there's people out there that cannot go out 'cos they're still shielding . . . I personally would like to go and speak to them myself. I'm in a bit of a predicament myself at the moment but one day I can do that and go and help an elderly person. What we can do is leaflets, maybe posting through door to door and then they get advice." (Woman, 35, Burntisland)

"I called the number you gave me and I was really put off the guy was really judgmental. It was nae my imagination he was genuinely judgmental. He said 'could you no do this could you no do that?' I had to go into all these details and that and it made me anxious I know if I'm using a service I'm using it cause I'm using it. Genuinely. And He really didnae, didnae

make me feel good about that. He was like I'm gonna have to pass it on to another agency. . . .

We really need to be pushing like mental health support. Getting on top of it and understanding the needs these people have. Dealing with people like, yourself you know, they have no money. Needing they're needing equipment (IT). There needs to be money flung. The government needs to bring in the money I don't know what else they're doing. They manage to find money when it suits them. They need to do some equipment, doing some deals with companies about broadband. So folk are getting cheaper access if they're on benefits and that. There has to be a way round it, this can't continue people are dying. It's not all right, it's just disgusting. That and making sure we got ways of people nourishing themselves as well. You can use vouchers you can make sure they're not selling onto anybody.” (woman, 35, Kirkcaldy)

5. Findings - Community Groups

Representatives from Groups from the third sector were interviewed by Professor McArdle and asked about their services and perspectives on the local situation in the climate of Covid 19. A decision was taken to keep their responses as confidential as possible, as the groups were asked to comment on the Council and may be reliant on contributions to funding. Also, it meant the representatives could be frank in their opinions.

Groups were asked about their experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic.

“We do a lot of things around food insecurity; we complement the food bank. To take a more dignity principles approach, so we just launched a pantry project which is kind of a membership project with no stigma for anybody. But it is ultimately about tackling food insecurity and food poverty. A lot of the projects we do are on that overlap of development work, environmental, motivation for reducing waste energy use. It's about helping people who are experiencing disadvantage. We also do walking and cycling events, community development bringing people together, tackling social isolation. We run a community gardening project which has been on hold but normally that's a nice kind of outdoor activity and we do various other activities to bring people together.

“Yes, absolutely people from all different backgrounds and walks of life use our services. We see ourselves as trying to have something for everybody and wanting to engage with the whole community. It's really important to us that we are not seen as an organisation that's just working with vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Even though we're very keen to bring those people into our work. We have projects for elderly people and we have activities for kids as well.”

“Yes we've been swamped in the period April to June. We saw significant increase. . . What we saw was a very significant increase In April to June. 60% compared to April a year ago. And up to 66%

higher in June. Interestingly, a real tailing off from July to September. So, actually a change that more or less coincides with the strict lockdown having come to an end. I guess the concern we obviously have is what happens now? Furlough coming to an end, the improvements in Universal Credit that we're seeing, coming to an end as well. We're seeing a continuing lockdown and we wonder what will happen there. A particular aspect, just going behind the figures, was that. The big increase we saw was in family parcels. We distribute or we record the different kinds of parcels we give out. We give out singleton, a couple and a family. . . The big jump was in family parcels and then quite a big jump particularly in April for couples. Interestingly parcels with single people remained steady or going down over that period.”

“We have between 60 and 70 referring agencies to the food bank. . . We get all ages, adults of course, but we occasionally get a young homeless person from the place in Kirkcaldy. You know teenagers and occasionally get an under 16 in the care system but that's highly unusual. Over the last 18 months we were starting to see more elderly people coming. They were experiencing pension poverty.”

5.1 Challenges faced by the local community

We asked respondents how Covid 19 had affected the local community. Community groups were more likely to mention low income than residents and agreed social isolation was an important issue.

“We normally have a community building in the centre of Kirkcaldy that's open five days a week; that closed in March. And is reopening on Monday and, in fact there's been a big impact. A lot of our services have gone online . . . We've been no less busy because a lot of people are in financial crisis. Because we're willing and entrusted we've, we've had a lot of people calling us as the first point of contact You run out of money the two things that happen are food and fuel . . . We distributed over 7,000 meals since the beginning of lockdown.

Money issues and probably social isolation/mental health issues. To be honest is probably the two things. For the money issues there's almost two groups, people who are already having money issues people who are already hard up, and, in some cases, it's made it worse for them. In some cases, it's better for them 'cause we're spending money differently, aren't we? But then there's people who are newly financially vulnerable. I'm sure you're hearing this a lot, but there are a lot of people out there who are really on contracts or who are self-employed, the grey economy sort of cash in hand self-employed, where it's been devastating and there are people who've never had to ask for help before. There's suddenly a newly financially vulnerable, and that's been really tough because they've been lost by a lot of the government support.”

“We were the first point of contact for people and people were like panicking. People were panicking across the whole board how are we going to get out how are we going to eat how are we going to do anything really? And the switchboard was absolutely jam packed with people. I'd say the majority of people were actually elderly folk.

Before the boxes got delivered before all that government boxes started. It was elderly people who were genuinely terrified to leave their house and they didn't know how they were going to get food. So we slipped into that role but a lot of it was speaking to people. The mental health impact, you were actually on the phone talking to people, calming them down, just being an ear. To hear all the things that they were scared about. You were on the phone for maybe half an hour with each person.

Many people were phoning up who are having difficulty with low income Previously they would have accessed charity shops for clothing, Maybe charity shops for cookers and things. So, they were phoning up and saying I can't get food from the food bank because I don't have a cooker. . . it's beyond just getting food to people. . . Do they actually have enough money to put electricity on the meter? So, it was really impacting people on low incomes.

There was a massive amount of volunteers, in fact, We had so many volunteers it's a lot of them didn't get utilised. On the website you could either ask for help or offer help. And there were five thousands of people in Fife and it was actually really hard and we could see how many people in Fife actually really wanted to help. Not right at the very beginning but as time went by. Many people I think, they were maybe on furlough from the work and didn't want to sit around doing nothing. Unfortunately, some people lost their jobs completely and they wanted to help as well. So, it was a massive, massive amount of people who came forward and we couldn't use them all."

"Other than the obvious one of lack of money, just another thing to say about our data over the period is that it's, we took a decision, at the beginning of the lockdown to minimise contact with clients. Normally, in normal times our volunteers would complete a referral form, some clients are referred by agencies others self-refer. And that details the nature of the crisis that pull them coming to us. . . This would help our volunteers to signpost them to the appropriate help. We took a decision right at the beginning to really just stop that. So, we were recording the bad minimum of information about, In order to minimise the time that we were with them like the drawback is, we've not been able to do all the things that we would normally do in terms of recording that data and in terms of sign posting. So, we don't have the data to answer that question. Previously, we would see it was debt and benefit issues that were the prime."

"April May and June we saw a 30% increase in activity and a 70% increase in families. we had a tail off in the number of single people coming with a huge increase in the number of families. It really did impact on the amount of meals we were providing.

Impacts - mental health absolutely huge, a huge challenge for people with mental health issues. I've seen more tears in the last few months than I've seen in, I've been volunteering now for nearly six years so, I've seen a lot of people with anxiety levels, a lot of people who are frightened to come out, particularly back in April. We are now again seeing people in despair. They're in despair, they're frightened, they

don't know what's happening. People whose financial situation is just so fluid, Changing all the time. Its having a big impact."

"That's a good question. In some ways it's quite difficult to answer. Clearly there are a number of elderly people in Kinghorn. Some of which are socially isolated. But Kinghorn is a very sort of close-knit community, one of the things we thought, we kind of thought, we would be a lot busier than we were, particularly with getting groceries. I mean the support we've given is to the pharmacy delivering prescriptions, for people who are isolated. What's happened is the neighbours have kind of stepped in anyway and done a lot of the work for us. Having said that there's a kind of mental side of that as well. And one of the things we've done is kind of give out sort of Cheer Up Packs we've done too and now we're about to do - bars of chocolate, quizzes and various bits and pieces and as I say we've done that to about just over 200 people . . . Is kind of difficult in a way, I think there's a lot of people it's affected. The next village Burntisland they're running around like headless chickens doing food and whatever. Whereas we've not had that need, We're kind of a bit of a safety net underneath, where everything else has failed. . . The important need was the well being need, the mental need."

5.2 The 'New Normal'

Community groups representatives were asked what they thought the 'new normal' would look like for Kirkcaldy and what this would mean for their organisation.

"So, we're really interested in where the new normal might come back sort of better. I'm really interested in localization. Kirkcaldy High Street is busier than it used to be. That's a good thing people aren't commuting, commuting out of town. So, for my local regeneration and localization perspective, this might be better. We're also seeing a lot of people using active travel, walking and cycling. That's a good thing I think there's a real risk when we come back, we lose that, we don't maintain that. I think that people have been joining their local areas during lockdown, They've been walking running cycling rather than going to a gym. I think there's a real opportunity to build on that and I hope that stays".

"No, I think need is going to still be there. I think things are very different now. The new normal is strange we've kind of got used to social distancing and I think in many ways once we get used to it. It got calmed down after the first wave people. Found it really strange being with other people again. It felt somehow odd to be in the same room with people . . . We just need to be very, very careful, listening to the government and taking the advice. But I think this is going to go on for a long time. We're going to be well into next year. And have a third wave if we're not careful."

"The organisation we're planning, we're keeping our ear to the ground. We're keeping our ear very much to the ground and if a lot of things start happening again, that database can reopen and we can start. Volunteers can be contacted so we're ready to go (snaps fingers) just

like that. God forbid I hope we don't have to. It depends how the numbers go, doesn't it?

That is the unknown. We've seen, we've been talking with that caveat what's round the corner? As I said earlier, the end of furlough, the changes to Universal Credit as well, the end to the temporary increase in it um as well. Something that some volunteers said a couple of weeks ago at one of our meetings was a big, the difference in income that the Universal Credit had made. In one sense it doesn't sound all that much but actually that (Increase in Universal Credit) had made a major, significant difference to people. We're just concerned about what is around the corner. And reassured, I think, that we were able to cope with that massive spike. And so we could do that again, but concerned about . . . the other thing I didn't mention when we were talking about the three month period was that the other big, big challenge was the challenge in actually getting the food. We, we buy most of our food. So, we're not relying on donations. We have been very fortunate in the incredible support from the community in terms of financial donations, also grants. The money hasn't been a concern it's been being able to spend it. So, in that April to May particularly April and May on line shopping and so on we were having to cope with it on a massive scale . . . we coped with it and we would be in a position to do it, we don't as we always emphasise, we don't want to need to exist at all. We actually want to be saying we are not needed."

"I don't know I think that's the huge unknown. We're anticipating another peak coming up. And our local economy, is a lot of people who are working in the fields, you know and that's peaks and troughs throughout the seasons. We just don't know; and I think nobody knows and it's that huge uncertainty, this is causing stress to people. Us as well, service providers, us as well, it's so difficult to know what to do."

"Um, I hope people are more considerate we've got something in our area going on called Pettycur Power, which again our next door neighbour was one of the coordinators. It's a kind of WhatsApp thing. It pings 'how are you blahdy blahdy blah?' It does stuff things during the day. And I think that in various shapes and forms is still happening . . . So, people are checking out on their neighbours and I think that the normal is that people will continue to do that and perhaps be a bit more aware. One gentleman we didn't even know he was in the area had not eaten for five days. Anyway, we contacted the council and we sorted it out."

5.3. Good Future

Respondents were asked what would be a 'good future' for the area, to identify local aspirations for Kirkcaldy.

"I really think a good future would be this 15 minute future where everything is within 15 minutes, minutes walking distance or a short cycle distance so, so local shops, local post offices and local community libraries and so on, you don't need to travel so much. I think there's something really important about . . . I think there's something really important about vulnerable and disadvantaged

people that um, can we bring forward the basic income pilot? Or at the very least keep up the momentum for that because that financial vulnerability is terrifying for people and lockdown has highlighted that vulnerability for people. And some kind of guaranteed income would really help with protection of that, that.”

“Oh, definitely more joined up working. This has been an eye opener to me to me. There’s been lots of places have been working in isolation, And now that we know that we can all kind of contact each other we know we need to be joined up We need to be 1 central place I don’t know if that would work The bureaucracy gets in the way. Definitely a lot more communication between all the groups that are out there. If anything happens, we can just refer between people. So that folk don’t jump, drop between the gaps.

“It’s ultimately about the money in people’s pockets. Actually, so they can buy things themselves, so they don’t have to rely on a charity. How that is achieved in terms of Universal Credit or better availability of the Scottish Welfare Fund or Issues like that I’d have to say that’s not my area. But I think it should be about money, people having the money in their pocket.”

“If it was good people would have sufficient benefits and not have to survive by coming to us as a food bank. We don’t want to have a food bank. There are always going to be people who have significant vulnerabilities you know; there are people with mental health issues, addiction, And so on and so forth. We have lonely people who come in, affect cohort of people who come in the same day because they see the same volunteer. . . I don’t know what the future holds I just think people are going to take a long time to get over this mentally and financially.”

Oh gosh um, I don’t think staying the same. . . We kind of feel we could do an awful lot more. We are very very limited in terms of what we can do. The community often think we can do a lot more than we actually can. So I think, I would hope we’ve proved that we’ve served a valuable purpose and we should be treated a bit more seriously. And to some extent in terms of Kinghorn, we’re a little bit like the forgotten people. So all the the good stuff goes to Kirkcaldy. What would be nice, we really need to get the shops and businesses up and running; they’ve really been hammered, so I think a good outcome for Kinghorn would be people wanting to come to Kinghorn, spend their money in Kinghorn and enjoy this city.”

5.3 Ways to contribute to the ‘Good Future’

Community organisations were asked how they could contribute to this ‘good future.’ It was quite clear that a lot of reflection had taken place on the future for these groups. The theme of dependency on support was raised.

“We are doing, we’ve been developing before and during lockdown, we’ve been developing our active travel work. So, come on we’ve been doing quite a lot round cycling promotion And I’m really keen to continue that. We actually had funding in

place before lockdown to launch a new cycling project. We've carried on with this, I'm really keen to see that continue. That will operate as a social enterprise so will work with volunteers. There will be a high level of what was vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. That's a really important part of it we need to be really careful, I think this has been an issue in the Kirkcaldy area, around dependency. And I think there's been a real issue overtime around the food bank in Kirkcaldy. You've probably heard this from other people the food bank in Kirkcaldy is open access. Is not Trussell Trust, so there's no eligibility criteria so there's no . . . It's become a real issue of dependency for a lot of people. And so, we're trying to develop community food activities that in a respectful and kind of dignified way try to tackle that and urge people out of that.

The pantry area is a key area we're exploring at the moment. But also, we're encouraging people to volunteer, to contribute. If they can't contribute financially, can they contribute time? Really just following dignity principles and trying work with the food banks through our wrap groups, the welfare reform groups, to try and gently encourage them in that direction as well.”

5.4. What the Council should do to contribute to a 'Good Future' in Kirkcaldy

Community respondents were asked what the Council should do to contribute to a 'good future' for Kirkcaldy. This blended into 5.5 when asked about other things that respondents wished to contribute to the research.

“I think they need to keep pushing this basic income pilot. I think there's something in the Kirkcaldy area about the Council being a little bit better about communication and co-ordination of the support work. The 7 areas in Fife are all quite different in how they work but the community planning in Kirkcaldy area, there's not so much communication with the voluntary sector. There was a change of staff now the networks have stopped. I know it's a fine line between meeting fatigue and not getting the information you need, I'm not one for meetings just for the sake of it, but definitely a need for better communication and co-ordination between the council services and the voluntary sector, to ensure that we're working better together and that things are being joined up. That we're working towards the same strategy, I guess using some of the food banks as examples, I know that sometimes some frustration between council food banks and the voluntary sector and may be there could be a strategy, where we work better across sectors and within and between organisations in the voluntary sector.

On my active travel projects, I think there's a need for leadership from the council In High Street pedestrianisation and changes in Covid. There's a lot of disquiet over... and this sounds like a bit of a hobbyhorse, it's become a really big issue, but there's been no traffic enforcement. No traffic

wardens, it appeared during lockdown. The supposedly pedestrianised High Street has become absolute chaos. So, from a community point of view, as the High Street becomes busy again, we have cars mixing with children, older people and cars that have got used to driving along this High Street. I think the real challenge there's about getting enforcement back in and getting the council services back to normal."

"It would be very nice if they could put some money into the third sector, but I don't know if they've got any money to put into it. This is the heart of it, isn't it? . . . I think I would want to set up resilience...I can give you a couple of examples of things that we thought definitely fell through the gaps. The council and the government were very happy to provide food and toiletries. There was an awful lot of need for incontinency products. They just can't get them so one of the biggest bugbears we had was getting incontinency pants and pads for people. Because the food bank doesn't provide that. . . So, there's lots of little pockets of things that could have been handled better. Everybody was saying oh that's not our department, oh that's not our department'. So, I think if you've got a duty of care to people which the Council has it shouldn't just be food. Dignity, as well there should be some effort put forward to ensure people's dignity is also maintained.

I think it would be really good if we personally could work a lot closer with Fife Council. We could do it, it works, we've all had our little extended teams. I know we do this like at a management level, but what I find is that down to our level the grassroots level, the ground floor level, working with, working with other members of Fife Council at our level has been eye opening. Amazing, we've learned so much from them, they've learned so much from us and I would like that to continue. Joined up working. It's really good to hear from people who are trying to implement things rather than from the airy fairy this is what we're trying to think about."

"From our own point of view, A significant small step that they are taking and is important is that they are providing their service, particularly the Community Learning and Development service Team, in providing their direct service, to clients so making that available. They're starting that at a small scale at the moment, um with a couple of afternoons, a couple of days a week, they are basing one of their workers within our premises, So, the ability for us to direct and somebody to direct them directly to that help and support that's there. Unfortunately, it's physical limitations to that at the moment with the restrictions on contact, I think that's a significant help, a significant support that's available to our clients. . . So I think the development of that will be particularly important. Really helpful as much as possible.

If the solution is to get people, money in their pocket, then food vouchers is another area, Funding in relation to that. There are definite challenges in how that is implemented but I know that

something that other independent food banks would support as well.”

*“Funding if that's possible and Since Covid, during Covid, we lost a lot of our volunteers through health and age issues. Fife Council step forward the CLD team. Put into one of our distribution points and they, there's a huge value in them being there. What I would like is much more of that partnership working. We've been asking for it for years and the resources probably weren't there but a very positive thing out of this is the Council have realised there's a role for them to play. I'd like more council staff to give welfare advice, to give housing.”
advice, we can signpost as volunteers at the food bank but we can not, we don't have the knowledge to pass on to other people.”*

“We feel we are closer to the community than Fife council and perhaps they should listen better to what we say they should do. . . Well perhaps it's a bit controversial, but we would like To be responsible for a whole chunk of things. Get a bit of a budget, a chunk of money that you know we could use locally to help with the local businesses, regenerate. We don't want to be responsible for maintenance and all the other stuff, but I think again it's giving us a little bit more of a like local power. No, not power is the word more local representation on some of the things we do.”

5.4. Other Concerns

Respondents were given the opportunity to raise any other matters they considered important to the research in the context of Covid 19. The issue of dependency on support was raised again, by a different respondent, and the need to raise the voices of the people of Kirkcaldy through consultation. One respondent raised the idea that NOW is a good time for reflection on service provision.

“There's a perception of the Council having done really well on some elements, as perception, the Council have done really well with emergency support. They've mobilised food and things like that fantastically but there are also some council services just appeared to stop over this period . . . The one that we get real grumbles over here was the one that's called Parks, Streets and Places, it's basically litter and weeds in the street. It sounds really trivial but it's actually, it's people's perception of where they live. It's the broken window effect and how you feel about your community. I walk down my street and there's litter, there's, um, weeds coming out the cracks in all the pavements. If we're taking pride in our communities and upping where we live then enjoying our locality, then that's a subtle and important thing for people. And I, I personally don't understand why that Council service stopped for summer.”

“I think it's an opportunity to rethink our priorities. And would be great if the council asked people what they felt about It. There's other organisations in the private and voluntary sectors, who are using this as an opportunity to ask some quite deep questions. About what we're here for and what we want from our lives. The council has a

massive budget and has an impact on all of our lives and where we live. And it would be amazing if they could ask some of those big questions as well . . . but actually ask the people. Hopefully the work you're doing is part of that."

"Beyond, ongoing mental health is definitely an issue. . . Well I'm not a mental health worker, but I think more Mental Health Workers are definitely going to be required to help people. . . There's more people being affected by this, will stop the suicide rates gone up dramatically, dramatically. People are becoming paranoid after a while thinking the government are telling them lies . . . There really needs to be more help for people that does, there really needs to be more help for people."

"Dependencies occur, dependency is a concern I would share. I think we need to be asking ourselves and trying to make sure that we're not creating that . . . In normal times are self-referrals were increasing up to 85%, 90% . This is caveated by the agencies sometimes to their own clients to just self-refer to the food bank rather than having to fill out a form themselves. We always recognise it, self-referral percentage, was inflated by that. It's very much part of our ethos, we don't want to put barriers in front of people for food insecurity. We won't refuse people, but the challenge is on the other side as what you said about dependency, in terms of creating a dependency. And that's where the potential for having the work with the council support, the advice work, on hand is really helpful. We definitely don't want to exist we definitely don't want people to depend on us."

"A lot of the poverty that people were experiencing was Council, they owed to the Council, they owed council tax. We as a food bank are going to that same local authority and saying can you help us out. Over half of our referrals came in from Fife council. The money and the resources just seemed to get shuffled about (makes a spiralling motion with finger). There's a poor person in the middle of it."

"I don't think there's been a huge recognition of the work that volunteers have done. Everybody else buckled down and went into their houses. Our volunteers all came out and went above and beyond. The work they have done to keep this thing going has been phenomenal . . . It's just keeping these donations going, keeping the profile of the food bank up there in the public eye. The recognition that volunteers across the board have gone above and beyond can never be, can never be fully understated. It's been so massive."

"One of the areas we struggle with, one of the areas we struggle with, is warden controlled properties. They are seemed to be as tenants, in these warden-controlled places, people are all jammed up together. And what we wanted to do was, if they wanted any shopping or medication, we just wanted to drop it inside the door. And that has caused all sorts of problems because they're not actually prepared to take them to people's rooms. They worked on the basis these are tenants so therefore it's their problem. I don't know how wide a problem that is, In Scotland I expect it could be. . . We tried very hard to work with them at a local level but that we needed to get Fife

council to talk to the owners. And even then, it's proved to be challenging, after that."

6. Discussion

6.1 Social Isolation – Young people

The key issue to emerge from the residents' data, as has been found in other parts of Fife, is that the need for support post-lockdown will be very strong, both for those with pre-existing conditions and those affected by Covid 19. In the latter case, low mood was mentioned frequently and this was often linked to loneliness and isolation, so is arguably less likely for this population to be a medical and NHS problem and is more likely to be a social problem. This social isolation was apparent in the data for the elderly and for the young, in particular. The issue of young people being 'phased' by Covid 19, as one resident puts it, warrants attention. This was of course not a representative sample but lessons can be learnt from the individuals interviewed and applied to others in the same context. The experience of young people warrants further exploration

At an individual level, children and youth have suddenly lost many of the activities that provide structure, meaning, and a daily rhythm, such as school, extracurricular activities, social interactions, and physical activity, during the pandemic. Over a sustained period, these losses may worsen any depressive symptoms and may further entrench the social withdrawal or hopelessness that they may be experiencing prior to Covid 19. We would also expect a shift in anxious preoccupations from higher-order needs, such as self-esteem and expression to basic needs, such as food and physical safety (Courtney et al, 2020)

Ensuring the material needs and physical health of communities is the immediate priority in any public health emergency, conflict situation or natural disaster. The mental health needs of young people can easily be overlooked in a public health crisis. There are worries for a 'second wave' of the effects of the virus in terms of the negative mental health and social consequences borne by young people whom have little control over their environmental circumstances. There are many potential adverse consequences for young people who have lost access to structured school and college and work environments. There are broad physical and mental health implications for all young people. Negative physical health consequences such as poorer sleep, poorer diet, increased sedentary behaviour and loss of cardiometabolic fitness are more common and these are likely to relate to poorer mental health during Covid 19 (Power, 2020)

The mental health impacts of any disaster are unevenly distributed. Those with lower social capital and those in vulnerable positions are most at risk (Power, 2020). Early research efforts from the YoungMinds organisation in the UK highlights the predominance of concerns around the psychological and social consequences of the pandemic response, particularly on young people (YoungMinds, [2020](#); Holmes *et al.* [2020](#)). In this recent UK survey, 83% of young people with mental health needs believed that COVID-19 had an adverse impact on their mental health, with specific concerns around loss of social contact and structured activities.

The survey was carried out by Young Minds with 2,036 young people, who did have a history of mental health needs, between Friday 6th June and Monday 5th July,

The results revealed that:

- **80% of respondents agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse.** 41% said it had made their mental health “much worse”, up from 32% in the previous survey in March. This was often related to increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, a loss of coping mechanisms or a loss of motivation.
- **87% of respondents agreed that they had felt lonely or isolated during the lockdown period,** even though 71% had been able to stay in touch with friends.
- Among more than 1,000 respondents who were accessing mental health support in the three months leading up to the crisis (including from the NHS, school and university counsellors, private providers, charities and helplines), **31% said they were no longer able to access support but still needed it.**
- Of those who had not been accessing support immediately before the crisis, **40% said that they had not looked for support but were struggling with their mental health.**
- **11% of respondents said that their mental health had improved during the crisis,** an increase from 6% in the previous survey. This was often because they felt it was beneficial to be away from the pressures of their normal life (e.g. bullying or academic pressure at school)

A major adverse consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic for young people, whether or not they have pre-existing mental health conditions, is likely to be increased social isolation and loneliness which are strongly associated with anxiety, depression, self-harm and, at its worst, suicide attempts. Tracking loneliness and intervening early are important priorities. Crucially, reducing sustained feelings of loneliness and promoting belongingness are mechanisms to protect against suicide, self-harm, and emotional issues. (Holmes et al, 2020). Youth work is part of the work of the Community Teams and will be increasingly important, especially using safe, social distancing methods of interacting with young people. Access to a supportive adult is a protective factor for a young person’s mental health and some will have lost this protective factor during this crisis through loss of supports outside the family home (Power, 2020)

Many young people, it is reported, do not feel confident about talking to someone about their mental health, or that they have faced barriers to accessing support during the pandemic. Equally, there may also be young people who, as a result of the pandemic, are struggling with their mental health for the first time. Young people belonging to groups that are already marginalised, or disadvantaged may be particularly at risk. (Young Minds, 2020)

Child and youth mental health is clearly markedly influenced by the family system, and family interactions have been profoundly affected by the pandemic. With prolonged home confinement, the family environment may become a key risk factor for the mental health of some children and youth. Some parents are grappling with the new stresses of supervising the education and activities of their children, while simultaneously experiencing their own economic, emotional, and social losses (ibid).

Parents are essential to buffering their children’s stresses, helping them to manage their feelings and make sense of their own experiences. However, this buffering requires a parent who is sufficiently emotionally and physically resourced to do so. With parents increasingly experiencing their own demoralizing losses (e.g., lost jobs, death of loved ones, worsening of their own mental health and substance use) their ability to buffer their children’s stresses inevitably diminishes over time, increasing the risk that this pandemic becomes traumatic for children and young people, with enduring emotional consequences. During this pandemic, children and young people have lost contact not only with their peers but also with their

extended communities of protective adults (e.g., teachers) Given the expected increase in incidence of mood and anxiety disorders associated with the Covid 19 pandemic, access to mental health and well being care for children and young people is paramount (ibid)

Although worries and uncertainties about a pandemic are common, for some they can cause undue distress and impairment to social and occupational functioning. Across society, a sense of loss can stem from losing direct social contacts, and also range from loss of loved ones, to loss of employment, educational opportunities, recreation, freedoms, and supports. Existing evidence suggests some measures taken to control the pandemic might have a disproportionate effect on those most vulnerable (ibid). Youth work practised safely should be viewed as a priority and be embedded in a broader approach to CLD work that focuses on community life in general and resilience in particular. This is discussed further in section 6.4

6.2 Social Isolation – Older Adults

Older adults can be particularly affected by issues including isolation, loneliness, end of life care, and bereavement, which may be exacerbated by the so-called digital divide, which was apparent for older people in the findings of this research. Practical issues such as how to get their shopping and medication also featured in the findings. People with existing mental health issues, including those with severe mental illnesses, might be particularly affected by relapse, disruptions to services, isolation, the possible exacerbation of symptoms in response to pandemic-related information and behaviours. Digital interventions for anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide include information provision, connectivity and signposting, automated and blended therapeutic interventions (such as apps and online programmes) can be used for those who do have access to ICT. Chatlines and forums, and technologies can be used to monitor risk either passively or actively. Telephone calls and messages can be used to reach those with poorer digital resources (digital poverty).

To deal with the mental health issues linked to social isolation, there is a range of measures that can be used to deal in the short term with the issues. These are to determine the best ways to signpost people to social and community support through existing measures linked to food banks and perhaps expand these. Also, the Community Team could provide training with volunteers at food banks, pantries and other providers, which will assist with Signposting and seek to network community groups to promote better awareness of each other's services.

In the longer term, the Community Team can design and source providers of bespoke approaches for different populations, such as young people, families, singleton dwellers and elderly people; approaches need to be developed, linked to boosting and resilience. This is discussed further later in this report but will include measures such as physical and social exercise; befriending; and arts and life skills interventions. Adult learning interventions can focus on resilience and coping for these different populations.

6.3 Poverty

Food insecurity was a strong message emerging from the residents' data and from Community Groups. Poverty, or financial insecurity, was not considered a strong issue and was rarely discussed in relation to oneself, but underpins many other problems people faced. It was shocking, for example, to find that people were not eating, in some cases. Food parcels had been very important to people and there is no reason to think that this need will not continue. Professor Sir Michael Marmot (2020) has underscored the link between poverty and food security. If those on benefits subscribe to the NHS Eatwell Guide, they will need to spend 75% of their disposable income on food which will leave nothing for rent, gas

and other costs. The most deprived, he asserts, spend more than a third of their income on housing and in the Covid 19 period, food insecurity has doubled. It was apparent in this study that some people were accessing food parcels for the first time, whilst for others it was a part of normal life prior to Covid 19.

Volunteers and the third sector had stepped up to the plate, in supporting people from a wide range of backgrounds, to access food and to provide a limited but important source of social contact. These organisations had responded with urgency; they had also reflected and had plans in place for another wave of such a crisis. They did however need Council support to manage signposting people to sources of social and welfare support, as well as signposting for mental health and well being. The Community Team could provide this support to the third sector to work in partnership with the Council and each other to meet residents' needs.

The complexity of issues facing the residents is such, that a central role needs to be in place from CLD staff in identifying residents' needs, as the problems are multiple and need to be teased out in a trust relationship. It may well be that a social worker or a psychiatrist or a community nurse is needed, but it also may be that all are needed, and the community worker can assist people to seek help in the right places and with established priorities. The Community Worker can empower the residents of Fife to seek the support they both want and need, amidst the complexities of people's experience. This can be done with relationships with individuals and with communities.

It is quite clear to me that the CLD workers need to be operating at 3 levels. The first level is working with and securing the individual. This means finding the voice of the individual, who is seldom heard; ensuring there is provision in place for signposting individuals with complex issues to sources of support; ensuring needs are being met through partners in the voluntary sector.

The second level is working at community level, to promote community resilience. A strong level of support from the third sector was apparent. The Community Team should, in my opinion, be concentrating on supporting and developing this provision by seeking funding; providing training; and supporting networking of the groups. As community resilience is so important it is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Thirdly, and more contentiously, community teams should be assisting at the political level. Many of the issues faced such as poverty are outwith the jurisdiction of Fife Council; the Council in many domains is responding to the outcomes of policy made elsewhere. The Council can assist the population, in particular, those least likely to vote, to be heard and to manage local issues. The Community Team do not need themselves to be political, but they can assist others in the community, particularly the seldom heard, to be active citizens. Political literacy can be facilitated through youth work and adult education and I am aware of work done in the third sector in Fife, which facilitates this outcome.

Community development work often focuses on community groups and organisations with a good foundation in philosophy and theory. There is, however, evidence from the UK of ways in which residents of 'deprived' neighbourhoods seek to support each other. Groups are widely seen to bolster community spirit, promote local democratic renewal and then deliver support to those who are in need (Williams, 2003). Yet, studies of community participation with deprived neighbourhoods found much higher participation rates in one to one aid than in community based groups. People were engaged in unpaid work supporting people beyond close kin. This was apparent in our data. Williams suggests asking these people to be involved in community groups is 'parachuting in' an approach more common amongst affluent populations. Accordingly, one to one 'volunteering' needs to be recognised by the

Community Team and Council and celebrated, supported and valued in these communities, as a complement to community groups and a means to initiating greater involvement, where there is a spectrum of methods of community engagement.

6.4. Community Resilience

As discussed earlier, the need for community resilience should be seen as a priority for Fife Council. Many of the elements outlined in this section are in place in the Council but a co-ordinated effort from the Community Team, with skills and knowledge in community development, is important to ensure this process of building resilience takes place.

The term *community resilience* is used to describe the interconnected network of systems that directly impact human society at a grassroots community level, including the socioeconomic, ecological, and built environments. A community is resilient when members of the population are connected to one another and work together, so that they are able to function and sustain critical systems, even under stress; adapt to changes in the physical, social or economic environment; be self-reliant if external resources are limited or cut off; and learn from experience to improve itself over time (Arbon et al. (2012).

By focusing on community resilience, it is important to emphasise the important role of the community both as geographical territory and as an emotional attachment to a place, in understanding resilience. Whether or not individuals are resilient will depend not only on personal attributes and skills, but also on the resilience of the community. A community can both facilitate and constrain resilience, and it can be an agent for change in and of itself. Social capital, in its broadest sense, gets to the core of how a community functions; how people in a community get along with each other, including questions of trust and understanding; how people in the community collaborate and work together (involving questions of collective efficacy); what links exist between people, organisations and institutions within a community as well as links with people, organisations and institutions in wider society. Social capital is at the centre of any understanding of community process and change. It can bring together the other types of resource, such as individual human capital, it can coordinate groups, facilitating political mobilisation, it can network people into flows of political power and influence, and it can tap into financial resources that can be used for the development of further human capital. (The Young Foundation, 2012).

Youth work and adult learning are important dimensions of community work and need to be undertaken with a community development focus, using identified community needs to shape and influence design of services. These services should also meet the identified aspirations for the community and be clearly linked to priorities for Kirkcaldy as identified by Council and residents of Kirkcaldy of all ages and backgrounds.

6.5 Pause, Take Stock, and Reconsider

Disasters often present communities with a unique opportunity to pause, take stock, and reconsider what it is they truly value. It is well documented that post disaster, many individuals who experience trauma also experience changes in self, interpersonal relationships, outlook on life, spirituality, and new possibilities. Similarly, a community may undergo positive transformational growth following a traumatic disaster event, leading to increased social and cultural capital among its people, higher level of community competence and political influence, and even improved economic development. What is necessary in order to ensure that this is achieved is: (a) community resilience, (b) the leadership capacity to recognize the opportunities for growth that disasters present, and (c) the political will to address the adaptive challenges which underlie ongoing issues faced by

that community rather than just providing “Band-Aid” solutions to the symptoms caused by these issues. (Fitzpatrick, 2016). It is quite clear that now is the time for this community work discussed in previous points to be implemented. It needs to begin now.

The Young Foundation (2012) has developed a holistic understanding of resilience. Their understanding of community resilience is made up of a number of features incorporating cultural, human, political, financial and social resources. These may include ‘hard’ assets such as good transport links, access to services and amenities. Also important are local buildings, organisations that enable communities to come together, allowing people to access support and to have their voices heard in relation to local issues. It includes ‘softer’ assets such as relationships with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and the support of the wider community. It encompasses links with voluntary and state organisations and the private sector. Most importantly, it not simply about exhorting communities to ‘pull themselves together’ but about giving them the capacity to identify assets and utilise them.

The Young Foundation suggest looking (inter alia) at an important dimension of community, which will assist with the community development approaches, adopted with communities by Community Teams.

- Self, the way people feel about their own lives;
- Support, the quality of social supports and networks within the community; and
- Structure and systems, the strength of the infrastructure and environment to support people to achieve their aspirations and live a good life.

This links directly to the previously mentioned 3 approaches to the work of Community Teams. All CLD workers, whether engaged in a youth work, adult learning or community capacity building environment should be engaged at all three levels.

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

1. Continue localised micro funds to seed voluntary sector activity.

Small amounts of investment make a big difference and send important signals to communities of recognition and celebration as well as meeting practical needs. They can provide a bolster to fragile community organisations and can prove important in building up new organisations and community resilience. **It is proposed the Council should use the third sector as much as is possible for food security. It is also proposed the Council could facilitate discussion between providers, including established third sector organisations and local community organisations; to ensure best use is made of available resources; to avoid duplication; and to facilitate local ‘signposting.’**

2. Provide opportunities for Reflection with the third sector at grass roots levels.

As cuts impact both public and voluntary sector services, **it is more important than ever to forge new links and protect existing ones between the sectors.** Strengthening community resilience can not be done in a traditional top down way, but neither can communities ‘go it alone.’ Public and third sector organisations continue to have a vital role.

An opportunity for reflection is timely and can be facilitated by the Community Team, in a virtual environment if necessary. **Connections are vital to resilience and Community team can play an important role in bringing people together in the third sector, to reflect on the experiences of Covid 19 and planning for a future with community resilience at its heart.**

3. Training and Support for the Third Sector

Training and support for volunteers in the third sector, particularly for small community groups, should be provided by the Community Team to assist with short term 'signposting'.

4. Design a CLD Approach to Mental Health and Well-Being

A short term and longer term CLD partnership approach to individual and community mental health and wellbeing should be devised to embed resilience and coping in youth work, adult learning and community development approaches. This should embed youth work and adult learning in a community resilience framework which is represented by the 3 levels of activity described in the Discussion of this report – individual, community and strategic. Prioritise safe adult learning and youth work programmes that promote resilience and target vulnerable populations. This will include programmes that enhance self esteem, confidence, personal coping skills and target healthy living, through *inter alia* arts, culture and outdoor activities.

A plan should be devised for the short and longer term, which provides and sources support to promote resilience, in partnership with the third sector. This can be achieved holding virtual meetings with third sector providers; with the Council staff providing a leadership and facilitative role at operational levels.

Community resilience requires continuous learning and adapting to indicators of changing community circumstances; and operationally, this means a focus on identifying, conserving and investing in the social, and physical capital that make up its protective elements. Resilient community goes beyond the 'circling of wagons' for a defensive space and builds on people's hopes for the future, so needs a forward-looking orientation including a vision for the community as a whole. **Often negative shared experiences trigger community resilience but this can be transferred into a positive strategy, through promoting shared positive experiences in the community.**

To tackle systems and structures which are linked to poverty, programmes of political literacy may be provided which seek to enable people to address local issues themselves.

5. Longitudinal Community Development.

The United Nations defines community development as *"a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems."* The community can work to explore empowerment to overcome negative barriers; and to tackle the problems of social isolation through a shared community commitment. This will not work if driven solely by the professionals. It requires the involvement of key community drivers and the buy in of the community itself. This requires

that means of engaging individuals are sought which build on respect and trust in the community, which once again take time to deliver. There is no short cut to trust. It requires a presence in the community and the development of respect.

It is important to invest in community resilience over time and the role of CLD staff is critical to an outcome of community resilience and to planning for future. This outcome is a product a holistic approach to community work and multi-faceted partnership working.

6. Community Engagement

Community engagement is important to reach people who may be isolated for social and economic reasons as well as reasons linked to rurality; such as transport issues, fuel poverty and physical isolation. Community engagement is important because it has been shown that 90% of health determinants, for example, are not health system related but social and economic (Kilpatrick, 2008). Studies suggest that the majority of 'engaged' individuals perceive that there are benefits for their physical health, psychological health, self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of personal empowerment and social relationships (Milton et al 2010). The social outcomes of community engagement may be particularly important for 'at risk' populations such as residents in poor social and economic circumstances, young people starting out on their life journey and older people who tend to be less well connected socially (ibid). **Accordingly, the approach to adult learning needs to be founded on community engagement not solely the provision of classes and other formal learning opportunities. This will include programmes that enhance self esteem, confidence, personal coping skills and target healthy living, through *inter alia* arts, culture and outdoor activities.** It may also include interventions such as, for example, establishing volunteer digital ambassadors for those who are socially isolated.

Community engagement needs to be part of the responsibility of all relevant services to the rural communities, not just the CLD team, It also needs to be part of the profile of Fife Council partners in their provision. **The CLD team is well placed to advise on ways in which community engagement can best be managed in other services that have a community interface.** A holistic, multi-disciplinary approach is important as this reflects the complex interrelationships of issues in people's lives.

Similarly, a strategic role in community emergency planning is important for CLD staff, with their expert local knowledge and ability to promote community resilience. **Seek to return CLD staff to their community development roles, as soon as possible, to promote community resilience in their own service and with the third sector.** In addition, use their local knowledge in community emergency and recovery planning at both strategic and local levels.

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APPENDIX A

Kirkcaldy Area Residents' Research Interview Schedule: Past, Present and Future: Covid 19

Hello, my name is XXXX. This research is being done by Fife Council to find out the impact of Covid 19, the virus, on residents of the Kirkcaldy area and what this means for the future. You have been chosen because XXXXX. (*I know you; you have used Fife Council service, or similar explanation*). The Council and partners want to shape services around your experience of using them. We are looking for your feedback in order to shape the future help we offer and how and when we get that support to you and others.

The research will be used to help decide what use is made of services now and in the future by the Council.

Please can I record the interview. It is so that I can easily manage the answers to the questions. No one will hear the recording except me and Karen McArdle, the Senior Researcher. (*If they say no, you have to take notes*).

A report will be written of the research and your name will not be used. No one will know it was you who was interviewed, except me.

The interview should last about half an hour, are you happy to start? You can stop at any time.

(The aim is to get the conversation going so you do not need to use all these questions. Just remember the aims of the research and themes we discussed)

1. Can you remember the first time you heard about Covid 19, the virus?
2. How long have you been in lockdown, can you remember?
3. Who was in lockdown with you?
4. Were you or anyone else shielding or self isolating?
5. What's it like for you?
6. What's it like for the people you live with (if applicable)?
7. What about family or friends. How are they coping?
8. How was it at the beginning? Did it get easier/harder as time went on?
9. How does it make you feel?
10. What was life like, before the virus?
11. How is life now?
12. How have you spent your time in lockdown?
13. How will life be for you, in the future if the virus continues?
14. If you had to go into lockdown again, how would you cope? What would you do differently, if anything?

Please make sure and cover the following, if they have not already been covered.

15. How has it been moneywise? How have you coped?
 - Have you received any financial support, benefits?
 - what was that like?

- How did you feel?
- how should this be done in the future?

16. How has it been food-wise? How have you coped?

- Have you used food boxes or food banks or local food projects?
- Have you used Supermarket vouchers?
- If you used food banks or projects, did you go in person or get a delivery?
- If so, how were these?
- If so, how did you feel?
- How should this be managed in the future? Who should provide it?
-

17. Have you missed seeing other people? How have you coped?

- Are you social distancing, if you do see other people?
- Have you ever felt down?
- What support could there be for mental wellbeing in the future?
- Who should provide it?

18. (If applicable) Have you been doing home schooling with your children/grandchildren?
How have you coped?

- How was it having the at home?
- Did you have online access for schooling?
- Have you used any support for it?
- How was it
- How did you feel?

19. Have you used any other Fife Council or charity supports during the lockdown period?

- What did you use?
- Did you use any local groups?
- Have these services been helpful?
- How did you feel?
- Is there anything else you would like to see in the future, that was missing?
- Who would provide this?
- Did you use any online services?

20. If help was needed after Covid 19, what help do you think would be good for people in Kirkcaldy area?

- Food banks?
- Supermarket vouchers?
- Cash?
- other forms of support? Please specify. . . .

19. If you needed fuel (electric and gas) support, would you prefer cash, or if someone came to do the fuel for you?

20. Are there any issues about travel and transport in your area?

- If so, what are these issues?
- How could any problems be fixed?
-

21. Can you get online at home?

- If yes, how (phone or broadband at home)?
- If yes, are you able to do everything you need to do?
- If no, why do you not have access? (cost, lack of knowledge, not available)

22. Is there anything you would like to talk about that I haven't asked you about yet?

23. Can I finally ask you your age?

24. Where do you live? (name of town or village)

Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the research.

(The aim is to get people to say as much as possible in their own words. You can stimulate this with the following kind of follow-up questions below:

- *What makes you say that?*
- *Can you give me an example?*
- *Can you tell me about a time when that happened?*
- *How did it make you feel?*
- *Why? Where? How? When?*
- *Explain a bit more about that.*
- *I'm not sure I understood/got that, can you say a bit more?*
- *What exactly did you/she/he/they say?)*

Appendix B

Questions for Community Groups

1. What is the purpose of your community group/charity/organisation?
2. Do you provide services to the community?
 - If yes what are these?
 - Where do you provide them (location)?
 - Who are they for?
3. What has been the impact of Covid 19 on your group/charity/organisation?
4. How, if at all, will this impact on services in the future?
5. What do you think are the key challenges for people living in this this area of fife?
6. What do you think the 'new normal' will be like after Covid 19?
7. What do you think the new normal should be like?
8. What do you think a good future for the area would look like?
9. How can you and your group/charity/organisation contribute to this future?
10. What do you think the Council should do to contribute to this future?

Thanks

