

COWDENBEATH AREA LOCAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

2022

About this document:

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

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

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

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



1. Overview

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

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

The Plan 4 Cowdenbeath Area 2019-2022 set out how public, private and voluntary organisations needed to work together with our communities to deliver the ambitions of the Plan4Fife.

Our Vision

Our ambition is to make a positive and lasting difference to the Cowdenbeath Area – an area where all citizens work together to achieve their aims; innovation and entrepreneurship is encouraged; people live in fuel-efficient, affordable housing; public transport is accessible and affordable; High Streets thrive; and people receive the care that they need when they need it.

Plan 4 Cowdenbeath Area, 2019--2022

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

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



Cowdenbeath Mural, Picture Credit - Andrew Beveridge

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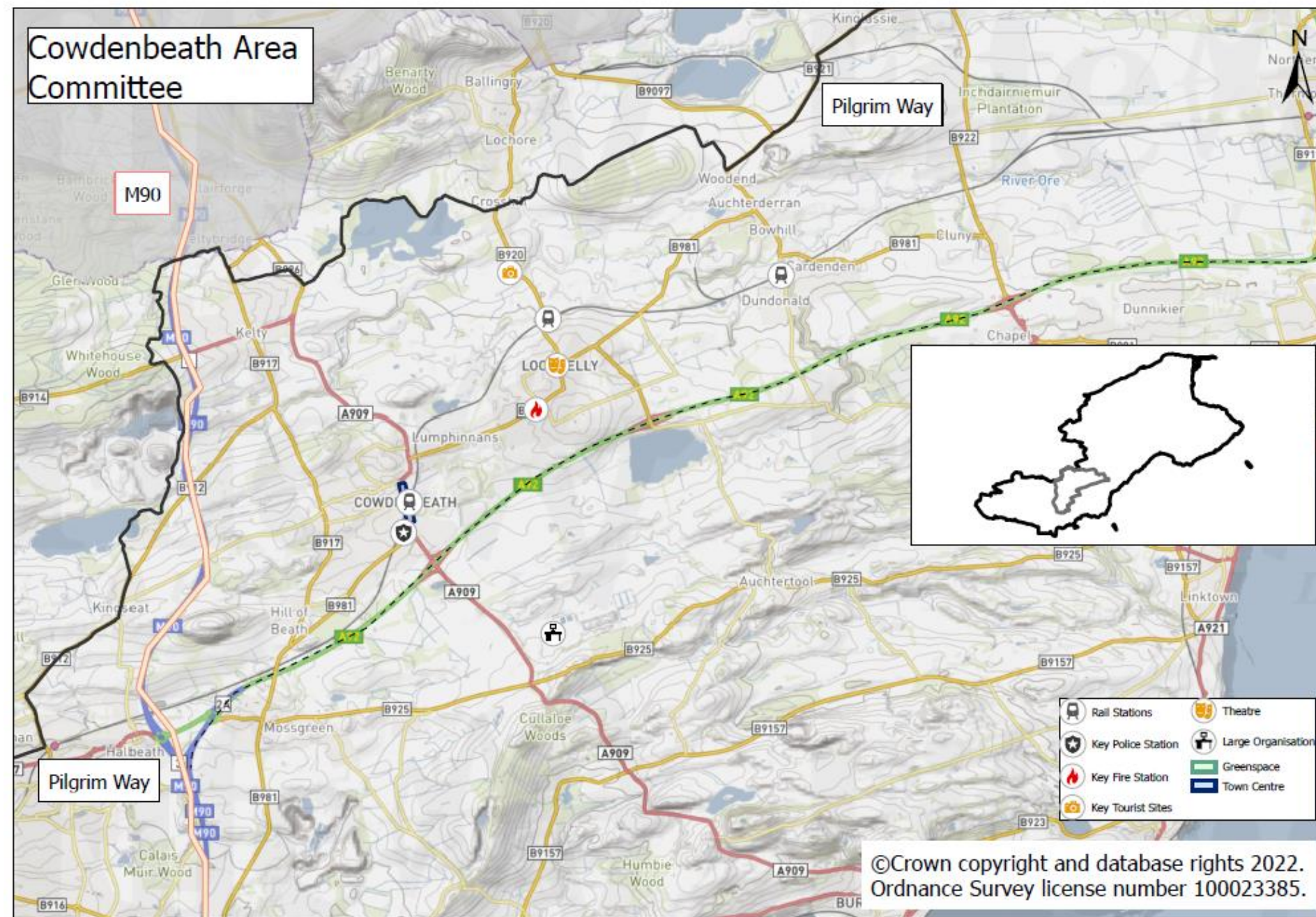


Figure 1.1 Strategic Overview of Cowdenbeath Area

The Cowdenbeath Area is located in the south west of Fife, bordering the larger urban area of Dunfermline. Much of the area is characterised by low, undulating, arable landscape sitting to the south east of the Ochil Hills. Cowdenbeath, and the towns and villages that make up the Area, owe much to their historical links with coal mining and the extensive coalfields that characterised the area.

2. Local Assessment Findings

3. Profile

Cowdenbeath is one of the less populated areas of Fife, with 41,491 people in 20,123 households. A smaller proportion of houses are owned (55.7%) in the area compared to Fife, with higher levels of social renting (34.9%), and lower levels of renting privately (7.4%).

The Area has a higher employment rate (76.6%) than Fife, and a smaller percentage of the working age population are economically inactive (17.7%). However, levels of employment (13.6%) and income deprivation (17.8%), and claimant rates (6.0%) are higher than Fife. Participation of 16-19 year olds in education, employment or training (88.9%) is below Fife.

4. Place

Following improvements in 2018, the picture for Cowdenbeath Area in 2022 is now more similar to what it was in 2016, with social wellbeing being an area that has been particularly affected. Natural space is the domain identified as needing least improvement within the area.

While the majority of domains show as having a greater need for improvement in 2022 compared to 2018, Housing and Community shows marginal improvement. The greatest need for improvement in the Cowdenbeath Area is in the domains of Influence and sense of control, Care and Maintenance, and Traffic and Parking.

5. People

A study to explore the impact of COVID-19 for residents, including vulnerable and disadvantaged people, found that social isolation and its impact on mental health, as well as food poverty and financial hardship were particular issues for the Cowdenbeath Area. Although the COVID pandemic brought difficulties for residents, a sense of learning from the experience, and optimism about the future also emerged. Positive findings included the gratitude people had for the services they had received from the Council, community staff and third sector during the pandemic: in particular for support with food.

Strong social connections are seen as a cornerstone of mental health and wellbeing and community resilience. Local people are feeling more connected to their neighbourhood now, with a strong feeling of belonging. People value the friendships and connections they have with others in their neighbourhood, with the majority of people regularly stopping and talking with others in their neighbourhood.

Technology has become a necessity for keeping connected, working remotely and accessing vital information. Personal use of the internet in the Area is 96.4% compared to 93.9% for Fife. While levels of internet use continue to grow, people can still be digitally excluded because they lack the skills to confidently and safely navigate the digital world.

6. Community

In 2022, cost of living has replaced NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare as the main issue facing all Areas of Fife. Within the Cowdenbeath Area, funding for public services and access to suitable housing are also identified as main issues.

The majority of local people in Cowdenbeath Area would like more involvement in decisions that the Council makes that affect their local area. 54% report that they provide some kind of unpaid (voluntary) help to a group or organisation.

Within Cowdenbeath Area, only one in three people believe the Council provides high quality services, and does the best it can with money available. Fewer people think the council is good at letting people know about the kind of services that it provides, or addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their local neighbourhood. Many people do not believe that the Council good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions or keeping people informed about what is happening in the local area.

7. Local Outcomes

40% of communities in Cowdenbeath Area are doing better than expected compared to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland, compared to 50% of communities for Fife.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Cowdenbeath Area remain Lochore and Crosshill, and Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans. Areas with better life outcomes are Kelty East, Lochgelly East and Cowdenbeath North.

8. Horizons

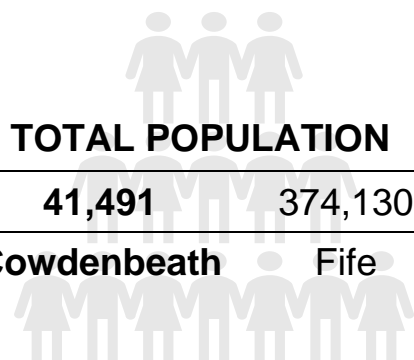
The extent of uncertainty that Fife's communities will need to face in the coming years is unprecedented. The impact of wider events (i.e. pandemic, Brexit) will continue to be felt at a very local level. The population of Cowdenbeath Area is expected to continue to increase in size over the next 10 years.

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

Rising living costs are adding to the pressures felt by individual households. It is unclear when this situation will stabilise, and how this will impact on widening inequalities within Fife's communities.

There is a need to anticipate and plan for the more pressing implications of climate change and how it will affect peoples' lives, particularly in areas of multiple deprivation.

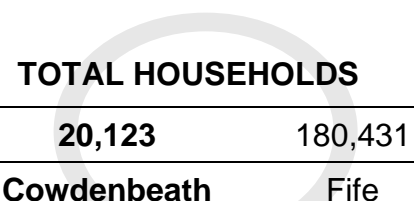
3.Profile



TOTAL POPULATION	
41,491	374,130
Cowdenbeath	Fife

Children (0-15yrs)		Working Age (16-64yrs)		Older Adults (65+yrs)	
7,783	64,152	25,545	231,809	8,163	78,169
(18.8%)	(17%)	(61.6%)	(62%)	(19.7%)	(20%)
Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife

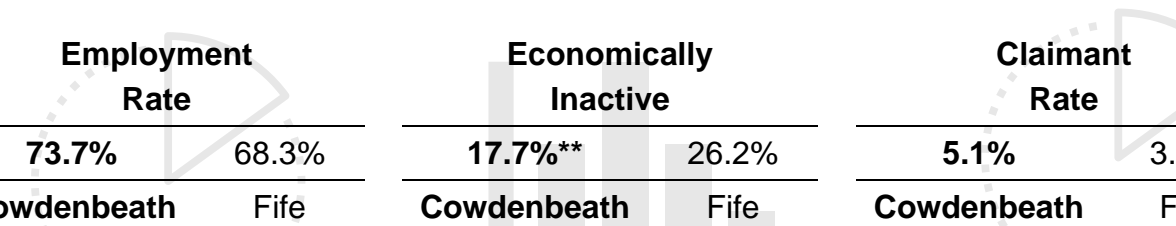
Figure 3.1 – Mid-year 2020 Population Estimates Source: [National Records for Scotland](#)



TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	
20,123	180,431
Cowdenbeath	Fife

Owner / Occupier		Private Rented		Social Rented	
55.7%	61%	7.4%	11%	34.9%	23%
Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife

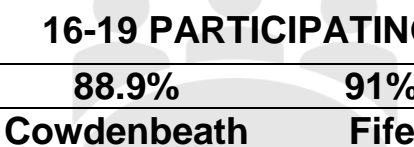
Figure 3.2 – Housing Tenure 2021 (Source: Fife Council Housing Tenure Database)



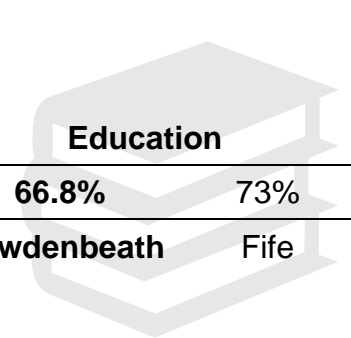
Employment Rate		Economically Inactive		Claimant Rate	
73.7%	68.3%	17.7%**	26.2%	5.1%	3.9%
Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife

Figure 3.3 – Employment, Economically inactive for January - December 2021; Claimant Rate is in relation to April 2022 (Source: NOMIS / [Fife Local Economic Profiles](#))

**No reliable Oct 20-Sep 21 or Jan-Dec 2021 estimate available for Cowdenbeath. Estimate for Jul 20-Jun 21= 17.7%

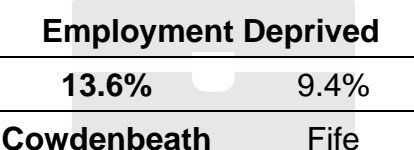


16-19 PARTICIPATING	
88.9%	91%
Cowdenbeath	Fife



Education		Employment		Training / Personal Development	
66.8%	73%	21%	16.2%	2.1%	1.8%
Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife

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



Employment Deprived		Income Deprived	
13.6%	9.4%	17.8%	11.9%
Cowdenbeath	Fife	Cowdenbeath	Fife

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

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

4.Place

Place is an important element of Local Community Planning. Using the national Place Standard tool, local people were asked to consider aspects of the physical and social environment where they live and to paint a picture of the place and what needed to improve. Through comparing the results of Place Surveys in 2016, 2018 and 2022 we can get a picture of how the Area is changing, and use this snapshot as a background benchmark for any local use of the Place Standard within local communities across the Area.

Following improvements in 2018, the picture for Cowdenbeath Area in 2022 is now more similar to what it was in 2016, with social wellbeing being an area that has been particularly affected. Natural space is the domain identified as needing least improvement within the area.

While the majority of domains show as having a greater need for improvement in 2022 compared to 2018, Housing and Community shows marginal improvement. The greatest need for improvement in the Cowdenbeath Area is in the domains of Influence and sense of control, Care and Maintenance, and Traffic and Parking.

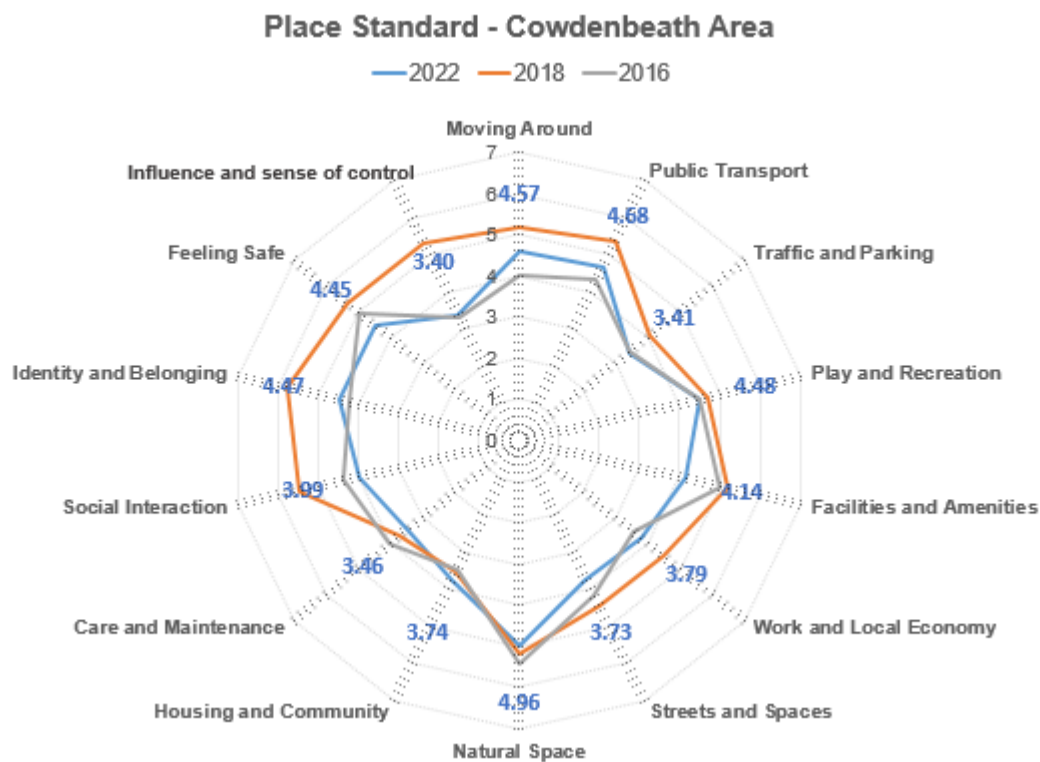


Figure 4.1 – Community perceptions of where improvement is needed in the area using the Place Standard, and how it has changed between 2018 and 2022. The outer part of the diagram (score 7) means little room for improvement, while the inner part (score 1) represents most need for improvement (Fife People’s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

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

Compared to other areas of Fife, Cowdenbeath Area shows a mixed picture across a range of aspects of place.

Natural Space, Play and Recreation, and Feeling Safe are viewed positively within Cowdenbeath Area relative to other areas of Fife. Like many other areas of Fife, Work and Local Economy is identified as being in need of improvement.

While getting around the area appears to be viewed more positively, Influence and sense of control, Housing and Community, and Care and Maintenance of the local area are identified as being in need of improvement within Cowdenbeath Area. Buildings are seen as needing maintained whilst improved street lighting, and more places for people to meet would be welcomed in the area.

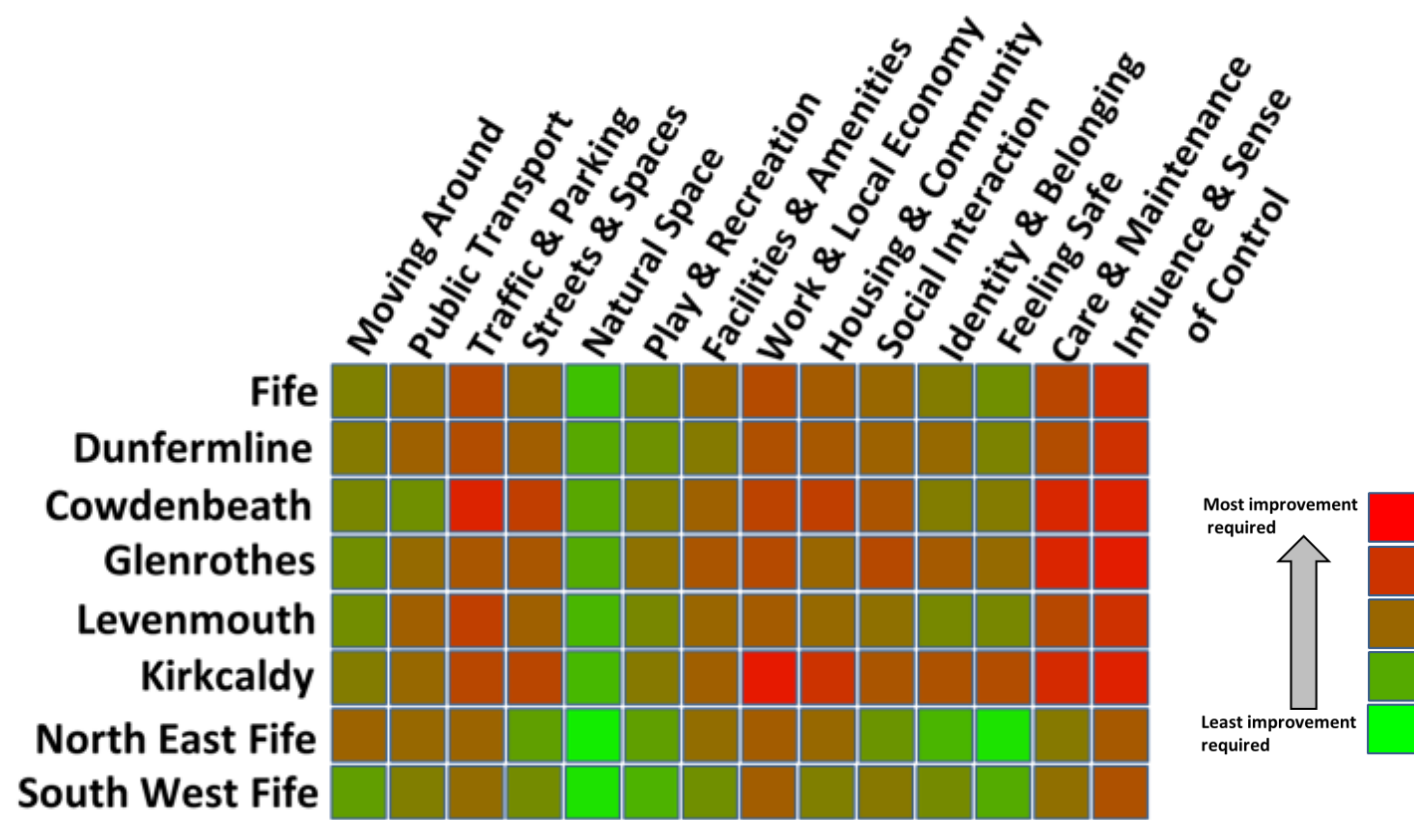


Figure 4.2 – Colour shaded diagram of how different aspects of Place are viewed across Fife (Place Standard, Fife People’s Panel, Survey 34, 2022)

5. People

Simply looking at where people live only gives part of the picture. During 2020, Fife Council commissioned a study to explore the impact of COVID-19 for residents, including vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Cowdenbeath Area.

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

- What has been the experience of residents 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 the Area?

The report for Cowdenbeath Area highlighted the 'Potential to be better'. A number of themes emerged through conversations with residents including: Mood (people expressed experiencing a range of feelings including disbelief, fear and anxiety, which eased as time progressed for some); Relationships (people were particularly worried about their immediate family and older relatives); Finances (some seemed to struggle with financial hardship, whilst others felt slightly better off due to limited opportunities to go out or shop); Food (food insecurity was mentioned by most people, with mixed thoughts around using food banks); and a sense of optimism about the Future, with a feeling that people would have the ability to cope within a second wave. Positive findings included the gratitude people had for the services they had received from the Council, community staff and third sector during the pandemic: in particular for support with food.

Findings were explored with groups with local knowledge and experience of providing services in the area during the pandemic. Community groups mentioned a wide range of issues that they saw as particularly challenging for individuals and groups during COVID-19. Those identified included social isolation and its subsequent impact on mental health; food poverty; financial strains; lack of employment opportunities; digital literacy, or lack thereof. There was a sense that a shared experience (of the pandemic) had brought the community closer together and the future could be more positive. Focusing on key aspects such as food poverty, isolation and mental health seemed to be key.

The issue of social isolation and its impact on mental health, as well as food poverty and financial hardship came through particularly strongly in the Cowdenbeath Area.

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

Community organisations were asked how they and the Council could contribute to a 'good future'. The theme of dependency on support was raised. There was a strong sense that community organisations want communities to own their own future and be involved in providing this support. Community representatives did however, feel optimistic about learning that had emerged from the first wave of COVID-19, with there now being a greater understanding of the services in the community, and that it had perhaps made the community closer.

MOOD

"It was horrible, really horrible. Since the start I was anxious. Really, really high". (21 year old Cardenden).

"It got easier, like the social distancing, it got easier. You just have to be patient." (21 year old woman, Cardenden)

RELATIONSHIPS

"The kids found it really hard (social distancing), they missed their friends. My son found it really hard, he's so social, yer, he found it really hard, really hard missing his school chums. He struggled mentally and now struggles if there are three or four people, yes. He doesn't like crowded places. He didn't come to the café. He sat in the car....and to be honest I wasn't wanting him to come as I was trying to keep him safe." (46-year-old woman, Cowdenbeath)

FINANCES

"Some aspects were good. I saved money as we had nowhere to go, so I saved money on the car as I couldn't take the kids as there was nowhere to go. Food wise was not so good. Gas and electricity not so good. I definitely had to use the food bank too, yes definitely. It was the school counsellor that helped me get that, yes." (46 year old woman, Kelty)

FOOD

"I think some people were a bit proud to be seen using a food bank 'cos you dunna want to be seen to kinda be using a food bank, eh? Especially if you're in the habit of kinda working and you've not been on benefits before. It's the kind of mindset.

People are a wee bit embarrassed. There's one thing coming here (community fridge) and getting a bag of food and another level when you go to someone and say I need help, will you refer me...it's another level. Here, there's no questions asked, they just get it." (Woman aged 36, Lochgelly)

FUTURE

"You adapt don't you. Aye, I think I'm quite resilient...it's hard, it's hard for everyone but everyone has to do their bit, ye ken." (36 year old woman, Lochgelly)

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

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

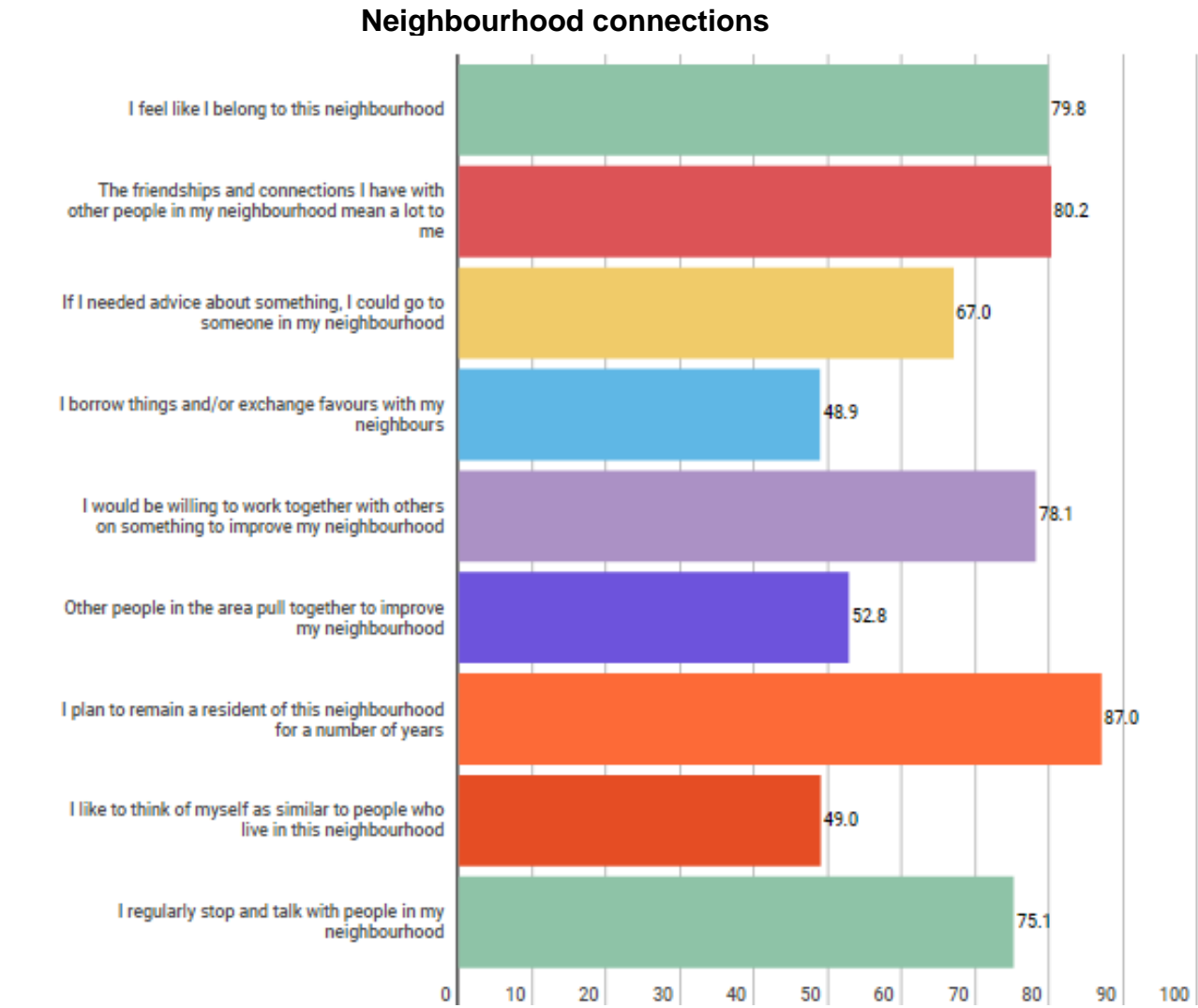


Figure 5.2 – Perceptions of neighbourhood connections (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

Over the last couple of years, while people have been encouraged to stay at home to stay safe, technology has become a necessity for keeping connected, working remotely and accessing vital information. Personal use of the internet in the Area is 96.4% compared to 93.9% for Fife. The main uses of the internet are to search for information, send and receive emails, and buy goods or services. While levels of internet use continue to grow, people can still be digitally excluded because they lack the skills to be able to confidently and safely navigate the digital world.

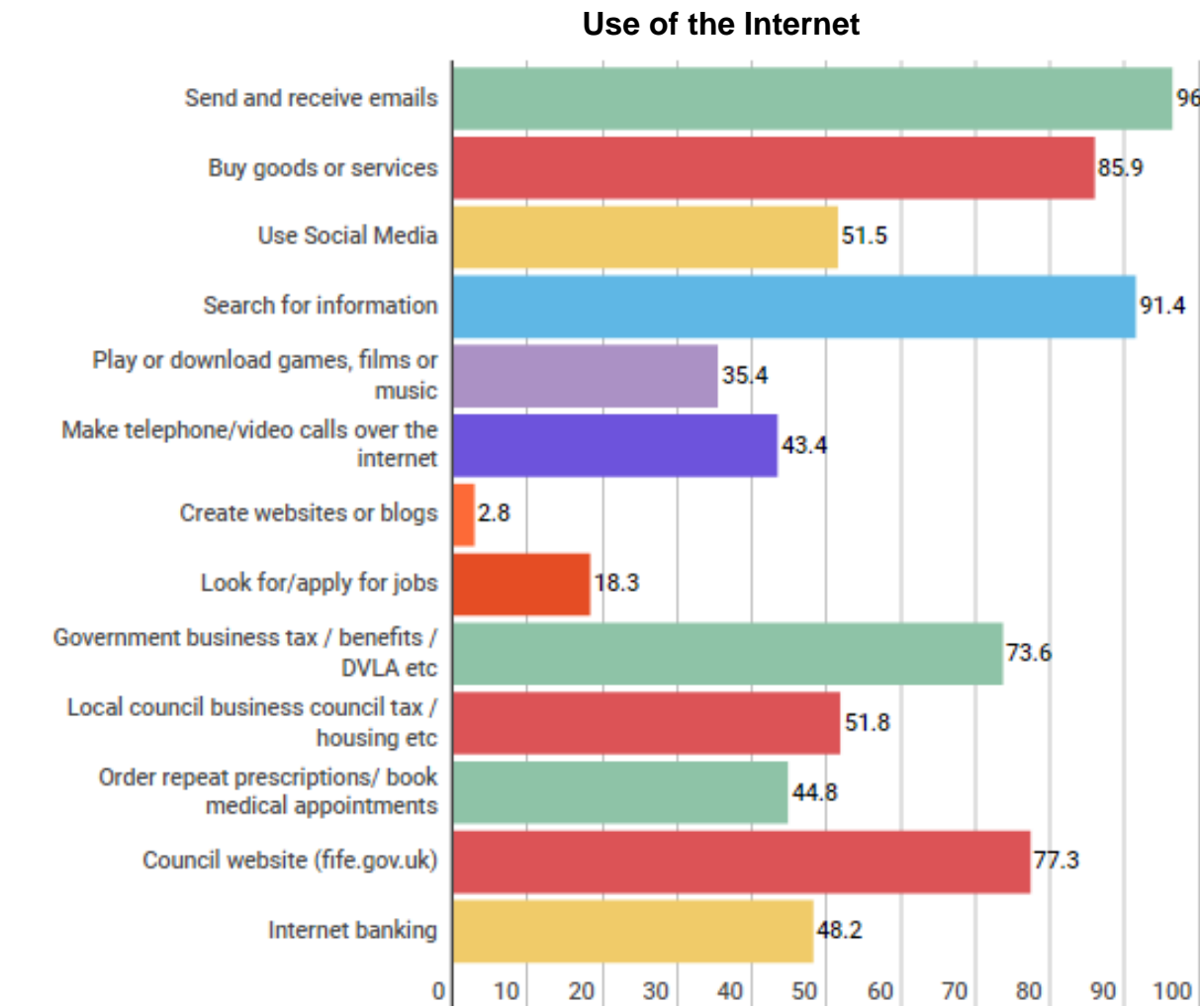


Figure 5.3 – Use of the Internet (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

6. Community

Insights into how communities are faring are a critical input when considering local places. As with all areas of Fife, the majority of local people in Cowdenbeath Area would like more involvement in decisions that the Council makes that affect their local area. 10.7% of people in Cowdenbeath Area feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area (compared to 13.7% for Fife).

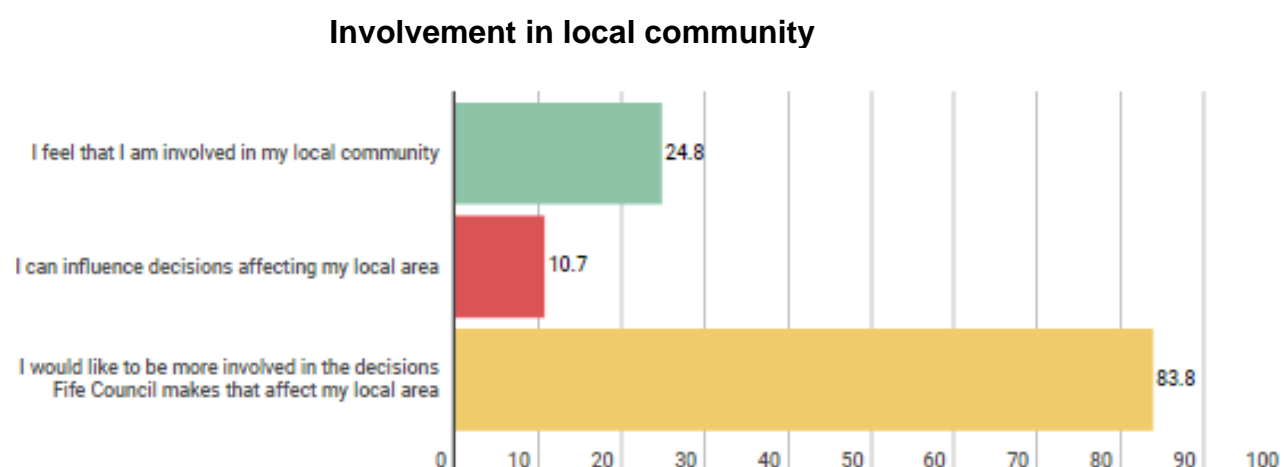


Figure 6.1 – Involvement in local community (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

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

The top five major issues for Cowdenbeath Area are:

- cost of living (including food, petrol prices),
- funding for public services,
- economy,
- increasing elderly population, and
- access to suitable housing.

In 2022, cost of living has replaced NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare as the main issue facing all Areas of Fife. Within Cowdenbeath Area funding for public services and access to suitable housing are also identified as main issues.

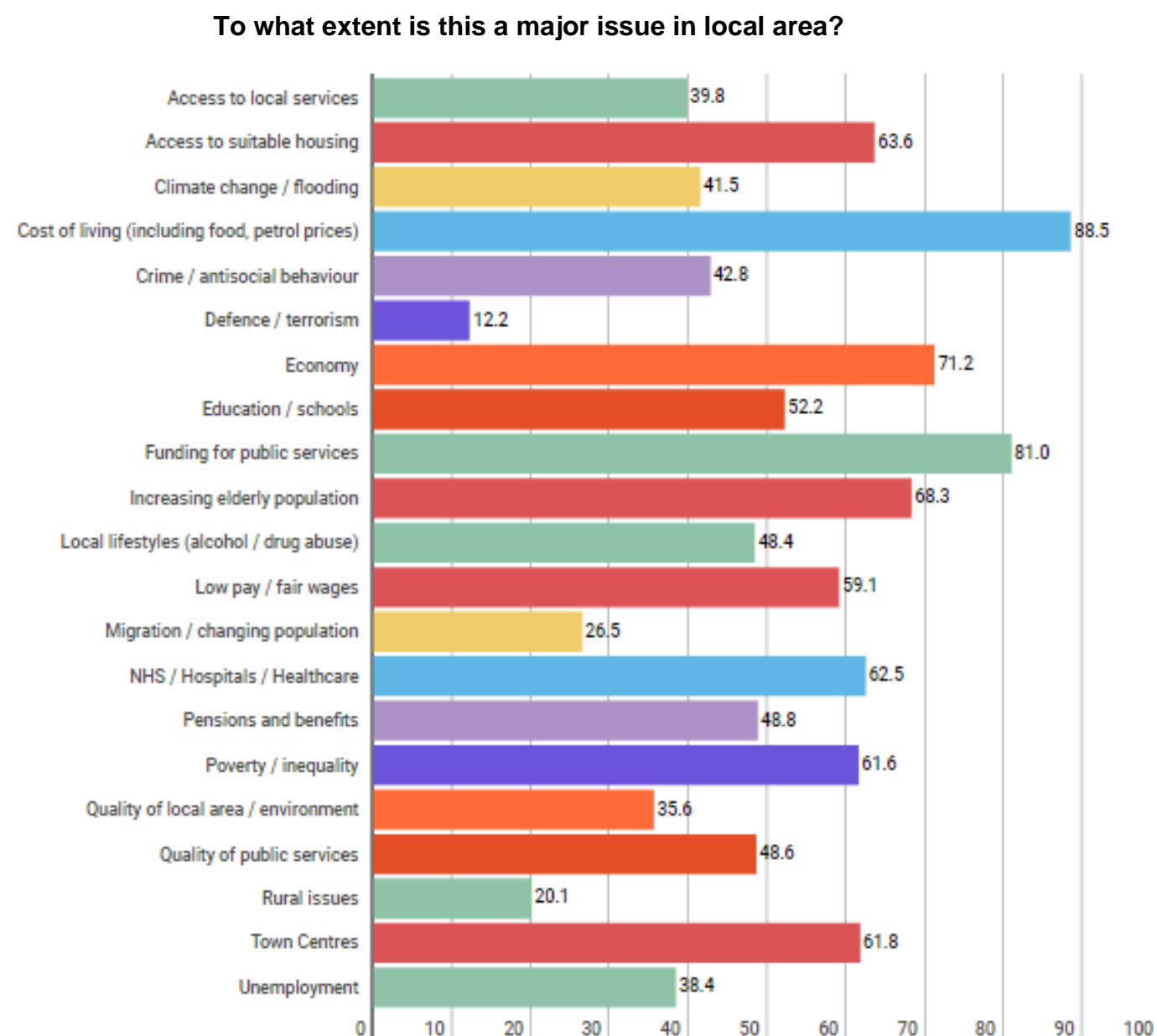


Figure 6.2 – Community perceptions of what is a major issue in the area (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

Of those surveyed, 54% report that they provide some kind of unpaid (voluntary) help to a group or organisation. This compares with 46% of Fife as a whole. The most common areas in which unpaid (voluntary) help is given to groups and organisations are trade union activities, local community / neighbourhood groups and groups / organisations relating to health, disability and social welfare.

Unpaid (voluntary) help to groups and organisations

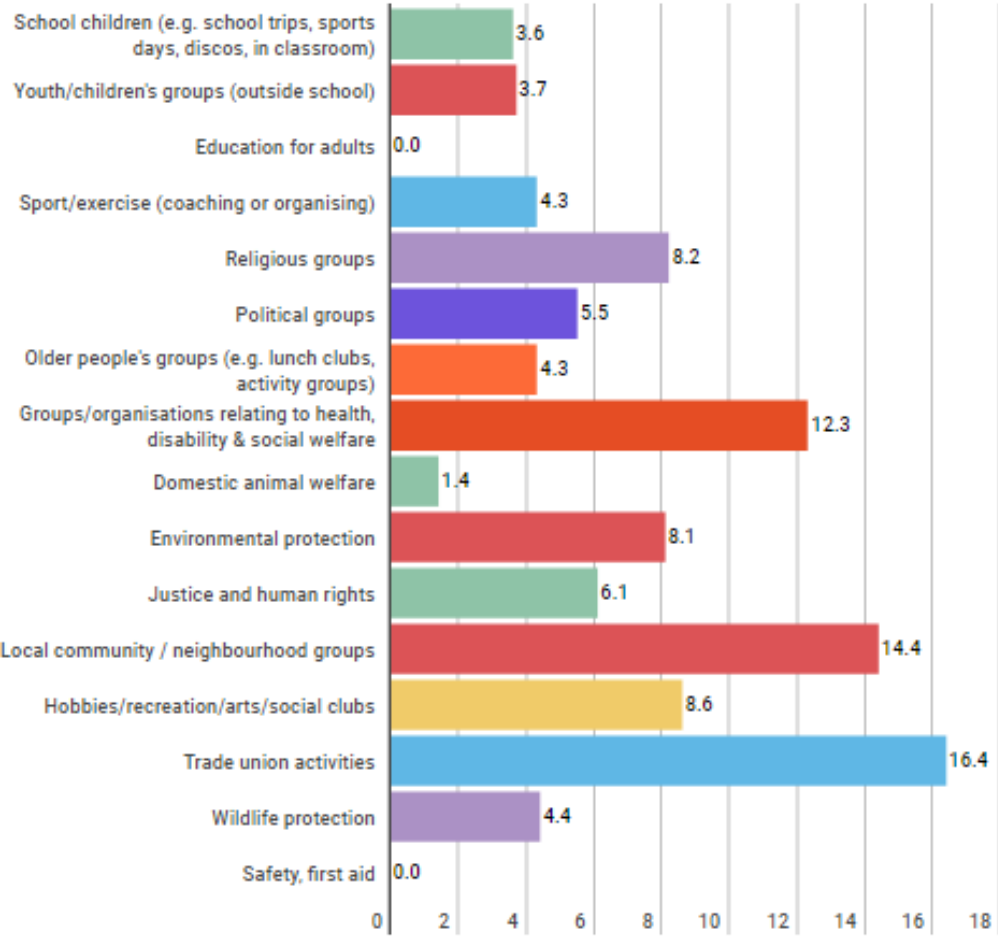


Figure 6.3 – Types of groups/organisations supported through unpaid (voluntary) help (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

Within Cowdenbeath Area, only one in three people believe the Council provides high quality services, and does the best it can with money available. Fewer people think the council is good at letting people know about the kind of services that it provides, or addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their local neighbourhood.

Within the area, fewer people believe that the Council is good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions or keeping people informed about what is happening in the local area.

Views on local Council and services it provides

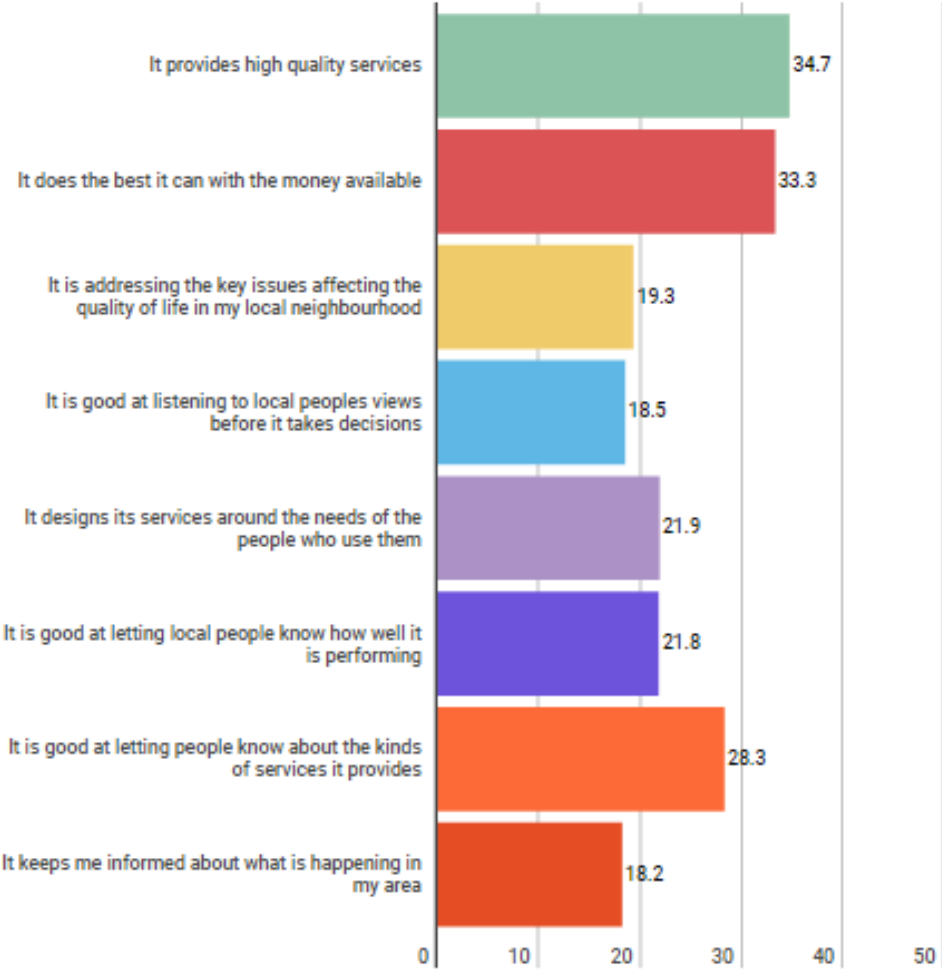


Figure 6.4 – Views on local Council and services it provides (Fife People's Panel, Survey 35, 2022)

7. Local Outcomes

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

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

According to the Community Planning Outcome Profile Tool (Improvement Service, 2022), 40% of communities in Cowdenbeath Area are doing better than expected compared to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland, compared to 50% of communities for Fife as a whole.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Cowdenbeath Area remain Lochore and Crosshill, and Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans. Areas with better life outcomes are Kelty East, Lochgelly East and Cowdenbeath North.

Lochore and Crosshill, Ballingry and Kelty continue to do worse than expected compared to similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland. Cardenden, Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly are doing better than expected.

Neighbourhoods showing the least improvement in life outcomes are Hill of Beath and Kingseat, and Cowdenbeath South. The greatest improvement in life outcomes is seen in Cardenden and Kelty East.

Neighbourhoods that have improved less than expected – when compared to similar areas in other parts of Scotland – continue to include Hill of Beath and Kingseat, and Lochore and Crosshill.

Kelty East, Cardenden and Lochgelly East continue to show improvements compared to other similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland.

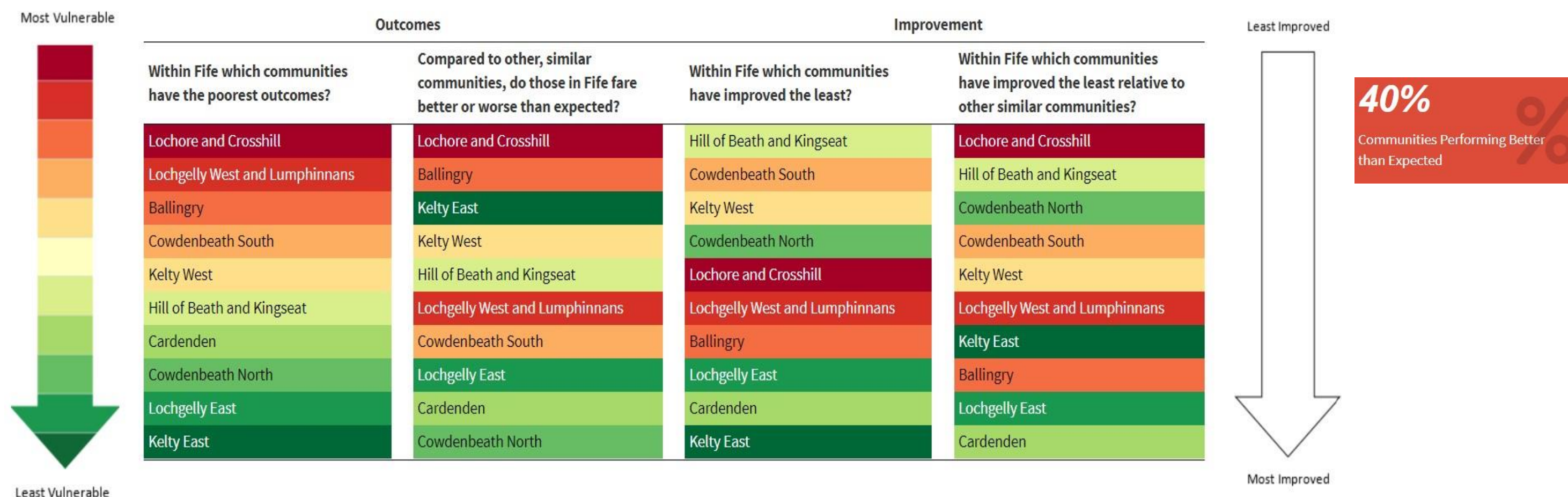


Figure 7.1 – How different neighbourhoods are doing on key life outcomes relative to other comparable areas (Improvement Service, Community Planning Outcomes Profile Tool 2022)

The map below (Figure 7.2) shows how local outcomes for neighbourhoods within the Area compare to other similar types of communities elsewhere in Scotland. It is a mixed picture across the Area with many neighbourhoods doing about the same as other similar types of neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland. Areas performing better in terms of life outcomes include Cardenden, Cowdenbeath and parts of Lochgelly. Neighbourhoods doing less well compared to other similar types of community include Lochore and Crosshill, Ballingry and Kelty.

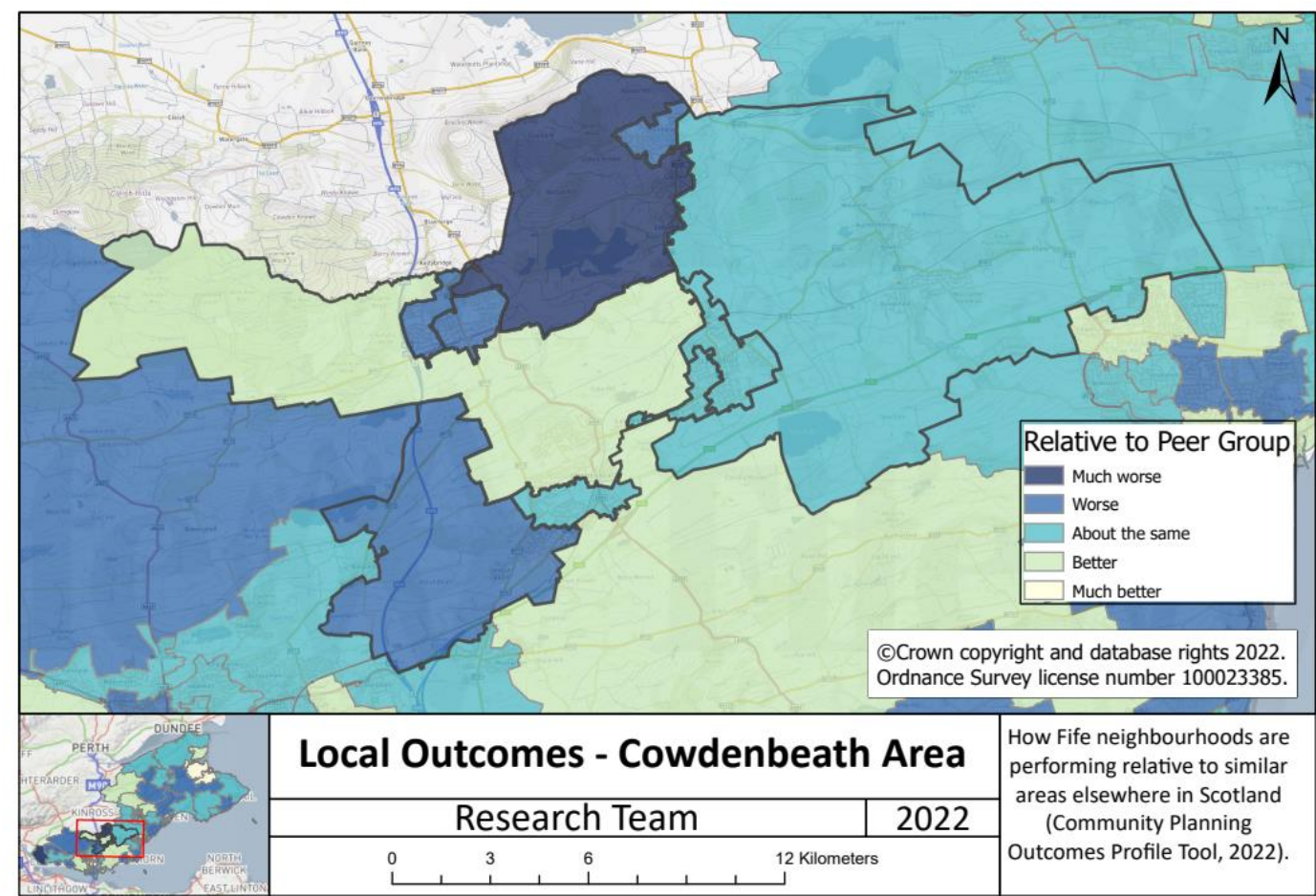


Figure 7.2 – How neighbourhoods are performing relative to similar areas elsewhere in Scotland (Community Planning Outcomes Profile 2022)

The majority of Fife’s most deprived areas continue to be concentrated in Mid Fife, across the Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes areas. Cowdenbeath Area has 19 of its 55 datazones in the 20% most deprived for Scotland (see Figure 7.3), which accounts for one in five of Fife’s most deprived datazones (see Figure 7.4).

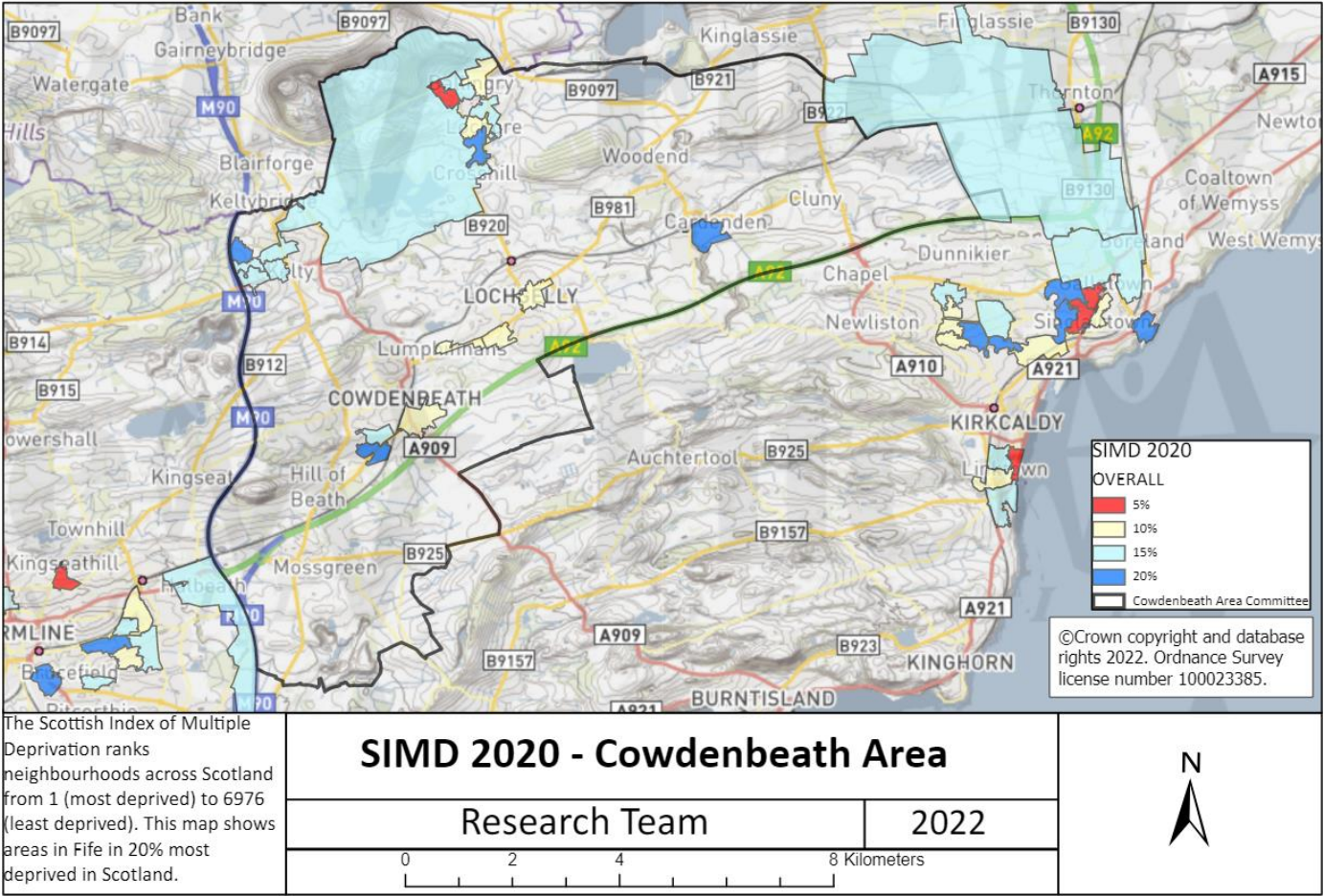


Figure 7.3 – Map highlighting the 5, 10, 15 and 20% most deprived datazones within the Area, SIMD 2020

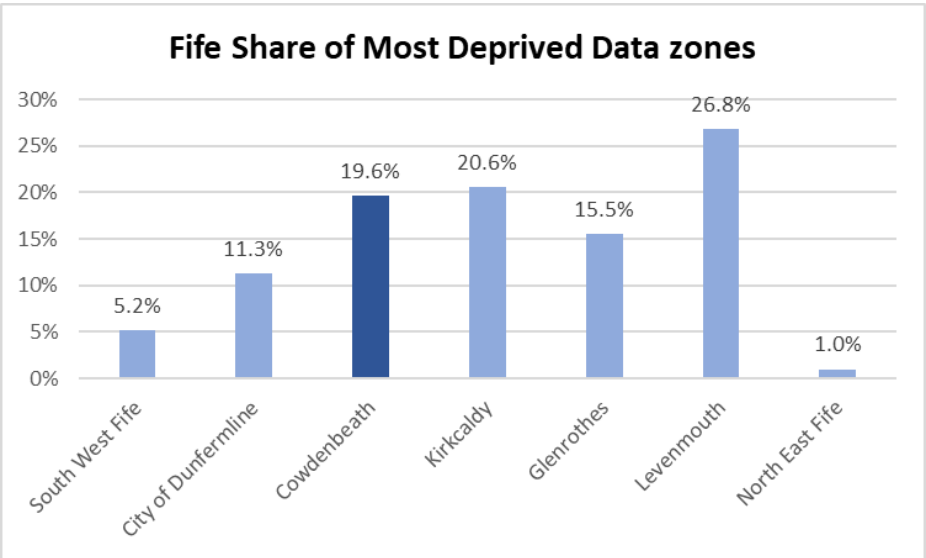


Figure 7.4 – Area share of Fife’s most deprived datazones, SIMD 2020
See [SIMD 2020 Focus on Cowdenbeath Area Profile \(https://know.fife.scot\)](https://know.fife.scot)

8. Horizons

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

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

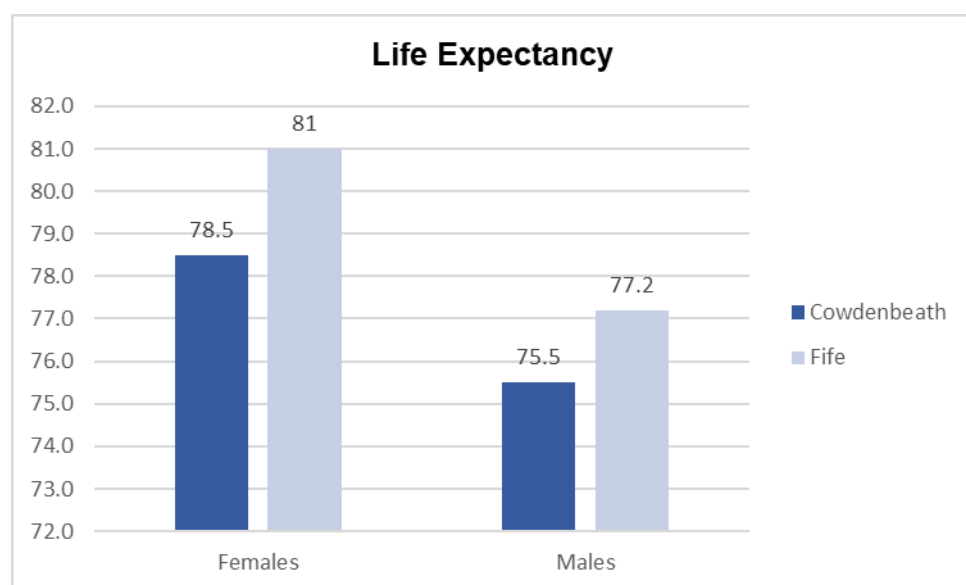


Figure 8.1 – Life Expectancy at birth for males and females (Source: ScotPHO)

The most fundamental element of any area's make-up is its people, and so it is crucial that there is a good understanding of what that population looks like and how it is likely to change in the future. Cowdenbeath Area, like Fife, has seen its population grow for several decades, and over the next 10 years is estimated to increase in size along with City of Dunfermline and North East Fife Areas. Cowdenbeath's overall population is projected to increase by around 1,170 people (3%) by 2030, with both Wards showing an increase. However, most of the growth will be in the Cowdenbeath Ward, projected to increase in population by 1,100 (5%), while Lochgelly and Cardenden and Benarty Ward will see a more modest growth of 70 people (0.4%).

Cowdenbeath's overall population increase is mainly due to an increase in the numbers of Older People, due to increase by 1,900 (24%) by 2030. Children and Working Ages will both reduce in numbers, with the number of children reducing by 340 (-4%) and Working Age groups reducing by 400 (-2%). Both of Cowdenbeath's Wards will see reductions in its child numbers, while Working Ages will increase slightly in Cowdenbeath Ward and reduce in Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty Ward. Both Wards will see an increase in Older People, with the largest increase in Cowdenbeath Ward of 1,000 (23%), while Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty Ward will increase by 930 (26%).

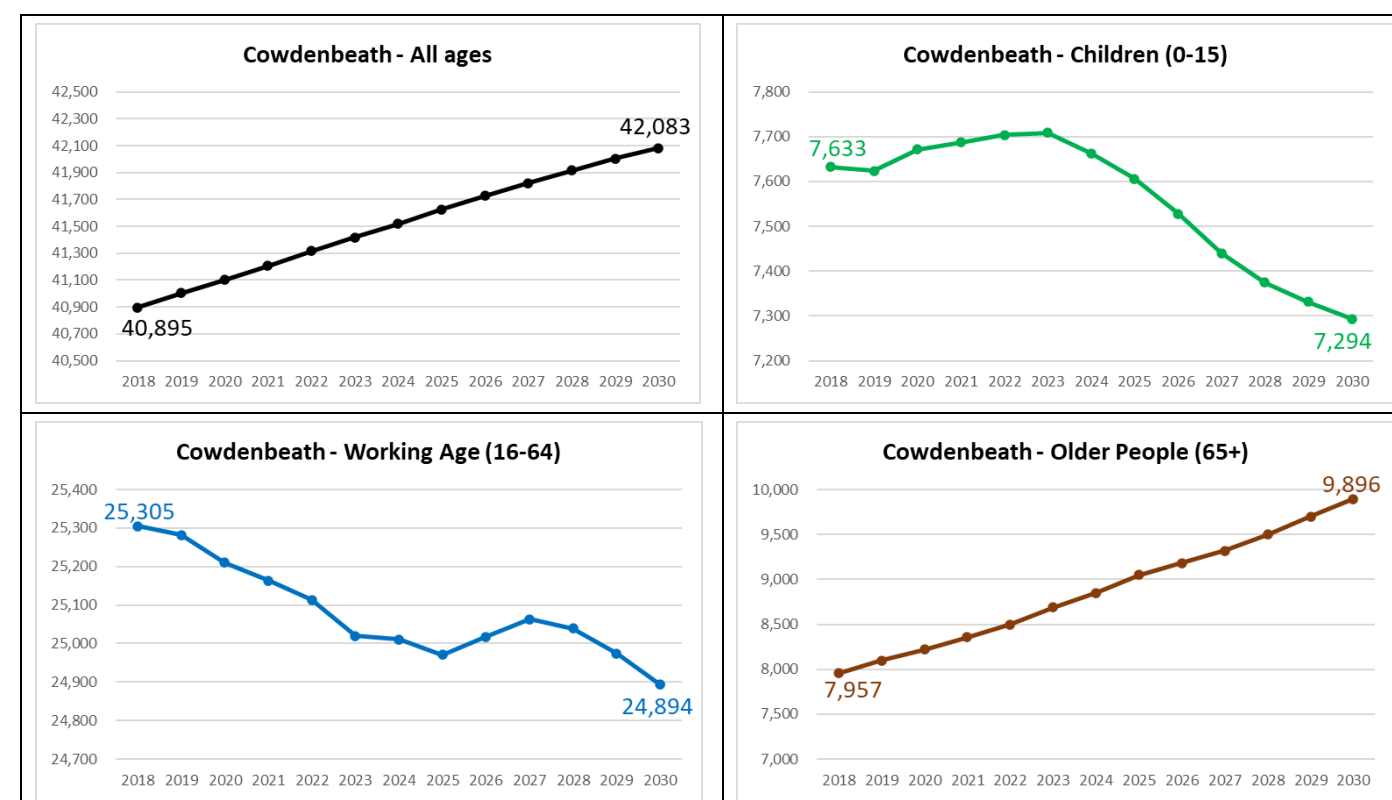


Figure 8.2 – Projected change in population of the area over the period 2018 to 2030 (Fife Council Research)

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

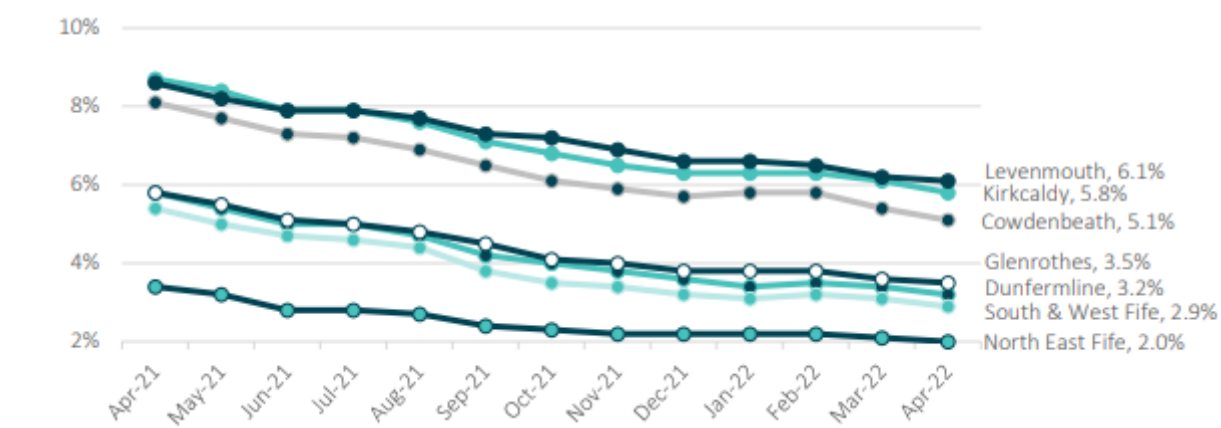


Figure 8.3 – Claimant Rate by Area Committee (Source: Monthly Economic Update, April 2022)

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

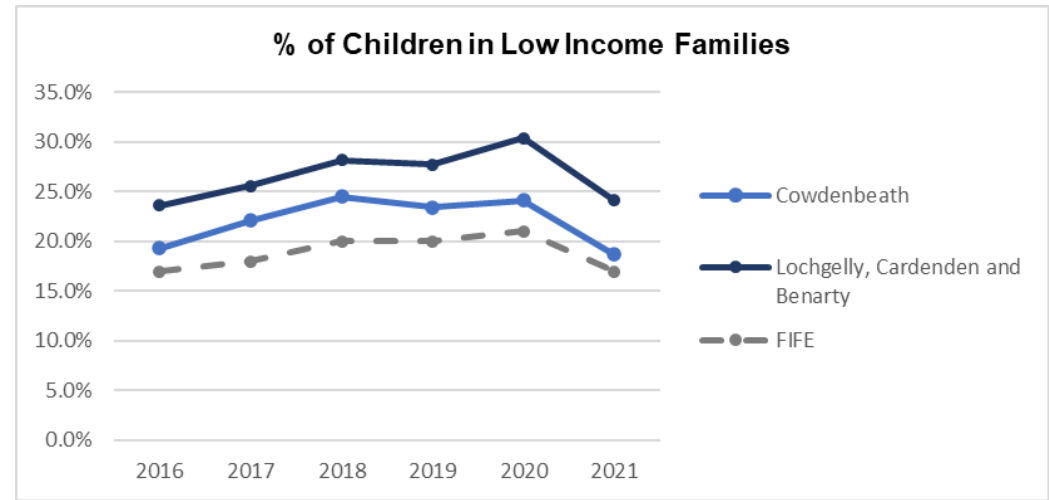


Figure 8.4 – Children in low income families by Ward (Source: Department of Work and Pensions)

There is a need to anticipate and plan for the more pressing implications of climate change and how it will affect peoples’ lives, particularly in areas of multiple deprivation.

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

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

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

Cowdenbeath also has high rates of challenging home types, including older properties, listed or restricted buildings status, and non-traditional properties, that make energy efficiency improvements expensive or prohibited. An investment portfolio blending public and private investment will be essential for homes of all tenures and non-domestic buildings, to reduce energy demand and decarbonise remaining energy consumption. Scottish Water’s Horizons interest in heat from waste water for the Cowdenbeath pool and surrounding area has been raised, but currently there is no Council capacity to develop this at present. There will need to be a significant increase in the pace and scale of progress on transition of buildings to decarbonise energy required if we are to meet new building criteria and the Scottish Government’s targets. This will be hampered to some extent by a lack of sufficient skills and suitable supplies. The cost of energy transition will be significant against existing income and spend opportunities across the area, and large-scale improvement initiatives will be needed as small-scale improvements tend to be less cost effective in the long run. In the short-term, there is likely to be significant increase in fuel poverty due to increasing energy prices. While the area has some capacity for wind turbines, there will be a future need for refurbishment and upscaling of these turbines.

Cowdenbeath Area has a number of high socioeconomic flood vulnerability areas due to its topography. This involves a number of areas which are not only prone to physical flooding, but the people that live there, mainly in areas of multiple deprivation (SIMD), are also the most vulnerable to these episodes of flooding. People living in SIMD areas are the least likely to be able to cope and are less resilient than more affluent areas in dealing with future repeat episodes of flooding. Sensitive assets prone to flooding in the area include Lumphinnans Care Village.

As with other areas in Fife, Cowdenbeath will need to decarbonise its various forms of transport including private and public methods, with only moderate access to rail services, and a greater need for access to more sustainable transport, including expansion of options and facilities for walking and cycling, particularly for commuting. Specific air quality risk areas include Mossmorran.