



# Local Strategic Assessment Levenmouth Area

Final Report

February 2025

Topics: Census, Economy, Environment, Health and wellbeing, Housing and community, Population, Poverty and deprivation

# 1. About this assessment

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The Local Strategic Assessment provides an overview of how a local area is doing. It brings together a range of information to inform and support local conversations about the issues that need to be addressed in the area, in terms of both people and place, through the local community plan.

It is not an assessment of service delivery or functional performance. There are complex and persistent issues affecting Fife's communities. This assessment of their current impact on local people and places does not attempt to convey, or quantify, the value of the public services and interventions that have been provided over the past three years. This is covered in local community plan progress reports to the area committee and regular reporting of performance by services and partners.

The purpose of the local strategic assessment is to:

- Provide a three yearly strategic overview document for each area committee to inform future planning.
- Provide good quality evidence base to support People and Place Leadership groups to provide effective local leadership and collaboration to ensure plans and strategies are aligned to deliver agreed priorities and ambitions.
- Collate and update a wide range of local information, assessment of need, and other evidence as key input to inform and ensure local community plans remain relevant.
- Inform discussions about priorities and actions that need addressed locally.
- Support the shift to prevention and neighbourhood / place-based approaches
- Support the alignment of spatial and community planning to deliver improved outcomes for local communities in Fife.

Talking points are given below to support the use of the information in this assessment:

## **Talking points**

- Does the 2022 Census data confirm or challenge what you know about this area?
- To what extent does knowing about the types of household within the area help you understand issues around child poverty and financial resilience?
- Which neighbourhoods have highest fuel poverty risk, and how does this relate to provision of support?
- How is the area responding to the relative need for improvement across different aspects of place?
- To what extent is accessibility of services an issue in terms of living locally?
- Are neighbourhood development plans in place for the areas with the poorest outcomes?
- How are land use policies being directed to improve local outcomes? How will you monitor and assess the impact the local development plan is having?

## 2. Overview

The Levenmouth area is made up of three main coastal towns (Leven, Buckhaven and Methil) and a number of smaller towns and villages. These sit on the north side of the Firth of Forth in the south east of Fife. The area is characterised by heavy and traditional industries, such as coal mining and the docks, which have steadily declined over recent decades. The Levenmouth Rail Link has been reinstated and reopened in June 2024.

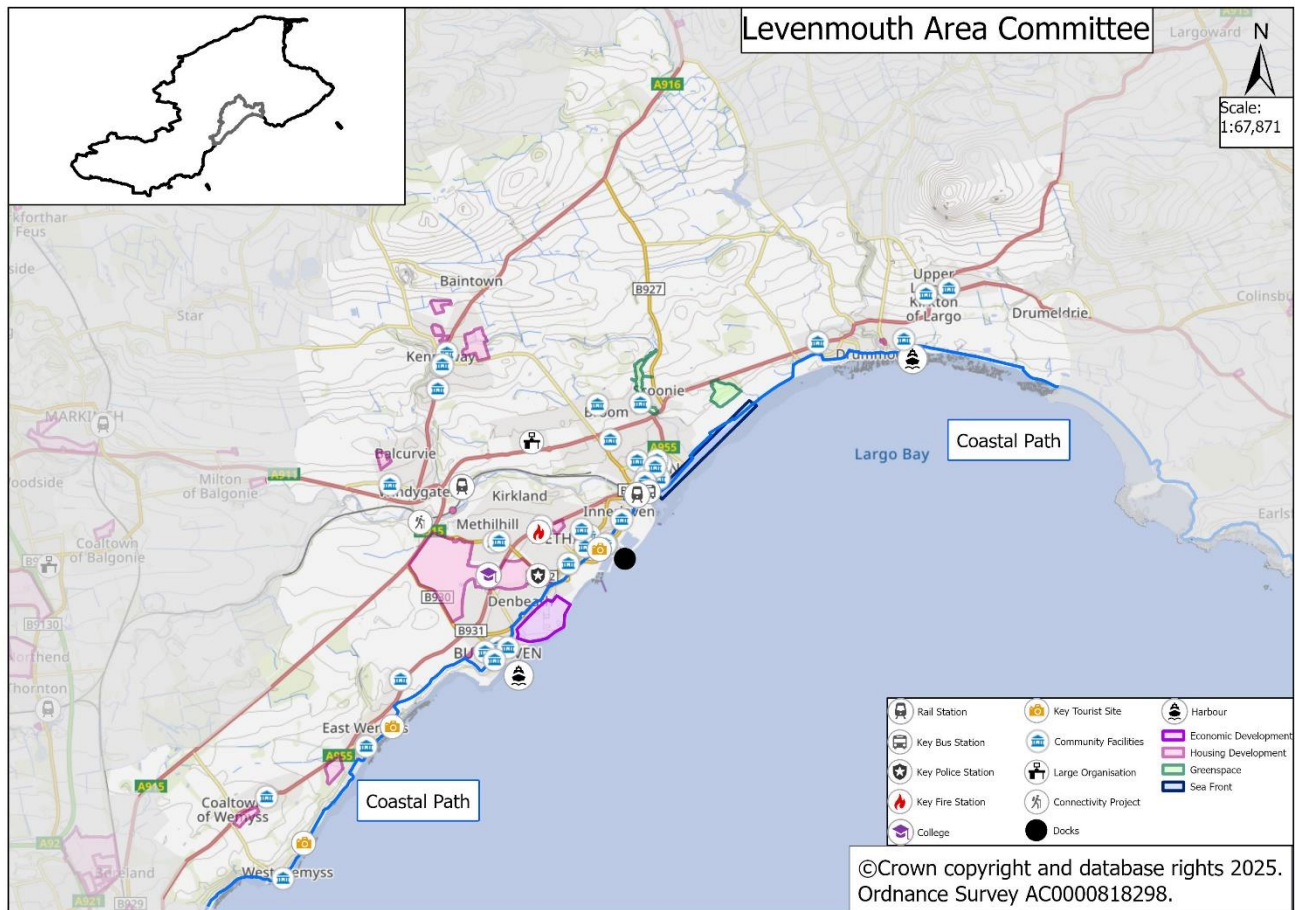


Figure 2.1 Strategic Overview of Area

## How Levenmouth area compares to Fife – in brief

More detail is given in each section of this assessment report.

### Profile

- Levenmouth area has similar levels of children, working-age, and older people compared with Fife.
- The area has higher levels of single person households and lower levels of two, three, and four or more person households, with lower levels of owner-occupied, higher levels of social-rented, and lower levels of private-rented accommodation than Fife.
- It has significantly lower proportions of people qualified to degree level or above, and significantly higher levels of people with no or low qualifications
- The area has lower levels of people in good health and higher proportions with a long-term illness or disease, mental health condition, and a physical disability compared with Fife. This is reflected in the area's economic inactivity being higher than the Fife level.

### People

- Low education, poor physical health, disability benefits, caring responsibilities, poor English skills, rural isolation and living alone, are particular drivers of poor financial resilience in the Levenmouth area.
- Levenmouth area has a higher proportion of people that live in what are described as Hard-up Households compared with Fife overall. This includes one-third that are categorised as Low Income Living, and higher proportions of Constrained Pensioners, Cash Strapped Families, and those facing Challenging Circumstances.

### Poverty

- Levenmouth area has the highest level of child poverty in Fife, and the second highest level of fuel poverty based on ability to pay.

### Place

- Levenmouth area is below Fife on all of the place and wellbeing outcomes, all of which have seen substantial negative change since 2021. Stewardship and Resources are identified as the most in need of improvement.

### Local outcomes

- Poorer outcomes are firmly grounded in place with communities in Mid Fife – across Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Levenmouth areas – showing greater vulnerability.
- Less than half of communities in the Levenmouth area are performing better than expected and are below the level for Fife.
- The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes within the area are Methil West and East, Buckhaven, Denbeath and Muiredge, and Methilhill.

### Development planning

- The area is a series of small towns, many of which are conjoined. Their size allows them to retain reasonable access to key services and facilities.
- Parts of the area are at risk of flooding from the River Leven and Scoonie Burn and from surface water in Leven with increased risk of coastal erosion around Largo Bay.
- Planned growth and an aging population will put increased pressure on healthcare facilities.
- The area has the highest levels of deprivation in Fife.



## 3. Profile

### Population

Levenmouth Area has a population of 38,599 people, of whom 6,235 (16.2%) are children, 23,552 (61%) are working age (16-64 years), and 8,812 (22.8%) are aged 65 and over. Within the area, Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages has a greater proportion of children and working age, while Leven, Kennoway and Largo has a greater proportion of older adults.

**Table 3.1 - 2022 Mid-year Population Estimates**

Ward	Total Population	Children (0-15 years)	Working Age (16-64 years)	Older Adults (65+ years)
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	20,085	15.4%	60.0%	24.6%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	18,514	16.9%	62.2%	20.9%
Levenmouth Area	38,599	16.2%	61.0%	22.8%
Fife	371,390	16.6%	61.7%	21.7%

### Households

The 2022 Scotland Census shows that Levenmouth Area has 18,023 occupied households, 10.6% of the Fife total. One person households (38.7%) are the most common household type in Levenmouth Area, with the highest proportions of people living alone (42%) in Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages wards. Leven, Kennoway and Largo has the highest proportion of households with three or more people (27.5%).

**Table 3.2 - 2022 Scotland Census - Household Size**

	Total Households	One Person	Two People	Three People	Four or more
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	9,167	35.6%	36.9%	13.9%	13.6%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	8,856	42.0%	32.0%	13.3%	12.6%
Levenmouth Area	18,023	38.7%	34.5%	13.6%	13.2%
Fife	169,567	35.1%	35.8%	14.1%	15.0%

Home ownership is the main tenure type in Levenmouth Area, and is below the Fife level, with Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages wards having much lower levels of home ownership. Levenmouth Area is above the Fife level for social rented properties, with higher levels of social renting in Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages. Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages also has higher levels of private renting.

**Table 3.3 - 2022 Scotland Census - Household Tenure**

	Total Households	Owned	Social Rented	Private Rented	Lives Rent Free
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	9,167	66.9%	21.8%	9.5%	1.5%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	8,856	48.6%	37.5%	12.0%	1.5%
Levenmouth Area	18,023	57.9%	29.5%	10.7%	1.5%
Fife	169,567	65.3%	21.9%	11.6%	1.3%

The majority of occupied households (73.6%) have access to a car or van, with just over one quarter (26.3%) having no access to a car or van. Leven, Kennoway and Largo ward has the highest level of households with access to a car or van, while Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages has the lowest.

**Table 3.4 - 2022 Scotland Census - Access to a Car or Van**

	Total Households	No car or van	One car or van	Two or more cars or vans
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	9,167	21.1%	44.3%	34.6%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	8,856	31.8%	43.5%	24.7%
Levenmouth Area	18,023	26.3%	43.9%	29.7%
Fife	169,567	22.1%	44.2%	33.7%

## Health and Wellbeing

The majority of individuals in Levenmouth Area class themselves as being in very good or good health. Overall people living in Leven, Kennoway and Largo have better health than those living in Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages.

**Table 3.5 - 2022 Scotland Census - General Health**

	All people	Very Good / Good	Fair	Bad / Very Bad
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	19,500	75.5%	16.6%	7.9%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	18,073	69.2%	19.7%	11.1%
Levenmouth Area	37,573	72.5%	18.1%	9.4%
Fife	371,792	77.8%	15.1%	7.0%

Nearly one in four people in Fife (23.4%) reported having a long-term illness/condition, higher than the Scottish average of 21.4% and has increased in Fife from 20.3% in 2011. Mental health is the second most commonly reported health condition. This has increased threefold at Fife level to 11.9% in 2022, from 4.1% in 2011. This is driven by a large increase amongst younger people and is in line with the picture for Scotland as a whole.

Levenmouth Area has higher proportions of people with a long-term illness or disease, a mental health condition, and a physical disability compared with Fife, with Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages ward having the highest levels in the Area.

**Table 3.6 - 2022 Scotland Census - Long term conditions**

	All people	Long-term illness, disease or condition	Mental health condition	Physical disability
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	19,500	24.6%	11.1%	11.7%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	18,073	26.0%	15.7%	15.2%
Levenmouth Area	37,573	25.3%	13.3%	13.4%
Fife	371,792	23.4%	11.9%	10.4%

Health and wellbeing profiles, showing the latest data available across a range of health indicators, can be accessed from [ScotPHO profiles](#). Choose HSC Locality for area profile or Intermediate zone for neighbourhood profiles within an area.

## Unpaid care

The number of unpaid carers has increased across all age groups over the last decade in both Fife and Scotland. A marginally higher proportion of unpaid care is provided across all wards within Levenmouth Area, relative to Fife.

**Table 3.7 - 2022 Scotland Census - Unpaid Care**

	All people aged 3 and over	Providing unpaid care	1-19 hrs	20-34 hrs	35-49 hrs	50 hrs +
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	19,007	13.4%	7.1%	1.2%	1.5%	3.6%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	17,578	13.7%	5.7%	1.5%	1.9%	4.5%
Levenmouth Area	36,585	13.6%	6.5%	1.4%	1.7%	4.1%
Fife	362,136	12.2%	6.7%	1.2%	1.3%	3.0%

## Qualifications

Levenmouth Area has a higher proportion of individuals with low or no qualifications, and a lower proportion of those who are qualified to degree level or above. Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages ward has the highest levels of people with low or no qualifications, while Leven, Kennoway and Largo ward has the highest levels of those with a degree level or above qualification.

**Table 3.8 – 2022 Scotland Census – Highest level of qualifications**

	All people aged 16 and over	With no or low qualifications	Degree level or above
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	16,481	39.6%	24.3%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	15,024	51.4%	14.5%
Levenmouth Area	31,505	45.3%	19.6%
Fife	309,933	36.6%	28.6%



## Economic activity

The 2022 Census data tells us that 17,058 (54.1%) people in Levenmouth Area are economically active, including all those in employment and full-time students available for work. This is lower than the Fife level of 58.2%. Levenmouth Area has a lower level of people that are in work as an employee and that are self employed. The proportion of unemployed people looking for work is higher than the Fife level, and the area has fewer students available for work.

**Table 3.9 – 2022 Scotland Census – Economically Active**

	All people aged 16 and over	All employees	Self employed	Unemployed – available for work	Students – available for work
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	16,481	44.7%	6.1%	2.0%	2.3%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	15,024	42.4%	4.8%	3.4%	2.5%
Levenmouth Area	31,505	43.6%	5.5%	2.7%	2.4%
Fife	309,936	46.2%	6.7%	2.0%	3.2%

The proportion of people in Levenmouth Area that are classified as economically inactive is 14,447 (45.9%), higher than the Fife level of 43.9%. The majority of economically inactive people are retired (27.0%), slightly lower than the Fife level of 27.7%. There are lower levels of students in the area, but higher proportions of people looking after home or family, and long-term sick or disabled.

**Table 3.10 – 2022 Scotland Census – Economically Inactive**

	All people aged 16 and over	Retired	Student	Looking after home or family	Long term sick or disabled	Econ. inactive other
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	16,481	29.2%	3.9%	3.7%	5.7%	2.4%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	15,024	24.5%	4.4%	5.8%	9.0%	3.1%
Levenmouth Area	31,505	27.0%	4.1%	4.7%	7.3%	2.7%
Fife	309,936	27.7%	5.2%	3.6%	5.2%	2.2%

## Industry

In Levenmouth Area, the industry sector employing the most people is health and social care, employing 16.9% of the area's workforce, and is the highest level of the seven Fife areas, with Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages ward employing the highest level (18.3%). This is followed by manufacturing (13.4%), wholesale and retail sector (12.2%), public administration (9.3%), and construction (8.18%). All of the top five industries in Levenmouth Area have higher levels of people working in them compared with Fife overall.

**Table 3.11 – 2022 Scotland Census – Industry Type**

	All people aged 16 plus in work	Human health and social work	Manufact.	Wholesale retail, repair of motor vehicles	Public admin, defence, social security	Construction
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	8,693	15.7%	14.0%	11.0%	9.5%	8.7%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	7,394	18.3%	12.6%	13.6%	9.0%	7.5%
Levenmouth Area	17,058	16.9%	13.4%	12.2%	9.3%	8.1%
Fife	171,809	14.6%	11.8%	9.4%	9.4%	7.6%

More information on Fife's labour market and business base, along with Fife Council's economic development and employability activities, can be found in the annual [Fife Local Area Economic Profiles](#).

For the latest labour market data see the quarterly [Labour Market Updates](#); these provide figures on the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Fife and Fife's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity rates.

# 4. People

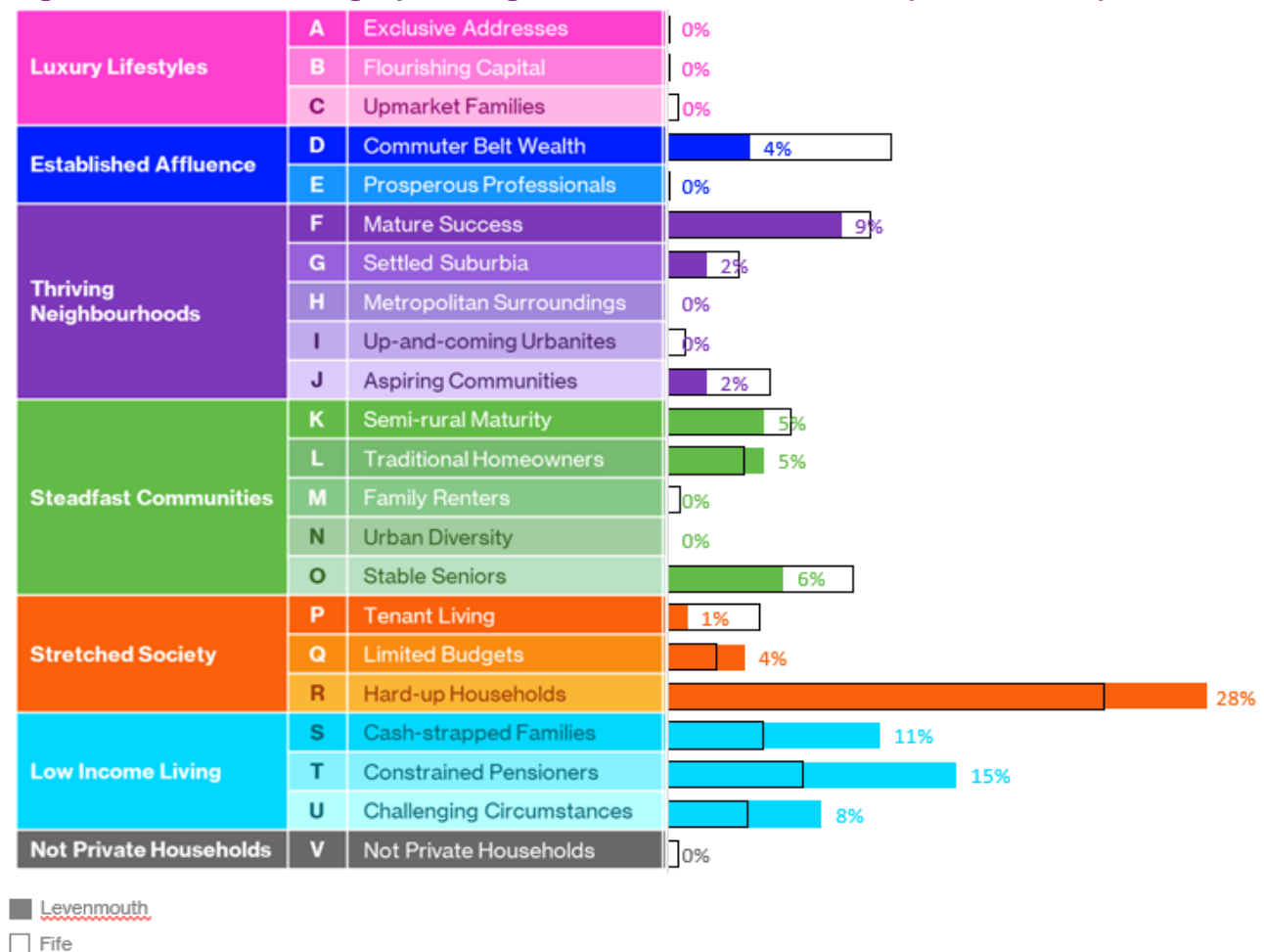
## Population segments

33% of households in Levenmouth Area can be categorised as Stretched Society. While the most common household type in both the area and Fife is hard-up households, 28% of households are of this type in Levenmouth Area compared to 23% for Fife as a whole. This is according to CACI’s Acorn classification which provides geo-demographic segmentation of households at postcode level.

34% of households are categorised as Low Income Living (compared to 16% for Fife), with there being higher proportions of Constrained pensioners (15%), Cash Strapped Families (11%) and Challenging Circumstances (8%) than for Fife as a whole.

In Levenmouth Area only 13% of households are categorised as Thriving Neighbourhoods and 16% as Steadfast communities, compared to 21% for Fife as a whole for both of these household types.

**Figure 4.1 – Geo-demographic segmentation of households (CACI, Acorn)**



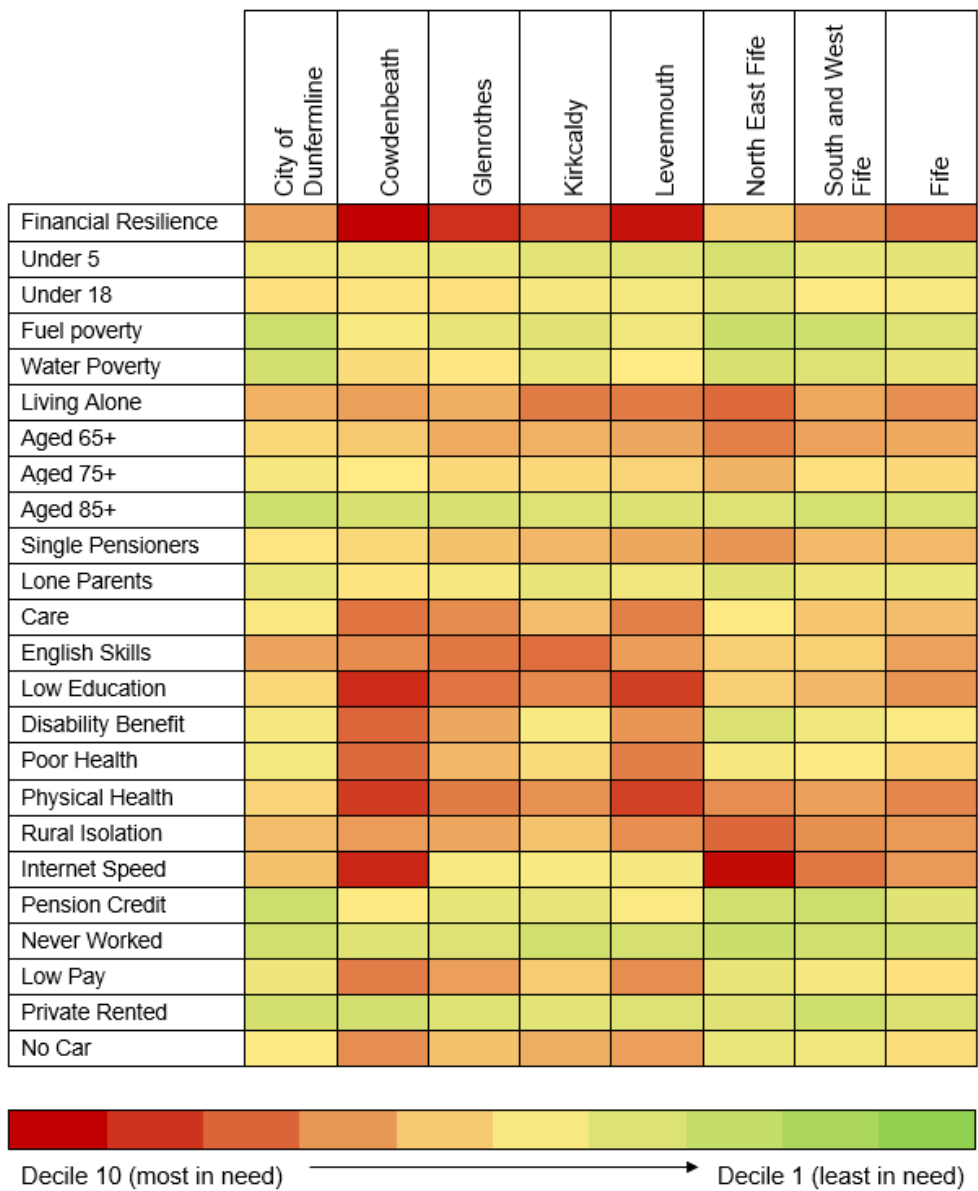
See [Acorn Pen Portraits -Group](#) for a pen portrait on each of the household types.

## Financial resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the financial vulnerabilities of households to unexpected economic shocks. In 2024, cost of living was identified by local people as the top issue affecting life in Fife, followed by funding for public services, poverty and inequality.

Fife is ranked 81 out of 379<sup>1</sup> local areas across the UK for financial resilience (Experian), a score created from a range of socioeconomic variables. Financial resilience is correlated to other factors such as low levels of education, low pay, poor physical health, living alone, and no access to a car. Low education, poor physical health, disability benefits, caring responsibilities, poor English skills, rural isolation and living alone are particular drivers of poor financial resilience in Levenmouth Area.

**Figure 4.2 - Heat map showing average deciles (1-10) for all Fife postcodes for key variables by Area (Experian Financial Resilience and Safeguarding Model)**

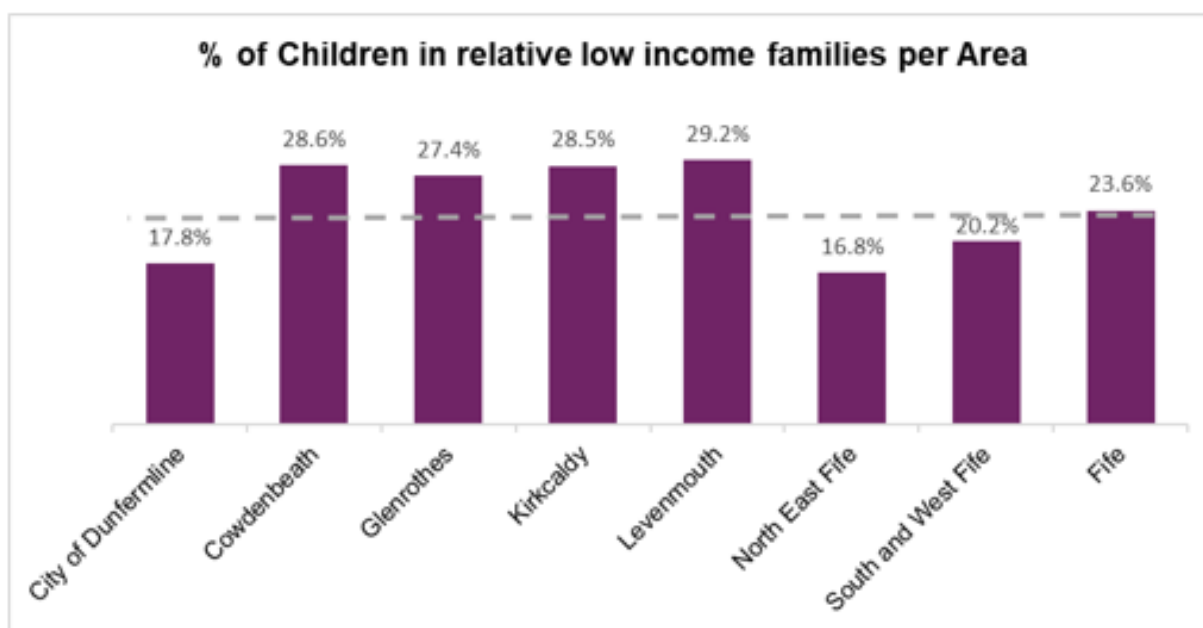


<sup>1</sup> 1 is least resilient and 379 is most resilient.

## 5. Poverty

There are many reasons why a household may find itself in poverty such as unemployment, low paid jobs, inadequate benefits as well as rising living costs.

Fife continues to track just above Scotland for child poverty (a proxy for household poverty). 23.6% of children in Fife are now living in relative poverty (in households with income less than 60% UK median income) compared to 21.3% for Scotland. Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes Areas all have higher child poverty rates than Fife as a whole. This is broadly consistent with income and employment deprivation (SIMD 2020).



**Figure 5.1 - % of children in low income families (relative poverty) (DWP, FYE 2023)**

The table below shows the number and proportion of children in relative poverty alongside the take up of the Scottish Child Payment (for low-income families with children and young people aged under 16). While this is helping to mitigating child poverty at a local level, there may still be some households that this is not reaching.

**Table 5.2 – Number and percent of children, 1) in relative poverty (DWP, FYE 2023) and 2) benefitting from Scottish Child Payment (Social Security Scotland, 09/23)**

Area	Relative Poverty		Scottish Child Payment	
	Number	%	Number	%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	1,170	34.3%	2,160	63.6%
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	740	23.2%	1,400	41.9%
Levenmouth	1,910	29.2%	3,560	52.9%
Fife	15,024	23.6%	24,810	39.0%
Scotland	194,592	21.3%	323,315	35.5%



## Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty relates to households that must spend a higher proportion of their household income to keep their house warm at a reasonable temperature. It is affected by three factors:

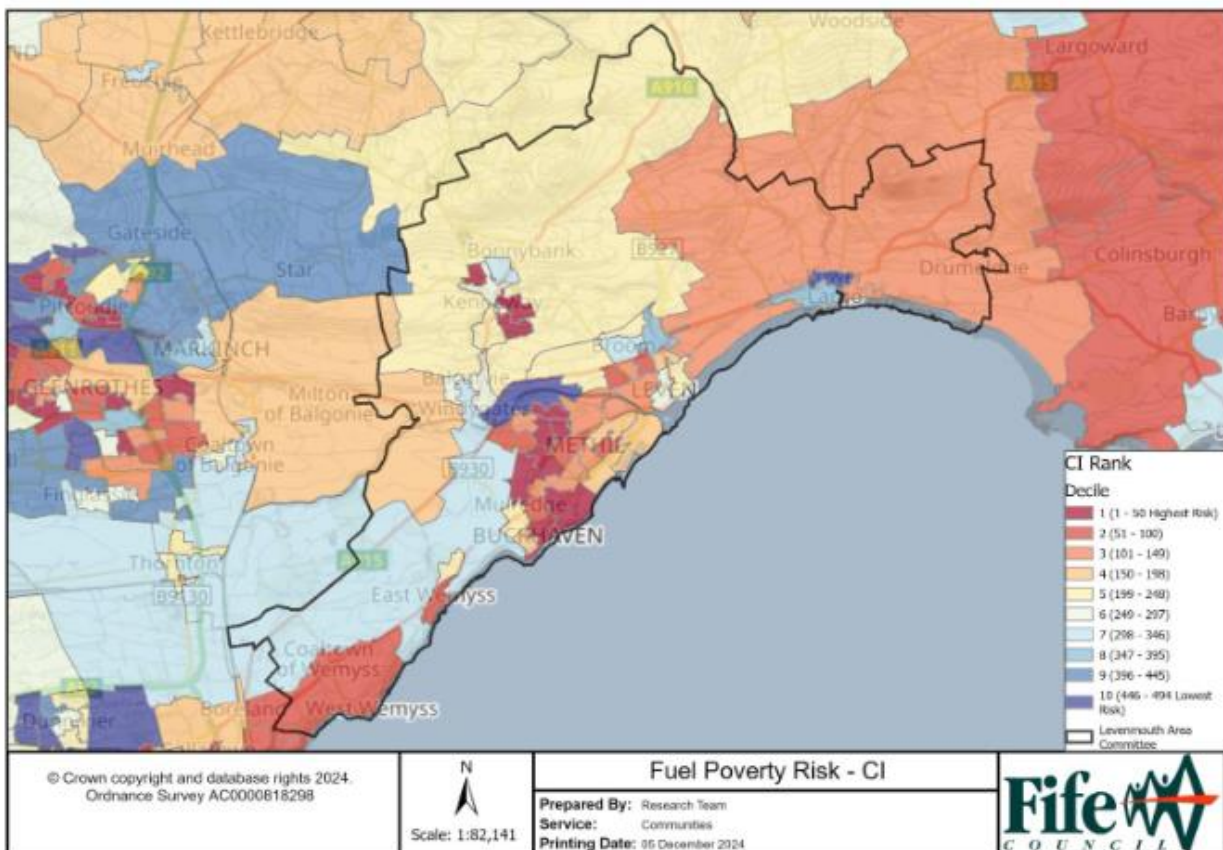
- 1) household income,
- 2) an increase in household fuel costs,
- 3) a household's energy use.

The Research and Insight Team have developed a Fife Fuel Poverty Composite Index (CI) to answer the question:

**‘Where are neighbourhoods in Fife with increased risk of experiencing fuel poverty?’**,

This provides a more accurate measure of fuel poverty risk to enable services to target fuel poverty need more effectively.

Areas of highest fuel poverty risk on the overall index include: Buckhaven Central, Methil Trees East, Kennoway South East, Denbeath South, Methilhill Toll Bar, Kennoway North West, Methil Trees West, Methil Methilhill, Kennoway East, Buckhaven Birds.



**Figure 5.3 – Fuel Poverty Composite Index**

The Demand sub-index highlights Lower Largo, Methil Trees East, Kennoway South East, Buckhaven Central, and Leven Links while the Ability to Pay sub-index highlights known areas of need in Methil Memorial Park, Aberhill, Buckhaven South, Lower Methil, Methil Savoy, Buckhaven Central, East Wemyss McDuff, Buckhaven North, Methil Old Bayview, Methil Kirkland, and Methilhill North.

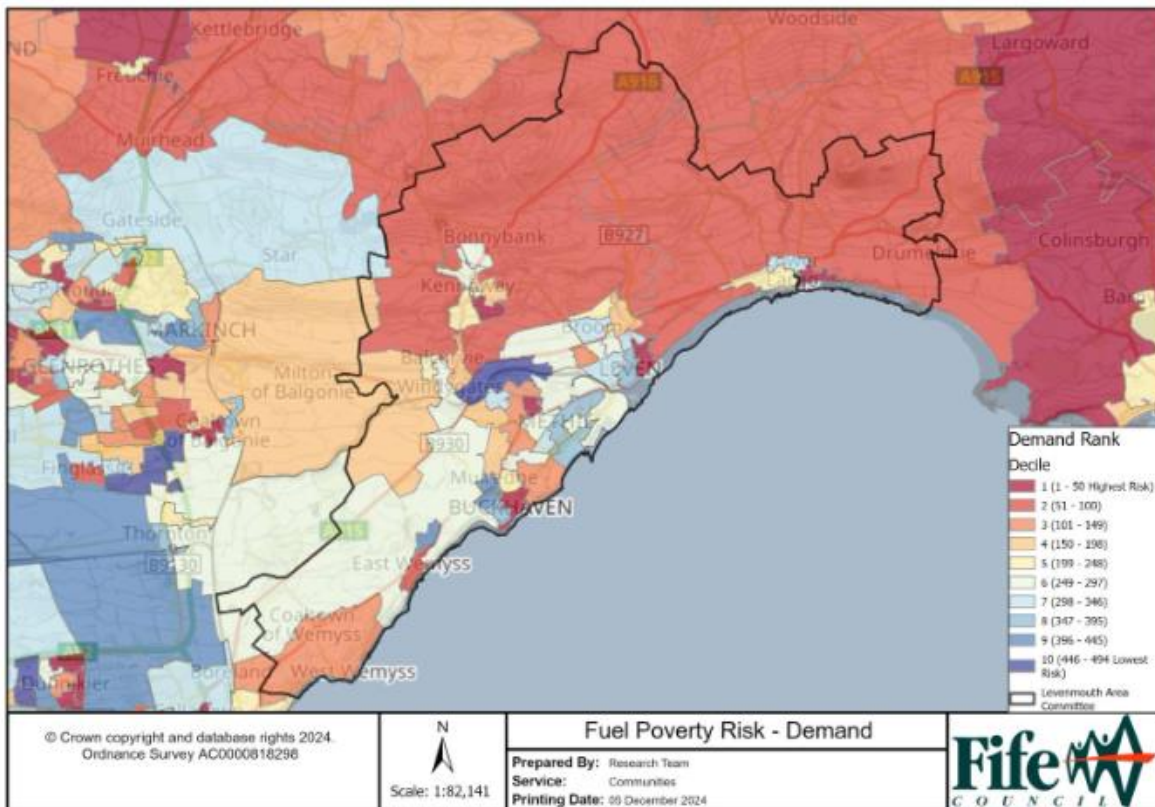


Figure 5.4 – Demand sub-index

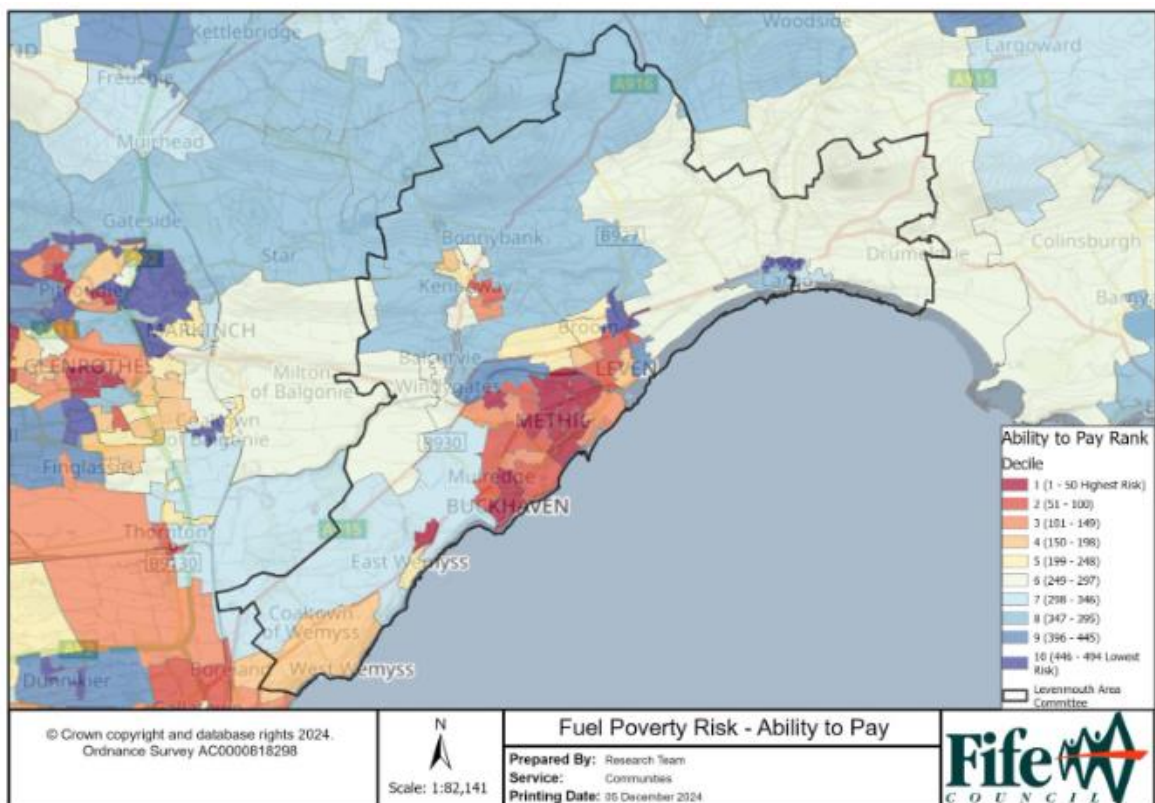
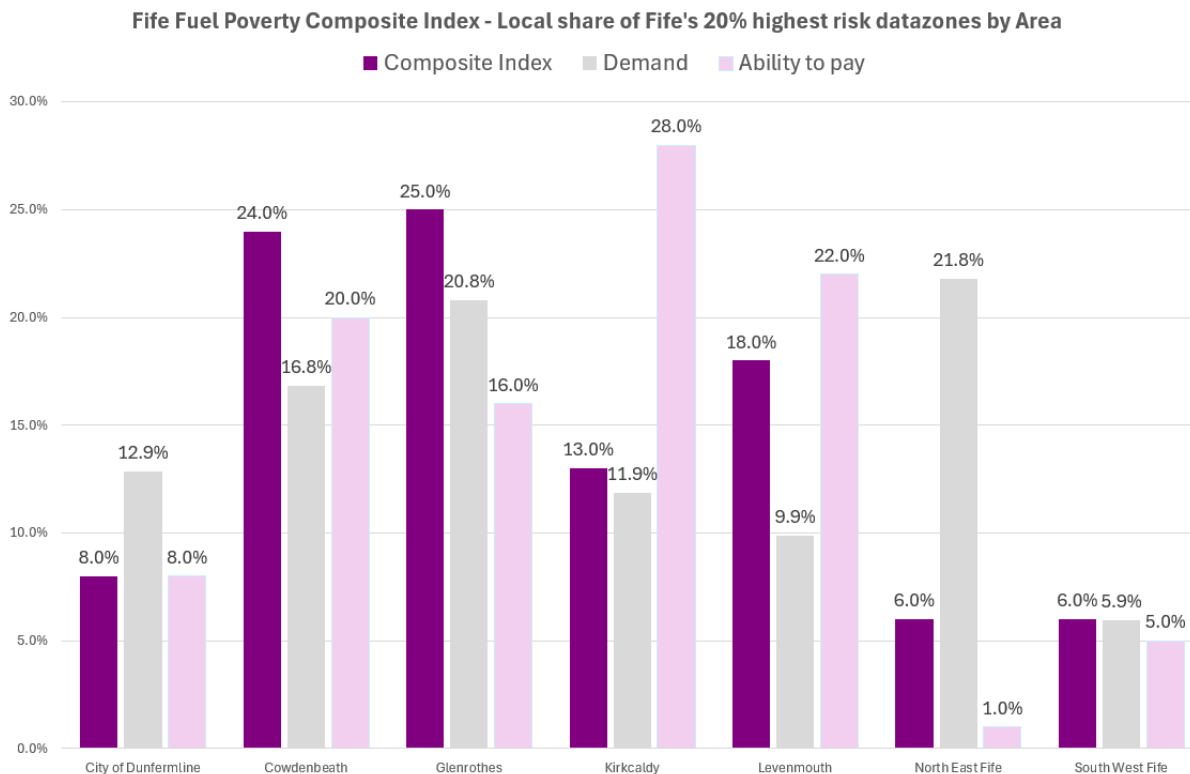


Figure 5.5 - Ability to pay sub-index

If the risk of fuel poverty was distributed equally across each of the areas of Fife, then each area would have 20% of its datazones in the 20% highest fuel poverty risk for Fife. In terms of local share of neighbourhoods with highest risk of fuel poverty, Levenmouth Area has 18% of Fife’s 20% highest risk datazones on the overall index, 9.9% of highest risk for Demand sub-index, and 22% of the Ability to Pay sub-index.



**Figure 5.6 – Local share of Fife’s 20% highest risk datazones by Area (FFPCI,2024)**

**Technical note**

The Fife Fuel Poverty Composite has been created by Fife Council’s Research and Insight Team to support improved targeting of fuel poverty as part of Fife’s Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).

Indices provide an interpretable metric for subjects that are difficult to measure, such as social vulnerability or risk. A commonly used composite index is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which ranks all data zones (DZ) in Scotland from most to least deprived.

Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to integrate, weight and visualise indicators to show areas of low to high fuel poverty risk. The Composite Index is divided into two domains: 1) demand for fuel and 2) ability to pay for fuel. Demand is further divided into property and people sub-indices representing the heating requirements of the building and increased heating requirements from specific demographics. Variables have been attributed to sub-indices to reduce the impact of correlation, as correlation among selected variables may lead to unintentional weighting. The ability to pay sub-index includes household characteristics that have been associated with increased risk of fuel poverty. The results from the domains were combined to create an overall index, which is the average of the sub-indices.

More information is available in the briefing [Fuel Poverty: Focus on Levenmouth Area](#)



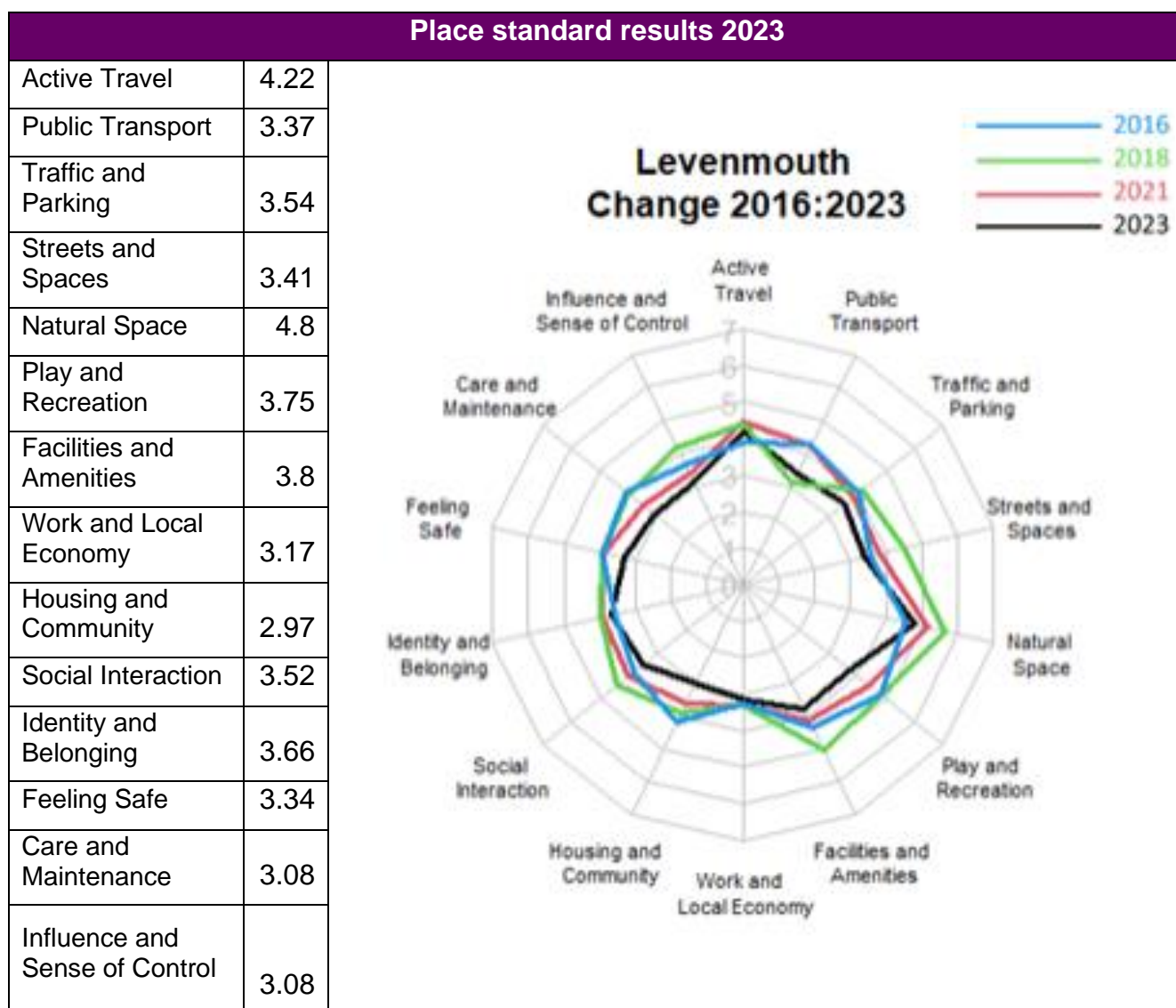
## 6. Place

### Place and wellbeing

The [Place Standard tool](#) provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It is designed to be used locally to identify relative need for improvement in a place. In our 2023 Place Survey, we asked people to rate fourteen aspects of place on a 7 point scale, where 1 is most need for improvement and 7 is little need for improvement.

People in Fife generally view where they live with mixed feelings, seeing it as ok but with growing room for improvement. Overall, Fife is seen as a place with good natural spaces and active travel options but where greater improvement could be achieved in relation to work and the local economy, housing and community and in how they can influence what is going on around them to provide a greater sense of control.

**Figure 6.1 – Radar chart showing need for improvement in aspects of place for Levenmouth Area (Place Survey 2023, 2021, 2018 and 2016)**

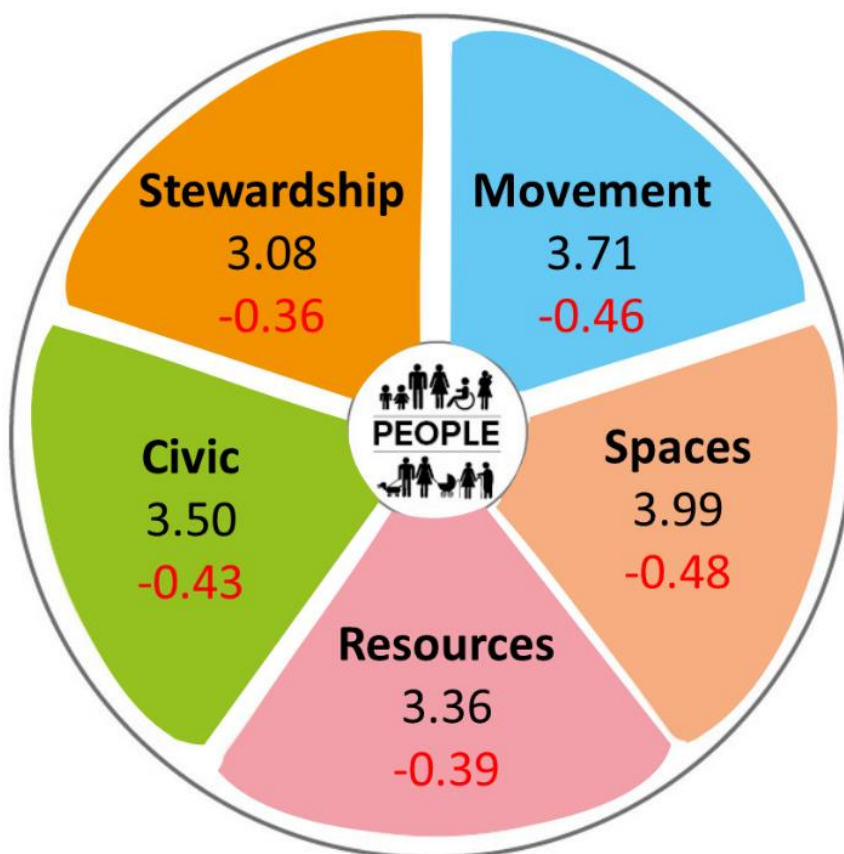


The [Place and wellbeing outcomes](#) framework identifies the key elements of what makes a place better. This allows us to consider a wide range of key elements consistently and to think about how they link together and what this may look like for an area, and how it might be improved. Derived from the place standard tool these are:

1. [Movement](#) – active travel; public transport; traffic and parking
2. [Spaces](#) – streets and spaces; natural spaces; play and recreation
3. [Resources](#) – services and support; work and economy; housing and community
4. [Civic](#) – identity and belonging; feeling safe
5. [Stewardship](#) – care and maintenance; influence and control

Levenmouth Area is below Fife on all of the place and wellbeing outcomes, all of which have seen substantial negative change since 2021. Stewardship and Resources are identified as needing the most improvement.

**Figure 6.2 – Place and wellbeing outcome scores showing need for improvement in aspects of place in Levenmouth Area (Place Survey 2023, change from 2021)**



**Table 6.1 – Place and wellbeing outcome scores: Area and Fife, change since 2021**

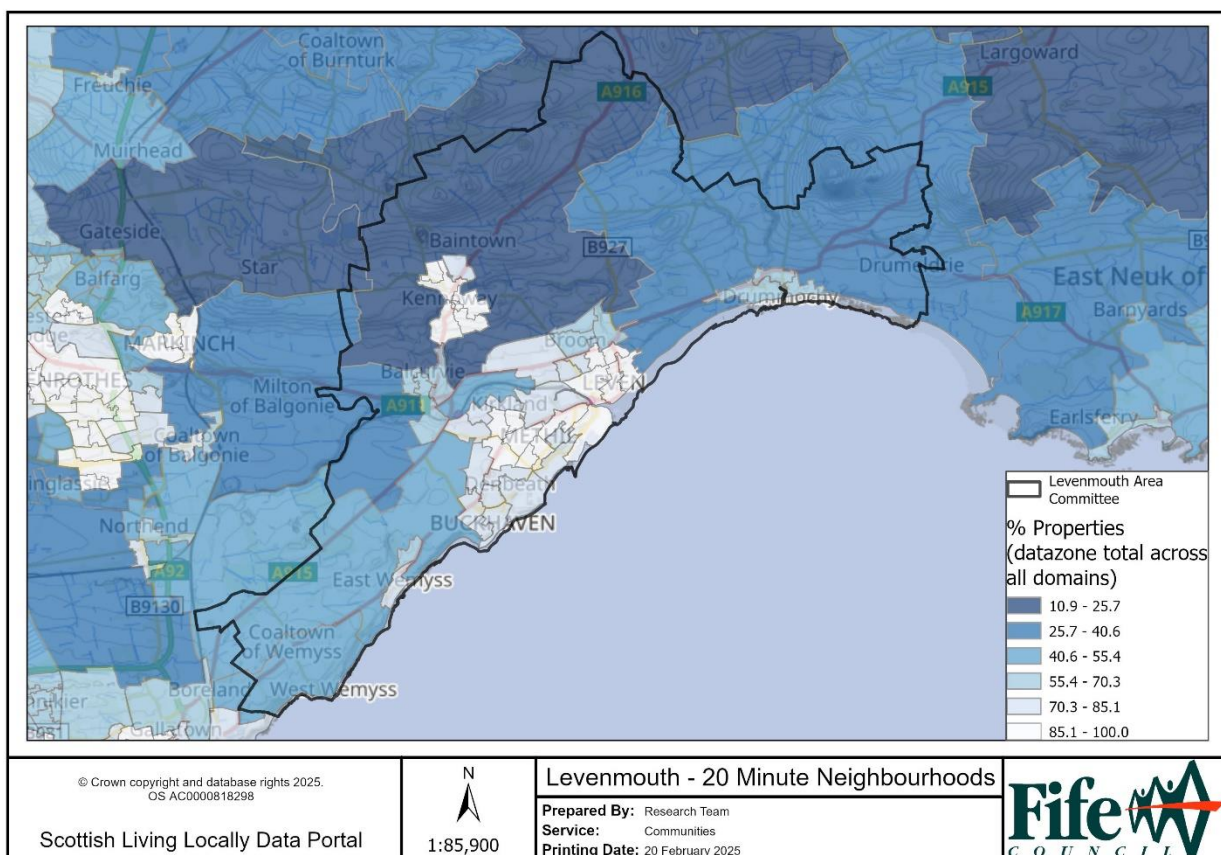
Outcome	Movement	Space	Resources	Civic	Stewardship
Levenmouth	3.71	3.99	3.36	3.50	3.08
change	-0.46	-0.48	-0.39	-0.43	-0.36
Fife	4.02	4.45	3.67	4.31	3.46
change	-0.20	-0.26	-0.42	-0.25	-0.26



# Living locally

The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal<sup>2</sup> is an interactive online map showing locations in Scotland whether they have access (15 minute, 20 minute and 30 minute) to 12 domains: Healthy food retail, Public transport, High frequency public transport, Social & cultural, Primary healthcare, Pharmacy, Primary school, Eating establishment, Accessible public open space, Recreation and sports facilities, Financial and Superfast broadband (fixed). The domains were chosen using the Place Standard Tool and based on the availability of robust national datasets.

Figure 6.3 provides an overview of accessibility in Levenmouth Area based on the 12 Scottish Living Locally Data Portal domains. Similar to the Fife overview, increased accessibility is evident within the more densely populated centres including Methil Trees East, Methilhill Toll Bar, Leven South West and Kennoway Central, with areas on the periphery showing lesser accessibility, and rural areas to the North and West indicating the least. The third largest datazone, Bonnybank and Montrave, is showing lower overall accessibility, similar to rural larger datazones within South West Fife and North East Fife. Parts of Scoonie, Upper Largo and Drumeldrie detail poor accessibility to services including healthy food retail, financial and eating establishments, as well as healthcare, primary care and pharmacy.

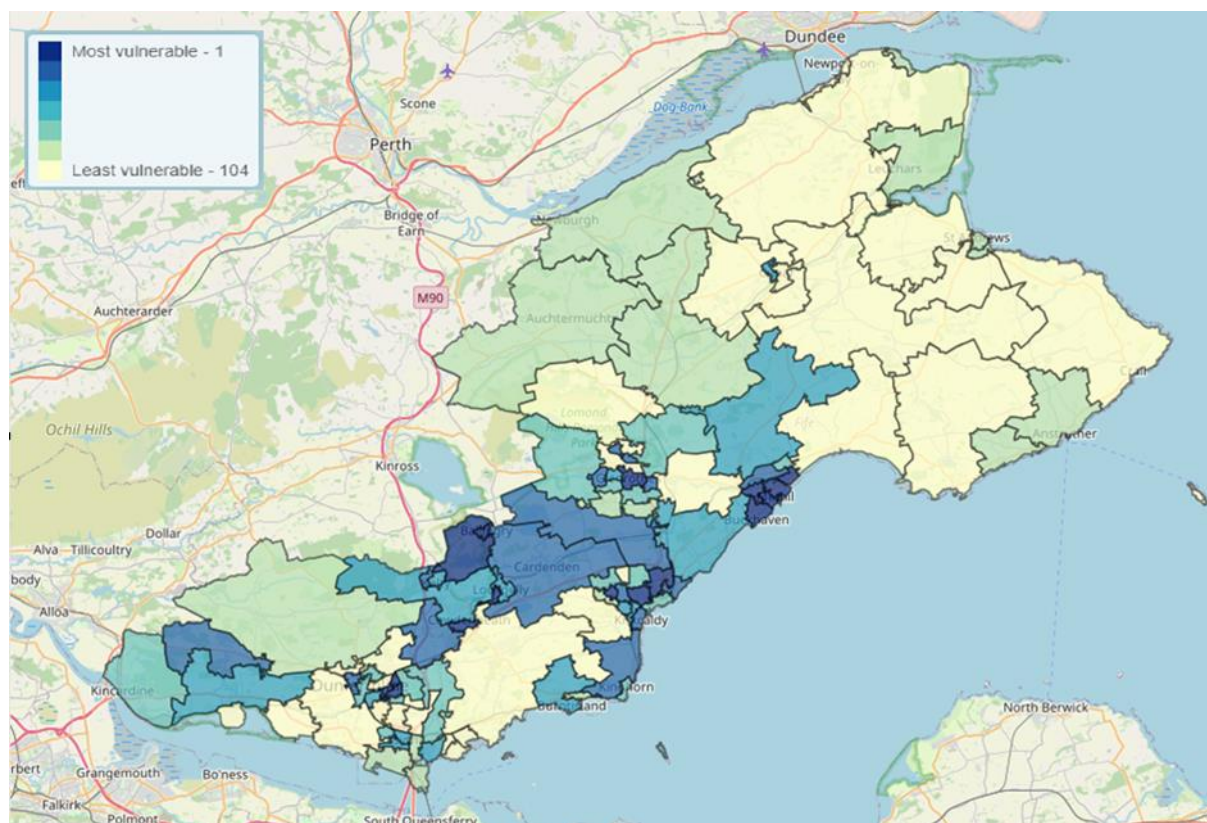


**Figure 6.3 – Percentage of properties within 20-minute neighbourhoods, by Datazone 2011 (Scottish Living Locally Data Portal)**

<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP). Available at: [The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal \(SLLDP\) \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com) (Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024).

## 7. Local Outcomes

Local community planning requires a good understanding of differences within and between neighbourhoods. The Community Planning Outcomes Profiling tool 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.



**Figure 7.1 - Map showing relative community vulnerability across Fife (Community Planning Outcomes Profiling Tool, 2024)**

Poorer outcomes are firmly grounded in place with communities in Mid Fife – across Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Levenmouth Areas – showing greater vulnerability.

45% of communities in Levenmouth Area are performing better than expected compared to 49% of communities across Fife. Table 7.1 shows the overall pattern of outcomes for neighbourhoods in the area, and whether local neighbourhoods are improving over time.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes within the area are Methil West and East, Buckhaven, Denbeath and Muiredge, and Methilhill. Neighbourhoods such as Largo, Windygates and Leven North have better outcomes. It is a mixed picture for Levenmouth Area with some areas performing better than other similar communities in terms of local outcomes (including Kennoway and Bonnybank, and Leven West), and other areas doing less well compared to other similar types of neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland (including Methil West and East, and Buckhaven, Denbeath and Muiredge).

**Table 7.1 – Ranking of neighbourhoods in Levenmouth Area ranked by outcomes, improvement and comparison with other similar communities (CPOP)**

Neighbourhood	Poorest outcomes	Doing better or worse than expected compared to similar communities	Improved the least	Improved least compared to similar communities
Methil West	1	1	2	1
Methil East	2	3	8	8
Buckhaven, Denbeath and Muiredge	3	2	3	2
Methil Methilhill	4	6	10	10
Leven East	5	4	5	6
Leven West	6	9	7	7
Wemyss	7	5	11	11
Kennoway and Bonnybank	8	11	9	9
Leven North	9	7	4	3
Windygates and Coaltown	10	10	6	5
Largo	11	8	1	4

### Understanding differences between neighbourhoods

The Community Planning Outcomes Profiling Tool provides an overview of trends in key outcomes – including child poverty, school attainment, age participation, out of work benefits, emergency admissions, premature mortality, crime rate, and depopulation - for local neighbourhoods within the area and across Fife.

Go to [CPOP \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io), select CPP Fife, My Communities or Community Profile

For health and wellbeing profiles see [ScotPHO profiles](#). Choose HSC Locality for area profile or Intermediate zone for neighbourhood profiles within an area.

## 8. Development planning

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*Fife's Place Plan* - the new Local Development Plan for Fife - is in the process of being prepared. The statutory process will run up to 2028. Development plans set out how places will change into the future, including where development should and shouldn't happen. They show where new homes and workplaces will be built, how services and facilities such as schools and travel will be provided, and identify the places and buildings we value and want to protect. Plans bring together many different sectors and interests to achieve the desired change for places and communities. The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework forms part of the Development Plan and sets national planning objectives for sustainable, liveable, and productive places. A summary of the spatial issues identified for Levenmouth Area through the Local Development Plan Evidence report, is given below:

### **How past development has shaped how the area is today**

The area is a series of small towns, many of which are conjoined. Their size allows them to retain reasonable access to key services and facilities within a 10-minute walk. Smaller villages have historic cores and distinctive character. The railway line creates a barrier leading to poor integration between areas. Many smaller settlements (including Windygates) have limited services and facilities and rely on nearby larger settlements to access these.

### **The need to change due to climate and biodiversity emergencies**

Parts of the area are at risk of flooding from the River Leven and Scoonie Burn and from surface water in Leven with an increased risk of coastal erosion around Largo Bay. This area is part of the Central Scotland Green Network infrastructure project and potential Heat Network Zones have been identified. The H100 Fife hydrogen project aims to decarbonise heating and energy using wind power at Fife Energy Park. Mine water is also a possible decarbonised heat source in the area. The River Leven is classified as bad quality and many connecting burns poor and project is in place to improve the water quality. Groundwater quality is poor due to legacy from mining and quarrying activities. A gas network pipeline passes through the area.

### **Infrastructure issues that need addressed in lifetime of FifePlan**

Planned growth and an aging population will put increased pressure on healthcare facilities and NHS Fife has identified the need for additional future Primary Care capacity. Overall provision and quality of greenspace is below average with some higher quality greenspaces in Lundin Links and Lower Largo. Access is restricted in many larger areas. Most of the area is well served by bus services but it is still one of the most deprived areas in Fife in terms of connectivity to strategic employment destinations. Public transport access for employment, health and retail are poor compared with Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy. The new rail line will improve access to employment outwith the area and provide an opportunity to support the growth of the area as a visitor destination.

### **How the economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future**

The area has the highest levels of deprivation in Fife. The majority of people living in the area also work in the area. There is some travel to Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy with fewer travelling to Cupar, Dunfermline, Rosyth or beyond. The Energy Park is one of Scotland's leading centres for energy, low carbon and renewables with world-class facilities and potential for expansion. Leven town centre performed relatively better than Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy. There are an additional six Local Shopping Centres serving the area where occupancy rates are good.



## 9. Resources

The following resources are available to support further exploration of the findings in this assessment:

Resource	Link
Census 2022	<a href="#">Census   KnowFife</a>
ScotPHO Health and Wellbeing profiles	<a href="https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/">https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/</a>
Fife Local Economic Profiles 2023-24	<a href="https://www.investfife.co.uk/life-in-fife/economy">https://www.investfife.co.uk/life-in-fife/economy</a>
Labour Market update	<a href="https://www.investfife.co.uk/life-in-fife/economy">https://www.investfife.co.uk/life-in-fife/economy</a>
Fife Strategic Assessment 2024	<a href="#">Fife-Strategic-Assessment-2024-Final.pdf</a>
Fife Fuel Poverty Index Interactive map application	<a href="#">Fuel-poverty-risk-in-Fife.pdf</a> <a href="#">Fife Fuel Poverty Index Mapping Application</a>
Our Place Survey 2023	<a href="#">Our-Place-Fife-2023.pdf</a>
Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP) Scottish Living Locally Data Portal – Fife Overview	<a href="#">Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP)</a> <a href="#">Scottish Living Locally Data Portal - Fife Overview</a>
Community Planning Outcomes Profiling Tool	<a href="https://scotland.shinyapps.io/is-community-planning-outcomes-profile/">https://scotland.shinyapps.io/is-community-planning-outcomes-profile/</a>
Local Development Plan Evidence Report Adopted Local Development Plan FIFEplan interactive mapping	<a href="#">Local Development Plan Evidence Report</a> <a href="#">Adopted FIFEplan</a> <a href="#">FIFEplan interactive mapping</a>
Area Committee	<a href="#">Levenmouth Area Committee   Fife Council</a>

A range of additional local area information, area and Fife-specific research, and links to other information resources is available through the KnowFife Hub:

[Community Profiles | KnowFife](#)

### About this report

Local strategic assessments for each of the 7 areas of Fife have been produced by Fife Council’s Research and Insight Team to support local community planning.

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