Fife
COUNCIL

Local Strategic Assessment
Cowdenbeath Area

Final Report

February 2025

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

1. About this assessment

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?

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2. Overview

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.
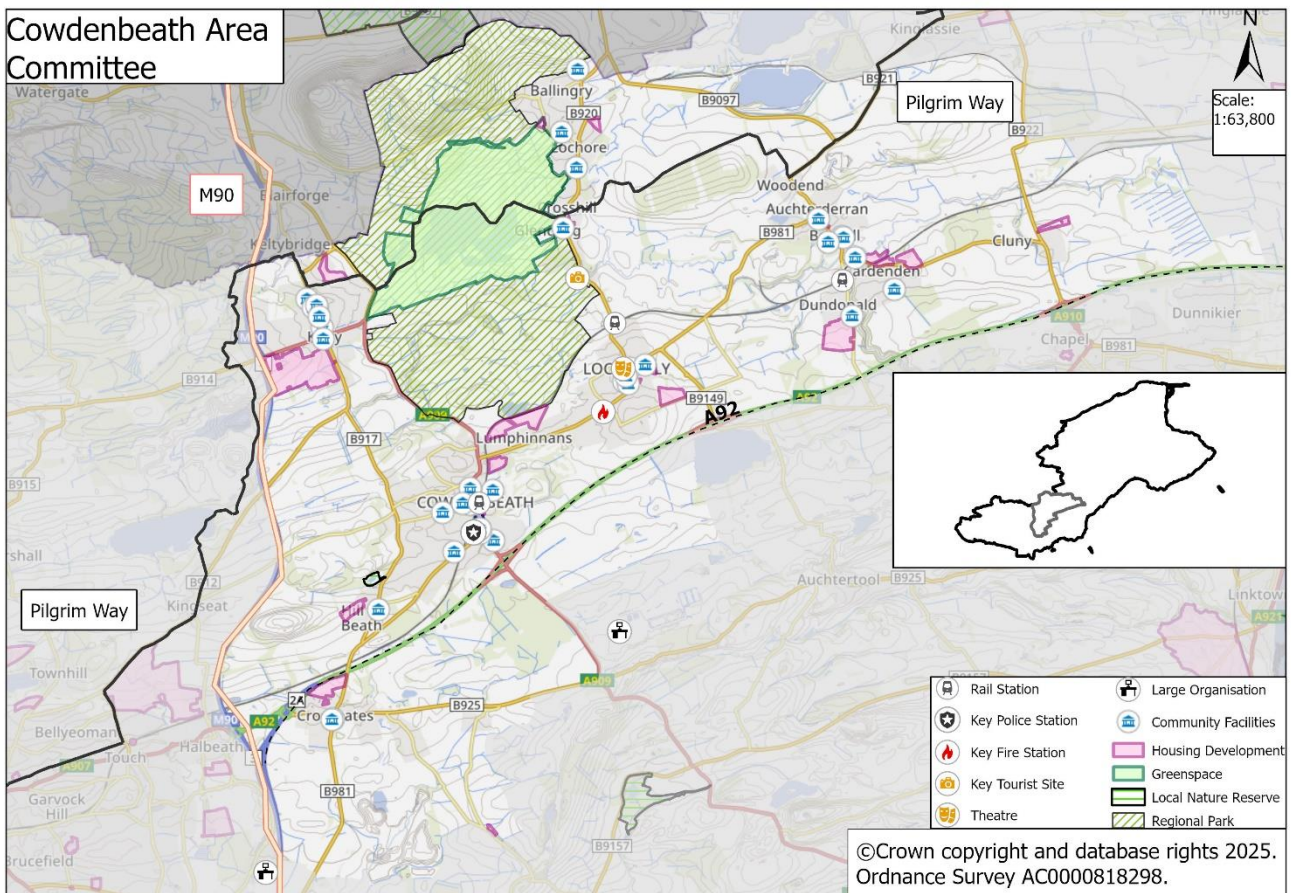

Figure 2.1 Strategic Overview of Area

How Cowdenbeath area compares to Fife – in brief

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

Profile

- The area has a higher level of children, around the same level of working age people, and lower levels of older people, compared with Fife overall.
- One and two person households are the most common type in Cowdenbeath Area, and are similar to the Fife levels, while three-person households are slightly higher than for Fife. There are lower levels of owner-occupied, significantly higher levels of social-rented, and lower levels of private-rented accommodation compared with Fife.
- The area has significantly lower levels of people qualified to degree level or above, and significantly higher levels of people with no or low qualifications.
- There are higher levels of people economically inactive, including those looking after family, and long-term sick or disabled, while there are lower levels of retired people or students compared with Fife.
- The area has lower levels of good general health, and higher levels of long-term illness and disease, mental health and physical disability, which results in the higher rates of economic inactivity seen in the area.

People

- The area has poorer financial resilience, with more hard-up and low-income households, and less thriving neighbourhoods compared with Fife.

Poverty

- Cowdenbeath area has higher child poverty levels compared with Fife, and the second highest level of children in low-income families, and at risk of fuel poverty (composite index) in Fife.

Place

- Cowdenbeath area shows a greater need for improvement in place and wellbeing outcomes, particularly Stewardship (care and maintenance, influence and control) and Resources (services and support; work and economy; housing and community).

Local outcomes

- Poorer outcomes are firmly grounded in place with communities in Mid Fife – across Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Levenmouth Areas – showing greater vulnerability.
- Only 10% of neighbourhoods in Cowdenbeath area are doing better than expected.
- The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes within the Area are Ballingry, Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans, and Lochore and Crosshill.

Development planning

- Large areas have been extensively mined for coal leaving a legacy of ground stability and contamination issues. Planning permission in principle has been granted for the restoration of the Westfield site
- Main towns have access to most key services and facilities within a 10 minute walk, while smaller towns are more spread out with less well-defined centres.
- The area has above average levels of employment, but incomes are on average lower, as are levels of qualifications, leading to some of the highest levels of deprivation in Fife

3. Profile

Population

Cowdenbeath Area has a population of 41,579 people, of whom 7,527 (18.1%) are children, 25,735 (61.9%) are working age (16-64 years), and 8,317 (20%) are aged 65 and over. Within the Area, Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty ward has a greater proportion of children, while Cowdenbeath ward has a greater proportion of working age. The proportion of older people living in the area is below Fife.

Table 3.1 - 2022 Mid-year Population Estimates

Ward	Total Population	Children (0-15 years)	Working Age (16-64 years)	Older Adults (65+ years)
Cowdenbeath	22,502	17.5%	62.5%	20.0%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	19,077	18.8%	61.2%	20.0%
Cowdenbeath Area	41,579	18.1%	61.9%	20.0%
Fife	371,390	16.6%	61.7%	21.7%

Households

The 2022 Scotland Census shows that Cowdenbeath Area has 18,595 occupied households, 11.0% of the Fife total. One and two person households are the most common household type in Cowdenbeath Area, with more than one in three people living alone in both Cowdenbeath, and Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty wards, similar to the level of two-person households. Cowdenbeath, and Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty wards also have lower proportions of households with three or more people (15.2%).

Table 3.2 - 2022 Scotland Census Household Size

	Total Households	One Person	Two People	Three People	Four or more
Cowdenbeath	10,025	34.5%	34.7%	15.2%	15.6%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	8,570	35.0%	35.1%	15.2%	14.8%
Cowdenbeath Area	18,595	34.8%	34.9%	15.2%	15.0%
Fife	169,567	35.1%	35.8%	14.1%	15.0%

Home ownership is the main tenure type in Cowdenbeath Area, although below the Fife level, with Cowdenbeath ward having the highest levels of home ownership. Cowdenbeath Area is above the Fife level for social rented properties, with the highest levels of social renting in Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty. Both Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty have similar levels of around 7% for private renting.

Table 3.3 - 2022 Scotland Census Household Tenure

	Total Households	Owned	Social Rented	Private Rented	Lives Rent Free
Cowdenbeath	10,025	62.6%	28.4%	7.2%	1.5%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	8,570	54.4%	36.7%	7.0%	1.4%
Cowdenbeath Area	18,595	58.8%	32.2%	7.1%	1.5%
Fife	169,567	65.3%	21.9%	11.6%	1.3%

The majority of occupied households (75.3%) have access to a car or van, with around one quarter (24.7%) having no access to a car or van. Cowdenbeath ward has a higher level of access to a car or van compared with Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty.

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
Cowdenbeath	10,025	23.1%	43.5%	33.4%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	8,570	26.5%	43.3%	30.2%
Cowdenbeath Area	18,595	24.7%	43.4%	31.9%
Fife	169,567	22.1%	44.2%	33.7%

Health and Wellbeing

While the majority of individuals in Cowdenbeath Area class themselves as being in very good or good health, this is lower than Fife. Overall people living in Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty, and Cowdenbeath wards have poorer health than those living in Fife.

Table 3.5 - 2022 Scotland Census General Health

	All people	Very Good / Good	Fair	Bad / Very Bad
Cowdenbeath	22,010	74.9%	16.6%	8.5%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	18,670	72.3%	17.7%	10.1%
Cowdenbeath Area	40,680	73.7%	17.1%	9.2%
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.

Cowdenbeath Area and its wards have higher proportions of people reporting long-term illness, disease or conditions, mental health conditions and physical disabilities compared to Fife as a whole.

Table 3.6 - 2022 Scotland Census Long term conditions

	All people	Long-term illness, disease or condition	Mental health condition	Physical disability
Cowdenbeath	22,010	24.7%	12.8%	12.0%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	18,670	24.2%	13.9%	13.6%
Cowdenbeath Area	40,680	24.5%	13.3%	12.7%
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. Marginally higher levels of unpaid care are provided across all wards within Cowdenbeath 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 +
Cowdenbeath	21,344	12.8%	6.2%	1.3%	1.6%	3.6%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	18,086	13.7%	6.1%	1.7%	1.9%	4.0%
Cowdenbeath Area	39,430	13.2%	6.2%	1.5%	1.7%	3.8%
Fife	362,136	12.2%	6.7%	1.2%	1.3%	3.0%

Qualifications

Cowdenbeath Area has a higher proportion of individuals with low or no qualifications, and a much lower proportion of those who are qualified to degree level or above. Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty has the highest proportion of no or low qualifications, while Cowdenbeath ward has the greatest proportion qualified to degree level or above, but considerably lower than Fife.

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
Cowdenbeath	18,115	45.0%	18.9%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	15,220	50.8%	15.2%
Cowdenbeath Area	33,335	47.7%	17.2%
Fife	309,933	36.6%	28.6%

Economic activity

The 2022 Census data tells us that 19,668 (59.0%) people in Cowdenbeath Area are economically active, including all those in employment and full-time students available for work. This is slightly higher than the Fife level of 58.2%. Cowdenbeath Area has a slightly higher level of people that are in work as an employee and a slightly lower level of people that are self-employed. The proportion of unemployed people looking for work is broadly similar to 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
Cowdenbeath	18,115	50.4%	5.9%	2.0%	2.4%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	15,220	46.6%	5.8%	2.4%	2.1%
Cowdenbeath Area	33,335	48.6%	5.9%	2.2%	2.3%
Fife	309,936	46.2%	6.7%	2.0%	3.2%

The proportion of people in Cowdenbeath Area that are classified as economically inactive is 13,671 (41.0%), slightly lower than the Fife level of 43.9%. The majority of economically inactive people are retired (23.6%), 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
Cowdenbeath	18,115	23.4%	2.8%	3.7%	6.9%	2.5%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	15,220	23.9%	2.7%	5.2%	8.5%	2.8%
Cowdenbeath Area	33,335	23.6%	2.8%	4.4%	7.6%	2.6%
Fife	309,936	27.7%	5.2%	3.6%	5.2%	2.2%

Industry

In Cowdenbeath Area, the industry sector employing the most people is health and social care, employing 14.8% of the area's workforce, with Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty ward employing the highest level (16.3%). This is followed by the wholesale and retail sector (12.2%), construction (10.8%), manufacturing (10.4%) and public administration (9.4%). Construction, health and social care, and manufacturing industries are more predominant in this area compared with Fife overall.

Table 3.11 – 2022 Scotland Census – Industry Type

	All people aged 16 plus in work	Human health and social work	Wholesale retail, repair of motor vehicles	Manufact.	Public admin, defence, social security	Construction
Cowdenbeath	10,528	14.8%	12.3%	10.2%	9.9%	9.7%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	8,236	16.3%	12.0%	10.6%	8.7%	12.2%
Cowdenbeath Area	18,764	15.5%	12.2%	10.4%	9.4%	10.8%
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.
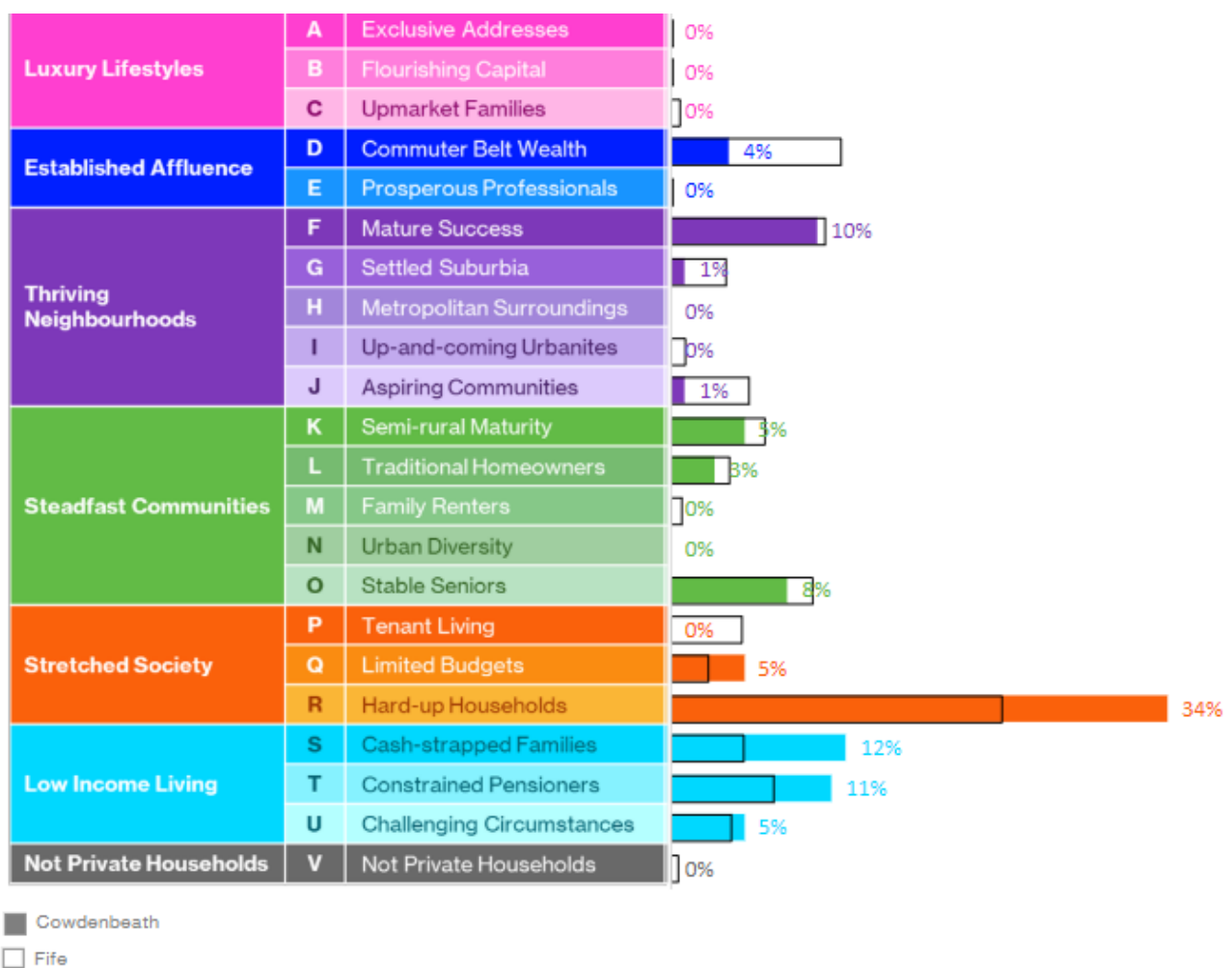
4. People

Population segments

39% of households in Cowdenbeath Area can be categorised as Stretched Society. While the most common household type in both the area and Fife is hard-up households, 34% of households are of this type in Cowdenbeath 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.

28% of households are categorised as Low Income Living (compared to 16% for Fife), with there being higher proportions of Cash Strapped Families (125) and Constrained pensioners (11%) than for Fife as a whole.

In Cowdenbeath Area 12% 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)**

Luxury Lifestyles	A	Exclusive Addresses	0%
	B	Flourishing Capital	0%
	C	Upmarket Families	0%
Established Affluence	D	Commuter Belt Wealth	4%
	E	Prosperous Professionals	0%
Thriving Neighbourhoods	F	Mature Success	10%
	G	Settled Suburbia	1%
	H	Metropolitan Surroundings	0%
	I	Up-and-coming Urbanites	0%
	J	Aspiring Communities	1%
Steadfast Communities	K	Semi-rural Maturity	3%
	L	Traditional Homeowners	3%
	M	Family Renters	0%
	N	Urban Diversity	0%
	O	Stable Seniors	8%
Stretched Society	P	Tenant Living	0%
	Q	Limited Budgets	5%
	R	Hard-up Households	34%
Low Income Living	S	Cash-strapped Families	12%
	T	Constrained Pensioners	11%
	U	Challenging Circumstances	5%
Not Private Households	V	Not Private Households	0%

■ Cowdenbeath
☐ Fife

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[1] 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. Poor physical health, disability benefits, caring responsibilities, low education, poor English skills, rural isolation, internet speed and living alone are particular drivers of poor financial resilience in the Cowdenbeath 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)

Decile 10 (most in need) ⟶ Decile 1 (least in need)

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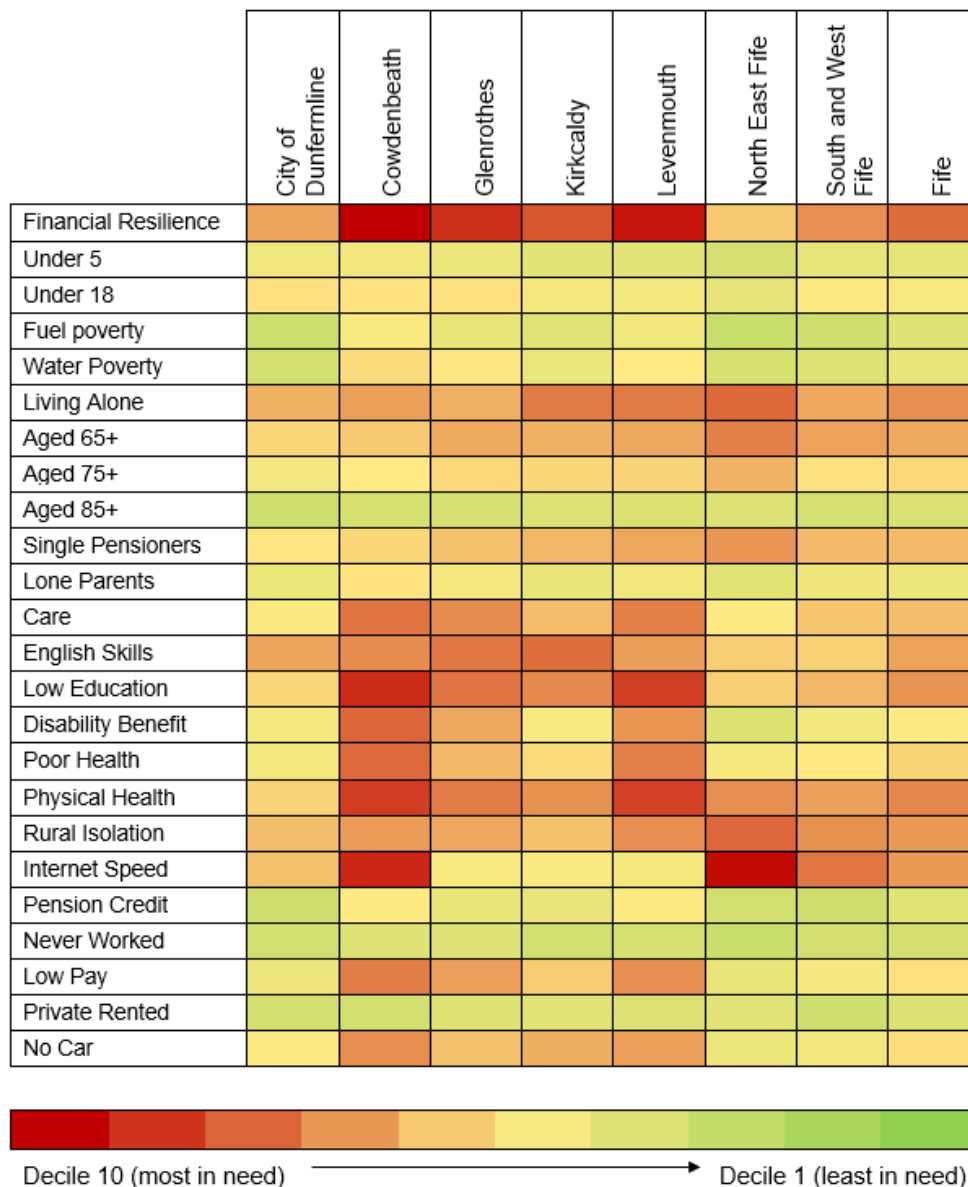
[1] 1 is least resilient and 379 is most resilient.

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.

Child poverty

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).

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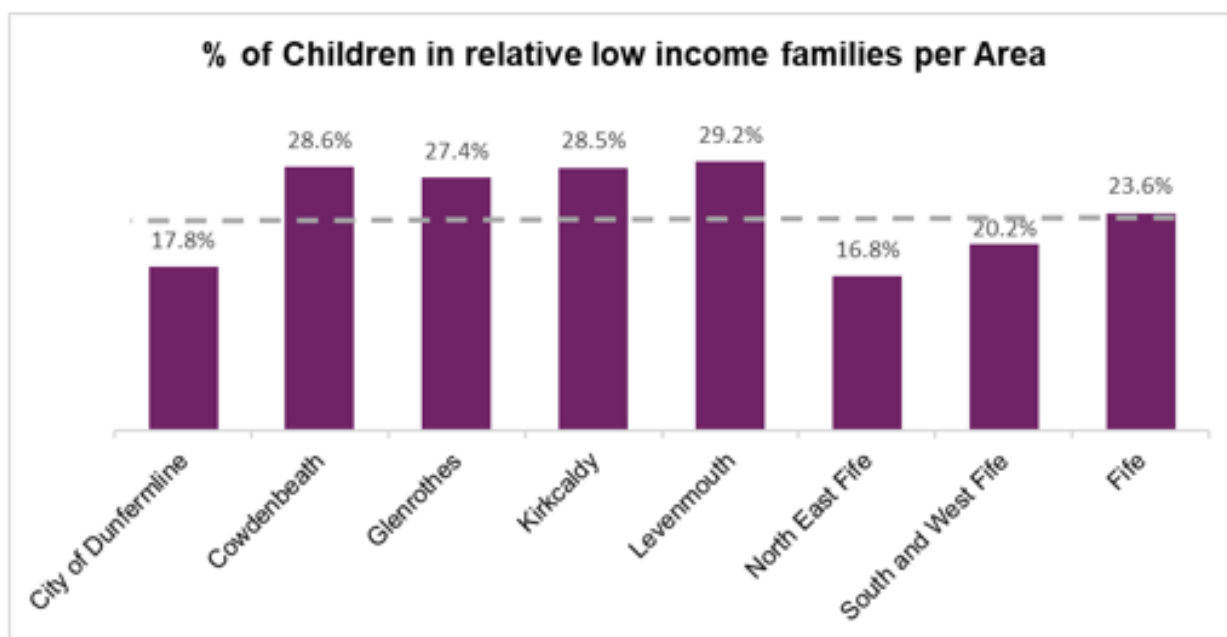
Figure 5.1 - % of children in low income families (relative poverty) (DWP, FYE 2023)

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	%
Cowdenbeath Ward	1,028	25.2%	1,745	43.9%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	1,177	32.1%	2,195	58.5%
Cowdenbeath Area	2,205	28.6%	3,940	51.0%
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: Ballingry East, Kelty West, Ballingry Central, Crosshill and Lochore South, Kelty South West, Cowdenbeath South East, Ballingry West, Ballingry South, Cardenden West, Lochore North, Cardenden East, Bowhill West, Hill of Beath, Lochgelly North.
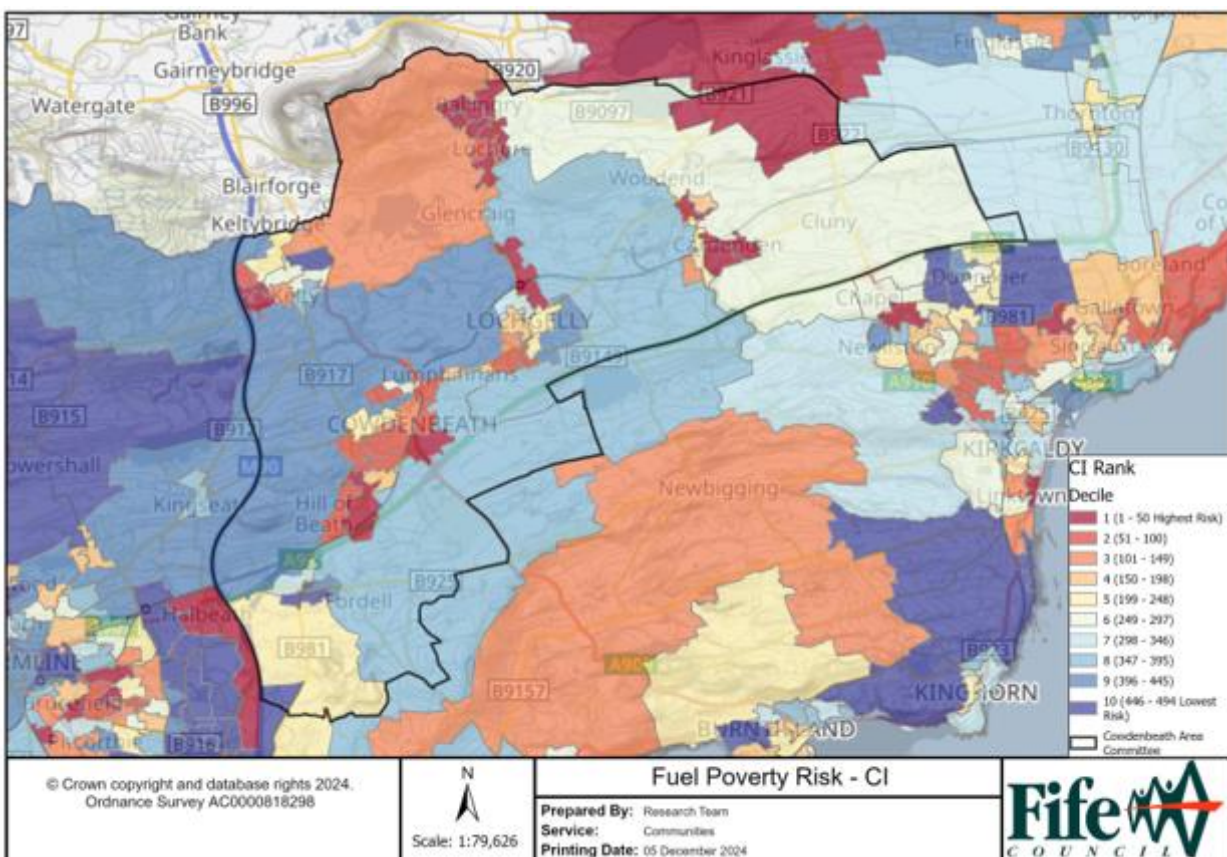

Figure 5.3 – Fuel Poverty Composite Index

The Demand sub-index highlights higher risk in Ballingry East, Ballingry Central. Kelty West, Cowdenbeath Foulford, Cardenden West, Crosshill and Lochore South, Lochore North, and Kelty South West, while the Ability to Pay sub-index highlights Lumphinnans, Kelty Central, Lochgelly East, Lochore Central, Ballingry West, Bowhill East, Cowdenbeath South, Ballingry East, Kelty West, and Cowdenbeath South East.
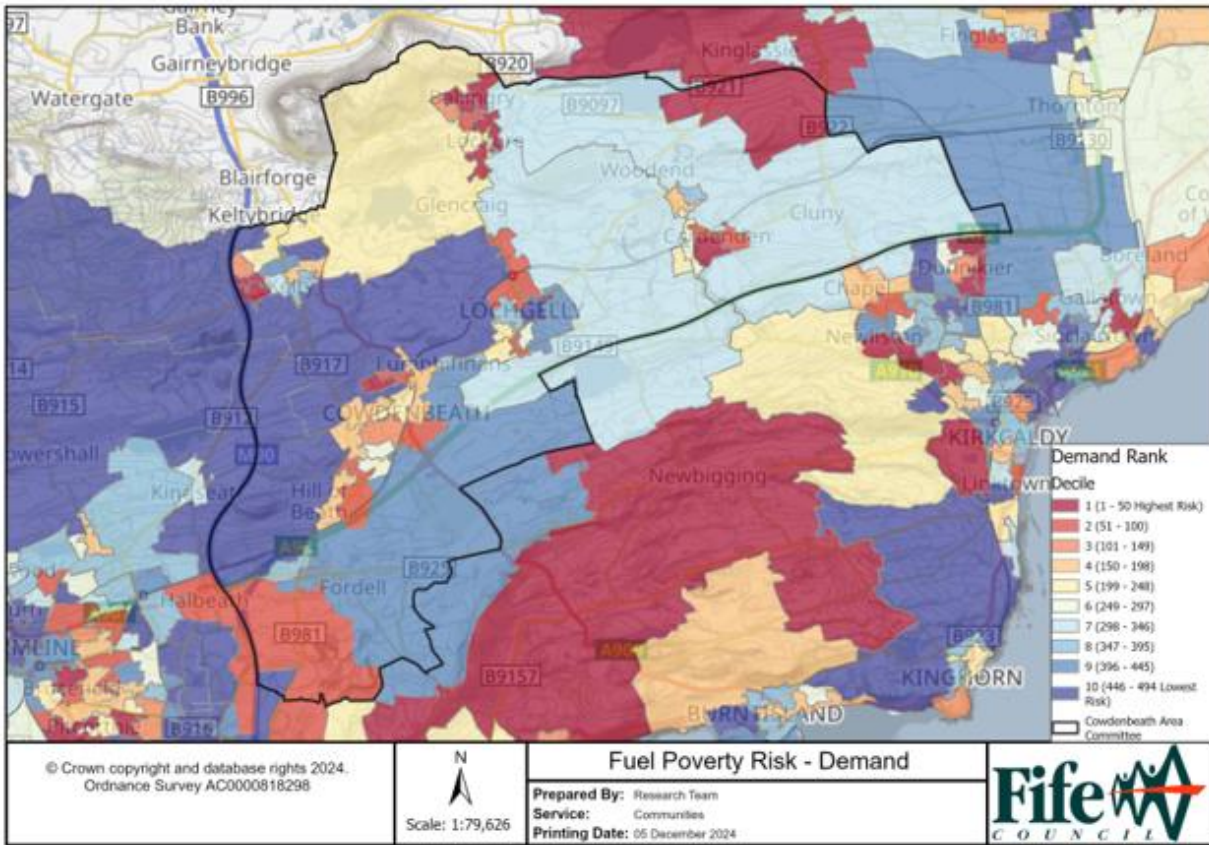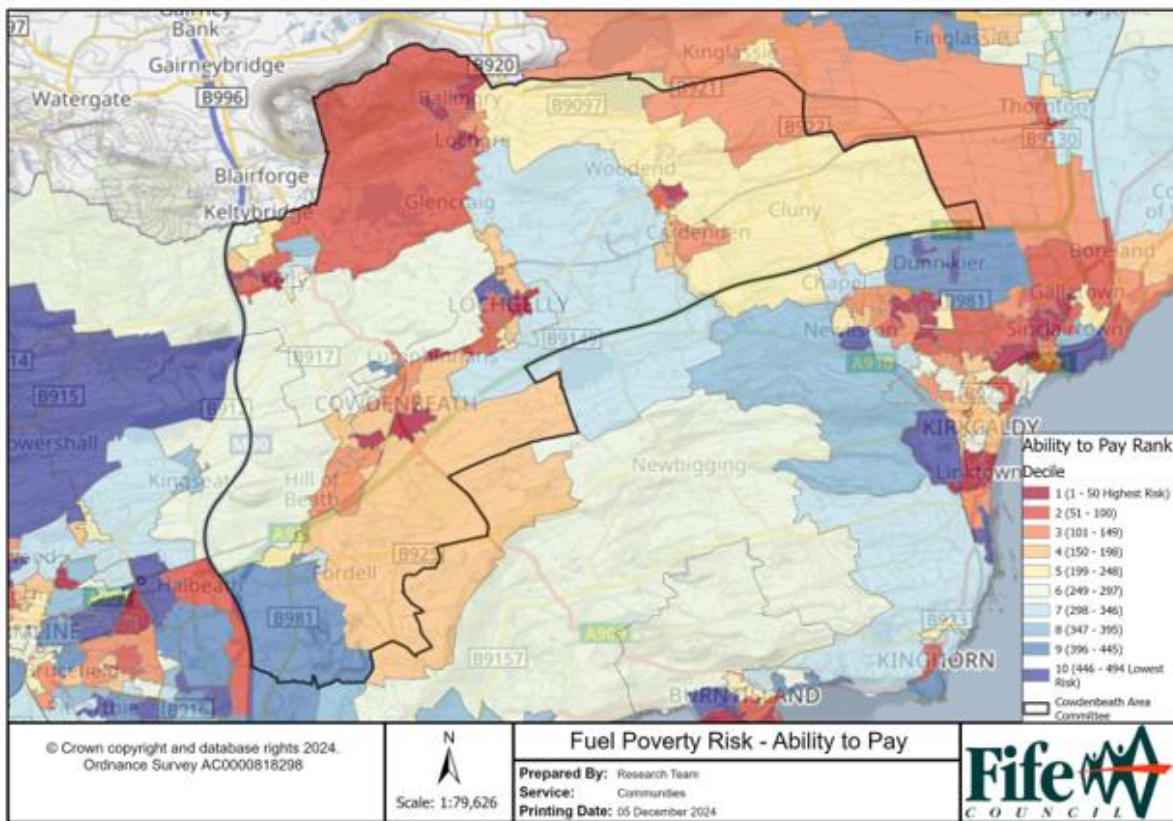
Figure 5.4 – Demand sub-index

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, Cowdenbeath Area has 24% of Fife's 20% highest risk datazones on the overall index, 16.8% of highest risk for Demand sub-index, and 20% of the Ability to Pay sub-index.
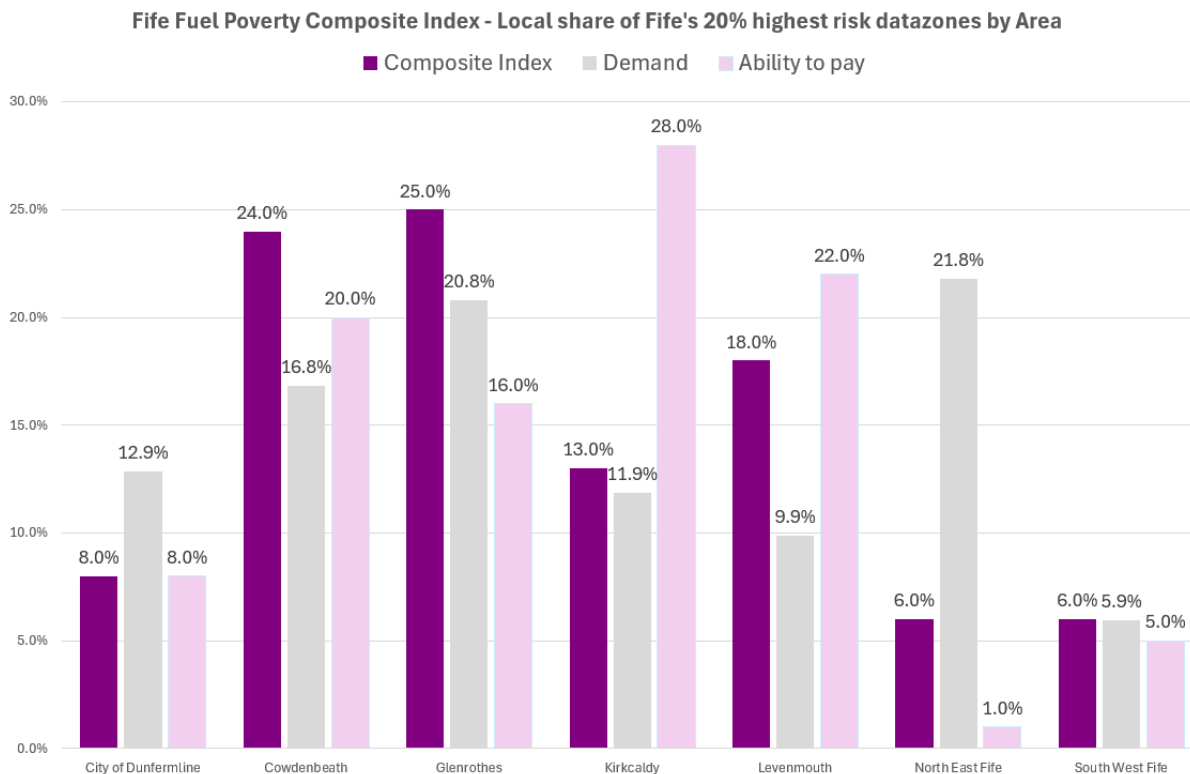
Fife Fuel Poverty Composite Index - Local share of Fife's 20% highest risk datazones by Area

Legend: ■ Composite Index ■ Demand ■ Ability to pay

Area	Composite Index	Demand	Ability to pay
City of Dunfermline	8.0%	12.9%	8.0%
Cowdenbeath	24.0%	16.8%	20.0%
Glenrothes	25.0%	20.8%	16.0%
Kirkcaldy	13.0%	11.9%	28.0%
Levenmouth	18.0%	9.9%	22.0%
North East Fife	6.0%	21.8%	1.0%
South West Fife	6.0%	5.9%	5.0%

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.

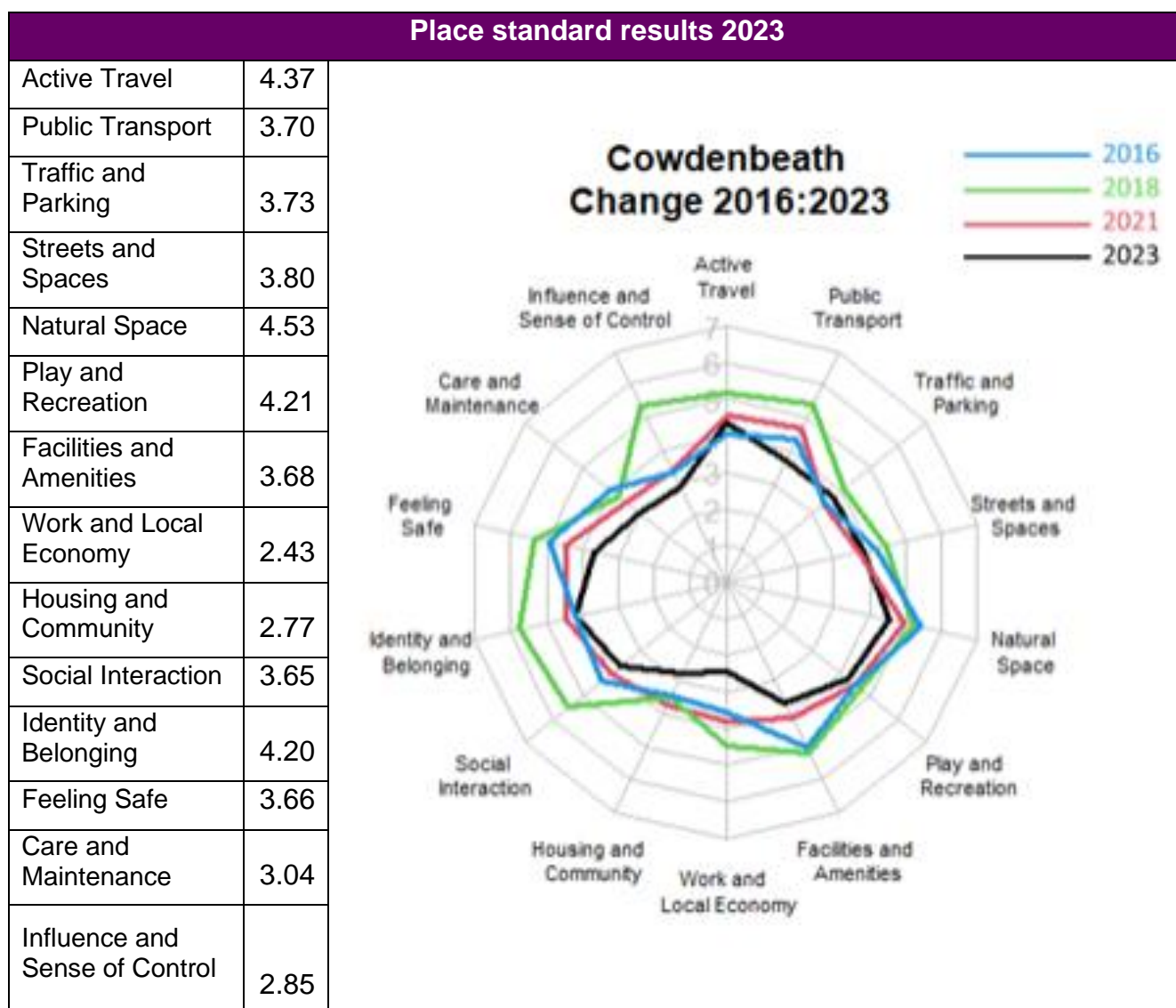More information is available in the briefing Fuel Poverty: Focus on Cowdenbeath Area

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 Cowdenbeath Area (Place Survey 2023, 2021,2018 and 2016)

Place standard results 2023		
Active Travel	4.37	
Public Transport	3.70	
Traffic and Parking	3.73	
Streets and Spaces	3.80	
Natural Space	4.53	
Play and Recreation	4.21	
Facilities and Amenities	3.68	
Work and Local Economy	2.43	
Housing and Community	2.77	
Social Interaction	3.65	
Identity and Belonging	4.20	
Feeling Safe	3.66	
Care and Maintenance	3.04	
Influence and Sense of Control	2.85	

Cowdenbeath Change 2016:2023

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

Stewardship and Resources are the outcomes most in need of improvement for Cowdenbeath Area. While Spaces are rated least in need of improvement, the need for improvement within the Area is greater than Fife. Change over time is in the wrong direction, with resources and civic outcomes showing greatest change since 2021.

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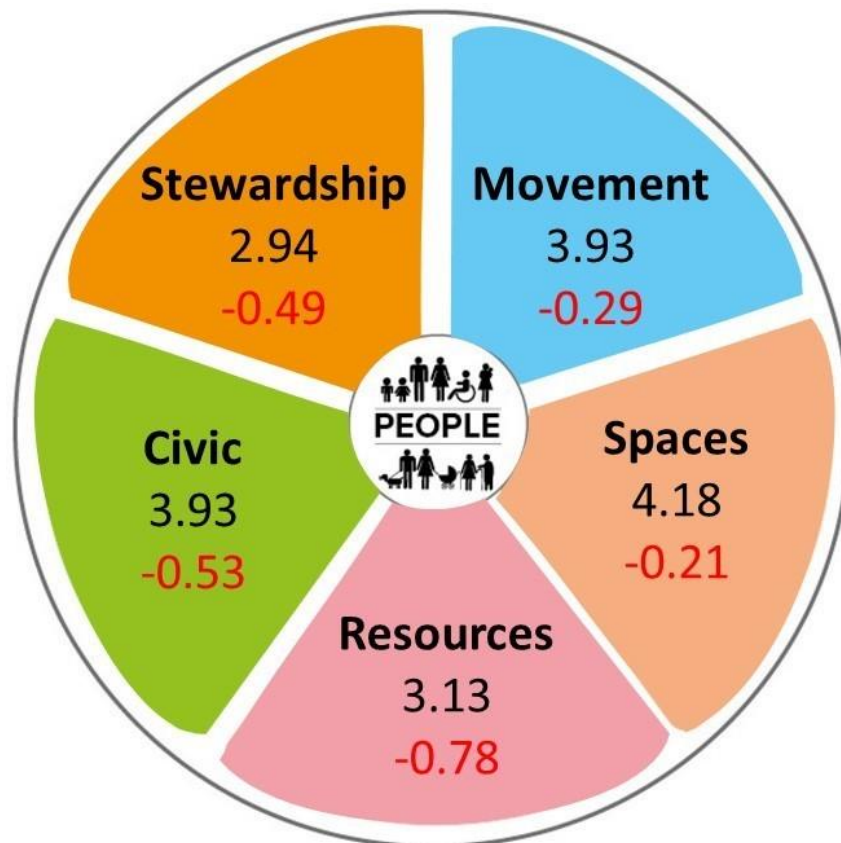

Table 6.1 – Place and wellbeing outcome scores: Area and Fife, change since 2021

Outcome	Movement	Space	Resources	Civic	Stewardship
Cowdenbeath	3.93	4.18	3.13	3.93	2.94
change	-0.29	-0.21	-0.78	-0.53	-0.49
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[2] 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 Cowdenbeath 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 Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly and Kelty, with areas on the periphery showing lesser accessibility, and rural areas indicating the least. Auchterderran is highlighted with reduced accessibility, with 36.5% of properties within a 20-minute neighbourhood. This area details reduced access to healthy food retail, primary care, primary school, pharmacy, financial, social & cultural and eating establishments. The area to the North of Beath High School indicates lower accessibility. Both of these areas are within rural, larger datazones, therefore may have improved access when compared to other areas within the Datazone. There is reduced accessibility in Crossgates/Mossgreen, Hill of Beath, the outskirts of Kelty and Cardenden and Cluny.
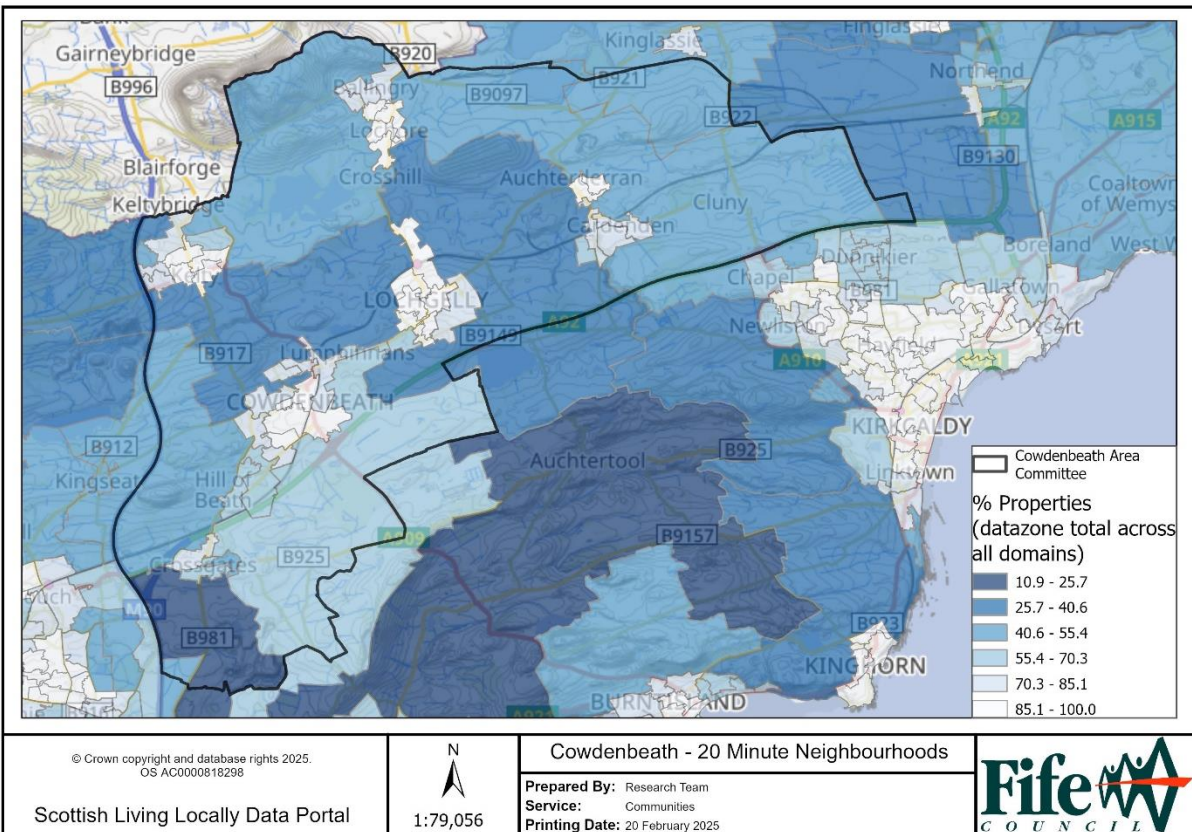

Figure 6.3 – Percentage of properties within 20-minute neighbourhoods, by Datazone 2011 (Scottish Living Locally Data Portal)

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[2] The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP). Available at: The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP) (arcgis.com) (Accessed 26th 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.
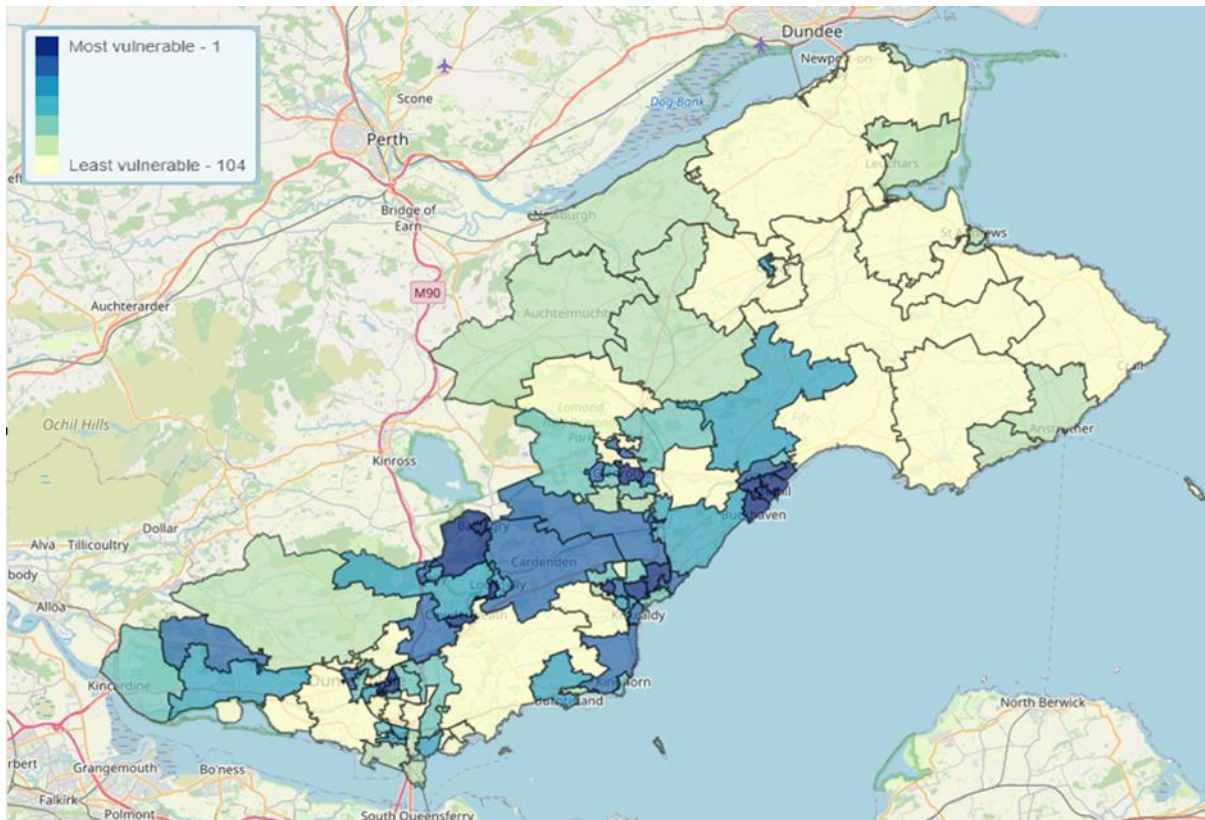

Figure 7.1 - Map showing relative community vulnerability across Fife (Community Planning Outcomes Profiling Tool, 2024)

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

Only 10% of communities in the Cowdenbeath Area are performing better than expected - down from 20% the previous year - compared to 49% for 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 Ballingry, Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans, and Lochore and Crosshill. Neighbourhoods with better outcomes include Kelty East, Lochgelly East, and Cowdenbeath North. It is a mixed picture for Cowdenbeath Area with some areas performing better than other similar communities in terms of local outcomes (including Cowdenbeath South, and Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans), and other areas doing less well compared to other similar types of neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland (including Ballingry, and Lochore and Crosshill).

Table 7.1 – Ranking of neighbourhoods in Cowdenbeath 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
Ballingry	1	1	2	6
Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans	2	7	1	2
Lochore and Crosshill	3	2	9	10
Cowdenbeath South	4	9	4	3
Cardenden	5	3	5	5
Hill of Beath and Kingseat	6	5	7	4
Kelty West	7	4	8	8
Cowdenbeath North	8	6	3	1
Lochgelly East	9	8	10	9
Kelty East	10	10	6	7

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), 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

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 the Area through the Local Development Plan Evidence report, is given below:

Implementation of FIFEplan in the area

Planning permission in principle has been granted for the restoration of the Westfield site which includes power generation/storage, waste recovery/recycling and employment.

How past development has shaped how the area is today

Much of Lochgelly, Cowdenbeath and Crossgates have access to most key services and facilities within a 10 minute walk. Areas that have grown from smaller towns are more spread out with less well-defined centres making walking and cycling less attractive options. Kelty and the Cardenden have areas on their outskirts which are not well served. Building and public realm maintenance is an issue in the area.

How area will need to change due to climate and biodiversity challenges

Parts of the area are at risk of flooding, particularly along the Den Burn and River Ore and there have been repeated incidents in Cowdenbeath which requires a detailed flood study. Large areas have been extensively mined for coal leaving a legacy of ground stability and contamination issues. Groundwater quality is poor at Lyne Burn but moderate at others. The area is part of the Central Scotland Green Network and potential Heat Network Zones have been identified. A major natural gas pipeline to Mossmorran passes through the area

Infrastructure issues that need addressed in area in lifetime of the Plan

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. Provision of greenspace is below average in Ballingry, Lochore, Crosshill and Crossgates. Quality of greenspace is also below average but there are quality spaces such as Lochore Meadows. Access to public transport is fairly good in the centre of most towns but less so on the outskirts, while Cardenden and Cluny have poorer access. Three train stations on the Fife Circle route connect to other Fife stations and Edinburgh, giving good access to key destinations and employment opportunities.

How area's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

The area has above average levels of employment, but incomes are on average lower, as are levels of qualifications, leading to some of the highest levels of deprivation in Fife. A significant number of people travel to work in Dunfermline and Rosyth as well as remaining within Cowdenbeath. The manufacturing sector is important and the area is well-located for accessing the trunk road network but a lack of premises and skilled workforce hinder economic development.

9. Resources

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

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

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