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 and input into the wider Fife-wide Strategic Assessment.

The Levenmouth Local Community Plan sets out how public, private and voluntary organisations will work together with our communities to make Levenmouth a better, cleaner, safer, stronger, more vibrant place to live and visit. It identifies three key priorities:

- Area Investment and Regeneration
- Health Wellbeing and Environment
- Access to Employment, Education and Training

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2. Local Assessment Findings

Local Community Plan
- Area Investment and Regeneration
- Health Wellbeing and Environment
- Access to Employment, Education and Training

Place
Least improvement needed
- Natural Space
- Facilities and Amenities
Most improvement needed
- Public Transport
- Work and Local Economy
- Housing and Community
- Feeling Safe

Community
Major issues for area
- Funding for public services
- Local lifestyles
- NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare
- Education / schools
Many issues now seen as less of an issue than two years ago

Unemployment
- Cost of living
- Crime/ antisocial behaviour

Profile
- Levenmouth area is the most deprived area of Fife
- The Area is characterised by decline of heavy and traditional industries
- As an area it is furthest from main employment centres

People
- There has been little change for people living in the Levenmouth Area
- Constrained and hard-pressed households are doing less well within the area and compared to similar households elsewhere in Scotland

Local Outcomes
Poorest outcomes
- Buckhaven and Methil
Most improved
- Methilhill and Methil East
Least improved
- Leven East and Methil West

Horizons and strategic challenges
- Overall population expected to increase in next 25 years.
- Children numbers expected to remain constant, with slight increases in next 5 years, followed by gradual decline back to current numbers.
- Working ages expected to continue to reduce over next 20 years, before recovering slightly, but still showing an overall reduction.
- Older people expected to increase steadily over next 20 years, before levelling off and then starting to reduce for remaining few years, resulting in the second lowest increase for older people across all the Fife areas.
- Continuing long-term socio-economic issues that limit economic growth, performance and tackling inequalities in employment opportunities.
- Welfare reform changes continue to impact on the area, and will be felt more severely than Fife overall
- Uncertainty over future local economic impact of Brexit
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 area is the most deprived area of Fife, with 23 of 51 datazones in the area featuring in the 20% most deprived for Scotland (SIMD 2016). Across the Levenmouth area, 19.0% of the total population is income deprived (compared to 12.4% for Fife), while 17.1% of the working age population is employment deprived (compared to 11.0% for Fife).

### Table: Area Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>37,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>70.9 SQ KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>6,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age</td>
<td>22,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>8,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>19,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly income (before housing)</td>
<td>£480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel poverty</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car ownership</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment deprivation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income deprivation</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working age deprivation</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner occupied</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social rented</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private rented</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live alone</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income (before housing)</td>
<td>£19.6k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in poverty</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ECONOMY

- **64.7%** Economically active
- **55.0%** Employed Full Time
- **22.1%** Employed Part Time
- **24.0%** Education & Health
- **19.5%** Wholesale Retail and Transport
- **15.1%** Finance & Professional
- **13.9%** Manufacturing
- **55.0%** Employed Full Time
- **22.1%** Employed Part Time
- **24.0%** Education & Health
- **19.5%** Wholesale Retail and Transport
- **15.1%** Finance & Professional
- **13.9%** Manufacturing

### WELFARE AND BENEFITS

- **2.2%** Universal Credit
- **4.4%** Universal Credit (16-24)
- **20.3%** Employment deprivation
- **£20.3 million** per year
- **£865** per working age adult

### Figure 3.2 – Bar code chart show relative deprivation in Area (top) compared to Fife (bottom), SIMD 2016

### Figure 3.3 – Map highlighting the 5, 10, 15 and 20% most deprived datazones within the Area, SIMD 2016
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 and 2018 we can get a picture of how the Area is changing, and use this snapshot as a background benchmark for any local use of the Place Standard within local communities across the Area.

In the Levenmouth Area in 2018, a consistent and generally improving picture emerges in relation to local people’s perception of place, compared to the results of the previous Place Survey in 2016. Natural Space, and Facilities and Amenities are identified as needing the least improvement in the Levenmouth Area, and together with Streets and Spaces, these appear to be the areas that have shown the most improvement between 2016 and 2018.

Public Transport is identified as the area needing most improvement, and this is in greater need for improvement now than in 2016. Other areas with the greatest need for improvement are identified as Work and Local Economy, Housing and Community, and Feeling Safe.

A mixed picture of place emerges for the Levenmouth Area when we compare it to other areas of Fife.

In common with a number of other areas of Fife, Natural Space, Play and Recreation, and Facilities and Amenities are generally viewed as positive by local people in Levenmouth Area.

In contrast to other areas of Fife, Public Transport and Feeling Safe are the areas which are in greater need of improvement in the Levenmouth Area.

Work and Local Economy – like many other areas of Fife – is identified as one of the areas in most need of improvement for the Levenmouth Area.

A greater need for improvement is also seen in the areas of Housing and Community, and Care and Maintenance of the local area.

Social wellbeing is an area where relative improvement is required, particularly in relation to Identity and Belonging, and Influence and Sense of Control.

Figure 4.1 – Community perceptions of where improvement is needed in the area using the Place Standard, and how it has changed between 2016 and 2018. 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 29, 2018)

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

Figure 4.2 – Colour shaded diagram of how different aspects of Place are viewed across Fife (Place Standard, Fife People’s Panel, Survey 29, 2018)
5. People

Simply looking at where people live only gives part of the picture. We want to understand how well different groups of people are doing compared to others in the area and throughout Scotland.

Constrained city types account for a sizeable proportion of households in the area, and these groups continue to do less well within the area, and when compared to similar types of people living elsewhere in Scotland.

The area also includes many hard-pressed household types, who are sitting around the average for the area but are doing less well compared to similar households elsewhere in Scotland.

Rural residents, and those living in the suburbs, are generally doing well in the Levenmouth area, but present a mixed picture as to how they compare to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland. Urbanites are doing well in the area, but less well compared to similar types of household elsewhere in Scotland.

Between 2012 and 2016 there has been no change for people in the Levenmouth Area as a whole, nor for the main categories of households in the area, compared to other similar households elsewhere in Scotland.

Within community categories, there are a number of types of households which show significant positive change between 2012 and 2016.

The household types that have seen the biggest improvements within the area, compared to other similar types of households elsewhere in Scotland, are white professionals, families in terraces and flats, and harmered aspiration.

Other household types show significant negative change compared to other similar households elsewhere in Scotland.

Within the Levenmouth Area, older farming communities, and retired communal city dwellers show the largest negative change between 2012 and 2016.

Figure 5.1 – How different types of people are doing within the area (based on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 and 2011 Census Output Area Classification)

Figure 5.2 – How different people are doing within the area between 2012 and 2016 (based on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and 2011 Census Output Area Classification)

RPG is Relative to Peer Group Index, zero is same, negative is less favourable, positive is better. Colours show red as poorest performing to green, best performing.

Change shows direction of change from 2012 to 2016, no arrow indicates no significant change.
6. Community

Insights into how communities are faring are a critical input when considering local places. 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.

Funding for public services is seen as the major issue for the Levenmouth area, followed by local lifestyles (alcohol and drug abuse). NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare, Education / schools and Unemployment, Cost of living, and Crime / antisocial behaviour are also seen as major issues for the area.

Compared to two years ago, many issues are seen as less of an issue for the Levenmouth area now. This includes Migration / changing population, Unemployment and Crime / antisocial behaviour. Funding for public services and Defence / terrorism are now seen as more of an issue than they were two years ago.

As with all areas of Fife, the majority of local people in Levenmouth Area would like more involvement in decisions that the Council makes that affect their local area. 16% of people in Levenmouth Area feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area (27% for Fife).

Within Levenmouth Area, more than half of local people believe the Council does the best it can with the money available.

There is a perception within the area that the Council is less good at providing high quality services, addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in local neighbourhoods, letting people know how well it is performing, and designing its services around the needs of the people who use them. Levenmouth Area is below Fife for local people’s perception of the majority of statements relating to the Council and the services that it provides, but above for the perception that the Council does the best it can with the money available.

Within the area, fewer people believe that the Council is good at listening to local people’s views before it takes decisions or letting people know about the kinds of services it provides.

![Figure 6.1 – Community perceptions of what is a major issue in the area (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 28, 2017)](image1)

![Figure 6.2 – Views on local Council and services it provides (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 30, 2018)](image2)
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.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Levenmouth area remain Methil West and East, Buckhaven, Denbeath and Muiredge, and Methilhill. Areas with better life outcomes include Largo, Windygates and Coaltown, and Leven West.

Methil West, Kennoway and Bonnybank, and Wemyss continue to do worse than expected when compared to similar communities elsewhere in Scotland, while Leven West, Windygates and Coaltown, Largo, and Methilhill are doing better than expected.

Leven East and Methil West have improved the least compared to other similar communities elsewhere in Scotland. The greatest improvements in life outcomes are seen in Methilhill and Methil East. Methil East was previously least improved in the area, and has improved its position relative to other similar communities elsewhere in Scotland.

Methilhill continues to show greater improvement than comparable neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland. Leven East and Methil West are improving the least compared to other similar neighbourhoods.

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**Figures 7.1 and 7.2 – How different neighbourhoods are doing on key life outcomes relative to other comparable areas (Improvement Service, Community Planning Outcomes Profile Tool 2018)**
8. Horizons

It is nearly impossible to predict the future, however it is possible to identify challenges which are already on the horizon.

Demography
Over the next 25 years, Levenmouth Area’s population is estimated to increase by around 1,100 (3%) to reach 38,500. Children numbers are expected to remain fairly constant, with very slight increases of around 200 over the next 5-year period, followed by a gradual fall back to around starting numbers of 6,300 by 2041. The number of working age people is estimated to continue to reduce for the next 20 years, before recovering slightly, but still showing an overall reduction of 1,500 (7%) over the 25-year period. Older people numbers are expected to increase steadily over the next 20 years, before levelling off and then starting to reduce for the remaining few years, with an overall increase of around 2,600 (33%) by 2041, (the second lowest increase for older people across all the Fife areas).

Across the Levenmouth Committee area the 13 primary schools are generally operating within capacity. There may be local capacity pressures at a couple of schools but across the area pupil numbers are expected to decrease. Capacity pressures are expected in Leven due to the large scale housing development, which is to provide a new primary school to support the new housing. Pupil numbers at the 1 high school are expected to increase and additional capacity may be required in association with the growth of the new housing area.

Economy
Areas of Mid-Fife continue to suffer from long-term socio-economic issues that limit their economic growth and in tackling inequalities in opportunity and employment. These issues expose a need for greater investment in business infrastructure, improving transport and digital connectivity, better matching of skills to meet local demand, and a closer working relationship for businesses and training and education providers. The National Planning Framework (NPF3) is looking to establish an energy corridor from Longannet to Methil. Lobbying of the Scottish Government is continuing regarding the reinstatement of the Levenmouth Rail Link.

Welfare reform changes, including managed migration to Universal Credit, will continue to impact on local people and the local economy. £20.3 million will be lost from Levenmouth Area’s local economy by 2020, as a result of welfare reform changes (both pre and post 2015 reforms). That’s a loss of £865 per adult in the area (£655 for Fife), with Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages most affected.

Considerable uncertainty remains about the economic impact of Brexit with impact unclear and difficult to predict until agreement is reached on fundamental issues such as trade, movement of people, or governing legislation. As Fife is heavily dominated by public sector industries, Brexit may have less of an effect compared to areas more reliant on private sector manufacturing, financial and knowledge industries. Labour supply for specific industries in Fife, such as agriculture, hospitality and lower skilled processing occupations, will experience more limited availability, as greater restrictions will be placed on EU workers that have traditionally filled these roles over the last decade (although these industries form a small part of the overall Fife workforce). It is likely that alternative funding sources will need to be secured to replace funding previously available through the EU.

Environment
Proposals by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) for regeneration of the River Leven are of significant scale and expected to bring a positive impact to Mid Fife. Regeneration of areas around the river are expected to deliver social and economic benefits to the area, including greater connectivity, and community hope and aspiration.

The Fife Pilgrim Way heritage project will see a new long distance walking route through inland Fife. From Culross and North Queensferry to St Andrews, the 104 km/64 mile path takes in views of the Fife Coast and Lomond Hills, and passes medieval landmarks, industrial landscapes and historic picturesque villages. It will take a direct path via Windygates and Kennoway.