

# Fife's Economic Strategy

A scenic view of Fife, Scotland, featuring the Fife Arms Bridge in the background and the Fife Arms Bridge in the foreground. The bridge is a large, modern cable-stayed bridge with a prominent central pylon and numerous stay cables. In the foreground, the Fife Arms Bridge is visible, a historic stone bridge with multiple arches. The background shows a lush green landscape with rolling hills and a body of water. The sky is a mix of blue and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall image has a vibrant, colorful overlay.

Growing a stronger, greener & fairer economy for Fife

# Introduction

Fife's Economic Strategy 2023–30 sets out the approach we will take over the next seven years to grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife, ensuring that more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in Fife and its communities for the benefit of all.

To realise this ambition Fife Council and its community planning partners<sup>1</sup> will focus on:

**Supporting businesses**

**Investing in premises and infrastructure**

**Delivering skills, training and fair employment**

underpinned by a *Community Wealth Building*<sup>2</sup> approach in order to deliver the following outcomes:

- A recovery & increase in the number of businesses
- Increased levels of economic activity & employment
- Improvements in the economic performance of Mid-Fife
- The recovery & growth of Fife's tourism & hospitality sector
- Vibrant, attractive & re-purposed key town centres
- A skilled workforce able to support business needs
- Fair & inclusive access to work
- Lower levels of carbon emissions, in line with national targets (75% of 1990 baseline by 2030).

The development of Fife's Economic Strategy has been undertaken in consultation with our community planning partners and other key stakeholders in Fife.

# Contents

<b>1. Executive summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Progress since 2017</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Operating environment over the next seven years</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Strengths, challenges &amp; opportunities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. Our approach &amp; key priorities</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Key priorities &amp; actions</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix 1: National, regional &amp; local policy context</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Fife's key employment sectors</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Alignment of Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, Plan4Fife &amp; the Fife Economic Strategy</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Performance monitoring &amp; reporting framework</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix 5: References</b>	<b>20</b>

<sup>1</sup> Information about the Fife Partnership and Fife's Community Planning Partners can be found [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> Community Wealth Building is a new approach to local economic development which seeks to retain expenditure in the local economy and enable more local communities and people to own, access and benefit from the wealth our economy generates.

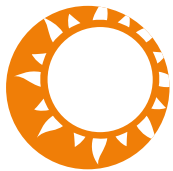


# Executive Summary

The ambition of Fife's Economic Strategy 2023–30 is to grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife.

We will seek to achieve this ambition by focusing on three policy priorities over the next seven years and by adopting a Community Wealth Building approach.

## Key to Plan4Fife Outcomes:



Opportunities  
for all



Thriving  
Places



Inclusive Growth  
and Jobs



Community Led  
Services

## Priority 1: Supporting businesses



### The Challenge

The number of businesses and jobs in Fife fell following the Covid-19 pandemic and during the start of the cost-of-living crisis. However, many businesses have remained resilient, adopting sustainable measures post Covid-19.

Fife's jobs density is lower than that for Scotland as a whole; Mid-Fife has a particularly low business density. Although many businesses in Fife have invested in digitisation, the use of digital technologies is still below the Scottish average; in addition, many small & medium sized businesses are yet to achieve net-zero emissions.

### To address this challenge we will...

- *Develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills in our young people and in under-represented groups in the labour market.*
- *Support new business start-ups and their early survival.*
- *Help small & medium-sized enterprises grow.*
- *Help businesses accelerate their transition to net zero emissions and adopt digital technologies to enable them to compete in a digital economy.*
- *Develop and strengthen local supply chains and optimise the level of public sector expenditure retained within Fife's local economy.*
- *Attract inward investment, focussing on our key strategic development locations.*
- *Support and develop community-owned and co-operative models of business ownership.*

### ... and by 2030, achieve the following outcomes:

- *An increase in businesses and jobs especially in Mid-Fife.*
- *Business start-up and survival rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels and/or are higher than national rates.*
- *A reduction in per capita greenhouse gas emissions.*
- *Over 50% of Fife Council's procurement expenditure is spent with suppliers based in Fife.*
- *An increase in the number of social enterprises, co-operatives & community-owned businesses.*
- *An increase in the number of advanced manufacturing, low carbon, digital innovation and trade activities and jobs as a result of the successful operation of the Forth Green Freeport.*

## Priority 2: Investing in business premises & infrastructure



### The Challenge

Market conditions make it unlikely that the private sector will provide the modern, high quality business premises required to attract and retain new and growing businesses. Whilst City Region Deal funding has supported Council investment in new developments, much of Fife's existing business property requires significant investment to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose and meets the transition to net zero emissions. There are gaps in transport and digital connectivity, and rising vacancy rates in some of our town centres. Fife's tourism, hospitality and accommodation sectors were particularly badly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and are yet to fully recover.

### To address this challenge we will...

- Provide high-quality, modern business premises.
- Develop serviced employment land sites and bring vacant and derelict land and buildings back into productive use.
- Deliver place-based investment to revitalise and repurpose our key town centres.
- Expand our network of enterprise centres and hubs.
- Support and deliver investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure.
- Support the development of and investment in digital infrastructure.
- Continue to make business cases for more funding and investment in Fife.

### ... and by 2030, achieve the following outcomes:

- An increase in businesses and jobs especially in Mid-Fife.
- The opening of the Levenmouth Rail Link has seen an increase in businesses and jobs in the area.
- Over 90% of Fife Council-owned business premises are occupied.
- A fall in town centre vacancy rates.
- Most communities have access to an enterprise centre aimed at stimulating small and growing businesses.
- Visitor numbers to Fife have returned to their pre-pandemic levels.

## Priority 3: Delivering skills, training & fair employment



### The Challenge

Although Fife's labour market is more highly qualified than other parts of Scotland, businesses in many sectors are finding it hard to recruit and retain staff with the right skills. Despite record low levels of unemployment, Fife's employment rates remain below the Scottish rate, and we have seen an increase in the number of people who are economically inactive. Around 10% of our school leavers are failing to achieve and sustain a positive destination. A significant number of people face multiple barriers to meaningful employment as a result of long-term physical and mental health conditions, and there are persistently high rates of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth. The earnings of people who work and live in Fife are lower than the national averages.

### To address this challenge we will...

- Monitor and respond to current and future needs in relation to workforce skills, embedding skills to thrive in a digital economy in all that we do.
- Work with employers and training providers to up-skill and re-skill our existing workforce.
- Ensure school and college leavers have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to move on to positive destinations.
- Provide additional support to young people at risk of not achieving a positive destination.
- Target enhanced support to those most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market.
- Work with employers and anchor institutions to encourage the adoption of inclusive employment and fair work practices.

- Increase the scale and range of community benefits achieved through public sector procurement expenditure.

### ... and by 2030, achieve the following outcomes:

- Higher rates of employment and reduced levels of economic inactivity.
- Fewer people claiming out-of-work benefits and suffering the greatest levels of deprivation.
- At least 95% of our school leavers go to and are still in a positive destination after 6 months.
- An increase in average wages and the percentage of employee jobs which are paid above the real living wage.
- More employers are accredited as real Living Wage Employers.

# Background

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**Since the publication of our previous 2017–27 Fife Economic Strategy, we have witnessed a series of events that have had a significant economic impact at global, national, regional and local levels.**

In 2019, Fife Council declared a Climate Emergency in line with declarations made by the UK and Scottish governments. The 2021 COP26 UN Climate Change Conference subsequently secured the commitment of world leaders on the need for more urgent progress on the just transition to net zero.

The 2020 global Covid-19 pandemic had an extraordinary social and economic impact worldwide and lockdown restrictions resulted in Britain's economy suffering the worst recession in 100 years.

The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020 and since January 2021 is longer part of the customs union and single market.

Disruptions in global supply chains caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and UK's EU exit were increased by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Energy, fuel and food prices have increased, and in the 12 months to June 2022 UK inflation hit its highest rate in 30 years.

The resultant UK cost-of-living and cost-of-doing-business crises are adversely impacting the lowest-paid and putting businesses at risk.

Meanwhile, global transformations, including digitalisation and innovation driven by the use of data and Artificial Intelligence, are impacting every aspect of the economy. The future of work is changing as automation replaces basic tasks and helps tackle skills shortages.

The economy is now a digital one and intelligent, carbon neutral buildings and the energy transition, energy security and decarbonisation require new skills and suppliers. People and businesses need the skills to adapt and compete in this fast-paced environment of new technologies and business models.

And yet, despite this period of disruption and uncertainty, we have seen many achievements.

Industry, the public and voluntary sectors, and local communities collaborated as never before to support the NHS in tackling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fife Council responded quickly to administer government financial support to businesses, who in turn worked hard to adapt and innovate.

Service providers rose to the challenge of remote digital delivery to maintain education, business support and employability services.

The early recovery of the construction sector helped us to push on with capital investment in our business premises, town centres, heritage assets and transportation infrastructure.

And in moving forward with this new strategy we will continue to endeavour to improve the economic prosperity for all in Fife.

**The economy is now a digital one and intelligent, carbon neutral buildings and the energy transition, energy security and decarbonisation require new skills and suppliers.**

# Progress since 2017

- ✓ Unemployment and the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Fife have fallen below pre-pandemic levels.
- ✓ Glenrothes became the first Living Wage Town in the UK, helping to reduce the proportion of jobs in Fife paid less than the real Living Wage from 18.9% in 2019 to 12.3% in 2022.
- ✓ A total of 32 hectares of vacant and derelict land in Fife has been brought back into productive use.
- ✓ 95.7% of residential and business properties in Fife now have access to superfast broadband compared to 92% in 2017.
- ✓ The amount of Fife Council procurement expenditure spent with Fife businesses has increased from 37.2% in 2017-18 to 41.7% in 2021-22.
- ✓ Fife was named the 'Most Enterprising Place in Britain' in the UK Government's 2018 Enterprising Britain Awards.
- ✓ Cowdenbeath was a shortlisted finalist in the Rising Star category of the 2019 Great British High Street Awards.
- ✓ Dunfermline was successful in its bid for city status as part of celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- ✓ The new Fife Pilgrim Way 64 mile walking route from Culross and North Queensferry to St Andrews opened.
- ✓ Fife Council administered 10,241 grants totalling over £166 million to Fife businesses from the Scottish Government's Coronavirus Business Support Schemes.
- ✓ In 2021–22, Business Gateway Fife supported 603 new business start-ups, the highest number across Scotland.
- ✓ Employability programmes funded or operated by Fife Council supported a total of 1,455 people into employment in 2021–22, the highest annual figure ever achieved.
- ✓ Significant investment for Fife has been secured through engagement in the £1.2 billion Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Deal and the £700 million Tay Cities Deal.
- ✓ The Scottish Government announced the £70m reinstatement of the Leven Rail Link, accompanied by £10m of joint funding with Fife Council to support further local investment.
- ✓ The Old Course, St Andrews hosted the 150th Open Golf Championship in July 2022, attracting a record 290,000 visitors to the event and showcasing Fife to a global TV audience.
- ✓ The University of St Andrews was named top university in the UK in The Guardian University Guide 2023 and The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022.
- ✓ Fife College recorded the best positive destination figures of any college in Scotland in 2018–19 and 2019–20 and received the Enterprising College of the Year Award 2022.

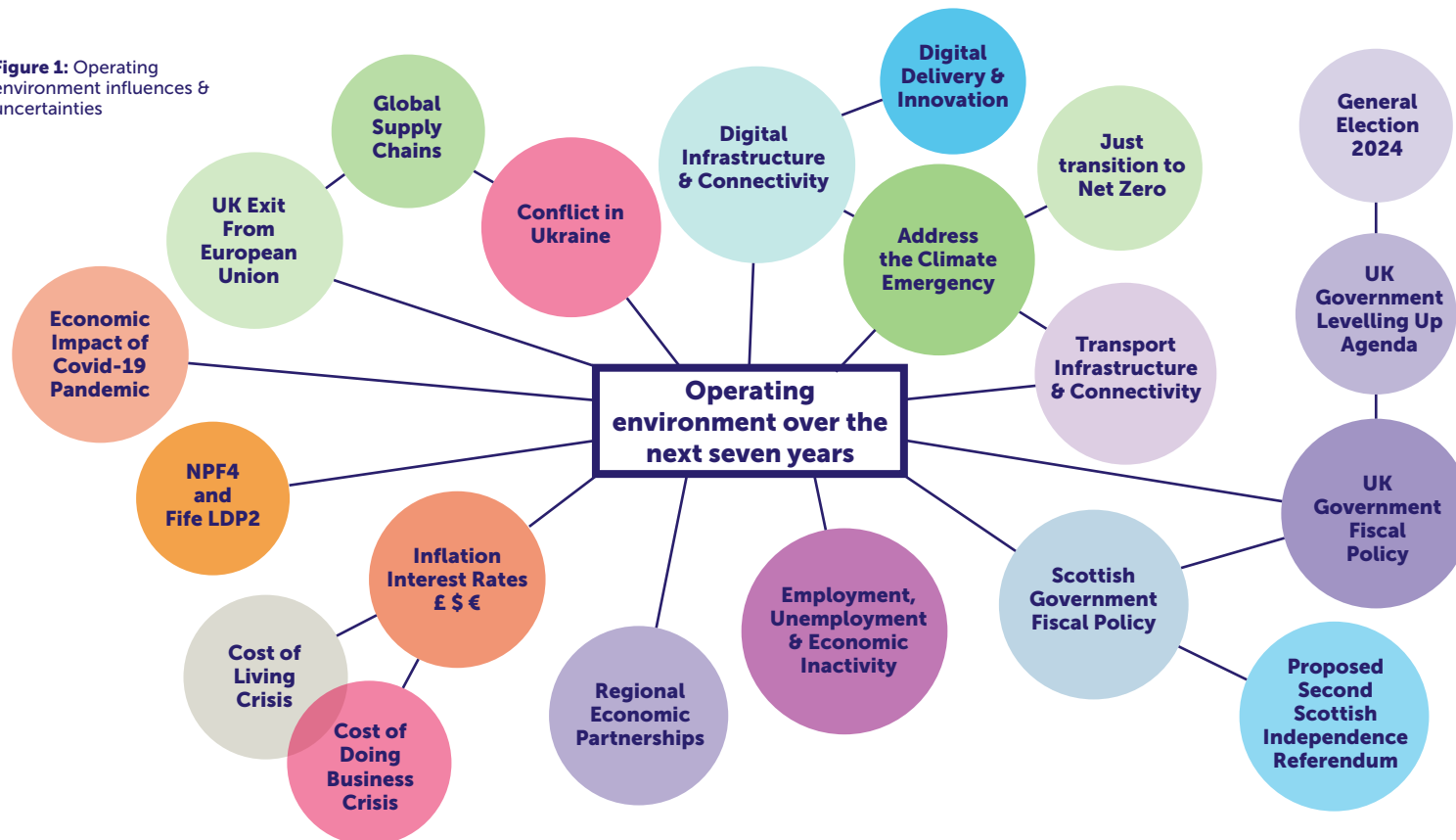


# Our operating environment over the next seven years

The delivery of this strategy will be influenced by a number of significant challenges and uncertainties, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. Our priorities, actions and delivery plan are based on our assessment of the current situation, but this will be continually reviewed in relation to the environment in which we are operating, and further adjustments will be made as required.

Our new strategy also takes into account the objectives and priorities of the **UK Government Levelling Up Paper**, **Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation**, the **Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Regional Prosperity Framework and Action Plan**, **Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy** and the **Plan for Fife and Plan for Fife Reform & Recovery Update**. Details of this national, regional and local policy context are set out in Appendix 1.

**Figure 1:** Operating environment influences & uncertainties





# Strengths, challenges & opportunities

Our assessment of the key economic strengths, challenges and opportunities for Fife is contained in Figure 2 and summarised below. A more detailed evaluation of Fife's recent economic performance and trends is provided in an [Evidence Report](#).

## Strengths

We have **strengths in several business sectors** (as shown in Appendix 2) and **provide effective support to businesses and to people facing barriers to work**.

Major events, golf tourism and Fife's **outstanding natural and cultural assets** provide the platform for growing visitor numbers to Fife – but with an increased focus on promoting sustainable tourism.

Fife is home to a **top-class university and college** and its labour market is more qualified than Scotland's as a whole.

## Challenges

Employment has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels and there has been an **increase in economic inactivity**. Claimant rates in Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath are consistently higher than the rest of Fife and the **under-performance of the Mid-Fife<sup>1</sup> economy** remains a concern.

There has been a **fall in the number of jobs and businesses** and Fife's jobs density is lower than that for Scotland as a whole. **Business investment in digitisation is below the Scottish average and many businesses are yet to achieve net zero emissions**. Many of our industrial estates and properties need significant investment and there are gaps in digital and transport connectivity. **The changing dynamics of high street retail in our key town centres** continues to pose a significant challenge.

Visitor numbers to Fife have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Whilst the number of tourism-related businesses has grown, the sector continues to face significant pressures from staff shortages and the cost-of-living / cost-of-doing-business crisis.

**Securing positive destinations for 16–24 year olds** remains a priority, as does targeted **support for the most disadvantaged** to access fair and meaningful employment.

## Opportunities

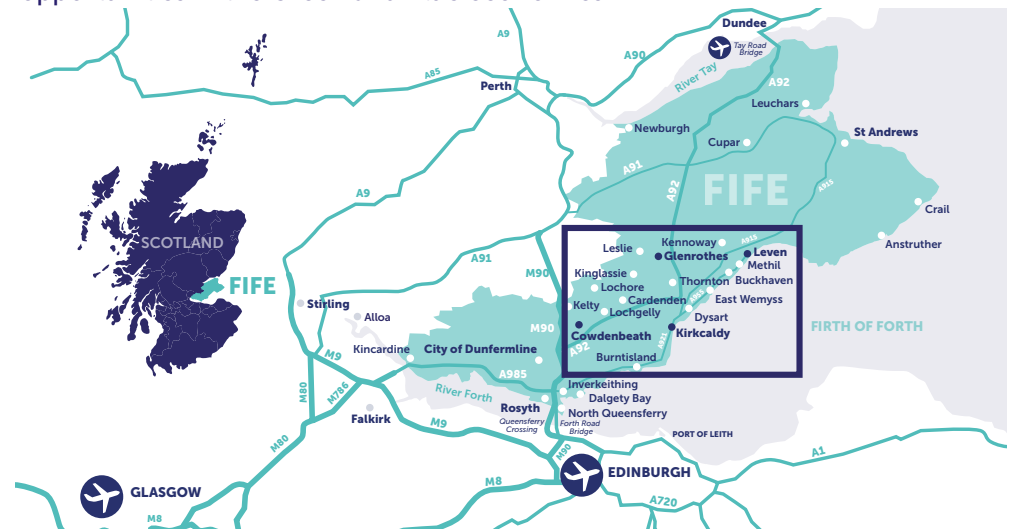
Delivery of the **Leven Rail Link**, work on the River Leven and Levenmouth Reconnected Programmes provide an opportunity to attract further investment into the area.

Fife's success in having **Dunfermline** recognised as Scotland's newest city provides a platform from which to attract new investment.

**Promoting and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation** continues to be an important area of activity with culture of enterprise activities linking our schools, college and local businesses to raise ambition and promote opportunity.

This is backed by a **strong emphasis on business start-up, survival and growth** assistance.

The ongoing development of the **Eden Campus** at Guardbridge and **Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus** at Rosyth and the award of **Green Freeport** status to the Forth provide exciting opportunities to stimulate data driven innovation, utilising established expertise in engineering and manufacturing in partnership with academic research and skills development to realise emerging opportunities in the Green and Blue economies.



<sup>1</sup>Mid-Fife includes the areas of Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Levenmouth, Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly



Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
<p><b>Record low levels of unemployment</b> In 2022 Fife's unemployment rate fell below the pre-pandemic rate and reached a record low for the region.</p>	<p><b>Addressing the climate emergency</b> CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions per capita in Fife are above the Scottish average and increased by 1% between 2019 and 2020 due to increased industrial activity.</p>	<p><b>Fife's reputation as an international tourism destination</b> The successful delivery of the 150th Open Golf Championship at St Andrews provides an opportunity to further promote Fife as an international tourism destination.</p>
<p><b>Effective business support &amp; employability services</b> In 2021/22 Business Gateway Fife supported the highest number of new start-ups in Scotland.</p>	<p><b>Economic inactivity in the labour market has increased</b> 25.3% of Fife's working age population was economically inactive during the 12 months to Sept 2022; with an estimated 17,700 people inactive due to long-term illness.</p>	<p><b>Vacant &amp; Derelict Land Fund</b> Fife continues to make effective use of Scottish Government VDLF funding to support investment in infrastructure and place.</p>
<p><b>Business sectoral strengths</b> Centres of expertise in Manufacturing/Engineering, Tourism &amp; Hospitality, Food &amp; Drink, Transport &amp; Storage Upcoming Financial Technology (Fintech) sector.</p>	<p><b>Low levels of R&amp;D spend by businesses</b> Although expenditure by Fife businesses on research and development has increased, spend per capita (£158) is still significantly below national spend (£263).</p>	<p><b>Investment in the Levenmouth area</b> Investment in the Leven Rail Link, Levenmouth Reconnected Blueprint and River Leven Regeneration Programme is supporting strategic investment in one of Fife's most deprived areas.</p>
<p><b>Top-class universities and colleges</b> The University of St Andrews is ranked the UK's top university and Fife College has the highest rate of students going on to positive destinations of all colleges in Scotland.</p>	<p><b>Young people not in education, training or employment</b> 10% of Fife's 2020/21 school leavers failed to achieve a positive destination – the 2nd highest rate of Scotland's 32 local authorities.</p>	<p><b>Investment in innovation</b> The ongoing development of the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus at Rosyth and Eden Campus in Guardbridge provide opportunities to drive innovation, clean growth and high-value start-ups.</p>
<p><b>Outstanding natural assets</b> Fife benefits from significant coast, countryside, heritage, golf, leisure, culture, and food and drink assets, including 50 golf courses and 13 Beach Award Scotland beaches – more than any other Scottish local authority area.</p>	<p><b>Aspects of the Mid-Fife economy continue to underperform</b> Mid-Fife has a lower business density than Fife and Scotland and Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath have significantly higher rates of people claiming out-of-work benefits than the rest of Fife.</p>	<p><b>Dunfermline's new City Status</b> The award of city status to Dunfermline in 2022, together with its membership of the Scottish Cities Alliance, provide a further opportunity to promote local economic growth.</p>
<p><b>Success in accessing and delivering investment</b> Fife has continued to deliver significant capital investment in infrastructure and place, including the Fife i3 Programme, Eden Campus, town centres, heritage-led and vacant &amp; derelict land fund investment, Fife Council's capital programme, and investment in new schools and the Dunfermline Learning Campus.</p>	<p><b>Business start-up rates and scale of businesses</b> In 2020, Fife's business birth rate fell back below the Scottish rate after exceeding it for the first time in 2019. As in Scotland as a whole, Fife's business base is dominated by SMEs with 96% of Fife businesses employing &lt;250 staff, and 93% employing &lt;50 people.</p>	<p><b>Green and Blue economies</b> Although still in the early stages of understanding and responding to future business needs, Fife is well-placed to benefit from Green and Blue economy opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Strong partnership working</b> Fife Council is the third largest local authority in Scotland, benefits from sharing a co-terminus boundary with NHS Fife, and has well-established community planning arrangements in place to support collaborative working.</p>	<p><b>Helping tourism to recover following the Covid-19 pandemic</b> Fife's tourism, hospitality &amp; accommodation sectors were particularly badly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and are yet to fully recover. Visitor numbers to Fife in 2021 totalled 1.75 million, compared to a pre-Covid figure of 2.8 million visitors in 2019.</p>	<p><b>Forth Green Freeport</b> The award of Green Freeport status offers the prospect of large-scale investment in Fife, centred around Rosyth and Burntisland.</p>
<p><b>Labour market qualifications</b> Compared to Scotland as a whole, Fife has a higher proportion of its labour market qualified to NVQ4 level or above and a smaller proportion with no qualifications.</p>	<p><b>Addressing labour market shortages</b> Businesses in many sectors are experiencing difficulties with skills shortages and staff recruitment and retention.</p>	<p><b>Digital Tech Sector</b> Scottish Enterprise's 'Understanding Regional Digital Tech Ecosystems in Scotland' 2021 Report identifies Eastern Scotland as the largest digital tech sector in Scotland, employing 26,000 people (2020) and having a GVA output of £1.6 billion (2019).</p>
<p><b>A thriving Third Sector</b> There are over 4,000 voluntary sector organisations in Fife. The sector supports around 9,000 jobs and has a total annual turnover of around £620m.</p>	<p><b>Earnings in Fife are lower than the national averages</b> Median workplace weekly earnings in Fife are below those for Scotland as a whole, and are significantly lower in the NE Fife and Glenrothes UK parliamentary constituency areas. 17% of jobs in Fife are paid less than the real Living Wage.</p>	<p><b>Investment in infrastructure</b> Ensuring investment in infrastructure builds Fife's resilience and enables inclusive, net zero and sustainable growth.</p>
<p><b>Changing dynamics of town centres</b> Retail vacancy rates remain high in key town centres, with particular issues around major large-scale vacant retail units.</p>		

Figure 2: Analysis of Fife's Economic Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

# Our approach & key priorities

The ambition of this strategy is **to grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife.**

An analysis of Fife's strengths, challenges and opportunities, our national, regional and local strategic context and future operating environment, has led us to identify three priorities where our actions will be targeted over the next seven years.

## Fife's Economic Strategy Priorities 2023–2030

- 1 Supporting Businesses
- 2 Investing in Business Premises and Infrastructure
- 3 Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Employment

A fourth priority, **Working in Collaboration and Partnership**, details how we will deliver the Strategy.

All activity will be underpinned by a **Community Wealth Building approach** and will aim to fulfil the following outcomes:

- *A recovery and increase in the number of businesses*
- *Increased levels of economic activity and employment*
- *Improvements in the economic performance in Mid-Fife*
- *The recovery and growth of Fife's tourism and hospitality sector*
- *Vibrant, attractive and re-purposed key town centres*
- *A skilled workforce able to support business needs*
- *Fair and inclusive access to work*
- *Lower levels of carbon emissions.*

The actions and interventions which will support delivery of these priorities are summarised in Figure 3 (page 10) and detailed in the tables on pages 11–13.

Appendix 3 illustrates the alignment between the strategy's three priorities and Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the 2021–24 Plan4Fife update.

Fife Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 was reflected in the 2021–24 Plan4Fife Update that identified **Addressing the Climate Emergency** as one of three priorities alongside **Tackling Poverty & Preventing Crisis** and **Leading Economic Recovery**.

The Fife Economic Strategy is committed to embedding actions to **tackle climate change** within all appropriate areas of economic development activity.

Supporting those who are most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market to secure and sustain meaningful employment is a critical component in **Tackling Poverty & Preventing Crisis**.

The 2021–24 Plan4Fife Update also commits to adopting a cross-cutting, partnership-wide **Community Wealth Building (CWB)** approach. The Fife Economic Strategy incorporates the principles of CWB within all relevant economic development and employability activities. **Fife Council, NHS Fife, Fife Voluntary Action, Fife College and the University of St Andrews are anchor organisations that have each adopted the CWB Fife Anchor Charter.** As such they are each committed to: buying goods and service locally where appropriate; employing people from local communities and providing jobs that are secure, rewarding and are paid at least the real Living Wage; using their land and property to support communities and enterprises; harnessing and growing local wealth; and encouraging the formation and growth of inclusive business models, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms and cooperatives.

This strategy intentionally focuses on a small number of priorities with the greatest potential to help us achieve our aim of ensuring that more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in Fife and its communities for the benefit of all.

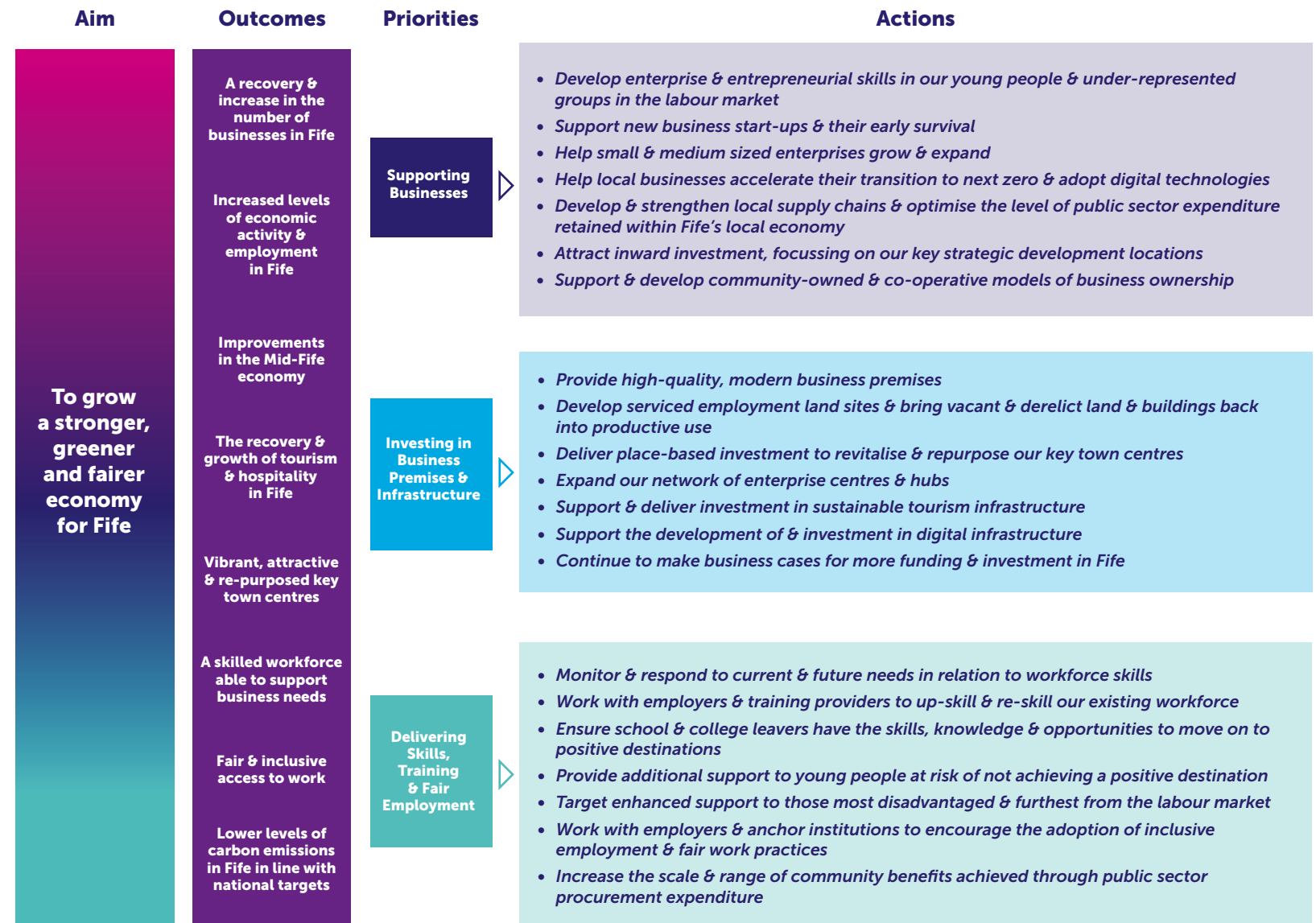
The detail of how we will take this strategy forward will be set out in a delivery plan and actions will be taken forward by the Fife Partnership's Leading Economic Recovery Board partners – Fife Council, Fife College, NHS Fife, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. Delivery will be monitored via Fife Council's and Fife Partnership's governance and reporting arrangements.

The delivery plan will also continue to inform, and be informed by, partnership working and collaboration at a local, regional and national level.

Progress will be measured by monitoring key activity, output and outcome performance indicators. A draft performance monitoring and reporting framework is set out in Appendix 4.

As we proceed over the next seven years, we will continually revisit our assumptions about Fife's operating environment, assess how any changes may affect our strategy, and adjust our priorities and actions as required.

**Figure 3:** Fife Economic Strategy: Aim, Outcomes, Policy Priorities & Actions



# Key priorities & actions

Priority 1: Supporting businesses <i>Key focus on:</i>			Priority 1: Supporting businesses <i>Key focus on:</i>		
<b>Action 1.1</b>	<b>Develop enterprise &amp; entrepreneurial skills in our young people &amp; within under-represented groups in the labour market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering project-based programmes in schools &amp; college including Culture of Enterprise initiatives</li> <li>• Increasing collaboration between education &amp; business sectors</li> <li>• Providing online resources</li> <li>• Targeting young people &amp; under-represented groups</li> </ul>	<b>Action 1.5</b>	<b>Develop &amp; strengthen supply chain opportunities &amp; optimise the level of public expenditure retained within Fife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier Development Programme &amp; Meet-the-Buyer Events</li> <li>• Promoting access to finance &amp; Expert Help</li> <li>• Trade shows &amp; learning journeys</li> <li>• Local and regional supply chain &amp; cluster development</li> <li>• Promoting the circular economy</li> <li>• Key sectors &amp; key opportunities for Fife</li> <li>• Opportunities associated with the green &amp; blue economies</li> <li>• Increasing local procurement spend by Fife public sector organisations &amp; NHS Fife</li> <li>• Increasing Scottish &amp; UK public sector procurement spend in Fife</li> <li>• Procurement strategies &amp; arrangements</li> <li>• National procurement arrangements</li> <li>• Sustainable procurement</li> </ul>
<b>Action 1.2</b>	<b>Support new business start-ups &amp; their early survival</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advice, guidance &amp; signposting to funding &amp; finance</li> <li>• Providing appropriate business start-up premises</li> <li>• Supporting high-value academic research spin-offs</li> <li>• Supporting business resilience</li> <li>• Targeting support for business start-ups by women, young people &amp; other under-represented groups</li> </ul>	<b>Action 1.6</b>	<b>Attract inward investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Fife, including Levenmouth</li> <li>• Energy Park Fife</li> <li>• The Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus (AGIC) at Rosyth</li> <li>• Delivering the Forth Green Freeport proposals at Rosyth and Burntisland</li> <li>• The Longannet strategic development site at Kincardine</li> <li>• Eden Campus, Guardbridge</li> <li>• Westfield</li> <li>• Opportunities arising from Dunfermline city status</li> <li>• Using &amp; further developing international/intra-regional partnerships to promote opportunities for investment, building on the agreed partnership with Kujawsko-Pomorskie</li> </ul>
<b>Action 1.3</b>	<b>Help small &amp; medium-sized enterprises grow and expand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Specialist &amp; Expert Help services</li> <li>• Promoting access to funding &amp; finance</li> <li>• Providing business premises &amp; employment land sites</li> <li>• Encouraging &amp; supporting innovation &amp; digital adoption</li> <li>• Supporting talent attraction</li> <li>• Providing support for workforce re-skilling &amp; up-skilling</li> </ul>	<b>Action 1.7</b>	<b>Support &amp; develop community-owned &amp; co-operative models of business ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing appropriate support for alternative business models, such as social enterprises &amp; cooperatives</li> </ul>
<b>Action 1.4</b>	<b>Help local businesses accelerate their transition to net zero &amp; adopt digital technologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Expert Help services</li> <li>• Signposting to sources of funding &amp; finance</li> <li>• Developing net zero standard business premises &amp; sites</li> <li>• Promoting energy, waste &amp; water efficiencies &amp; climate adaptations</li> <li>• Encouraging &amp; supporting innovation &amp; digital adoption</li> <li>• Providing support for workforce re-skilling &amp; up-skilling</li> <li>• Supporting the sustainable development of key sectors in Fife</li> <li>• Opportunities associated with the green &amp; blue economies</li> </ul>			



Priority 2: Investing in business premises & infrastructure		Key focus on:
Action 2.1	Provide high-quality, modern business premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing delivery of the Fife i3 Programme</li> <li>Leven Rail Link/Levenmouth Reconnected/River Leven Programme</li> <li>Mid-Fife Economic Investment Prospectus</li> <li>Ongoing development of the Eden Campus</li> <li>Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus (AGIC), Rosyth</li> <li>The Forth Green Freeport proposal</li> </ul>
Action 2.2	Develop serviced employment land sites and bring vacant & derelict land & buildings back into productive use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering the new Fife Employment Land Strategy</li> <li>The productive redevelopment of vacant &amp; derelict land</li> </ul>
Action 2.3	Deliver place-based investment to help revitalise & re-purpose Fife's key town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities arising from Dunfermline's new city status</li> <li>Public realm improvements &amp; built heritage regeneration</li> <li>Public realm improvements and town centre housing developments in Kirkcaldy</li> <li>Delivering Glenrothes town centre masterplan</li> <li>Built heritage regeneration programmes including those in Inverkeithing and Buckhaven</li> <li>Town centre housing</li> <li>The productive redevelopment of vacant &amp; derelict land</li> <li>Town centre business improvement grants</li> <li>Shop local initiatives &amp; town centre animation events</li> <li>Business Improvement Districts/Digital Improvement Districts</li> </ul>
Action 2.4	Expand our network of enterprise centres & hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extending the current network of operations (Glenrothes, Kincardine and within Fife College), assessing the feasibility of developing hubs on Kirkcaldy &amp; Cowdenbeath High Streets</li> <li>Eden Campus Enterprise Hub</li> <li>Supporting enterprise hub or small flexible space accommodation in key community locations across Fife</li> </ul>
Priority 2: Investing in business premises and infrastructure		Key focus on:
Action 2.5	Support & deliver investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure & events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing &amp; delivering a new Fife Tourism Strategy</li> <li>Supporting strategic events</li> <li>Supporting Fife's Local Tourism Associations</li> <li>Tourism campaigns &amp; promotional activities</li> <li>Liaising with Visit Scotland &amp; Regional Tourism Partnerships</li> <li>Delivering the Forth Bridges Tourism Strategy</li> <li>Investing in tourism infrastructure including public toilet &amp; campervan facilities</li> </ul>
Action 2.6	Support the development of & investment in digital infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving coverage &amp; reach of digital networks to homes &amp; businesses, eliminating areas of low connectivity &amp; tackling areas of exclusion, increasing take-up &amp; giving individuals &amp; businesses improved choices.</li> </ul>
Action 2.7	Continue to make business cases for additional funding & investment in Fife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Region Deals (CRD) Funding</li> <li>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) / UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF)</li> <li>FC Capital Programme</li> <li>Forth Green Freeport Business Case</li> <li>Further development of the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus at Rosyth &amp; the Eden Campus at Guardbridge</li> <li>Supporting SGN's H100 project at Methil</li> <li>Further development of Energy Park Fife</li> <li>Support for the development of the Westfield site</li> <li>Vacant &amp; Derelict Land Funding (VDLF)</li> <li>Town Centre &amp; Built Heritage Funding</li> <li>Employability funding</li> <li>Local energy networks, digital &amp; transport connectivity</li> </ul>

Priority 3: Delivering skills, training & fair employment		Key focus on:
<b>Action 3.1</b>	<b>Monitor, &amp; respond to, current &amp; future needs in relation to workforce skills both within Fife &amp; within the wider regional economies, embedding digital skills in all that we do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging with &amp; delivering national initiatives</li> <li>Active engagement with key business sectors around current &amp; future skills needs &amp; better use of Regional Skills Assessment &amp; Job vacancy data</li> <li>Agile ongoing review &amp; development of our skills offering</li> <li>Learner engagement &amp; feedback</li> <li>Engaging with SDS/Scottish Funding Council</li> </ul>
<b>Action 3.2</b>	<b>Work with employers &amp; training providers to up-skill &amp; re-skill our existing workforce to help those in low-paid/low hours/entry level jobs to secure higher value &amp;/or more secure employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up-skilling &amp; re-skilling across priority sectors</li> <li>Targeted support for young people (16–24 yrs)</li> <li>Targeted support for low-income households</li> <li>Targeted support for women &amp; disadvantaged groups</li> <li>Targeted interventions &amp; joint planning supporting Mid-Fife localities</li> </ul>
<b>Action 3.3</b>	<b>Ensure school &amp; college leavers have the skills, knowledge &amp; opportunities to move on to positive destinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools careers information, advice &amp; guidance</li> <li>DYW and Culture of Enterprise Delivery</li> <li>Fife College careers information, advice &amp; guidance</li> <li>Self-Employment &amp; business start-up support</li> <li>Promoting positive perceptions of vocational qualifications and apprenticeships</li> <li>Securing more work experience &amp; work placements opportunities in the private, public &amp; voluntary sectors</li> <li>Modern, Foundation &amp; Graduate Apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<b>Action 3.4</b>	<b>Provide additional support for young people at risk of not achieving positive destinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early interventions to support young people identified as being at risk</li> <li>No One Left Behind Programmes</li> <li>Targeted support for Mid-Fife localities</li> </ul>
<b>Action 3.5</b>	<b>Target enhanced support to those most disadvantaged &amp; furthest from the labour market to secure &amp; sustain employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No One Left Behind Fife Programmes/Service Delivery Principles</li> <li>Tailored programmes for 16–19 yr olds &amp; 19–24 yr olds</li> <li>Programmes targeting Intensive Family Support</li> <li>Disadvantaged groups</li> <li>Addressing issues of workforce mobility</li> <li>Tackling increased levels of economic inactivity</li> <li>Supporting those with long-term physical &amp; mental health conditions</li> <li>Targeted support for Mid-Fife localities</li> </ul>

Priority 3: Delivering skills, training & fair employment		Key focus on:
<b>Action 3.6</b>	<b>Work with employers &amp; anchor institutions to encourage the adoption of inclusive employment &amp; fair work practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the number of employers with Real Living Wage Employer accreditation</li> <li>Actively promoting Equal Opportunities/Equal Pay/Employment Rights</li> <li>Fife Business Charter/Community Wealth Building Charter</li> <li>Fair Work conditionality clauses for public sector procurement contract &amp; grant awards</li> </ul>
<b>Action 3.7</b>	<b>Increase the scale &amp; range of community wealth building benefits achieved through public sector procurement contracts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local employment opportunities</li> <li>Apprenticeship opportunities</li> <li>Work experience/work placements</li> <li>Support for community projects</li> <li>Community assets/community asset transfer</li> <li>Financial contributions</li> </ul>
Priority 4: Working in collaboration & partnership		Key focus on:
<b>Action 4.1</b>	<b>Continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders in Fife &amp; at regional and national level to promote a shared understanding of priorities, alignment of policy, effective use of resources &amp; a culture of delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active engagement in the ongoing development of effective Fife Partnership leadership, collaboration &amp; governance arrangements</li> <li>Active engagement in the ongoing development of regional economic partnership working &amp; collaboration arrangements for the Edinburgh &amp; South East Scotland City Region &amp; the Tay Cities Region</li> <li>Representation on national professional bodies, including SLAED, EDAS &amp; the Business Support Partnership</li> <li>Effective engagement with the UK and Scottish Governments</li> <li>Effective engagement with local businesses &amp; business groups including the Fife Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses Fife &amp; Fife's Local Tourism Associations.</li> </ul>
<b>Action 4.2</b>	<b>Continue to develop a robust evidence base of the Fife economy that helps to inform strategy &amp; evaluate impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fife Economic Strategy programme management &amp; reporting</li> <li>Economic performance monitoring &amp; reporting framework</li> <li>Local area economic profiles</li> <li>Fife business base intelligence</li> <li>Key sector intelligence &amp; analysis</li> <li>Fife workforce intelligence, including educational attainment, positive destinations, employability activity intelligence, Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) &amp; job vacancies intelligence</li> <li>Local, regional &amp; national economic &amp; business intelligences</li> </ul>

# Appendix 1 National, Regional & Local Policy Contexts

## National Economic Policy Context

### UK Government Levelling Up White Paper

Published in February 2022, the UK Government Levelling Up White Paper sets out 4 objectives and 12 associated missions aimed at sharing economic prosperity more equitably across England and the devolved nations of the UK, with the overarching ambition of increasing 'Pride in Place'.

#### UK Government Levelling Up Objectives & Missions

##### Boost productivity, pay, jobs & living standards

1. Increase pay, employment & productivity in every area of UK
2. Increase public investment in R&D outside the South-East by 40%
3. Make local public transport connectivity closer to London standards
4. UK-wide gigabit-capable broadband & 4G coverage, 5G majority

##### Spread opportunities and improve public services

5. Increase pay, employment & productivity in every area of UK
6. Improve in primary reading, writing & maths (England 90%)
7. Narrow the gap / increase Healthy Life Expectancy +5yrs by 2035
8. Narrow the gap / improve well-being in every area of UK

##### Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging

9. Narrow the gap / increase pride in place in every area of the UK
10. Decrease the number of non-decent rented homes by 50%
11. Reduce homicide, serious violent & neighbourhood crime

##### Empower local leaders and communities

12. Provide a devolution deal for all parts of England that want one.

### Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

The vision of the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) (March 2022) is for a **Wellbeing Economy** that will create a **Wealthier, Fairer and Greener Scotland**. This will be achieved by five interconnected and mutually-reinforcing programmes of action, together with a sixth programme to promote an enhanced Culture of Delivery and accountability.

#### Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation Programmes of Action

##### 1. Enterprising people & culture

##### 2. New market opportunities

##### 3. Productive businesses & regions

##### 4. A skilled workforce

##### 5. A fairer, more equal society

##### 6. A culture of delivery

Delivery Plans setting out how the Scottish Government will work with its partners to implement each of the Strategy's programmes were published in October 2022.

## Regional Economic Policy Context

### Edinburgh & South-East Scotland City Region Deal & Regional Prosperity Framework (2021–2041)

The Edinburgh & South-East Scotland City Region comprises the area covered by Fife, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders local authorities. The Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) agreed by the City Region Deal partners in September 2021 sets the direction for regional economic collaboration across the City Region for the next 20 years. It identifies how partners in the region can build on other significant investments to further improve the way the regional economy functions and deliver an economy that is more **resilient, flourishing** and **innovative**.

A Delivery Plan has been developed setting out both an action plan of immediate interventions for 2023–2025, and a prospectus detailing collective future ambitions and opportunities. The Delivery Plan, which targets three goals – reduced economic exclusion, increased regional competitiveness and an accelerated transition to Net Zero – is a live document that will be updated every 12 months to reflect changes to the local, regional and macro economy. Four key programme areas have been identified for Year 1 (2023/24):

1. **Green Regeneration**
2. **Infrastructure for Recovery**
3. **Visitor Economy and Culture**
4. **Data-Driven Innovation Economy.**



### Tay Cities Region Deal & Regional Economic Strategy

The Tay Cities Region describes the area of East Central Scotland covered by the local authority areas of Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross and the north-east part of Fife. The ambition of the current Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy (which will be refreshed in 2023) is to increase the number of businesses and create more better-paid jobs across the region to improve access to opportunity and increase the distribution of wealth and wellbeing.

Key targets to 2029 include:

- Increasing regional employment to above the Scottish average;
- Increasing the 5-year business survival rate to above 50%; and
- Reducing the proportion of jobs paid less than the real Living Wage

The Strategy focuses on 3 key inter-related themes:

#### **Key Business Sectors**

Supporting key business sectors in which the region has a strength, or which offer potential for growth.

#### **Place: Investment & Infrastructure**

Supporting improvements in digital and transport connectivity, investing in key business infrastructure and improving business support arrangements.

#### **People: Skills & Employability**

Improving workforce skills, re-skilling and up-skilling workers, tackling barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups and streamlining the skills system.





## Local Policy Context

### The Plan4Fife 2017–27

The Plan4Fife is the Fife Community Planning Partnership's 10 year vision for Fife and was first launched in 2017.

The Plan sets out 4 strategic ambitions and 13 objectives for Fife:

#### Opportunities For All

1. Lower levels of poverty in line with national targets
2. Continued improvement in educational attainment for all groups
3. Reduced levels of preventable ill health & premature mortality

#### Thriving Places

4. Everyone has access to affordable housing options.
5. Fife's main town centres are attractive places to live, work & visit
6. Low levels of crime & anti-social behaviour in our communities
7. Access to high quality outdoor, cultural & leisure opportunities

#### Inclusive Growth & Jobs

8. Improvements in economic activity & employment in Fife
9. Improvements in economic activity & employment in Mid-Fife
10. Year-on-year increases in visitor numbers & tourism spend

#### Community-Led Services

11. More joined-up public services acting 'one step sooner'
12. More involvement of communities & individuals in local decision-making & in helping to plan & deliver local services
13. Fife has lower carbon emissions in line with national targets (a 75% reduction of 1990 emissions by 2030).

### The Plan4Fife: Reform & Recovery Update 2021–24

A refresh of the Plan4Fife was published in August 2021, with a focus on Reform and Recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Plan4Fife Update retains the ambitions and objectives and sets 3 overarching priorities for the 3-year period 2021–2024:

#### Leading Economic Recovery

#### Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis

#### Addressing the Climate Emergency

These three priorities are underpinned by the development of a partnership-wide, cross-cutting approach to **Community Wealth Building**.

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which aims to redirect wealth back into the local economy and place the control and benefits of assets and resources into the hands of local people.

The CWB approach focuses on five pillars of activity:

- *Using spend to support local businesses and communities*
- *Encouraging fair employment and supporting local labour markets*
- *Encouraging shared ownership of the local economy and inclusive business models*
- *Using land and property to support communities and enterprises*
- *Harnessing and growing local wealth.*

## Appendix 2 Fife's Key Employment Sectors

### Figure 4 provides an overview of the largest employment sectors in Fife.

As can be seen, the public sector makes a significant contribution to the Fife economy via the provision of local government, education and health & social care services.

Key employment centres include Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and St Andrews.

Manufacturing remains a major sector for Fife, with key employment centres in Glenrothes, Rosyth, Dunfermline, Leven, and Methil.

Construction (including housebuilding) features prominently within Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, South West Fife, Dunfermline and North-East Fife.

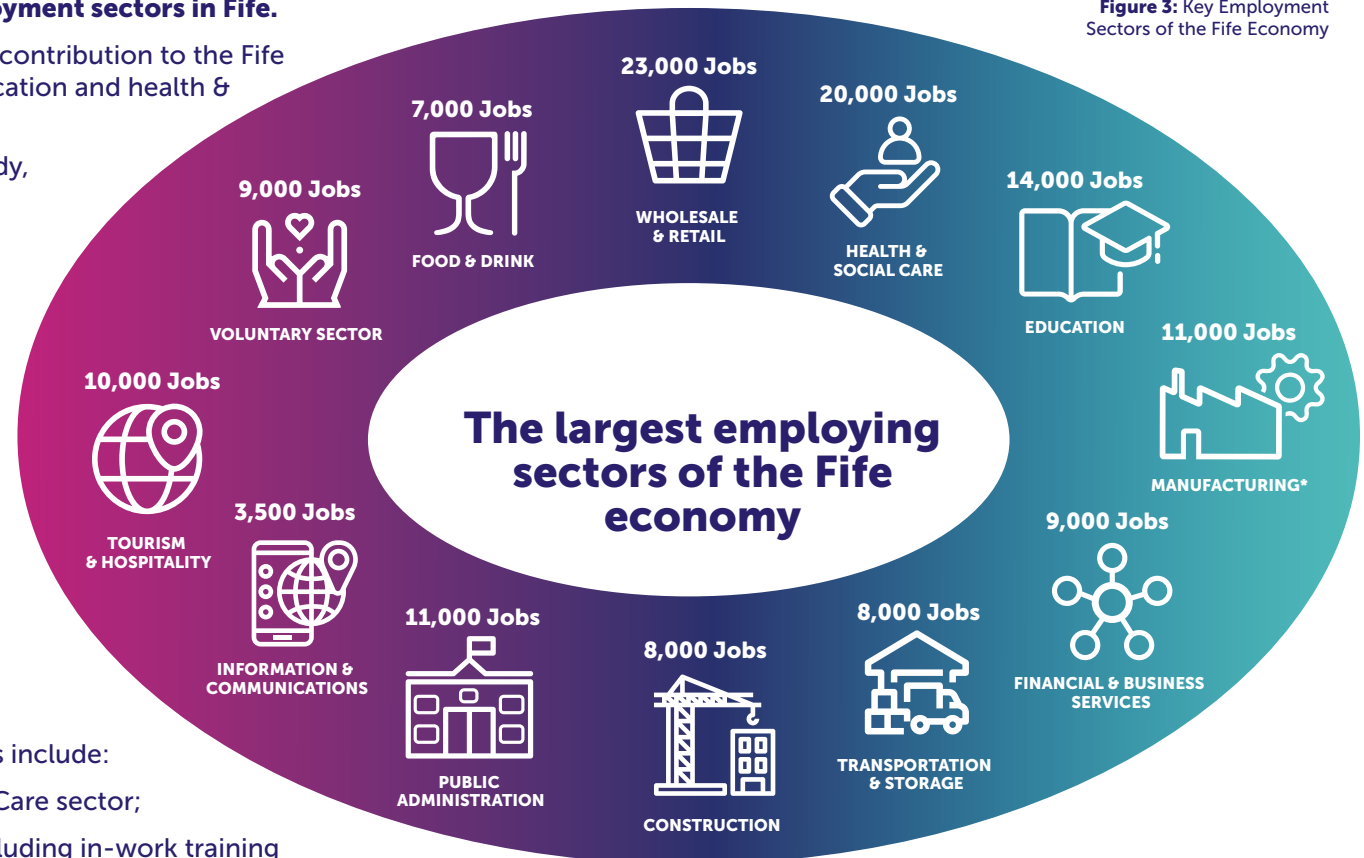
Tourism & Hospitality is focussed largely on St Andrews and the East Neuk, but also extends along the Fife's coastline, golf courses, and historical sites including Dunfermline and the urban centres of Kirkcaldy & Glenrothes.

Employment within the Financial & Business Services sector and Information & Communications sector is primarily focussed within the Dunfermline area.

Priorities in relation to these key employment sectors include:

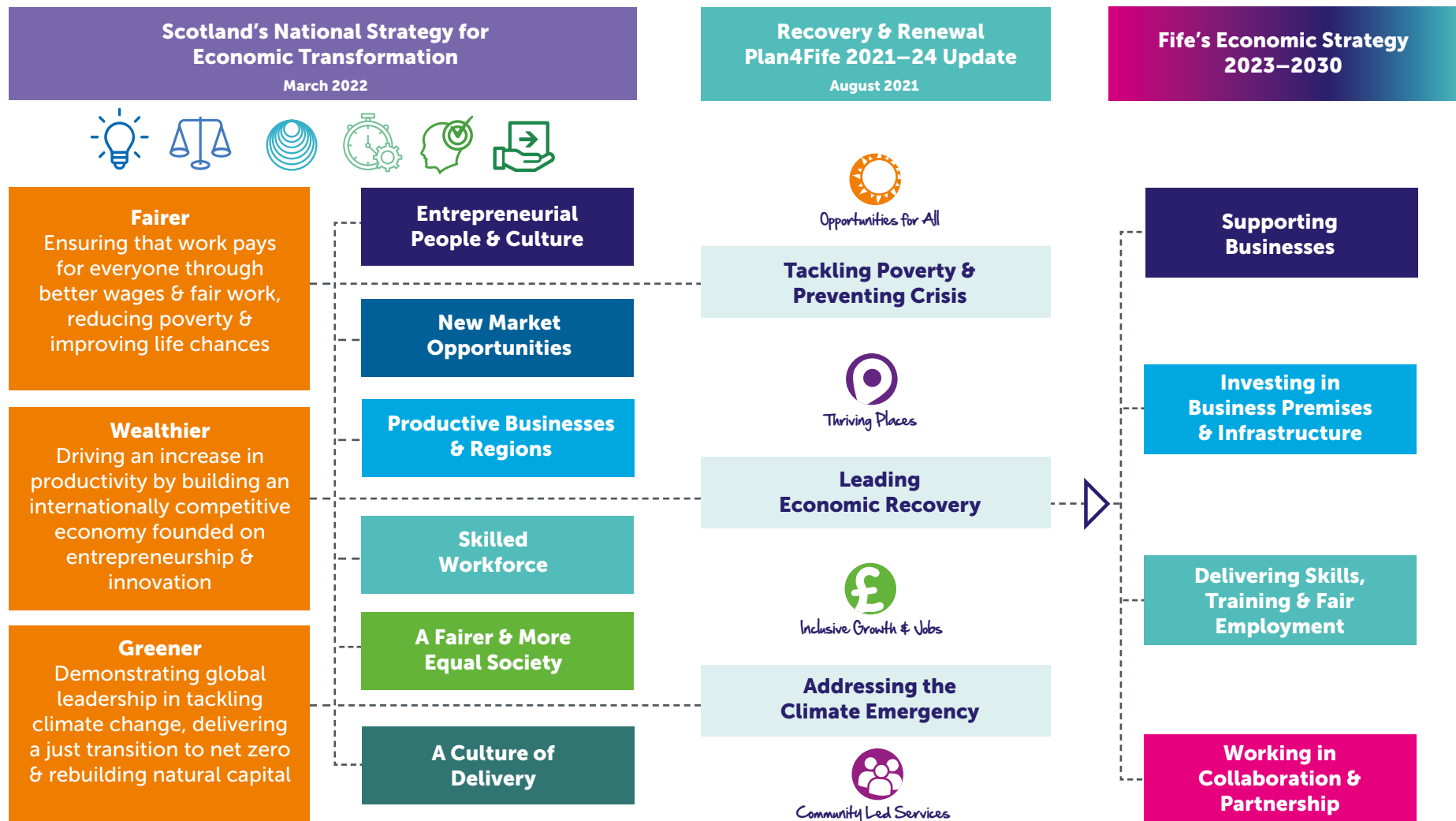
- Skills development supporting the Health & Social Care sector;
- Re-skilling & up-skilling the existing workforce, including in-work training
- Support for innovation in relation to advanced manufacturing & advanced construction;
- Emerging skills demands in relation to the Green & Blue economies and the just transition to net zero; and,
- Digital skills across all sectors, particularly the Finance & Business Services and Information & Communications sectors.

Figure 3: Key Employment Sectors of the Fife Economy



**Note:** \*Manufacturing excludes food & drink manufacturing (1,250 jobs)  
Source: ONS BRES 2021

# Appendix 3 Alignment of Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, Plan4Fife & Fife's Economic Strategy



# Appendix 4 Performance Monitoring & Reporting Framework

## Strategic Economic Outcome Measures

Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate | Economic Inactivity Rate | Median Weekly Resident Earnings | Median Weekly Workplace Earnings

Supporting businesses	Investing in business premises and infrastructure	Delivering skills, training and fair employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of business start-ups supported by Business Gateway Fife</li> <li>% of new business start-ups in Fife surviving for 3 years</li> <li>No. of VAT/PAYE-registered businesses in Fife</li> <li>% of people (aged 16+yrs) in employment who are self-employed</li> <li>No. of instances of Fife pupil engagement with Culture of Enterprise activities</li> <li>No. of registered businesses in Fife by employment size</li> <li>No. &amp; value of Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) awards to Fife businesses</li> <li>No. of Fife companies assisted by Economic Development (Invest Fife)</li> <li>No. of existing businesses supported by Business Gateway Fife</li> <li>No. of Fife companies registered with the Supplier Development Programme</li> <li>No. of Fife businesses participating in the Supplier Development Programme</li> <li>% of Fife Council's annual procurement expenditure spent with Fife businesses</li> <li>% of Scottish annual local authority procurement expenditure spent in Fife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupancy (% rate) of Fife Council-owned business premises</li> <li>Town centre retail vacancy rates by units/floorspace: Dunfermline; Cowdenbeath; Kirkcaldy; Glenrothes; Leven; Cupar; St Andrews</li> <li>Total amount of external funding (£) awarded to Fife Council for economic development &amp; employability activities (excluding City Deal monies)</li> <li>% of business &amp; residential properties in Fife able to receive superfast broadband</li> <li>% of employment land that is marketable</li> <li>Total visitor numbers to Fife (all visitors)</li> <li>Economic impact of tourism in Fife (all visitors; £m)</li> <li>Number of jobs supported by tourism in Fife (FTE)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> This performance monitoring framework may be subject to further refinement in relation to the wider Plan4Fife performance framework.  <a href="#">Baseline figures for the suggested indicators can be found in the Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-2022, Fife Business Base Report 2022 and Fife Economic Strategy Evidence Paper.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of school leavers in Fife achieving 5+ SCQF Level 6 (Higher) qualifications</li> <li>No. of Fife learners starting Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships &amp; Graduate Apprenticeships</li> <li>No. of Fife school leavers NOT achieving an initial positive destination</li> <li>No. of Fife school leavers NOT achieving a positive follow-up destination</li> <li>% of 16–19 year olds participating in education, training or employment</li> <li>% full-time Fife College leavers achieving an initial positive destination</li> <li>Claimant Count Rate (by Fife Council committee area)</li> <li>No. of participants on Fife Council funded or operated employability programmes</li> <li>No. of people supported into work via Fife Council funded or operated employability programmes</li> <li>% of employee jobs in Fife paid less than the real Living Wage</li> </ul>



## Appendix 5 References

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- [Plan for Fife 2017-2027](#) and [Recovery & Renewal: Plan for Fife Update 2021-2024](#)
- [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#); Scottish Government (March 2022)
- [Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#); UK Government (February 2022)
- [Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region: Regional Prosperity Framework and Action Plan](#) (September 2021 and March 2023)
- [Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy 2019-2029](#) (September 2019)
- [Skills Development Scotland - Digital Economy Skills Action Plan 2023-28](#) (March 2023)



# Fife

## A prosperous investment



Contact us to find out more  
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