

COWDENBEATH AREA

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LOCAL  
STRATEGIC  
ASSESSMENT

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2018



# 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 current local Community Plan for the Cowdenbeath Area sets out the following ambition

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

## **Cowdenbeath Area Local Community Plan**

The three aims of the Cowdenbeath Area Local Community Plan are

- **Improving Health & Wellbeing**  
Provision of quality care and support to all ages and all needs
- **Reducing Poverty & Inequality**  
No barriers to aspiration, attainment and achievement
- **Developing a Vibrant Economy**  
Maximising employment opportunities via innovation and regeneration



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## 2. Local Assessment Findings

### Local Community Plan

- Improving Health & Wellbeing
- Reducing Poverty & Inequality
- Developing a Vibrant Economy

### Place

Compared to other areas there is a clear improving picture of place for Cowdenbeath Area, particularly around social well-being

Least improvement needed

- Identity and Belonging
- Influence and Sense of Control
- Social Interaction
- Feeling Safe

Most improvement needed

- Housing and community
- Care and maintenances
- Traffic and Parking

### Community

Major issues for area

- Funding for public services
- NHS / Hospitals / Healthcare
- Unemployment
- Poverty / inequality
- Low pay / fair wages
- Cost of living

Many issues are now seen as less of an issue for the area than two years ago

Now seen as more of an issue for area

- Unemployment
- Poverty / inequality

### Local Outcomes

Poorest outcomes

- Lochore and Crosshill
- Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans

Better outcomes

- Cowdenbeath North
- Kelty East

Most improved

- Ballingry
- Cardenden

### Profile

- Cowdenbeath Area is made up a number of towns and villages dispersed across the area
- Despite its geographical makeup it has lower levels of car ownership than some other areas which will impact on access to services
- It is among the most deprived areas of Fife.

### People

- Hard-pressed households and constrained city types are doing less well within the area
- Suburban households doing well
- Rural households doing well within the area but not as well as other similar households elsewhere in Scotland

### Horizons and strategic challenges

- Overall population is estimated to increase, with most growth expected in the older age group.
- Children and working ages will show a slight decrease over the next 25 years.
- Continuing long-term socio-economic issues that limit economic growth, and tackling inequalities in opportunity and employment.
- Welfare reform changes will continue to impact on the area, and will be felt more severely than Fife overall.
- Uncertainty over future local economic impact of Brexit

### 3. Profile



POPULATION		AREA	
41,288 		84.1 SQ KM 6.1% of Area of Fife 11% of Fife's population	
CHILDREN	WORKING AGE	OLDER PEOPLE	
7,653	25,572	8,063	
HOUSEHOLDS		54.8% owner occupied	
19,830 		34.4% social rented	
68.0% with at least one car/van		8.9% private rented	
		32.5% live alone	
£512 median weekly income (before housing)		18.5% in poverty (before housing)	
26.2% in fuel poverty		23.5% children in poverty	
ECONOMY		MAIN EMPLOYMENT AREAS	
66.0% Economically active of which		21.3% Education & Health	
57.8 % Employed Full Time		20.6% Wholesale Retail and Transport	
21.3 % Employed Part Time		16.5% Finance & Professional	
		12.1% Construction	
WELFARE AND BENEFITS			
2.0% Universal Credit		WELFARE REFORM CHANGES: Expected loss to local economy per year by 2020	
3.2% Universal Credit (16-24)		£22 million per year	
16.0% Employment deprivation		£858 per working age adult	

Figure 3.1 – Overview Profile for the Area

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

Cowdenbeath area is among the most deprived areas of Fife, with 19 of 55 datazones in the area featuring in the 20% most deprived for Scotland (SIMD 2016). Across Cowdenbeath area, 17.3% of the total population is income deprived (compared to 12.4% for Fife), while 15.8% of the working age population is employment deprived (compared to 11.0% for Fife).



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

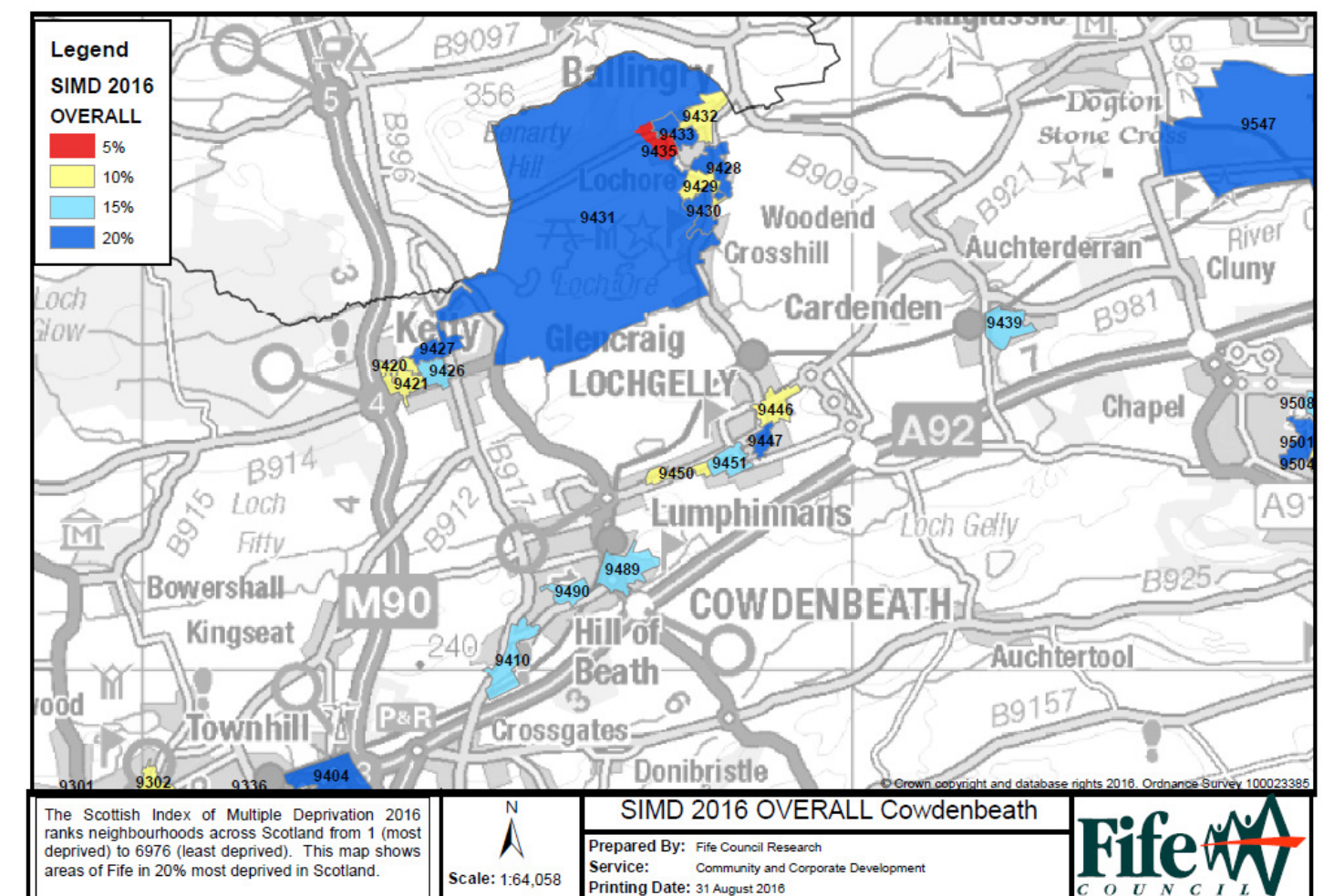


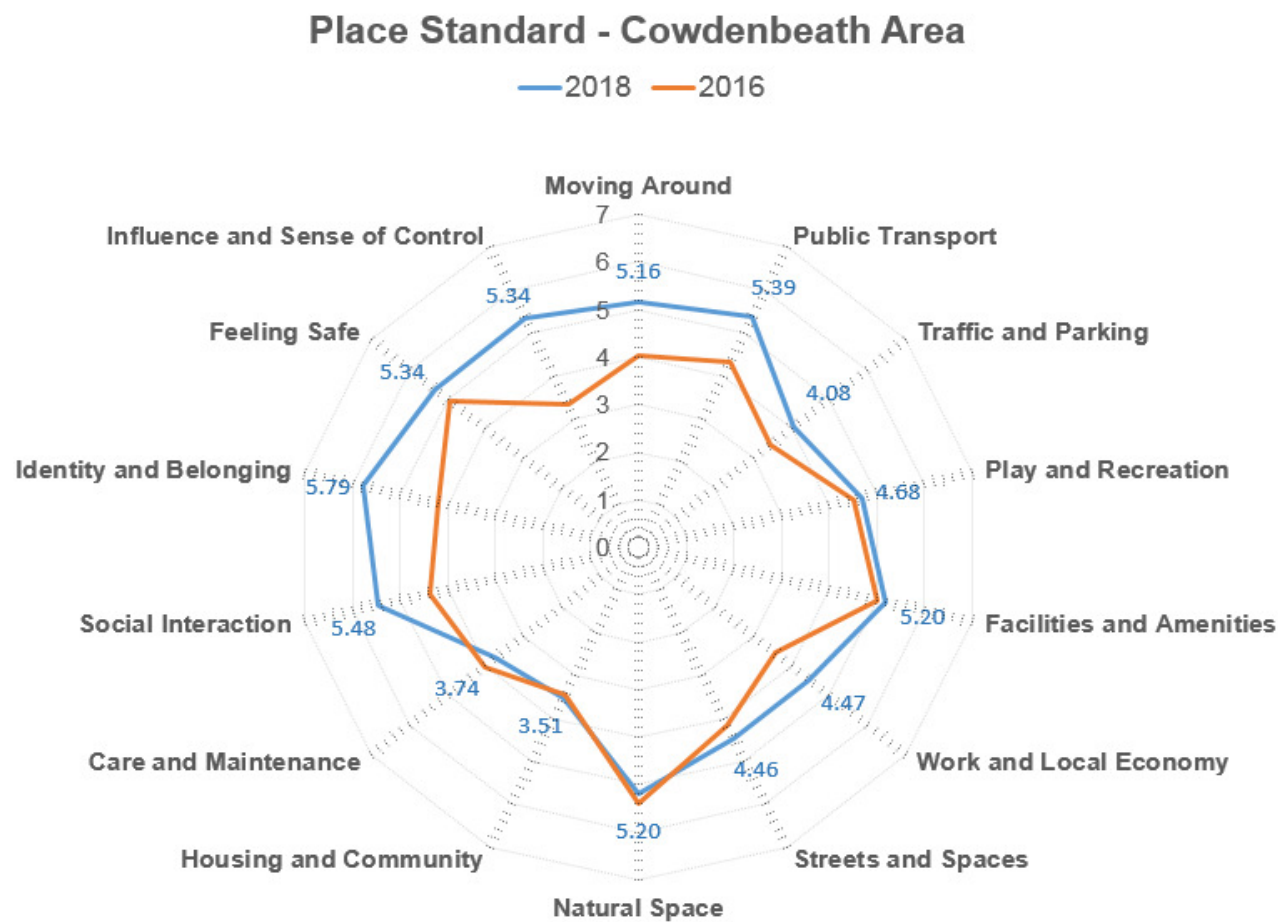
Figure 3.3 – Map highlighting the 5, 10, 15 and 20% most deprived datazones within the Area, SIMD 2016

# 4. Place

Place is an important element of Local Community Planning. Using the national Place Standard tool, local people were asked to consider aspects of the physical and social environment where they live and to paint a picture of the place and what needed to improve. Through comparing the results of Place Surveys in 2016 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.

There is a clear improving picture of place for the Cowdenbeath Area in 2018, compared to the previous Place Survey in 2016. Particular improvements are seen in areas of social wellbeing including Identity and Belonging, Influence and Sense of Control, and Social Interaction, which together with Feeling Safe are among the areas identified as needing least improvement within the area. This pattern stands out relative to the picture of social wellbeing emerging in other areas of Fife.

Improvements have also been seen in Public Transport, Moving Around, and Work and Local Economy. The greatest need for improvement in the Cowdenbeath Area is perceived to be in the domains of Housing and Community, Care and Maintenance, and Traffic and Parking.



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

Compared to other areas of Fife, Cowdenbeath area shows a largely positive and improving picture of a range of aspects of place.

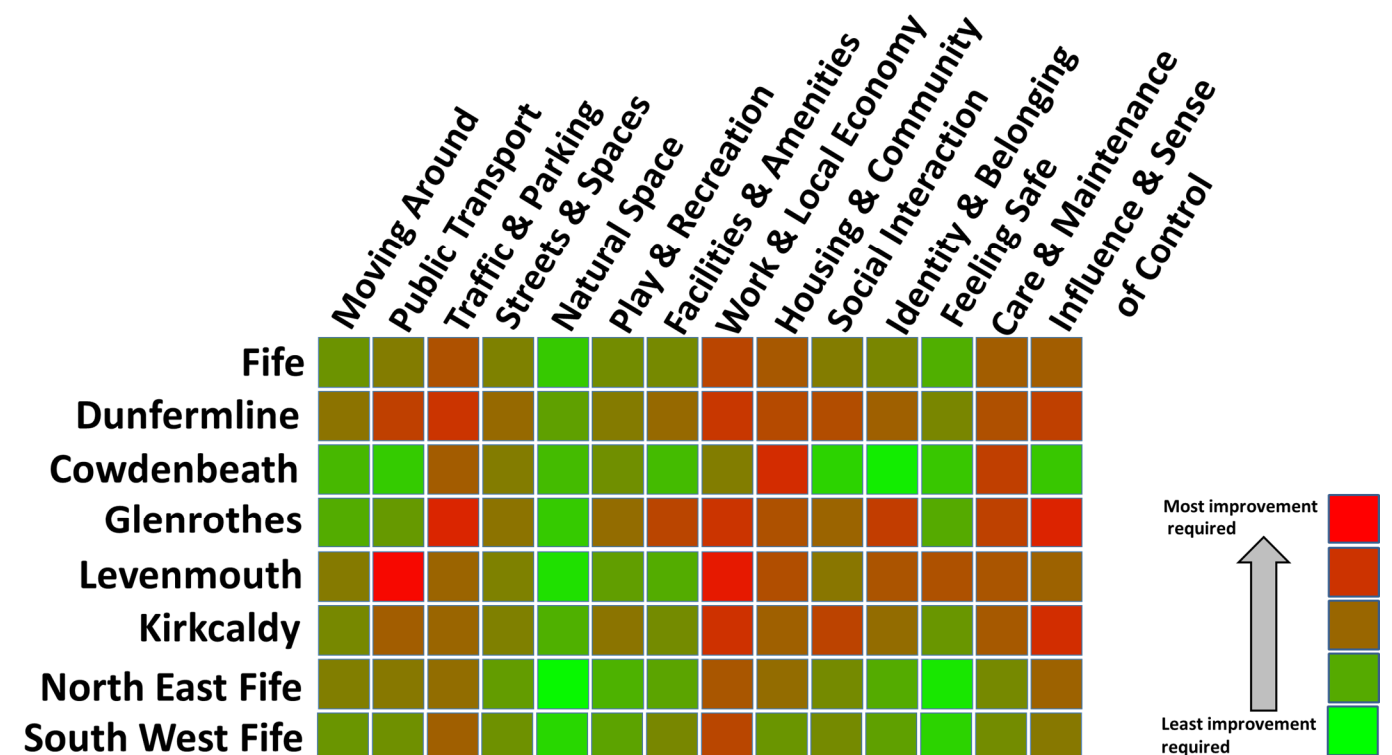
Natural Space, Facilities and Amenities, Play and Recreation, and Feeling Safe are all viewed positively within Cowdenbeath Area compared to other areas of Fife.

Work and Local Economy, while still being identified as in need of improvement, is viewed as needing less improvement than in other areas across Fife.

Housing and Community, and Care and Maintenance of the local area are identified as being in greater need of improvement within Cowdenbeath Area, than other areas across Fife.

Getting around the area is viewed more positively within Cowdenbeath Area than in other areas across Fife.

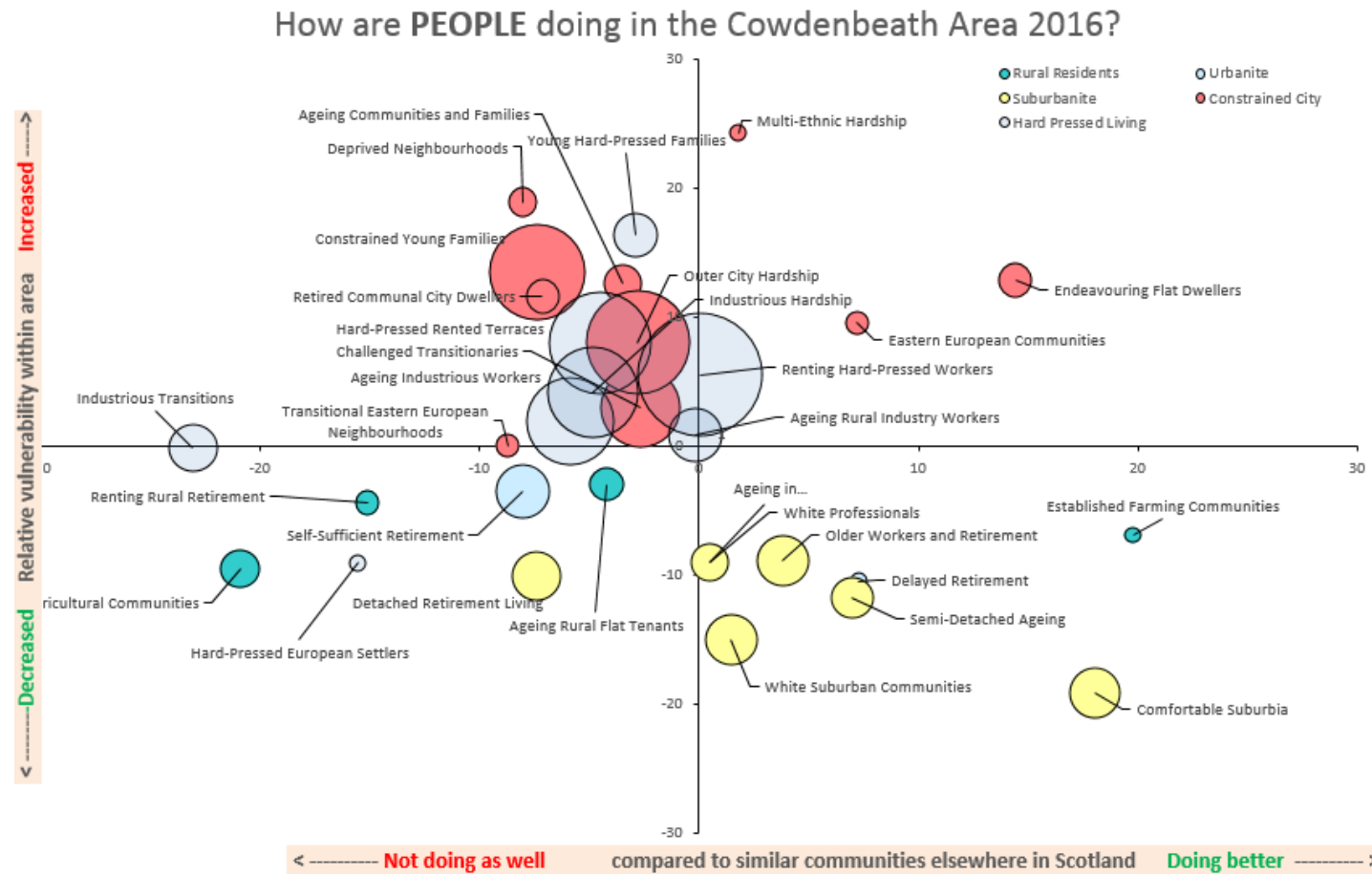
Cowdenbeath Area shows the most positive picture of all areas in relation to social wellbeing, particularly levels of Social Interaction, and Identity and Belonging, well above what is seen for Fife as a whole, and across other areas of Fife.



**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. Suburbanites continue to do well within the area, and are generally doing well relative to other similar types of households elsewhere in Scotland. Rural households are doing well within the areas, but are doing less well compared to other similar households elsewhere in Scotland. Hard pressed households are doing less well within the area, and less well than similar types of households elsewhere in Scotland. Constrained city dwellers are also doing less well within the area and compared to other similar households elsewhere in Scotland.



**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)**

On the whole, people living in the Cowdenbeath area are doing slightly less well than other similar people living elsewhere in Scotland. Rural households in particular are doing less well, including agricultural communities, and renting rural retirement, (which shows negative change since 2012).

Suburban residents are now doing better than other similar households elsewhere in Scotland, with mainly older households showing significant positive change since 2012. Urban households are doing less well than other similar people elsewhere in Scotland with little change in this picture since 2012.

Constrained household types are generally doing less well in the area, particularly deprived neighbourhoods, constrained young families and transitional eastern european neighbourhoods. However, a number of groups are showing positive change since 2012, notably eastern european communities and endeavouring flat dwellers.

Hard pressed households are also doing less well within the area, particularly those in industrious transitions and european settlers. However, there has been some significant positive change for some hard pressed households including young families, renting workers, and ageing industrious workers.

Community Category	RPG	Change
<b>Rural Residents</b>	<b>-11.0</b>	
Ageing Rural Flat Tenants	-4.2	↑
Agricultural Communities	-20.9	
Established Farming Communities	19.8	
Renting Rural Retirement	-15.1	↓
<b>Urbanites</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	
Delayed Retirement	7.3	
Self-Sufficient Retirement	-8.1	
White Professionals	0.5	
<b>Suburbanites</b>	<b>4.2</b>	↑
Ageing in Suburbia	0.5	↑
Comfortable Suburbia	18.0	↑
Detached Retirement Living	-7.4	↑
Older Workers and Retirement	3.8	↑
Semi-Detached Ageing	7.0	
White Suburban Communities	1.5	↑
<b>Constrained City Dwellers</b>	<b>-3.6</b>	
Ageing Communities and Families	-3.5	
Challenged Transitionaries	-2.7	
Constrained Young Families	-7.4	
Deprived Neighbourhoods	-8.0	
Eastern European Communities	7.2	↑
Endeavouring Flat Dwellers	14.4	↑
Multi-Ethnic Hardship	1.8	↑
Outer City Hardship	-2.8	
Retired Communal City Dwellers	-7.1	↑
Transitional Eastern European Neighbourhoods	-8.7	
<b>Hard Pressed Living</b>	<b>-4.0</b>	
Ageing Industrious Workers	-5.9	↑
Ageing Rural Industry Workers	-0.2	
Hard-Pressed European Settlers	-15.6	
Hard-Pressed Rented Terraces	-4.5	
Industrious Hardship	-4.9	
Industrious Transitions	-23.1	
Renting Hard-Pressed Workers	0.0	↑
Young Hard-Pressed Families	-2.9	↑
<b>Cowdenbeath Area</b>	<b>-3.1</b>	

**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.

The top issues for Cowdenbeath area - Funding for public services and NHS / hospitals / healthcare – are also top issues for Fife, but these are seen as more of an issue in the Cowdenbeath area. Unemployment and poverty / inequality are also seen as major issues for Cowdenbeath, more so than across other areas of Fife. Low pay / fair wages and cost of living are also seen as major issues for the area.

Compared to two years ago, many issues are now seen as less of an issue for the local area. In particular, access to suitable housing, the quality of local area/environment and quality of public services are now seen as less of an issue. Town centres, rural issues, increasing elderly population and poverty / inequality are now seen as more of an issue than they were two years ago.

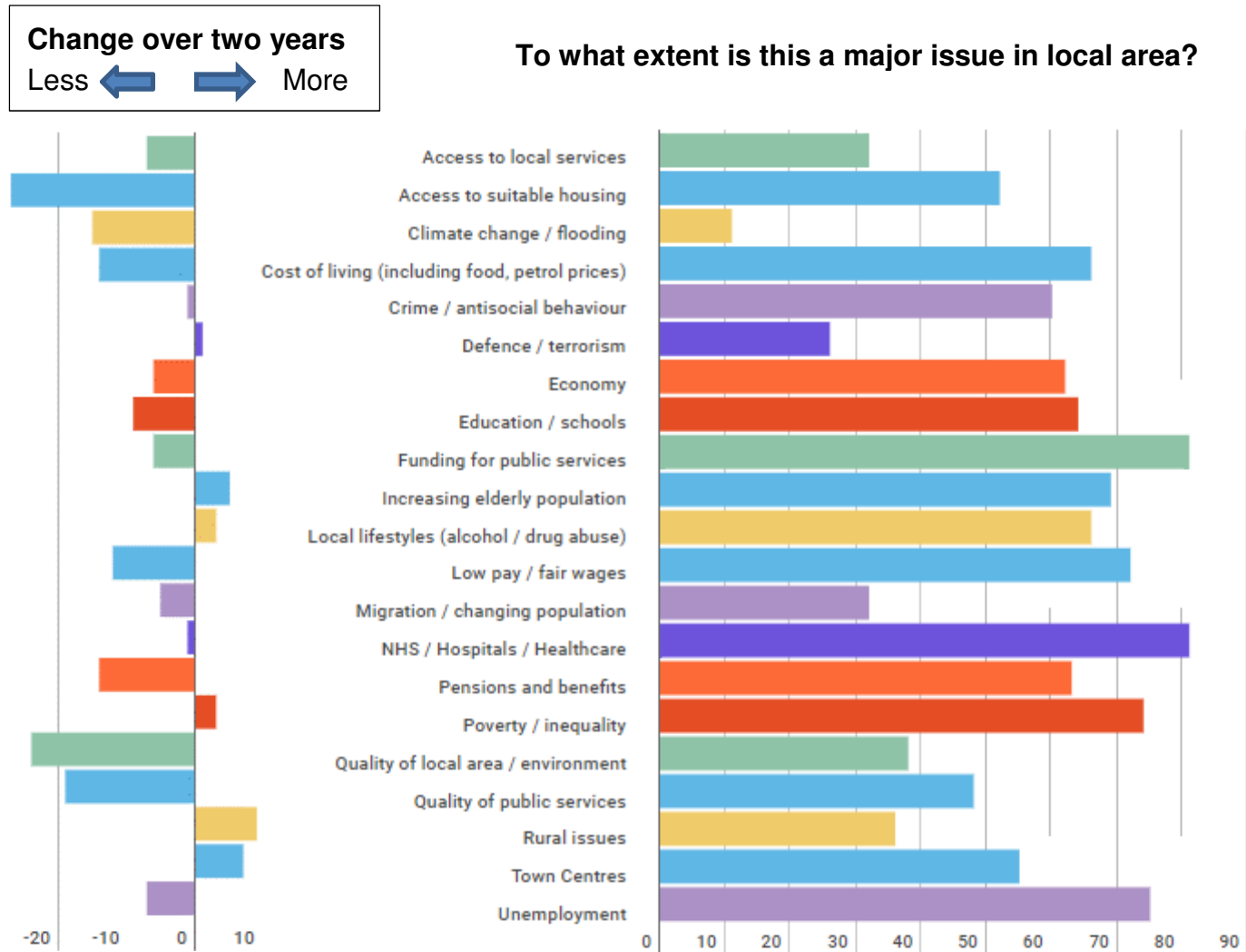


Figure 6.1 – Community perceptions of what is a major issue in the area (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 28, 2017)

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

Within Cowdenbeath Area, more than half of local people believe the Council provides high quality services, and is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their local neighbourhood.

Cowdenbeath Area is above Fife for local people’s perception of whether the Council is addressing key issues affecting quality of Fife in their local neighbourhood, but otherwise below Fife across the majority of statements relating in local people’s views on the Council and the services that it provides.

Within the area, fewer people believe that the Council is good at listening to local people’s views before it takes decisions or designing services around the needs of those who use them.

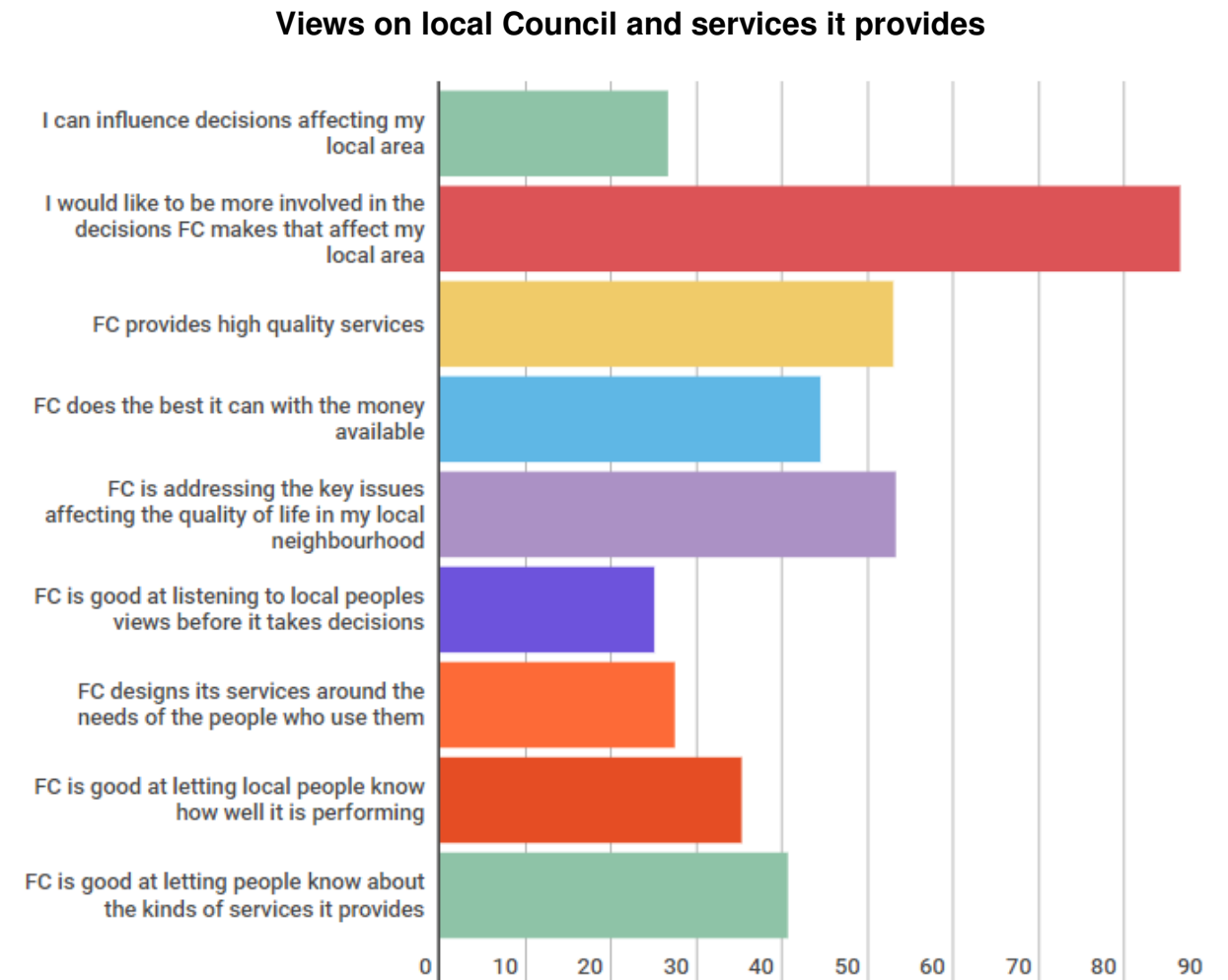


Figure 6.2 – Views on local Council and services it provides (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 30, 2018)

# 7. Local Outcomes

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

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

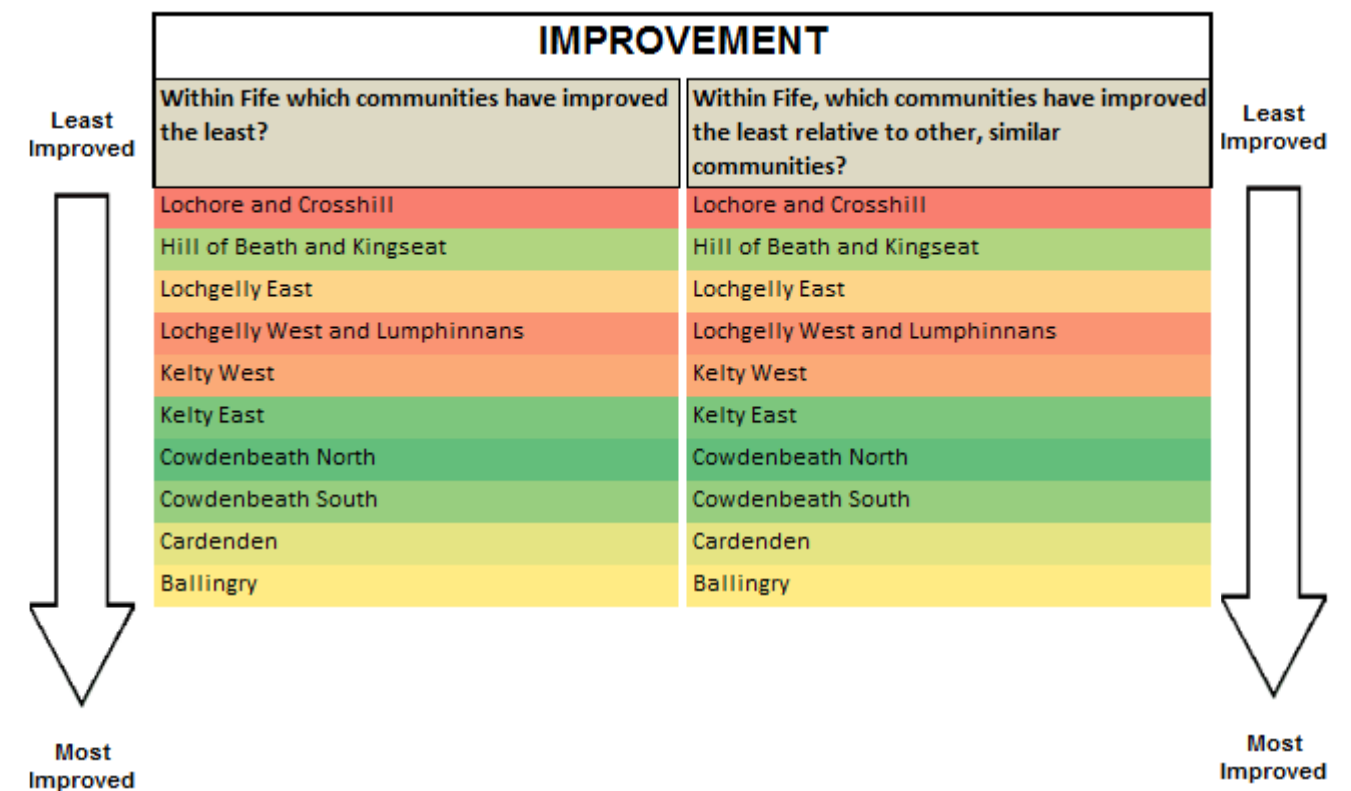
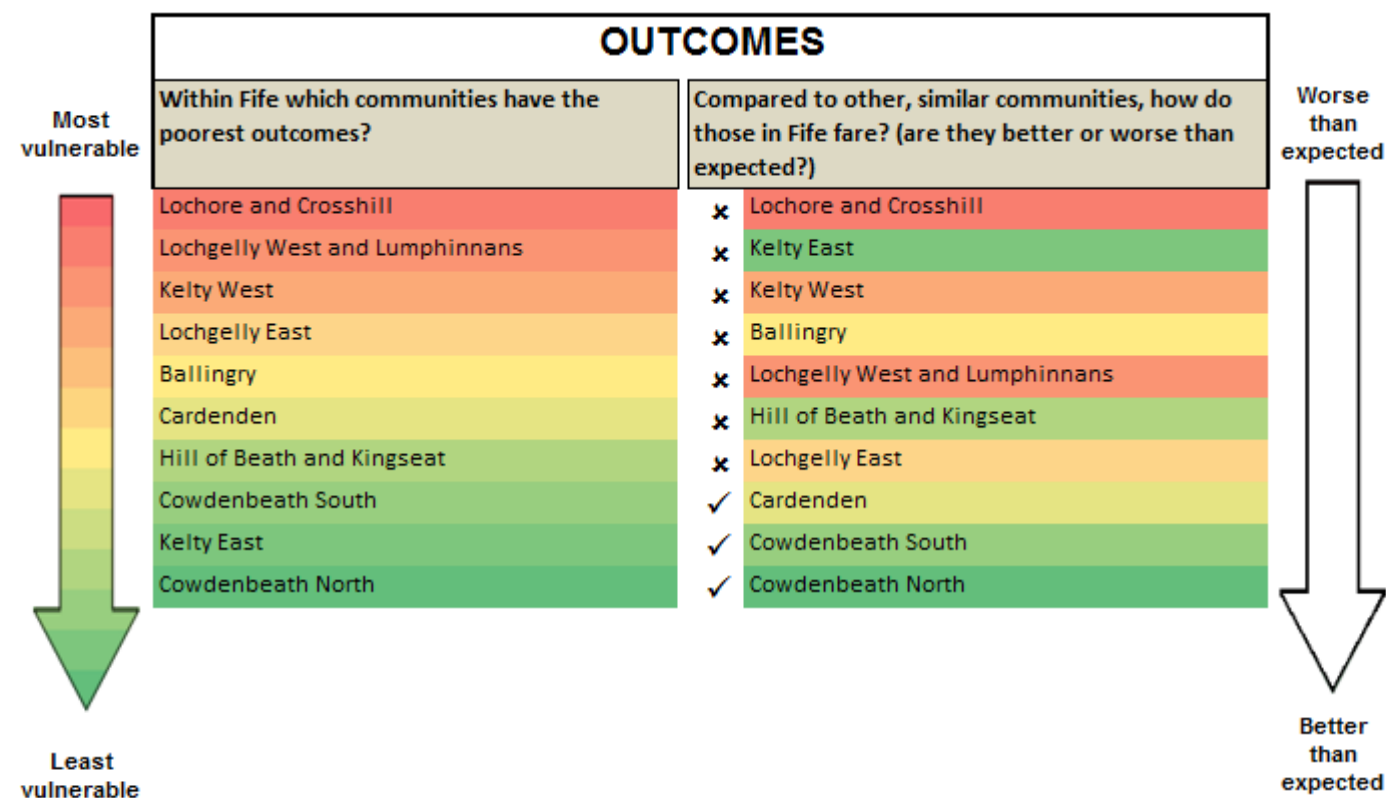
The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Cowdenbeath Area remain Lochore and Crosshill, and Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans. Outcomes in the wider area of Hill of Beath and Kingseat appear improved. Lochgelly East appears to be doing less well now than it was in 2016. Areas with better life outcomes remain Cowdenbeath North, and Kelty East.

Lochore and Crosshill, Ballingry and Kelty are doing worse than expected compared to similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland. While Lochgelly West and Lumphinnans is doing less well now than in 2016, Cardenden and Cowdenbeath are doing better than expected.

Neighbourhoods showing the least improvement in life outcomes remain Lochore and Crosshill, and Hill of Beath and Kingseat. The greatest improvement in life outcomes is seen in Ballingry and Cardenden.

Neighbourhoods that have improved less than expected – when compared to similar areas in other parts of Scotland – include Hill of Beath and Kingseat, and Lochore and Crosshill. Lochgelly East which showed as one of most improved in 2016 is no longer doing as well relative to other similar communities elsewhere in Scotland

Ballingry continues to show greater improvement than expected when compare to similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland, with Cardenden and Cowdenbeath South also showing improvements compared to other similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland.



Figures 7.1 & 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, Cowdenbeath Area's population is estimated to increase by around 2,000 (5%) to reach 43,300. Most of this growth is expected in the older people age group, which is estimated to increase by around 45%, resulting in 3,600 more older people living in the area. Children numbers, while initially showing a slight increase over the next five years, mostly within the secondary school age group, are estimated to steadily decrease from 2023, and to show an overall reduction of around 600 (8%) over the 25-year period. Numbers of working age people are estimated to continue to reduce over the next 20 years, with a slight recovery after this time, but showing an overall loss of around 1,000 people (4%) by the end of the period.

Across the Cowdenbeath Committee area the 16 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 slightly. Capacity pressures are expected in Kelty due to a large scale housing development which will provide a new primary school to support the new housing. The previously proposed large scale development in Lochgelly seems uncertain at this time. Pupil numbers at the 2 high schools are expected to increase over the short to medium term, and additional capacity may be required in association with the growth of the new housing areas.

## 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.

Welfare reform changes, including managed migration to Universal Credit, will continue to impact on local people and the local economy. £22 million will be lost from Cowdenbeath Area's local economy by 2020, as a result of welfare reform changes (both pre and post 2015 reforms). That's a loss of £858 per working age adult in the area compared to £655 for Fife. The former Lochs and Lochgelly and Cardenden wards will be 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

The Fife Pilgrim Way heritage project is engaging the support of local people and visitors in developing a new long distance walking route through inland Fife. Starting at Culross and North Queensferry, the 104 km/64 mile path takes in spectacular views of the Highlands, the Coast, Forth and Tay Estuaries and the Lomond Hills. It passes medieval landmarks, industrial landscapes and historic picturesque villages on its way to St. Andrews. The last link that needs to be put in place before the route can be opened is where it passes through St. Ninians opencast site to the west of Kelty.

## Technology

The Digital Scotland rollout programme is extending fibre broadband across Fife. Dunfermline and West Fife have 97.8% superfast and fibre coverage. There has been investment in town centre wi-fi in Cowdenbeath.

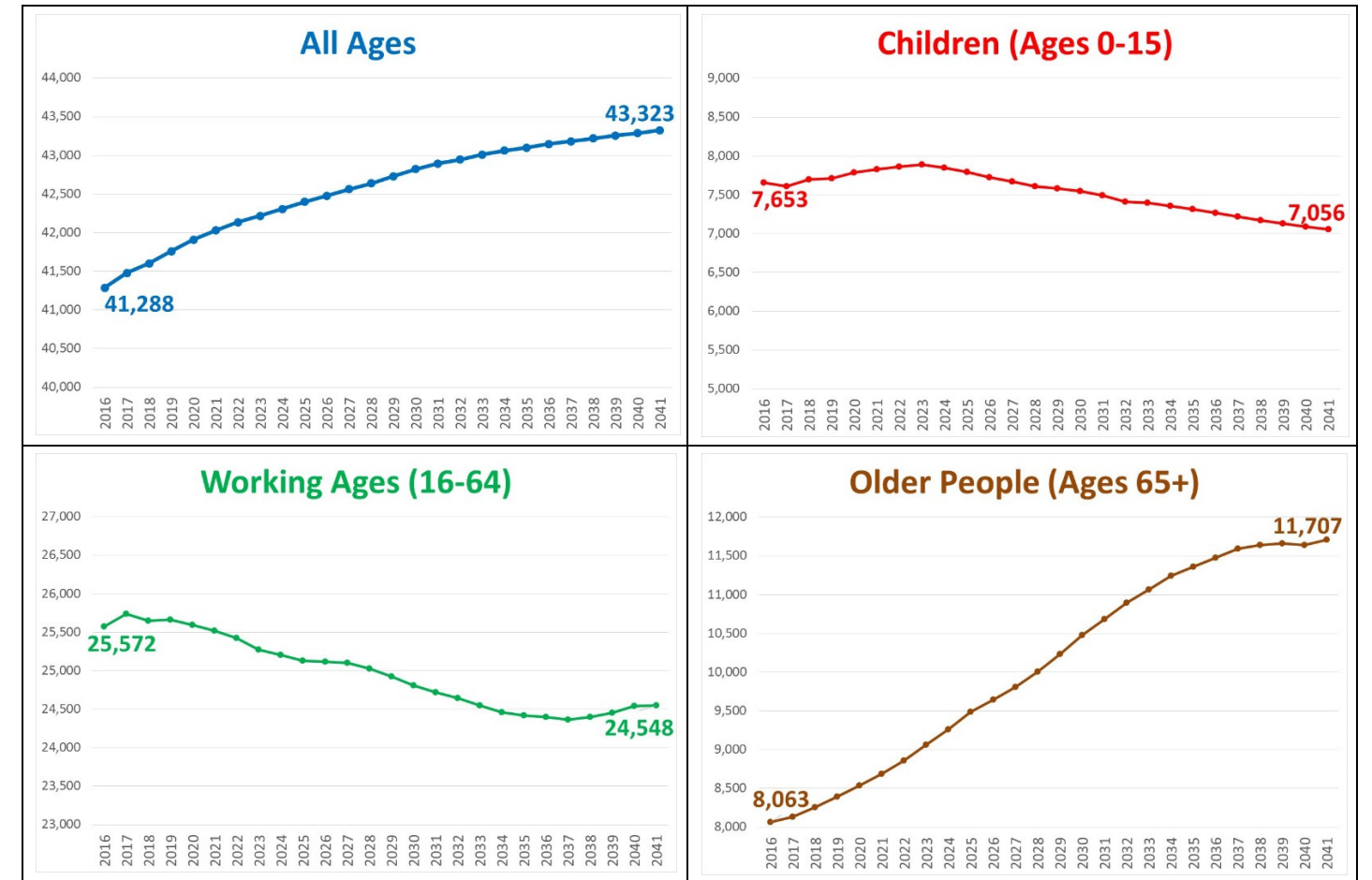


Figure 8.1 – Projected change in population of the area over the period 2016 to 2041 (Fife Council Research)

Lochs	£952
Lochgelly & Cardenden	£924
Cowdenbeath	£711
<b>Cowdenbeath Area</b>	<b>£858</b>
Fife	£655

Figure 8.2 – Local impact of welfare reforms (2016, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University)