



Levenmouth Tomorrow

A Vision for Levenmouth 2023 - 2030

Levenmouth
Reconnected

Levenmouth is currently undergoing changes that could significantly improve the economic growth of the area and the opportunities available for its inhabitants.

We all need to have a conversation about what that means and what that could look like; what priorities Fife Council and its partners should be focusing on, and how these could and should be delivered.

Creating a vision for a town, city, area or region should never be an exclusive process. This process has the potential to bring together organisations of all sizes, from small scale community groups to more powerful and influential bodies, to achieve what none could do individually. Inclusion is key.

So everyone in Levenmouth should be given a say on how to shape their future and eventually commit to something of long-term significance.

Above all, we should strive to ensure that Levenmouth:

- is a safe, healthy, clean and caring place that people want to live and work in for the long-term
- is inclusive and promotes a strong sense of community spirit
- is well-connected with transport and communication links fit for the future
- is an attractive environment for starting a business and for growth
- is diverse, well-educated and has quality housing for people to live in
- is welcoming to visitors, is known as a destination for family fun and quality experiences and protects the importance of its historic, geographical and natural assets

It's important to realise from the outset that not everyone will be on the same page. Levenmouth is a diverse place with many stakeholders, all pursuing their own objectives with different motivations and reasons to exist.

However, a vision creates a space in which to recognise common purpose and benefit. Not every organisation and individual will be able to contribute towards every outcome, but the identification of shared goals undoubtedly makes collaboration easier and helps to highlight where collaboration is possible.

The creation of this network of opportunities can then leverage more political power, more financial investment and more skills than any sector could potentially in isolation.

The hope is, therefore, that this vision will allow us all to take stock and move forward with renewed purpose – producing a reference point that is constantly available yet adaptable no matter how the physical and political landscape changes.

Introduction

A Vision for Levenmouth



Now is the time

Seizing some unique opportunities

The return of the railway has to be the catalyst for this vision.

Developers are re-evaluating their approach, and we have already seen significant interest in certain allocated areas as the benefits of the forthcoming rail link become clear.

And the opportunities for tourism will increase: not only allowing existing attractions the chance to shine and increase their audience but also to encourage the creation of new opportunities which will make Levenmouth stand out in an increasingly competitive market.

We need to capture the benefits of this major investment in our area, and we will note some of the projects and activity aimed at doing this further on.

The story so far...

Substantial investment has already been made in a range of areas in recent months and years, creating a solid platform upon which we can build ambitious plans for the future.

- The £116.6 million Levenmouth Rail Link project is reinstating the railway line to Leven for the first time in more than 50 years. Two new modern accessible stations are being built in Leven and at Cameron Bridge, and 19 single track kilometres of new/reinstated railway are being laid to create a fully double tracked and electrified railway line connecting the area back up to the wider rail and transport network. Opportunities for freight and tourist/charter connections are also being explored, while the benefits to local people, businesses and visitors will be numerous. It is truly transformational for Levenmouth.
- Around £40 million has been earmarked for the Leven Connectivity Project, which is creating a network of paths and cycleways along a 5km stretch of the River Leven and a 30km network of paths through and between local towns. The network focuses on making every-day journeys easier, and there will be links to the two new railway stations, as well as to education, employment, health care facilities, leisure, and local high streets across six settlements. The UK Levelling Up Fund committed £14.43 million to the Leven Connectivity Project earlier this year.
- A total of £10 million is being spent on a range of local projects via the Levenmouth Reconnected Programme, which aims to maximise the economic and social opportunities presented by the new rail link. The programme is creating a viable and sustainable legacy for local people, communities, businesses and visitors, and has supported a wide range of initiatives – both large and small – right across the area.
- Energy Park Fife is already a world-leading facility within the burgeoning renewable energy sector. Its location on the east coast of Scotland gives tenants easy access to the North Sea's offshore energy market and global regions. A joint venture between Scottish Enterprise and Fife Council, Energy Park Fife is capable of supporting the largest oil and gas renewables projects and encompasses a 55ha engineering site, Methil Docks, Methil Docks Business Park and Low Carbon Investment Park.



- H100 Fife is a world-first initiative which is bringing 100% green hydrogen gas to customers in Buckhaven and Denbeath for the first time. The £32 million project is investing in Fife's green energy industry, bringing jobs and unique opportunities to residents and local businesses, and providing evidence for future low-carbon policy decisions.

- More than £8 million is being spent on the redevelopment of the historic flax mill at Silverburn Park. A major community-led initiative for wellbeing, enterprise and employment, benefiting the people of Levenmouth and beyond, the currently derelict B-listed former flax mill building is being brought back to life, creating a sustainable and iconic centre piece for the park. Plans include a café and restaurant; arts and crafts studios; gift shop; meeting rooms and event spaces; a backpackers' hostel; offices and more.

- The £11m new Dumbarnie Links Golf Course opened in 2020 and has rightly taken its place on the list of prestigious courses across Scotland. Laid out across 350 acres, the 18-hole Clive Clark-designed course has created a lot of interest from home and abroad and is seen as one of the country's premier golfing attractions. It has added to the already amazing range of golf courses across the Levenmouth area.

- Around £3.6 million is being spent on a new Levenmouth Business Park on the edge of Buckhaven. Work is ongoing on seven new units which is supporting the area's regeneration and will create 25 jobs. The modern units will be available to rent to a range of businesses, including innovative and growing companies, and they will include solar panels to produce green electricity for tenants.

- At least £3 million is being invested in Buckhaven's historic buildings and streets to support the town's future. Following on from similar regeneration projects in Inverkeithing, Cupar and Anstruther, the project includes a mix of historic building projects and improvements to public spaces, along with a wide range of heritage activities for the community and traditional skills training for the local construction industry.

- Almost £200,000 has been spent on creating the new Kennoway Pump Track, which is not only well-used by locals but has become a destination attraction from people from miles around. The community-driven initiative saw a fully floodlit facility replace the area's old BMX track, and it is already being used for national events.



While creating a vision, we also understand that Levenmouth has its challenges, and we want to hear from people about what they feel needs to be prioritised to ensure that the impact of the potential benefits from the rail link can be enjoyed by all Levenmouth residents.

'With fairness at the heart of everything our aim is for Fife to be a place of healthy connected communities, where people thrive, have enough money, and contribute to a sustainable and attractive environment' – **Plan4Fife**

Among the challenges we have to acknowledge are:

- the cost of living crisis and the likelihood people have less disposable income
- the evolving nature of the 'workplace' and working from home
- competition from online shopping, out-of-town retail parks and neighbouring retail centres
- increasing traffic congestion, with parking pressures and impact on climate change
- demand for new facilities and activities to better serve some demographics
- demand for new housing sites and affordable housing
- the potential impact of new developments on established communities

The Place Standard tool offers a useful snapshot into local people's current concerns and priorities across a range of subjects.

On that basis, from 2018 to 2022, we are seeing dissatisfaction being expressed on the following issues:

- the provision and quality of local facilities and amenities
- the availability and security of well-paid work
- general care and maintenance
- ongoing concerns about feeling safe
- a lack of influence and control

Informed by this evidence, local elected members have now signed off on a number of key themes which provide a starting point for wider discussion, and to help organise specific projects, initiatives and ideas to ensure Levenmouth develops and connects in a coherent and organised manner.

Challenges

A Vision for Levenmouth

Our key messages



No-one should be left behind.

#oppsforall



Everything you need is on your doorstep

#thrivingplaces



Supporting businesses who support our communities

#fifejobs



Great services are community-led

#letstalk
#peoplepower

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

THRIVING PLACES

INCLUSIVE JOBS & GROWTH

COMMUNITY-LED SERVICES

Levenmouth will be a place where there are opportunities for all.

It will be a place where there are no barriers to achievement in all walks of life.

To do this, it will:

- **Improve health outcomes for all residents**
- **Improve rates of physical activity and participation**
- **Have a joined-up approach to providing targeted anti-poverty initiatives**
- **Provide a variety of events and activities suitable for all ages and abilities**
- **Be digitally connected ensuring access to digital services to support residents, businesses and visitors**



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Levenmouth will be a place without barriers to achievement in all walks of life.

Our aim is for Levenmouth to be a place where families thrive and all children learn and develop well from the earliest years so that they are ready to succeed at school, have excellent foundations for learning and are equipped well for achievement in life, no matter what their background.

Every child deserves a happy, safe childhood in which they can thrive and to do so, some children and families need additional help and support to secure their wellbeing and keep them safe from harm.

That ethos should then extend into later life, ensuring equality of access to higher/further education and a wide variety of other opportunities.



One key area of work will be to **improve health outcomes** in Levenmouth, with a particular focus on mental health support and issues around drug misuse and drug related deaths.

Parts of Leven, Methil, Kennoway and East Wemyss are in the most deprived 5% in the country according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020.

Substance abuse and misuse remains a problem locally and, although the number of drug deaths across Scotland fell from 1,339 to 1,330 last year, Fife was one of the health board areas which saw an increase – from 65 to 70.

Locality plans will therefore be key in driving forward targeted improvements in these areas but also to reduce public stigma which have long become associated with certain areas but may or may not actually reflect reality.



The area also needs to **improve rates of participation in physical activity** which are lower than most areas of Fife.

Work in this area should focus on the many and varied opportunities offered by Levenmouth Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, but should also capitalise on the soon-to-be developed active travel network across the area to encourage people to walk and cycle. That will provide high quality, safe and convenient routes for people to travel throughout the area actively.

With its many sports clubs, covering sports ranging from football to golf to bowls, Levenmouth should be a go-to place for recreational outdoor pursuits.

Cost should not be a barrier to those wishing to take part in physical activity, and we must support residents to walk and cycle for short journeys and invest in the public realm to make these trips more pleasant.



Another identified aim is to create **targeted anti-poverty opportunities** for people living in the Levenmouth area, specifically ensuring increased local support to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis.

The effects of longer-term industrial decline on many communities, such as high unemployment, job insecurity, poverty and low wages, are not lost on Levenmouth in particular.

However, the fact such problems have become widespread across many local authority areas has helped mobilise and bring councils together to exchange information and ideas around tackling poverty.

There are many mechanisms already in place to help people who may be struggling with the cost of living, and the aim for Levenmouth would be to ensure a joined-up approach within and between all agencies and partners involved in this area of work.

Public perception may not equate to reality, so sound research will also have to be carried out to inform the targeting and resourcing process.

Having that network of support there, and visible, will also reduce the stigma many people continue feel about accessing services.



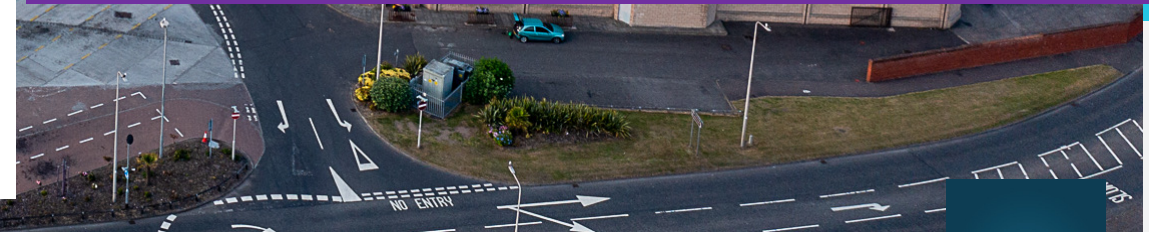
Levenmouth will be a welcoming, well-connected area where people choose to live, work and play and communities thrive.

To achieve this, it will:

- **Improve transport connectivity with the new rail link as well as providing active travel routes**
- **Foster places and spaces that matter to communities**
- **Invest in town centre public realm improvements**
- **Have ample green space and play park provision**
- **Make more use of its heritage, cultural and leisure facilities**
- **Ensure better access to the River Leven and between communities**
- **Continue to make progress in tackling anti-social behaviour**



THRIVING PLACES



THRIVING PLACES

Levenmouth will be a safe, welcoming and well-connected area where people choose to live, work and play.

Where we spend our time has a significant effect on our lives and well-being, so Levenmouth should be an area residents call ‘home’, where they have a huge sense of community and take a pride in their surroundings. By improving the quality of our places, and the opportunities within these, any existing inequalities can be tackled, so it’s important for us to understand both the existing, and potential, strengths of our various communities.

The foundations for work in this sphere lie in **improvements to transport connectivity**, with the wider area able to build on the opportunities offered by the rail link to improve local connectivity in Levenmouth.

Ideally, both the Leven and Cameron Bridge rail stations will be mobility hubs – a new concept that will see public transport and shared transport (such as bike share and car clubs) integrated at both sites, encouraging more sustainable and active travel.

Cameron Bridge will act more as a ‘park and ride’ station for commuters and visitors, but both Leven and Cameron Bridge will be served by a diverse range of active travel routes already identified and planned across the area.

Fife Council is also looking to develop a Local Bus Service Action Plan to enhance accessibility to the two new rail stations.

Ideally, visitors to Leven will be able to get off the train and have access to real time bus information should they wish to travel onward to other parts of Levenmouth or the East Neuk. Regular services will connect all parts of Levenmouth, stretching from the Wemyss villages in the west to the Largos, and there will be a new town service serving the rail station.



Town centre public realm improvements will be at the heart of the vision to build on the success of the new rail station in Leven, although support for improvement in Levenmouth’s smaller centres will still be required and provided.

Clear objectives to guide investment into Leven town centre will be needed, so that all current and future development proposals, policies, ideas and opportunities have due regard as to how they might relate to each other, to the wider town and surrounding areas.

Leven station will provide visitors with a “transformational gateway arrival experience”, with plans for a central boulevard linking the new station to the town centre and bus station. Better waymarking, the creation of active travel routes and physical changes to the layout of Leven Promenade will also encourage visits and improve the whole visitor experience.

Well signed and managed road, rail and cycling routes, into and out of Levenmouth’s many communities, will also cut negative environmental impacts, and ultimately save money.



Communities across Levenmouth should also enjoy meaningful areas of **green space and play space**, so improvements should be made across the area to ensure our green space is of comparable quality with the rest of Fife.

People in Levenmouth will not only comfort themselves from the fact that they are less than a five minute walk away from a ‘local’ play park, but all of the main towns in Levenmouth will also have a ‘town’ play park that has more space for more equipment and better walking and cycling provision. These have enough equipment to cater for children of all ages.



According to the new play park strategy, all residents of all ages will also be within a two-and-a-half minute walk of publicly usable green space such as grass areas, woods, parks, coast, beaches, flower meadows.

Another important strand is **The Leven Programme**, which will see the River Leven once again become a jewel in Levenmouth’s crown. Instead of being something that once brought communities together and provided their livelihood, the river became a barrier, disconnecting people and towns from each other.

Efforts will be made to improve the physical and ecological conditions of the river; creating better access to the river and between communities while reconnecting them to their heritage. as well as creating opportunities to improve people’s health, well-being and economic prospects.

Also, communities should feel safe where they live and continue to take a pride in their surroundings.

Tackling anti-social behaviour remains a key priority for our local communities and Levenmouth will continue to build on the success of its targeted action on anti-social behaviour which cut calls about the problem by 70% in 2022. There will be a continued focus on the misuse of motorcycles, fire raising and illegal dumping along with education opportunities to ensure exceptional results of recent years are maintained.

Levenmouth will be a place of opportunity and ambition, where innovators and entrepreneurs can achieve prosperity and success.

To achieve this, it will:

- **Provide local opportunities for skills development**
- **Attract and retain businesses from a wide range of sectors**
- **Pursue investment opportunities and take a co-ordinated approach to new development**
- **Identify solutions to unlock and accelerate the use of public sector land**
- **Become a first class, first choice tourism destination**
- **Encourage more visitor accommodation and develop branding to promote and reflect the visitor experience**



INCLUSIVE JOBS & GROWTH



INCLUSIVE JOBS & GROWTH

Levenmouth will be a place of opportunity and ambition, where innovators can achieve prosperity and success.

The skills of our people and global industries have driven much of the area's success over the last few decades, so **skills development** will be key moving forward.

Local opportunities for skills development will be provided via schools, colleges and initiatives like the Community Trade Hub, while training can also be tailored to the needs of local businesses.

Employment and decent work are at the core of sustainable growth.

Investing in people goes hand in hand with economic growth and investment.

At the same time, the economy needs to take into account the green transition and the efforts to be made for countering climate change. It also needs to foster responsible consumption and production and promote sustainable lifestyles.

Levenmouth should build on its **Energy Coast** tag, highlighting its clean energy credentials. The area is a world-leading centre for renewable energy with cutting edge technology that places it at the forefront of global efforts to develop green energy from sustainable sources. Fife Energy Park, the Fife Renewables Innovation Centre and H100 Fife are just some examples.



The rail link will also encourage businesses in all sectors to take another look at Levenmouth, so the area will need to offer **high quality, accessible business space** of all shapes and sizes.

Work on the Levenmouth Business Park and on business units at Mountfleurie will encourage investment and boost job creation, and will support small to medium-sized businesses by providing flexible and affordable space that can encourage collaboration. Indigenous businesses will also be sustained and supported.

However, Levenmouth should also be looking to attract sectors that have been sadly lacking in the area, in particular the hotel and hospitality industry where choice has been limited.

Levenmouth should be home to a wide range of visitor accommodation types, and there should be investment in new infrastructure, facilities, attractions and events to encourage people here.

Indeed, tourism will be crucial to Levenmouth long after the rail link is in, and our aim is to elevate Levenmouth to become a **first choice, first class destination** which is rightly proud of its past, present and future.

The Leven Local Tourism Association (LLTA) says that by 2027, Levenmouth will be recognised as a “family-friendly tourism destination full of quality experiences”.

Levenmouth has to be home to a diverse array of places, activities and events to make it a great place to live, work and visit.



So our goal is to grow an inclusive and sustainable tourism economy that can also act as a catalyst for positive social and environmental change to help people and places thrive.

Of course, we want to rekindle the nostalgic notion of families flocking to Leven as a dependable seaside resort of repute, harking back to a heyday which many people thought they would never see again. However, we must also use that platform to highlight the 'here and now', along with just how forward-thinking Levenmouth has now become.

Our aim is to work with leading players in the visitor economy and to develop stronger partnerships to deliver a more attractive year-round visitor proposition. That approach will include clear Levenmouth destination messaging which could be used on promotional materials and enhance the offering.

Levenmouth will be an area in which all residents feel that they are listened to.

Local people feel empowered and have the opportunity to influence public decision making, while they feel decision makers value, support and respond to individual and community initiatives.

To achieve this, it will:

- **Bring people and generations together to build strong relationships in and across the area**
- **Support communities to help themselves**
- **Develop and support community leadership in all forms**
- **Support community asset transfers where appropriate**



COMMUNITY-LED SERVICES

COMMUNITY-LED SERVICES

Levenmouth will be an area in which all residents feel that they are listened to and have the opportunity to influence public decision making, and which values, supports and responds to individual and community initiatives.

Made up of friendly, welcoming communities that each have their own identities and something to offer everyone, Levenmouth is far more than just the sum of its parts.

While financial resources continue to be stretched, **supporting communities to help themselves** will be essential to keep momentum building.

Local grassroots community groups are best placed to understand the challenges in their local neighbourhoods and how to reach those who need their help, so continuing to work with the many and varied community groups that exist across Levenmouth will be central to the vision moving forward.

This approach will not only make services available in local places where people need them, but will also provide opportunities for people to gain skills and confidence, help older people to maintain their independence, and help people to mix with others.

Fife Council should therefore **develop and support community leadership** in all forms, whether it be from community council participation to supporting community-led initiatives. We will continue to work with community groups across the area to build local ownership, promote volunteering opportunities, engage new communities and to deliver projects.

Examples of projects delivered, or already in the pipeline, include:

- Supporting the successful local community campaign to secure the reopening of the Levenmouth Rail Link after 50 years
- Ongoing development of Silverburn Park as a campsite with further development of the flax mill building over the next three years.
- Development of the Kennoway Pump Track from former rundown BMX track to international standard facility
- Support to the community-led development of the Wemyss Caves as a local tourism asset.
- Supporting CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil to enhance the area's green network and continue to promote benefits of local food provision.

To that end, communities looking to pursue **community asset transfers** should also be fully supported where it is appropriate and the idea has been deemed beneficial to the local community.



Connectivity

Levenmouth's communities will be more closely and sustainably linked than ever, while the area itself will be more accessible to all



Levenmouth Rail Link

The return of the physical rail link to Leven provides the area with a unique opportunity to create seamless transportation and nodes of neighbourhood activity.

RAIL

The reinstatement of the rail link to Leven is not merely a major transport infrastructure project: it's a statement of intent.

After decades of decline, Levenmouth will become a more prosperous, healthier and attractive place to live, work and play as a result. That's not only thanks to the inevitable influx of visitors keen to explore the "new" stops on the rail network but also thanks to local people who will have a new way of unlocking access to education, culture, entertainment and employment options. The physical presence of the rail line will also attract businesses and further investment, increase house prices, and open up opportunities for freight distribution moving forward.

Two trains an hour will provide access to the wider rail network for local residents and will enhance business and tourist access to and from the area. It will also serve stations elsewhere in Fife, augmenting access opportunities for Levenmouth residents, and would also provide additional wider benefits and travel options for north east Fife communities that haven't existed.

Well over 1,700 people a day will be using both Leven and Cameron Bridge stations by 2027, with an estimated 452,000 using Leven and 256,000 using Cameron Bridge each year.

Those annual figures are anticipated to rise to 490,000 and 260,000 respectively by 2037, and compare favourably with other rail stations in towns with similar populations.

And while leisure and other activities in and around Levenmouth will be a main attractor, the fact that residents of Levenmouth will now have access to around 80,000 jobs within 60 minutes using public transport will also be a huge driver for rail usage at both stations.

Improved access to Edinburgh in particular will be important for people who have chosen to settle in the Levenmouth area due to comparatively cheap housing options.

While the journey time saving will depend on where one starts a journey and the time of day they are travelling, most people will see up to 50 minutes saving on a current return journey of three hours between Leven and Edinburgh City Centre.

For those wishing to travel further afield for business or holidays, access to Edinburgh Airport via train and tram (rather than by longer bus/Park and Ride options) will also be available to the people of Levenmouth directly for the first time.



BUS

The proximity of Leven Bus Station to the new Leven rail station will open up a range of possibilities for travellers arriving by train, while the rail stations at both Leven and Cameron Bridge will also be served by frequent services.

Following a review of Leven's bus network, bus services will be tailored to coincide with train arrivals to foster a smooth transition from those looking to travel onward – whether that be to a destination in the Levenmouth area or to further afield.

A dedicated Leven service will improve options for local people living in the town, while the interchange between bus/train will also open up new bus routes to the East Neuk and could also encourage the area's tourist attractions and golf clubs to explore new and innovative ways to attract visitors e.g. combined entry/transport packages.

Golf tourism in particular will benefit from the new rail link, as it will be easier for people from across Scotland to visit an area they might have previously avoided due to problems transporting equipment and clubs. Golfers travelling to world renowned clubs up the east coast, such as St Andrews and Kingsbarns, may also see the merit in travelling via Levenmouth to sample some of the area's famous links courses.

Importantly, improved integration between rail services and better bus options will induce a shift from car to bus for local trips in and around the Levenmouth area and for regional trips beyond.

It will also promote sustainable transport use, both in terms of people who would otherwise drive to Markinch or even Kirkcaldy stations, and those who would previously make a journey by car but now switch due to better integration between bus and train.



MOBILITY HUBS

Leven will be one of Scotland's first dedicated mobility hubs, bringing together shared transport with public transport and active travel in spaces designed to improve the public realm for all.

It will **deliver integrated, quality services** and will consider the needs of those who live nearby as well as those who travel through the town.

Shared car club and electric car club initiatives will enhance options available to those still preferring to travel by road, but an e-bike scheme will also be in operation to encourage locals and visitors alike to travel more sustainably. The availability of EV charging points may also encourage more local people to switch from petrol and diesel cars.

Space will be retained at both Leven and Cameron Bridge for all sustainable and equitable modes of transport, thereby reducing the dominances of private cars and the associated problems of congestion, carbon emissions, air quality and social exclusion.

Mobility hubs make it easier for people to access, wait for and transfer between modes of transport. More options will also offer a safer and more comfortable dwell time, which leads to an improved experience for more vulnerable users in particular.

However, Levenmouth will for the first time be able to boast real-time information systems, displaying up-to-date arrival, departure and delay information for transit – delivered via an app, signage or interactive kiosk.

Levenmouth will also therefore be a focal point for raising the profile and visibility of the range of shared and other sustainable travel modes available, which will not only provide the area with a new status and appeal but also bring about the associated benefits of a reduction in car use.



Levenmouth Connectivity Project

Walking, wheeling and cycling will be transformed across Levenmouth

The wider ambition of the Leven Connectivity Project is to connect Loch Leven to the Firth of Forth through a world-class active travel network alongside the River Leven and surrounding communities, enabling local people and visitors to travel sustainably along the entire 26km length of the river with connections to public transport hubs, residential areas, schools, shops and places of work. However, the initial phase will see the communities of Leven, Methil, Methilhill, Buckhaven, Windygates and East Wemyss connected to each other and the river, through the creation of a safe and attractive active travel network that is accessible to all.

Around 24km of Levenmouth's existing roads and paths will be upgraded to accommodate the safer travel of walkers, wheelers and cyclists traveling. Of this, 10km will be segregated from vehicles. Meanwhile, existing paths along the River Leven will be upgraded as well as new ones being created.

Changes will include the provision of separate cycle lanes from the main carriageway, where possible; traffic calming for on-road cycling; improved on-road crossing points; walking, wheeling and cycling connections between areas of housing, shops, schools, and workplaces; connections to rail stations; improved rail and river crossings; the provision of shared use river park routes with associated seating, lighting and planting improvements; and improved surfacing for active travel.

An action plan and greater community engagement will also raise awareness of the benefits of active travel and how to do so safely, encouraging far more people to walk, wheel and cycle for a variety of reasons.



River Leven developments

The Leven Programme aims to bring people and wildlife together, by making it easy for people to get out and about around the river.

RESTORING THE RIVER LEVEN

A two-and-a-half mile stretch of the River Leven will be restored to a more natural condition as part of the Restoring the River Leven Project.

After years of man-made changes having an impact, the physical condition of the river and its floodplain will be improved to provide better habitat and improve potential fish passage at the Kirkland and Burn Mill Dams.

Local communities will be heavily involved in developing the area, not only to encourage more use of the surroundings but also to improve local biodiversity, path networks and green space.

In turn, communities will have more awareness of what's happening in their natural environment and be encouraged to protect and enhance the spaces around them.

Restoring water courses to a more natural state can bring a range of benefits, such as:

- providing a space for local people to enjoy;
- improving local resilience to climate change;
- supporting biodiversity including fish, mammals, birds and amphibians;
- allowing fish passage by removing barriers;
- reducing flood risk, for instance through natural flood management;
- gaining space for nature in a more urban environment.

Work on a section of one of the River Leven's tributaries, the Back Burn flowing from the Lomond Hills, will also have similar effects.



RIVER LEVEN PARK

Levenmouth will be home to an accessible, attractive and biodiverse public park to be used by locals and visitors alike.

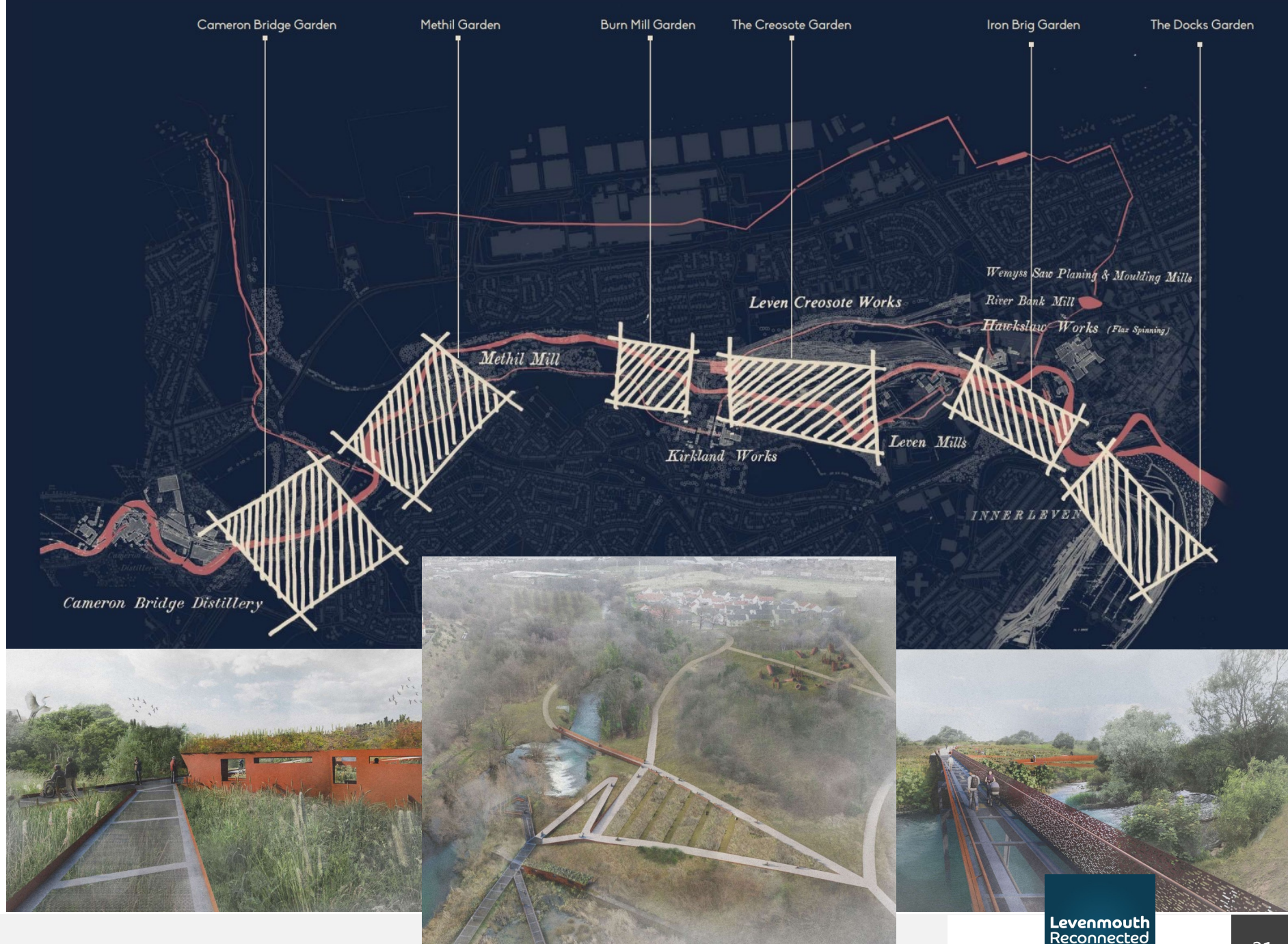
The eventual project will also provide multi-functional spaces for recreation, play and sport, outdoor community learning and growing, and a green skills academy.

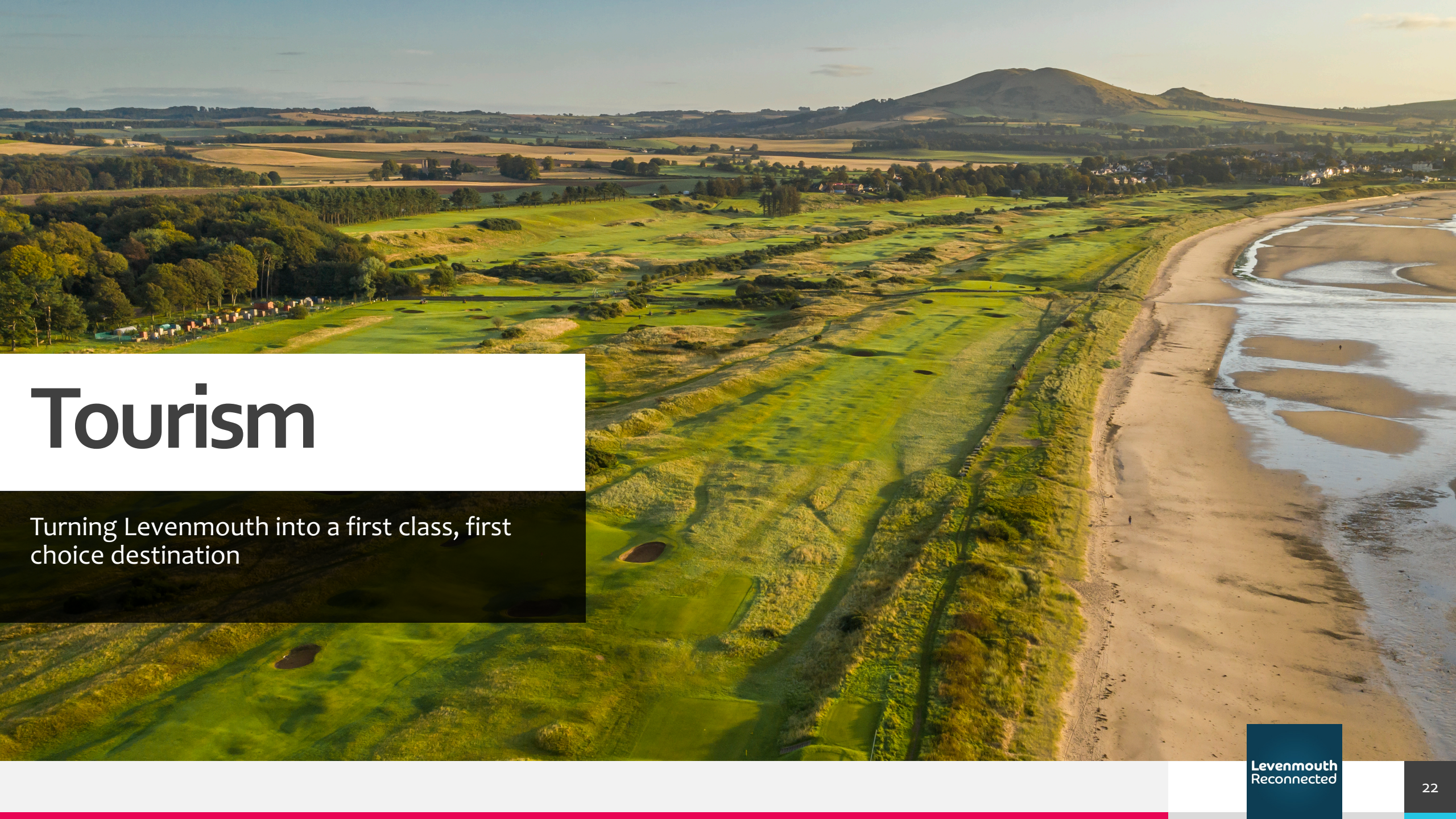
Six themed gardens have been proposed along the river, built on areas of land that are currently abandoned and/or in poor condition.

These will consist of:

- Methil Garden, which will be a space for revealing the heritage of the river.
- Burn Mill Garden, which will be a space for active exploration of the river.
- Creosote Garden, which will be a space for communities to meet, grow and celebrate the river. A new name for this garden will be codeveloped with communities.
- Iron Brig Garden, which will be a space for playfulness and discovery along the river.
- Cameron Bridge Garden, which will be a space that improves natural habitat for important species.
- Docks Garden, which will be a space celebrating the naval heritage of the area.

The River Leven Park will create a go-to destination between the two new rail stations to explore natural and local heritage while improving health and wellbeing for residents and visitors alike.





Tourism

Turning Levenmouth into a first class, first choice destination

The most recent Levenmouth Tourism Audit concluded that while the new railway offers significant tourism opportunities for the area, both in the short and longer terms, the overall visitor experience needs to be improved.

Better transport linkages are required from the station to the beach, while Leven Promenade itself requires significant improvement of its public domain – beyond what is already planned.

Furthermore, while the rail link will provide a transformational change, the audit stressed that long-term opportunities for tourism growth are not dependent solely upon the railway.

With that in mind, a partnership of organisations (including the Fife Tourism Partnership, VisitScotland, the Levenmouth Tourism Association, Fife Council, Scotrail, Network Rail and others as necessary) will work together to deliver a range of actions designed to capitalise on the profile and opportunities not just arising from the relaunch of the rail line but also from this renewed focus on this part of the world.

An action plan has been put together to deliver a range of key outcomes, and the main ones are outlined on this page.

KEY OUTCOMES

By 2027, Levenmouth will be recognised as a family-friendly tourism destination full of quality experiences.

Visitor numbers will increase, as will the quality of their experiences.

The number of businesses and tourism jobs in the area will rise.

There will be a marked increase in visitor destinations and products.

There will be increased awareness of Levenmouth as a visitor destination.



Aims and objectives

A number of key aims and objectives have also been identified to coincide with the rail link's return.

Raise the profile of the area: promote Levenmouth, its tourism businesses and events

We have a responsibility to raise the profile of Levenmouth as a visitor destination through effective and collaborative marketing campaigns.

This will include:

- The creation of a destination marketing plan to include key messaging, marketing channels and a programme of activity.
- The development of online and offline marketing channels to promote the region.
- Availability of destination-specific visitor information both pre and post-arrival.
- The establishment of clear destination messaging for the Levenmouth area.
- Working with partners to develop new tourism products and offers such as joint ticketing and day trip itineraries.

Ensure a quality experience for visitors

With the opening of the rail link, visitors will be coming to the area who haven't previously visited.

We must ensure that they have a good experience, will provide positive feedback and encourage repeat visits.

We will do this by:

- Working with partners to ensure visitors are able to benefit from improvements to the public transport and active travel links across the Levenmouth area.
- Creating themed trails / Instagrammable view points / TikTok trend potential / points of interest as marketable products for visitors.
- Supporting attractions and venues to increase and develop the events calendar in the area.
- Working with local golf courses, hotels and transport providers to improve the golf experience for visitors, and develop the golfing potential of the area.
- Working with Economic Development colleagues to attract investment to the area in terms of visitor accommodation, retail, food and drink, and outdoor activity operators.
- Working with partners to ensure improvements to the public realm, such as signage, public toilets, footpaths etc to build and strengthen the visitor experience.
- Support community-led tourism initiatives, groups and organisations to add value to the tourism offering in the area.

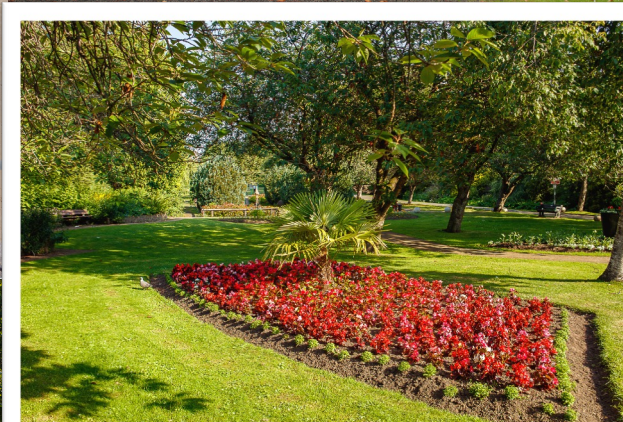
Build resilient tourism businesses

The phrase 'tourism is everyone's business' will be especially pertinent to the Levenmouth area in light of the new rail link, and we must provide support for businesses to understand the visitor economy and the expectations of visitors.

We will do this by:

- Developing a 'Rail Ready Pledge' to engage businesses and ensure they can contribute to the visitor economy.
- Creating new jobs and upskilling existing roles in areas such as hospitality to improve offerings.
- Holding workshops and events with businesses to familiarise themselves with the visitor offering in the local area, work collaboratively on the development of tourism products, and work effectively with the travel trade.
- Developing promotional partnerships to bring visitors to the region
- Developing visitor events programme and attract new events.
- Measuring and monitoring impact to ensure ongoing improvement.

#LoveLevenmouth



Leven Town Centre

While the whole Levenmouth area is important in the round, the imminent arrival of the rail link to Leven means the town has a real chance to maximise its potential as a primary destination.

In order to compete with changing town centre needs, Leven Town Centre has to provide a quality experience for shoppers, visitors and residents.

And with rail services returning to the town for the first time in over 50 years, Leven Town Centre simply has to have something to offer people. It's not just competing against out-of-town retail parks or the internet, but it needs to offer an attractive alternative: combining interesting, niche retail with good quality arts and culture, decent public realm, local distinctiveness and a vibrant, varied cafe culture.

So the vision for Leven Town Centre is clear: **it must become a pivotal place of choice for local residents and an attractive destination for day visitors.**

Given the obviously fragile state of the town centre economy, the idea of linked trips, combining supermarket shopping, visits to retail parks, use of the swimming pool/sports centre and visit to the town centre may seem optimistic. Nevertheless, the town's retail centre of gravity has moved a few hundred metres to the west to Riverside Retail Park, away from the traditional historic and commercial core, and that direction of travel has to be reversed by finding new and unique offerings.

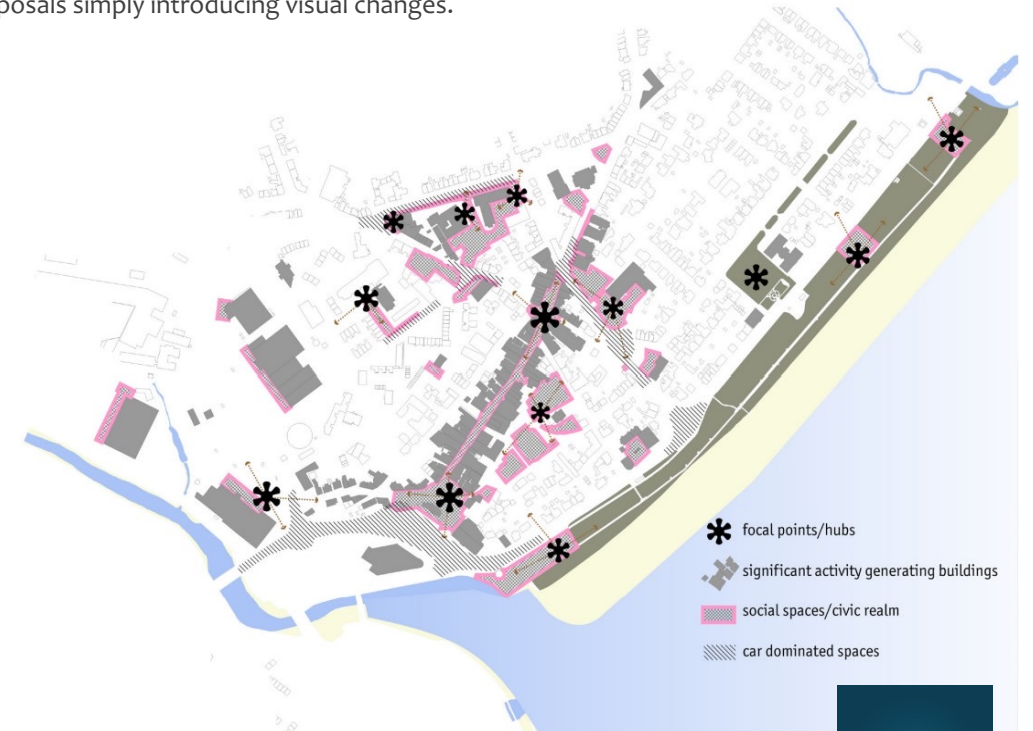
More has to be done to encourage movement between the town centre fringes and the High Street, and between the High Street and the seafront, and Leven must provide reasons for people to not only visit – but to prolong those stays.

A more diverse range of activities in the town centre would encourage a broader range of people to visit and spend time in Leven. Themed events could attract groups of different ages or interests, while community or civic events would make the town centre a more frequent destination for locals.

The town centre of Leven has many strong assets. As well as the obvious need to attract businesses into the town centre to improve vacancy rates, the core of the traditional centre has a network of streets and buildings which could form the basis of an alternative approach in which conservation, reuse and sustainability play a more prominent role.

In addition to the physical and visual benefits of retaining older buildings and street patterns there are potentially other positive benefits deriving from making the most of cheaper property as a driver for new businesses in the town centre, using heritage as an additional marketing strategy and developing skills in traditional building and construction. All of these could contribute to employment generation and a new sense of civic pride and community involvement in the fabric of the town centre.

New investment in the public realm could start to make a positive difference to the town centre, targeted within an overall understanding of how the town currently functions and could function better. However, there needs to be a fundamental change in how the town centre works to avoid any proposals simply introducing visual changes.



Leven Promenade

Proposals have already been drawn up which give us an idea of how the waterfront could look.

Leven is a place of considerable quality and its riverside and beachfront provide much needed functionality and amenity for locals and visitors alike.

Its promenade, beach and riverfront are special places and wonderful resources for people of all ages and interests. The attractive beach promenade is also part of the Fife Coastal Path that stretches for over 150 miles from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Tay.

The aim therefore is to generate transformational improvements for active travel in the area, creating a high quality and fully inclusive walking and cycling route, with associated public realm, biodiversity, and landscape enhancements. All of that will also allow residents, visitors or passing travellers to be able to access and enjoy the stunning coastline in the area.

A range of key strategic interventions have already been proposed which would all combine to create a revitalised amenity offer which, it is hoped, will encourage more people to walk, wheel and cycle around the town.

When complete, Levenmouth Promenade will be a desirable destination for locals and visitors alike, will enhance people's health and wellbeing, and will be a popular location for leisure activities or sports, exercise, outdoor education, festivals etc to enhance footfall.



The proposals would consist of the following key strategic interventions:

Riverside Trail Proposal

- Enhance and widen pedestrian and active travel access to and from promenade via enhanced riverside trail.
- A new designated shared foot/cycle way could be threaded along the riverside, following the existing pathway to connect a wider active travel route which will extend west along the river Leven, tying in with the River park/Connectivity masterplan and east towards the Promenade and Fife Coastal Route. With opportunities for pop ups/food trucks, enhanced access to the beach, artworks etc.

Branch Street Upgrade

- Enhance pedestrian and active travel access to and from town centre and bus station.
- Tabled traffic islands at road crossings and high-quality ground-scaping could be introduced to reduce potential for vehicle / active travel conflict, improve intuitive wayfinding between town centre and bus station and promote active travel connections.

Station Gateway Building

- A new feature ‘Gateway’ building associated with the proposed reintroduction of a railway station at Leven, incorporating active travel hub with cycle and e-cycle hire and parking / servicing, with opportunity to accommodate community led enterprise/initiatives, would facilitate wider active travel in connection with improved public transport.
- This new building could be complemented by new landscaped planting and ground-scaping which echoes and reinforces the historical street pattern, easing connection and intuitive wayfinding to and from the town centre and the beachfront.



Promenade at Mitchell Street Proposal

- A widened beachfront pathway could be formed in locally quarried stone, with new seating areas, stairs, ramp, and ‘offline’ vantage point to be introduced providing improved access for all to the Beach.

Promenade Proposal

- A new designated shared foot/cycle way could be threaded along the Promenade, following the existing pathway and connecting to wider active travel routes and key interconnecting paths into the town centre, driving footfall and economic activity.
- High quality surfacing could be introduced throughout to new interconnecting pathways with opportunities for artisanal interventions at key points, creating interest and activity.
- Balustrading to ramps and seawall will be in powder coated galvanised steel. Street furniture and signage will be in chunky weathered timber and weathering steel, and will be suited to match other signage, and street furniture along the route.

New orientation points in locally quarried stone, could be introduced at key points along the active travel route as it traverses the promenade aiding wayfinding and improving connectivity with the surrounding streets, beachfront, harbourside and parks and informing users of local amenities/ services.

Forth Street and School Lane Proposal

- Create pedestrian and active travel friendly routes to and from the town centre with branded signage, wayfinding, traffic tables and ground-scape
- A complementary branded streetscape could be developed along the length of these key routes from the water’s edge to the town centre, encouraging active travel and thereby footfall, which in turn drives economic development.
- New planting at the water’s edge could echo, and reinforce the street pattern, framing vistas from these key routes towards the beach



Leven Beach Car Park (opposite Balfour Street) Proposal

- A new leisure hub could be formed within the existing car park area with expanded programme that offers support for beachfront camping, access and metered stays for campervans, chemical toilet maintenance, cycle and e-bike stands and hire etc.
- A new three-metre-wide ramp with a gradient of 1:20 could offer wheelchair friendly access to the beach and improve access for all. The ramp would be sited in proximity of the existing car park & new cycle parking provision, with its upper start point close to a new central access formed between the existing toilet pavilion and the Action Zone.
- A new staircase to the beach could supplement this offer and provide an area for further informal seating to take in the beach views. Alongside the ramp and stairs interpretation boards could inform the visitor of the flora and fauna, and points of local interest.

Leven Skate Park Proposal

- Enhanced skate park incorporating greater height and variety, vantage point, access to beach, and reintroduced dunes and natural grades etc, with walk along beach encouraged
- New soft landscaping to berms/dunes could help to redefine boundary conditions and reinforce the coastal setting and aesthetic and create opportunity for improved biodiversity. These could also assist in shaping or reinforcing routes which encourage users onto the beach and Fife Coastal Path.

Promenade/Fife Coastal Path Proposal

- Enhanced play park and outdoor gym equipment accessed from Fife Coastal Path
- The upgrade of existing facilities could create an improved amenity destination which would encourage active travel along the proposed route.



Leven Beach Holiday Park Proposal

- Access via caravan park providing footfall to existing restaurant etc.
- Encouraging route users to engage with existing businesses via improved access and signposting creates potential for spend growth and the potential for inward investment.

Fife Coastal Path / Leven Links Proposal

- Enhanced access to beach with branded signage etc with walk along beach encouraged to bypass golf course to wider Fife Coastal Path.
- Improving access to the Beach and the Fife Coastal path removes potential conflict between golf course and route users and the attendant risk of the wayward shot.

Former Railway Bridge Crossing

- Enhance pedestrian and active travel access to and from Bayview and Methil via enhanced former railway bridge.
- Developing a route across the former railway bridge could create greater and more direct active travel connection between Bayview and the Town Centre allowing a continual and joined-up journey between the beachfront Promenade and Dock areas.

Beach Artwork Proposal: The Singing Butler coastal statue

- At the main seafront vantage point near the river-mouth we propose to introduce a 'Singing Butler' coastal statue, referencing Jack Vettriano and his artworks' links with the town to create an iconic landmark on the waterfront. This could be complemented by a series of artworks at park entrances, orientation and crossing points along the beachfront corridor.



- The inclusion of artwork offers the potential to inspire other artists and may in turn offer synergies with local schools, clubs and other community groups.
- The intent would be to create a series of small-scale landmarks.

Wider Route Interfaces

- The proposals are intended to compliment the proposals of the wider active travel improvement routes, using materials with similar visual and aesthetic cues which are sympathetic to their coastal location and setting, which are both robust and easy to maintain.

Car Parks (generally) Proposal

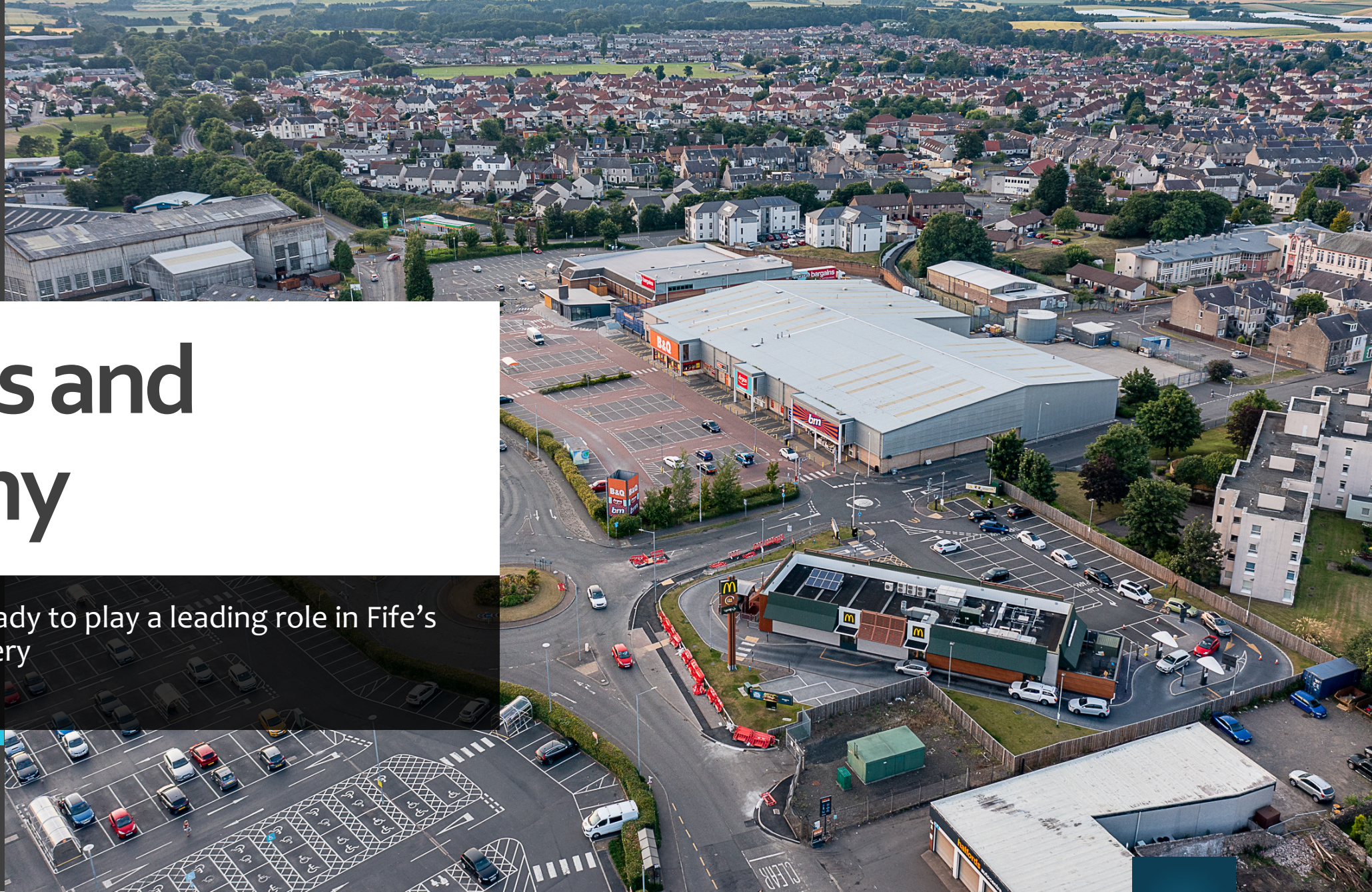
- All car parks enhanced, branded and provided with coordinated wayfinding and signage.
- Improve visual amenity and create consistency across all areas of car parking, with visual aids which orientate users to nearby amenities/services and principal routes to town centre.

Fife Coastal Path / Silverburn Proposal

- Following the path of the burn a new and improved route with branded signage would offer greater opportunity to connect the Fife Coastal Path with Silverburn and vice versa.

Business and Economy

Levenmouth stands ready to play a leading role in Fife's wider economic recovery



Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2028

The Fife Economic Strategy 2023-28 sets out the approach we will take over the next five years to promote inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, growth and resilience in Fife.

We want Fife to be a place where all residents live good lives, make informed choices and have a sense of control so that they can reach their full potential, and where all children are safe, happy and healthy.

We also want Fife to be a place where we make best use of our assets and facilities, while sustaining them for future generations.

In this respect, the Fife-wide strategy aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- A recovery and increase in the number of businesses in Fife
- High levels of economic activity and employment in Fife
- 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 in Fife, in line with national targets (75% reduction of 1990 baseline by 2030)

With the return of the rail link in 2024 and major investment already in the pipeline in terms of infrastructure and transport links, Levenmouth is arguably in one of the best positions of any area in Scotland – let alone Fife – when it comes to harnessing economic development potential.

Levenmouth therefore stands ready to play its part in helping realise the outcomes outlined on this page.

The groundwork currently going on (rail link, infrastructure, active travel links etc) will not only provide a sound platform on which we can stimulate economic investment and grow the business base, but also act as a catalyst for wider prosperity – making Levenmouth a desirable place where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

The Plan4Fife also sets out a commitment to the development of a cross-cutting, partnership-wide approach to Community Wealth Building (CWB).

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

The five core principles to Community Wealth Building encourage:

- Progressive procurement and development of local supply chains
- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Shared ownership of the local economy and support for the development of alternative business models
- The socially-just use of land and property assets
- Making financial power work for local places

With Levenmouth very much the sum of its parts, made up of a range of different communities with different needs, that approach will be particularly pertinent here.

Why Levenmouth? Why now?

There has never been a better time for Levenmouth to capitalise on the opportunities that have either presented themselves or been earned through hard work.

Delivery of the Levenmouth Rail Link, alongside work on the River Leven Programme and Levenmouth Reconnected Programme, has helped to provide focus and momentum on promoting further economic investment and stimulus within the area.

But the return of rail services is just a small piece of the wider puzzle.

Challenges remain. Whilst unemployment in Fife has fallen to a record low, employment has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Claimant rates in Levenmouth, remain higher than others parts of Fife and the under-performance of the Mid-Fife economy remains a concern.

The changing dynamics of high street retail in our town centres continues to pose a significant challenge, while all sectors continue to face pressures from staff shortages and the cost-of-living / cost-of-doing-business crisis.

However, the tide may well be turning – and the time is ripe to talk up the area.

Drawing upon our coastline, parks, cultural and heritage assets all provide opportunities to re-purpose and revitalise communities across the Levenmouth area.

Promoting and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation continues to be an important area of activity through culture of enterprise activities that help to link 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. Within this area of activity, there is a commitment to supporting businesses in the adoption of digital innovation, helping with the just transition to net zero, and providing additional tailored support for alternative businesses models, such as social enterprises and co-operatives, that can further contribute to community wealth building.

The percentage of 16-19-year-olds participating in education, training or employment in the Mid Fife and Glenrothes Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Area has steadily risen over the past five years, from 88.5% in 2017 to 91.3% in 2022.

In the 2-year period between March 2020 and March 2022, the number of registered businesses in the Mid Fife and Glenrothes Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Area increased by 10 enterprises (+0.6%). In Fife overall, the number of enterprises fell by -7.5%.

The estimated number of jobs in Levenmouth remained the same in the 2-year period between September 2019 and September 2021 at 10,000 jobs.

The proportion of retail and service units in Leven town centre that were vacant fell from 19.3% in 2019 to 13.0% in 2022.

The number of people visiting Kirkcaldy & Mid-Fife during 2021 increased by 45.6% compared with the previous year – and will surely only rise with the rail link and active travel network.

Hitting the headlines

A number of major developments have already been putting Levenmouth on the map.

- Construction has commenced on seven new-build industrial units providing 741sqm of space at Levenmouth Business Park in Buckhaven. The project has been supported by a funding contribution from the Levenmouth Reconnected Programme. A further two acres of land at the site has been acquired by Donaldson's Timber Engineering Ltd to allow for future business expansion.



- Since acquiring its Energy Park Fife site in 2021, Harland & Wolff, with the support of Fife Council, now employs over 300 employees at its Methil location, with 20 new apprenticeships offered in 2022.
- SGN is developing a world-first hydrogen network in Buckhaven and Denbeath that will bring renewable hydrogen into homes in 2024, providing zero-carbon fuel for heating and cooking. In the project's first phase, the network will heat around 300 local homes using clean gas produced by a dedicated electrolysis plant, powered by a nearby offshore wind turbine.
- The UK Government announced in January 2023 that the £19.4m Glenrothes UK Parliamentary Constituency bid submitted to Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund had been successful. The award includes £14.43m for the Levenmouth active travel network, including delivery of Phase 1 of the River Leven riverside path network.

- Fife Council is one of only five local authorities to receive funding from the Scottish Government's Vacant & Derelict Land Fund (VDLF). This funding has been used to support a number of key projects in the Levenmouth area, including site remediation and preparation works for the Cesscom Decom Ltd site at Energy Park Fife; industrial estate regeneration work at Muiredge and Mountfleurie; and an award-winning ground investigation and remediation project on a brownfield site as part of the SEPA-led River Leven Programme. Funds have also been secured to deliver ground stabilisation of a site at Chemiss Road in Methilhill subject to agreement on land assembly with the council due to open negotiations with existing owners across the site.

- The near £10m revival of Silverburn Flax Mill has begun. Work has started on repurposing the historic site to create a visitor centre and community hub offering jobs, training, space for retail and creativity, as well as shelter and sustenance for walkers and cyclists enjoying Silverburn Park and the Fife Coastal Path.

- In January 2023, global drinks manufacturer Diageo announced that first half sales had grown by 9.4%, with an accompanying 9.7% increase in operating profit to £3.2 billion surpassing analysts' expectations. The company is currently constructing a 9,000-panel solar farm the size of eight football pitches at its Leven headquarters that will generate up to 22% of the site's annual electricity needs, and up to 60% during summer months. Diageo's Cameron Bridge distillery is the world's largest Scotch whisky distillery and its facility at Leven is one of the largest spirit bottling plants in the world.



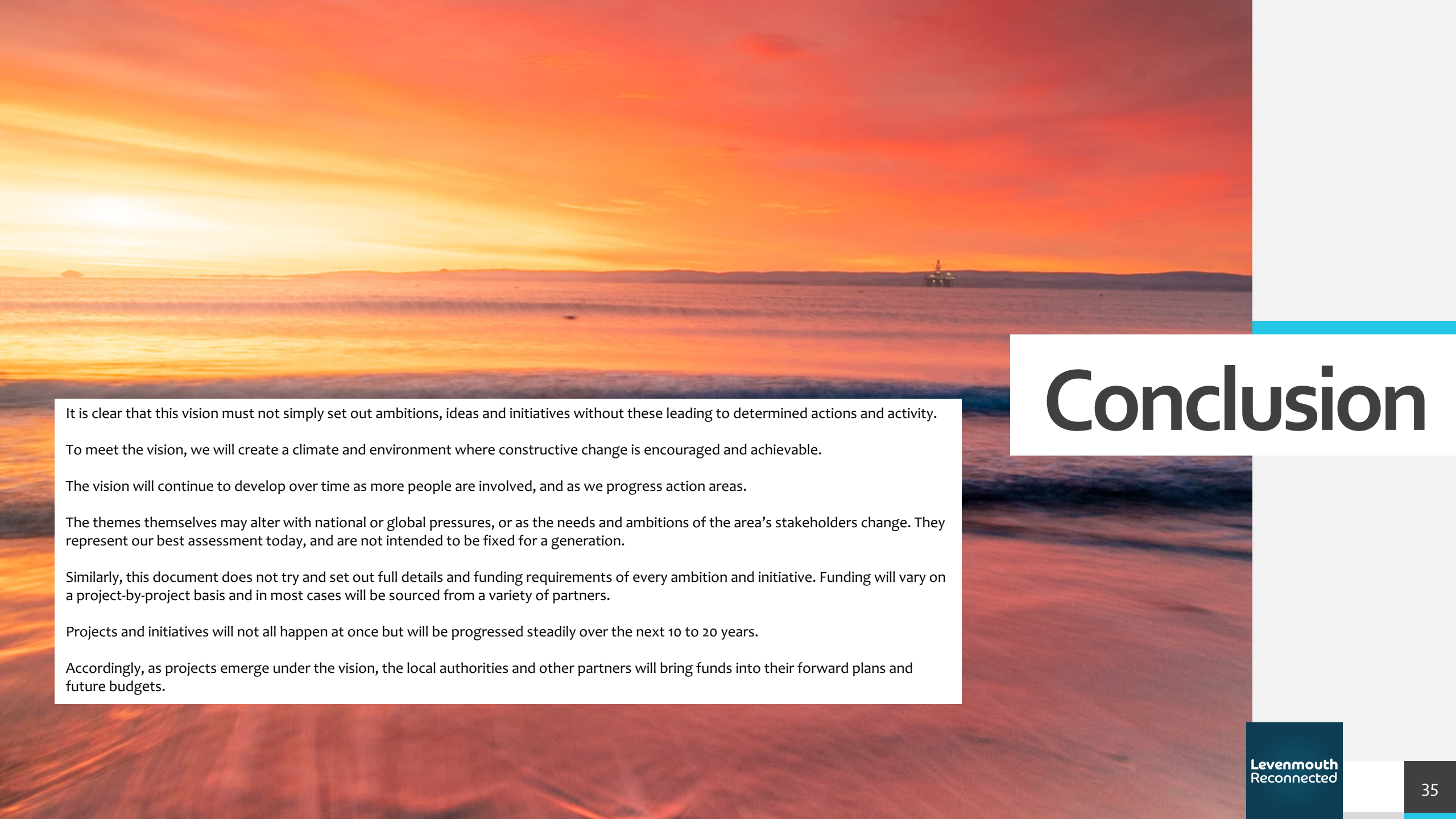
Key local highlights

Activities and projects across the whole Levenmouth area are progressing well.

- Scottish Government Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery (LACER) funding has been used to support local town centre businesses via Town Centre Digital Improvements and Energy Efficiency Grants, alongside Town Centre Building Improvement Grants. During 2022-23, Fife Council has received 9 enquiries from Levenmouth businesses, resulting in 3 energy efficiency audits and 2 applications totalling £9,890 of investment. A further 2 town centre building improvement grant applications from Levenmouth businesses were approved, totalling £16,825 of investment.
- A detailed design proposal for the Promenade area in Leven has been commissioned (as described elsewhere in this document). Development of a detailed proposal would subsequently support a separate application for Sustrans Places for Everyone funding to progress the construction of the Promenade proposals.
- There has also been significant investment of around £1.4million in public realm improvements at the Shorehead and Commercial Street ends of Leven High Street. Funding from the Scottish Government's Placed-Based Investment Programme is being used to help fund a place-making project between the new railway station and current bus station.

- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) has been delivering Careers & Pathways events across all Fife high schools between November 2022 and February 2023. There were 2359 instances of pupil engagement with Culture of Enterprise (CoE) activities in four schools within the Levenmouth area to date during 2022-23. This programme is delivered in partnership by Fife Council and Fife College.
- No One Left Behind (NOLB) activity, supporting inactive adults and vulnerable young people, commissioned in April 2022 is progressing well - delivery partners are on track to meet and exceed target registrations ahead of schedule and job outcome performance is strong.
- A new Locality Response Team (LRT) offering is currently in the early stages of development for the Levenmouth area, working in partnership with Rural Skills Scotland. The intention is that this initiative will adopt a pre-employment academy approach that will tie in with the River Leven regeneration/rail link activities to provide work experience in activities such as general ground work, tidying areas and the installation of benches and planters.
- The Buckhaven Area Heritage Regeneration proposal has been invited to progress to a Round 1 application to both Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.





Conclusion

It is clear that this vision must not simply set out ambitions, ideas and initiatives without these leading to determined actions and activity.

To meet the vision, we will create a climate and environment where constructive change is encouraged and achievable.

The vision will continue to develop over time as more people are involved, and as we progress action areas.

The themes themselves may alter with national or global pressures, or as the needs and ambitions of the area's stakeholders change. They represent our best assessment today, and are not intended to be fixed for a generation.

Similarly, this document does not try and set out full details and funding requirements of every ambition and initiative. Funding will vary on a project-by-project basis and in most cases will be sourced from a variety of partners.

Projects and initiatives will not all happen at once but will be progressed steadily over the next 10 to 20 years.

Accordingly, as projects emerge under the vision, the local authorities and other partners will bring funds into their forward plans and future budgets.