

Economic Impact Assessment of Thornton Greyhounds and Alternative Uses

October 2024



Credit: ASR Activism, Shawfield 2019



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1.

Executive Summary

Thornton Greyhounds makes a small contribution to the economy of Fife. Alternative uses as a site for housing promise more than twice as large economic benefits and support local priorities.

From changes in societal attitudes to increased competition across the entertainment industry, interest in greyhound racing across the UK has been on a long-term decline. As a result of this, there remains only one operating greyhound racing track in Scotland. Thornton Greyhounds in Fife operates as an independent, self-regulating venue, without the oversight of the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB).

Over the past few years, falling support for greyhound racing has led to petitions across the UK calling for its end. A 2019 petition to the Scottish Parliament secured over 29,000 signatures, bringing the issue on the parliamentary agenda. If approved, the proposed Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Scotland) Bill will end greyhound racing at Thornton Greyhounds. Under its current use, Thornton Greyhounds has a limited economic footprint and supports a total economic impact of £62,000 GVA and two full-time equivalent jobs in Fife.

Evidence from similar venues across the UK suggests the site, if not available for greyhound racing, will become available for an alternative use. As interest in greyhound racing declined, from the 1960s onwards, there have been several examples of successful re-uses across Scotland, including Ayr (Tams Brig) Greyhound Stadium, Clydeholm Stadium, Carntyne Stadium and Albion Greyhound Racecourse. More recently, plans have been put forward for the demolition of Shawfield Greyhound Stadium, for a mixed-use development project. Similarly, the Thornton facility, would become available for multiple alternative uses.

In 2023 Fife Council declared a housing emergency in response to unprecedented pressure on housing and homelessness services. At a more local level, housing is also a priority for Thornton Community Council. As a piece of economic infrastructure, housing has the potential for wider social and economic benefits.

It was estimated that a successful repurposing of Thornton Greyhounds as a housing development could lead to increased social and economic benefits. In addition to over £1.5 million GVA and 18 years of employment supported during the project's construction, a housing development would mitigate pressures on housing supply and contribute to attraction and population retention. Furthermore, after residents occupy the new housing, it was estimated that a 29-units development



could result in an annual impact of £137,000 GVA and one job for the Fife economy through household expenditure.

Overall, repurposing Thornton Greyhounds as a housing development would support more than twice as much economic activity than under its current use as a greyhound racing facility. These operational benefits would be further compounded by the nine jobs supported in Fife over each year of construction activity and the overall delivery of wider social benefits associated with housing.

Figure 1-1 GVA in Fife from Different Site Uses



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis



2.

Introduction

In summer 2024, BiGGAR Economics was commissioned by GREY2K USA Worldwide to provide analysis on the economic impact from the closure of Thornton Greyhounds.

2.1 Thornton Greyhounds

Thornton Greyhounds in Fife is the only operating greyhound racing track in Scotland. The track is a 'flapping' track, one of two across the UK. This means that it does not comply with the requirements of the GBGB, the industry body.

In the context of declining public support for greyhound racing, a petition calling for an end to greyhound racing in Scotland was submitted to the Scottish Parliament in 2019 and attracted over 29,000 signatories. The issue is set to return on the parliamentary agenda after the 2024 summer recess, when the proposed Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Scotland) Bill will be presented to the Scottish Government.

Rather than considering the subject from an animal welfare perspective, an important aspect that has been covered extensively elsewhere, this report focuses on the extent to which the loss of Thornton Greyhound would impact economic activity. In doing so, the analysis considers the economic impact of activity at Thornton Greyhounds and the potential benefits that could result from alternative uses.

2.2 Report Structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 3** sets out economic and wider priorities of Fife, as well as introducing to activity at Thornton Greyhounds;
- **Section 4** provides a high-level account of the methodology underpinning the analysis;
- **Section 5** considers the economic impact associated with the closure of Thornton Greyhounds;
- **Section 6** presents evidence from across the UK on the successful repurposing of closed dog tracks;
- **Section 7** provides estimates of potentials for economic impact of Thornton Greyhounds as a site for housing; and
- **Section 8 compares the** economic impact under alternative site uses.



3. Strategic and Sectoral Context

This section considers Fife's socio-economic context and its strategic priorities, as well as providing an overview of greyhound racing in the UK.

3.1 Socio-Economic Context of Fife

3.1.1 Socio-Economic Profile

Fife is a local authority located in the east of Scotland, with a population of around 374,700, representing almost 7% of Scotland's total population¹.

Based on demographic projections, the population of Fife will decline by 2.8%, or 10,500 residents by 2043. This contrasts with a 1.7% increase in Scotland's population over the same period. A decreasing population in Fife will be coupled with increasing pressures from an ageing population².

When it comes to the performance of its labour market, Fife does not dramatically differ from the rest of Scotland. For instance, it features an unemployment rate of 3.5%, similar to the national average of 3.4%³. Key employment sectors in Fife include wholesale and retail trade, and human health and social work activities⁴.

3.1.2 Local Challenges: Housing

In March 2024, Fife Council declared a housing emergency in response to unprecedented pressure on housing and homelessness services. The latest data reveal that Fife's housing register has reached record high levels, following a 7% increase in 2022-23⁵. The strain on housing and homelessness services is shown by a 54% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation in Fife between 2020 and 2023 (Figure 3-1).

¹ ONS (2022). Population estimates - local authority based by five-year age band.

² National Records of Scotland (2020). Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based).

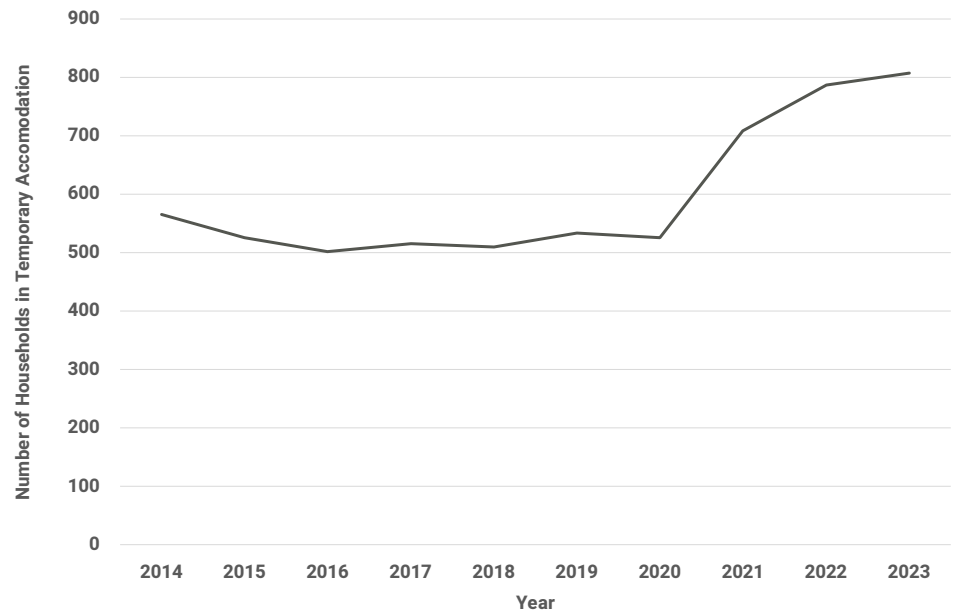
³ ONS (2023). Annual Population Survey - Data for Oct 2022-Sep 2023 and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - resident analysis, data for 2023.

⁴ ONS (2023). Business Register and Employment Survey: safeguarded access - Data for 2022.

⁵ Scottish Housing News (2024). Fife Council 'on brink of housing emergency declaration' amid record homelessness.



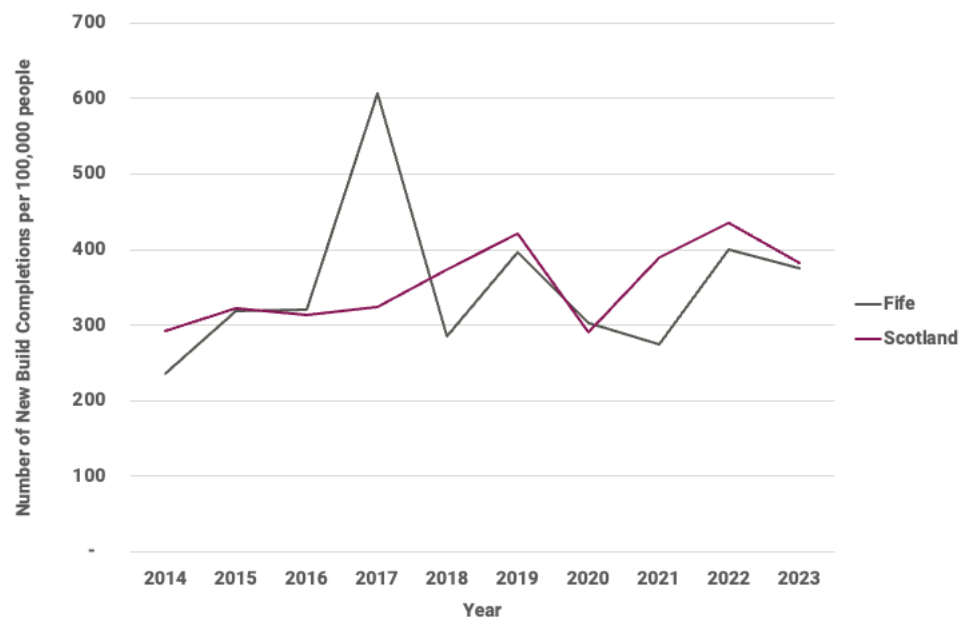
Figure 3-1 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation in Fife



Source: Scottish Government (2024). Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply.

Figure 3-2 illustrates the fluctuation of housebuilding over time in the region. Since its peak in 2017, there has been noticeable decline, with the number of new builds completed per 100,000 people falling below the national average.

Figure 3-2 Number of New Build Completions per 100,000 people, all sectors



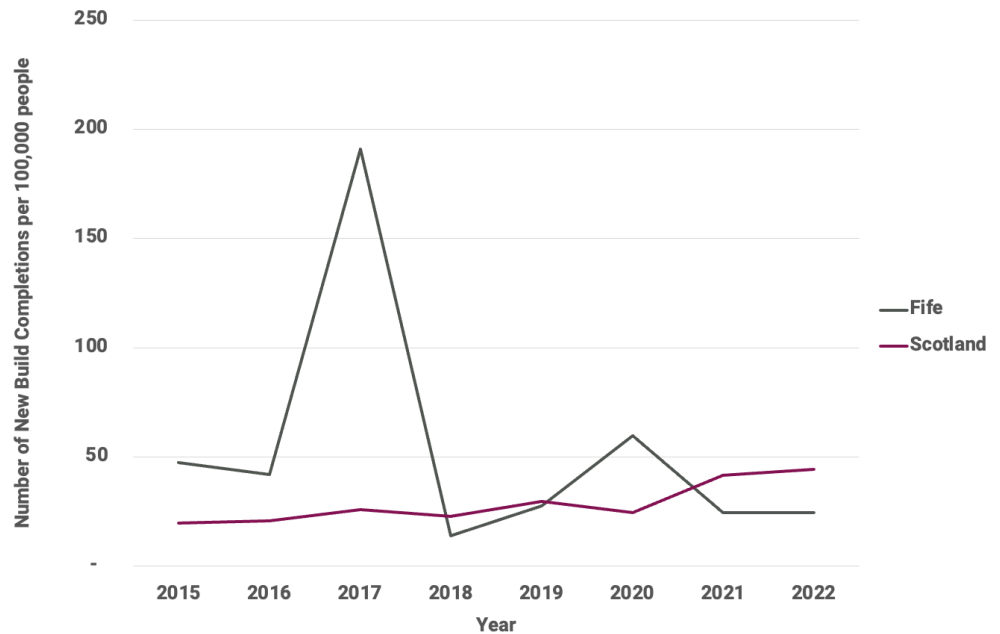
Source: Scottish Government (2024). Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply – all sectors

The decline was in part driven by a fall in local authority completions since 2017. Against the backdrop of increasing homelessness and pressure on temporary



accommodation, these trends highlight the need for new housing developments in Fife, making it a key strategic priority for Fife Council.

Figure 3-3 Number of New Build Completions per 100,000 people, Council Housing



Source: Scottish Government (2024). Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply, local authority (Council Housing)

3.2 Strategic Priorities

A series of regional strategies and plans consider the opportunities and challenges for the region, including the housing crisis declared in March 2024.

Fife Council’s local development plan, FIFEplan⁶, outlines its ambition to strategically shape planning for the region to support people, place, and the economy, and to build sustainable economic growth. To deliver this vision, the following land use strategies have been identified:

- **allocating land for new homes** to be built;
- **enhancing care and accommodation for older people**, including care homes; and
- **supplying employment land** to meet demand from local businesses and to attract new investment.

At a more local level, Thornton Community Council’s Local Place Plan⁷ sets out the priorities for those living in the area. The Plan identifies two priorities, demand for additional housing and improved access to healthcare services.

⁶ Fife Council (2017). FIFEplan.

⁷ Thornton Community Council (2024). Local Place Plan for Thornton.



The potential redevelopment of Thornton Greyhounds stadium presents an opportunity to develop essential housing, in alignment with both the land use strategies outlined in the FIFEplan and the priorities of the local community.

3.3 Greyhound Racing – Sectoral Trends

Greyhound racing in the UK has a history dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, with its popularity fluctuating over time. In recent years, the industry has come under increased scrutiny due to growing public concerns over animal welfare issues and a specific shift in societal attitudes to greyhound racing. According to a YouGov poll, three-quarters of British adults question the morality of greyhound racing⁸, with a recent survey reporting 91% of the British public neither followed nor participated in greyhound racing⁹.

Changes in societal attitudes towards greyhound racing and competition with an ever-broader entertainment market have had an impact on spectator numbers. Over the period between 2014¹⁰ and 2019¹¹, attendance at UK greyhound stadiums has fallen from 2 million to 1.2 million.

As a result of declining audiences as well as competition from other forms of entertainment, businesses operating the tracks have been significantly devalued, leading to the closure of several tracks across the country. And with many greyhound stadiums located in built-up areas, the plots of land they operate on are highly valuable¹², further prompting the closure and selling of several tracks within the UK. Figure 3-4 shows that since 1970 over 150 greyhound racing tracks have been closed. At present, 23 greyhound tracks remain in the UK, of which one is in Scotland, Thornton Greyhounds.

⁸ YouGov (2017) mentioned in Oxford Stadium (2024), How popular is greyhound racing in the UK?

⁹ YouGov (2022), survey results available at:

https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/5ue6z1j8dd/RSPCA_Greyhound_220914_W.pdf

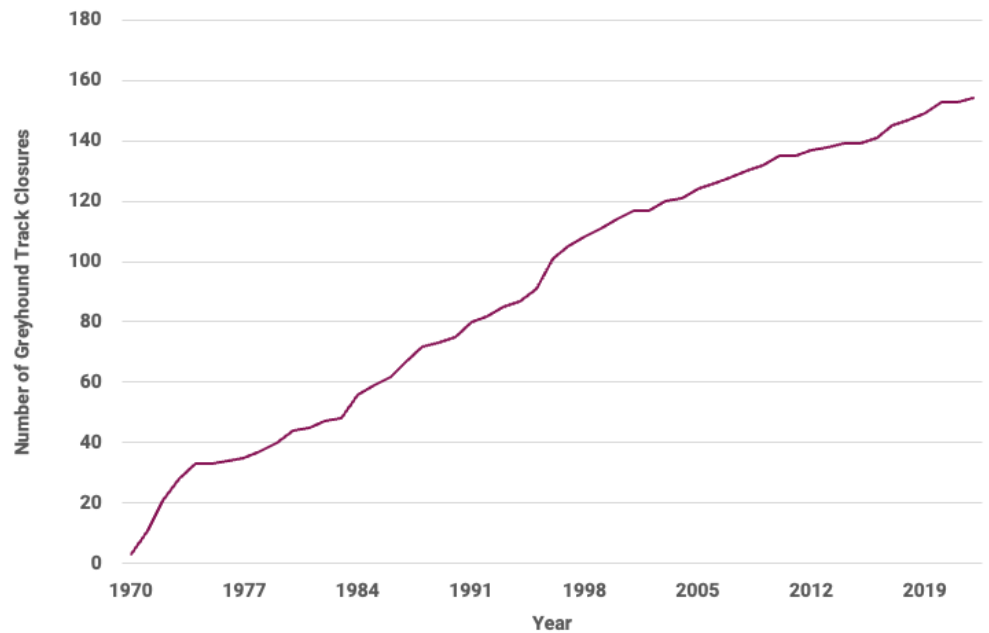
¹⁰ Deloitte (2014). Economic Impact of the British Greyhound Racing Industry 2014.

¹¹ Oxford Stadium. How Popular in Greyhound Racing in the UK?

¹² UK Bookmakers (2024). What Happened to British Dog Racing Tracks?



Figure 3-4 Greyhound Track Closures since 1970



Source: Greyhound Racing Times (2022), Openings / closures – listed by date

Alongside falling attendance and the increasing number of track closures, there has been a significant reduction in off-track betting, one of the primary economic drivers of greyhound racing. Industry reports indicate that £1.49 billion was wagered on UK greyhound racing in 2023, falling significantly below the inflation-adjusted figure of £1.68 billion in 2009. Accounting for inflation, gambling turnover has declined by over 11% during this period¹³.

With the decline of off-tracking betting, dwindling on-site attendance and the resulting closure of stadiums across the UK, the relative importance of the sector continues to diminish.

3.4 Thornton Greyhounds

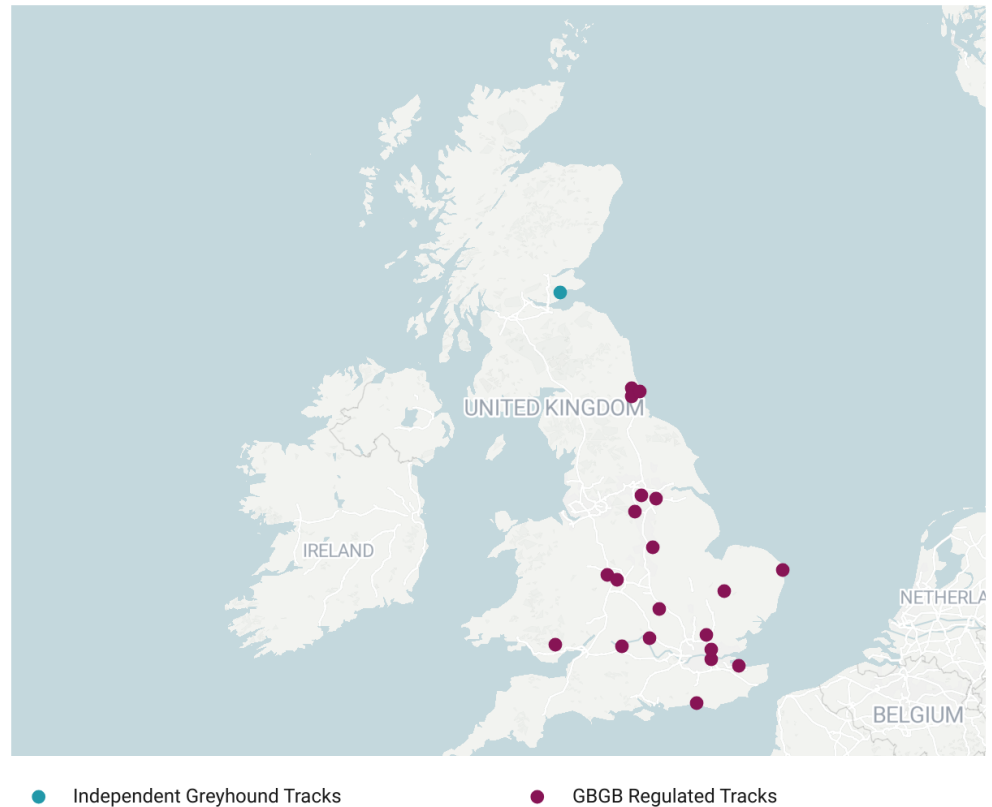
As stated, Fife’s Thornton Greyhounds is an independent and unregulated track (Figure 3-5.), referred to as a ‘flapping’ track.

Compared to licensed tracks, Thornton Greyhounds is not part of the GBGB system, the industry and regulatory body for greyhound racing. Activity is smaller scale and does not benefit from the betting industry’s contribution from the Bookmakers Afternoon Betting Services.

¹³ Gambling Commission (2023). Industry Statistics – November 2023, available at: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/publication/industry-statistics-november-2023>

Traditionally, activity at flapping tracks is less regulated than that sanctioned by an industry body. This means at Thornton there is no vet in attendance nor any anti-doping controls.

Figure 3-5 Location of Greyhound Tracks in the UK



Source: Greyhound Board of Great Britain (2024). Our Racecourses

Races at Thornton are held at most once a week, with mid-week trials. Attendance is limited and races are only held when a bookmaker can be present.



4. Study Approach

The economic impact analysis is built around the activities associated with greyhound racing and a range of data sources.

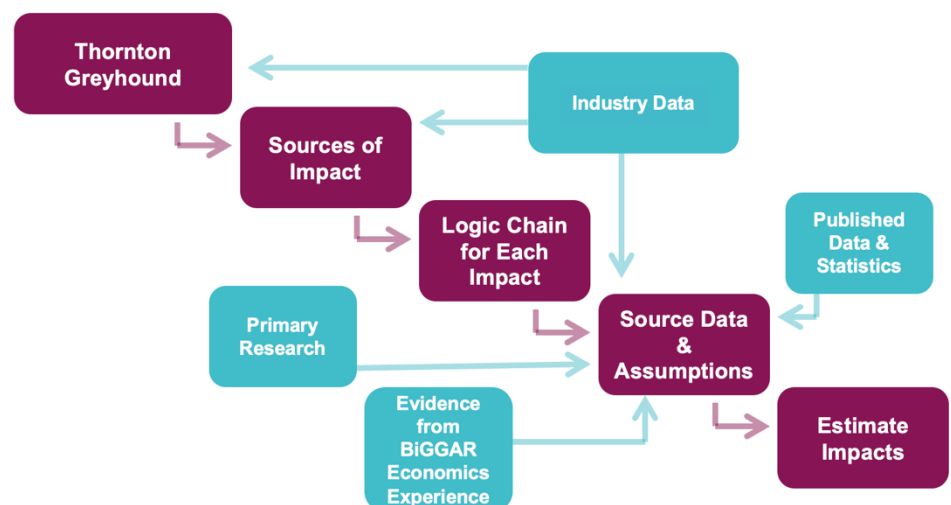
4.1 Estimating Economic Impacts

The first step in carrying out an economic impact assessment involves understanding the nature of the economic activity supported. In the context of Thornton Greyhounds, this meant considering differences between a GBGB-track and a 'flapping track'.

Based on this qualitative understanding of activity, it was possible to develop logic chains linking inputs into activity, outputs and impacts. The logic chains informed the type of data required to carry out the analysis. The study draws on a range of data sources:

- publicly available information on industrial activity across the Scottish economy (e.g., data from the Scottish Annual Business Statistics and Scottish Input-Output tables);
- sector-wide assessments of the UK and Irish greyhound racing industry; and
- publicly available information on activity at Thornton, including company accounts and evidence provided to the Scottish Parliament.

Figure 4-1 Approach to Economic Impact Analysis



Source: BiGGAR Economics Approach



4.1.1 Economic Impact Measures & Study Areas

The approach set out above leads to the estimation of economic impacts based on the following metrics:

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** a commonly used measure of economic activity;
- **Employment:** expressed as **Full-Time Equivalent jobs** for any permanent activity and as **years of employment**, when activity is temporary, such as in the context of construction activity.

The assessment considers the economic contribution made by Thornton Greyhounds and by alternative site use with respect to the following study areas:

- **Fife;** and
- **Scotland.**

4.2 Sources of Economic Impact

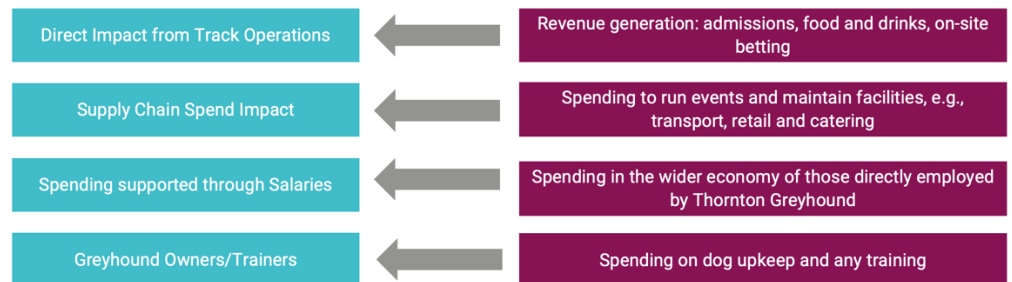
Based on the activity at Thornton, the following sources of economic impact are considered in Section 5:

- direct impact from track operations;
- impact from supply chain spending;
- impact from salary spend in the economy; and
- impact associated with spending from greyhound owners and trainers.

The assessment accounts for the differences in activity between Thornton and GBGB tracks by:

- focussing on on-site rather than off-site betting;
- by not accounting from any impact associated with prize money; and
- by not considering any supply chain impacts on compliance and veterinary presence on site.

Figure 4-2 Economic Impact from Thornton Greyhounds



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis



As set out in Section 3, housing is a key concern at local level. As such, consideration of alternative uses focusses on the economic impact associated with housing provision. A similar use is associated with the following impacts:

- temporary increase in activity associated with construction;
- operational activity associated with the development, including:
 - spending from residents across the economy; and
 - any impacts from that spending on local suppliers, salaries and wages.



5.

Economic Impact of Thornton Greyhounds

This section estimates the economic impact generated by activities at Thornton Greyhounds.

5.1 Direct Impact

The direct impact that Thornton Greyhounds has on the economy is assessed through its direct GVA and direct employment. This impact is calculated based on the location of the organisation and where the activity takes place, rather than where people live, aligning with the methodology employed by the Office for National Statistics.

Based on the latest publicly available company account records¹⁴, Thornton Greyhounds has had an average turnover of £36,738 from 2018 to 2022, and a total staff headcount of three in 2023, who were assumed to work part-time. During this period, Thornton Greyhounds had an average supply chain expenditure of £16,582 and recorded an average loss of £7,299.

Direct GVA is the largest of staff costs and the difference between turnover and operational spending. On this basis, it was estimated Thornton Greyhound supports direct GVA of £27,000 and two FTE jobs.

Table 5-1 Direct Impact, Thornton Greyhounds

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)	27,000	27,000
Employment (FTE)	2	2

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis.

5.2 Supply Chain Expenditure Impact

Thornton Greyhounds contributes to the wider economy by supporting the turnover and employment of its suppliers. It was assumed that Thornton Greyhounds spends £16,582 on goods and services, based on analysis of their latest publicly available company account records. In line with the activities characterising greyhound stadiums, including catering provision, a range of sectors were considered such as

¹⁴ Thornton Greyhound Ltd (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023), Unaudited filleted financial statements. Average figures were calculated from this time period.



food and drink suppliers, facilities management at the stadium, outside contractors, and office supplies.

On this basis, it was estimated that Thornton Greyhounds' expenditure on goods and services generates a total impact of £8,000 GVA and less than one job in Fife, and £13,000 GVA and one job in Scotland.

Table 5-2 Supply Chain Expenditure Impact, Thornton Greyhounds

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)	8,000	13,000
Employment (FTE)	<1	1

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis.

5.3 Staff Expenditure Impact

Employees of Thornton Greyhounds contribute to the local economy by spending their salaries in the communities where they live. This spending supports local businesses, enabling them to sustain operations and continue employing their own staff.

Thornton Greyhounds directly employs three staff and based on analysis of their latest publicly available company account records, the track expends £27,455 on staff costs annually. It was assumed that these staff work part-time. The distribution of this expenditure, and the associated economic impact is primarily determined by where staff live. It was assumed that all staff members live in Fife.

Through an examination of household expenditure habits in Scotland, it was possible to project the geographic distribution of staff expenditure occurring across Fife and Scotland. Economic ratios and multipliers were then applied to these expenditure figures.

On this basis, it was estimated employees of Thornton Greyhounds contribute £7,000 GVA and support less than one job in Fife, and £15,000 GVA and support one job in Scotland.



Table 5-3 Staff Expenditure Impact, Thornton Greyhounds

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)	7,000	15,000
Employment (FTE)	<1	1

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis.

5.4 Greyhound Owners and Trainers Impact

The owners and trainers of the greyhounds generate economic impact through their spending to maintain, feed, care for, and train their dogs. Based on evidence from a previous industry study and accounting for intervening inflation, it was estimated expenditure on each greyhound could be up to £3,500¹⁵. Only half of this spending was considered as additional, since part of the expenditure on dog upkeep would still be required even if dogs were not racing.

This increases the turnover and supports employment in the businesses benefiting from this spending, including dog food and dog accessory manufacturers, veterinary services, medicines, and treatments.

It was estimated that the greyhound owners' and trainers' expenditures on goods and services generates a total impact of £20,000 GVA and less than one job in Fife, and £51,000 GVA and one job in Scotland.

Table 5-4 Greyhound Owners and Trainers Impact, Thornton Greyhounds

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)	20,000	51,000
Employment (FTE)	<1	1

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

5.5 Thornton Greyhounds: Summary of Impacts

By summing the economic impacts derived from the operational activities of Thornton Greyhounds, it was estimated that the total impact generated a total of:

- £62,000 GVA and two jobs in Fife; and
- £107,000 GVA and four jobs in Scotland.

¹⁵ Deloitte (2014), Economic Impact of the British Greyhound Racing Industry 2014. Adjusted for inflation, and accounting for economic deadweight.



Table 5-5 Thornton Greyhounds: Summary of Impacts

Source of Impact	Fife	Scotland
		GVA (£)
Direct Impact	27,000	27,000
Supply Chain Expenditure Impact	8,000	13,000
Staff Expenditure Impact	7,000	15,000
Greyhound Owners and Trainers Impact	20,000	51,000
Total	62,000	107,000
		Employment (FTE)
Direct Impact	2	2
Supply Chain Expenditure Impact	<1	1
Staff Expenditure Impact	<1	<1
Greyhound Owners and Trainers Impact	<1	1
Total	2	4

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.

6. New Beginnings at Closed Dog Tracks

This section considers evidence from across the UK on the successful repurposing of closed dog tracks.

Over the past decade, several greyhound stadiums across the UK have closed, with many being repurposed. Table 6-1 provides a list of some of the most recent closures along with their subsequent redevelopment use. As illustrated, alternative uses for greyhound stadiums have included housing and other sporting facilities.

Table 6-1 UK Greyhound Stadium Closures and Re-Use (2014 – 2024)

Closure Year	Name of Greyhound Stadium	Alternative Use
2014	Ellesmere Port	Housing development
2016	Bathgate Road	Speedway
2016	Coventry Brandon	Speedway
2017	Halcrow	Housing development
2017	Wimbledon	AFC Wimbledon football grounds
2017	Hall Green	Mixed use development including housing and hotel
2020	Shawfield	Mixed use development including housing, hotel and retail
2020	Peterborough	Potential for the development of an employment hub
2020	Belle Vue	Housing development
2020	Poole	Speedway
2024	Henlow	Housing development

Source: Greyhound Racing Times (2022), Openings / closures – listed by date

An example of a recent completed redevelopment is provided by the former Belle Vue racecourse in Manchester.



Belle Vue, Manchester

Belle Vue Stadium of Manchester opened in 1926, when it was the first venue in Britain to host dog races on an oval track. Originally, the site had hosted the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens. Over the years, the stadium also offered motorcycle speedway, stock car racing and banger racing.

On the backdrop of declining attendance and the pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the stadium ceased activities in 2020. This led to the end of dog racing in Manchester, while other activities such as speedway had found alternative venues.

The availability of an urban site created an opportunity for development. In 2020, the area previously occupied by the stadium and its carpark received planning permission for a mixed-tenure housing development. As other parts of the UK, Manchester is characterised by an increased demand for housing, which places pressure on its green belt.

This resulted in the construction of a total 80 apartments and 167 houses, including 130 affordable homes. The delivery of the project involved work from housing developer Countryside and Great Places Housing Group, a housing association. The stadium redevelopment into housing was also accompanied by requirements for additional investment into the local school infrastructure.

The experience of Belle Vue showcases the potential benefits of repurposing former greyhound stadiums as housing developments.

A similar trend has emerged in Scotland over the years, where stadiums have been transformed into spaces for residential use and for various forms of entertainment and recreation. For example, the Ayr (Tams Brig) Greyhound Stadium, which closed in 1972, has been converted into an ice rink and now operates as a local curling club. Several other sites have been repurposed for mixed-use developments and housing, including Clydeholm Stadium, which closed in 1963; Carntyne Stadium, which closed in 1972; and Albion Greyhound Racecourse, which closed in 1976.

Most recently, Shawfield Stadium, which held its last race in March 2020, is now in the planning stages for redevelopment as a mixed-use development, including housing, a hotel, and retail spaces.

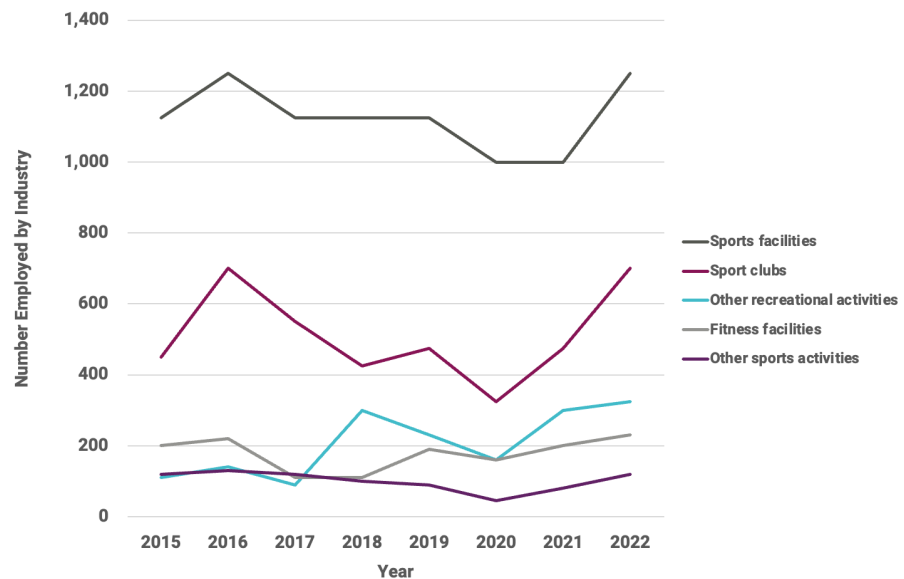


Shawfield, South Lanarkshire

Originally home to Clyde FC, Shawfield Stadium, introduced dog racing in 1932. For the last nine decades, the stadium has hosted football matches and speedway events, alongside some of Scotland’s biggest greyhound races¹⁶.

Despite being the last remaining GBGB-licensed dog track in Scotland, Shawfield Stadium faced significant financial challenges. These were further exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic, which forced the venue to cease operations for nearly two years, ultimately leading to its permanent closure.

Although employment from the sporting industries has fluctuated over the last decade, there is no immediate evidence of a negative impact from Shawfield’s closure, as sectoral employment in 2022 was broadly in line with pre-pandemic activity.



ONS (2023). Business Register and Employment Survey: safeguarded access - Data for 2022

Shawfield Greyhound Stadium is now in the planning stages for redevelopment into a mixed-use neighbourhood¹⁷. The vision is to provide housing and contribute to the Clyde Gateway’s goal of delivering 10,000 new homes¹⁸. The plans include a 150-room hotel, 450 residential units, and a diverse range of commercial spaces¹⁹.

¹⁶ Dog Track (2023). Shawfield Greyhound Stadium

¹⁷ Cooper Cromar (2024). Shawfield, Glasgow: Design and Access Statement

¹⁸ South Lanarkshire Council (2024). Clyde Gateway

¹⁹ Ryden (2024). Planning Statement: Mixed Use Development including Residential, Hotel, Commercial Development and Associated Works –Planning Permission in Principle –at Shawfield Stadium, South Lanarkshire



7. Economic Benefits from Alternative Uses

This section considers the potential economic impact from repurposing of Thornton Greyhounds as a housing development.

7.1 Economic Impact from Alternative Uses

The development of a new housing at the site of Thornton Greyhounds would generate a range of economic impacts in Fife, and across Scotland. This would include:

- **Construction Impact:** investment in the development of new housing would directly benefit and support jobs in the construction sector.
- **Resident Expenditure Impact:** occupants of the new housing development would spend money in the local economy, increasing the turnover of local businesses and allowing them to employ more people and spend more money on suppliers. This boosts the economy of Fife and increases the number of jobs available.
- **Fiscal Impacts:** the occupants of the new houses would be liable to pay council tax contributing to the public finances of Fife Council.
- **Capital Assets:** the development of new houses would add to the capital stock of Fife.

7.1.1 Construction Impact

The scale of the economic impact from the construction of a housing development would depend on the number of housing units built, and the cost per housing unit.

The Fife Housing Land Audit 2023²⁰ provides information on all the housing developments that were completed in Fife in 2023. It presents data on the number of housing units completed at each site and the surface area in hectares. From this information, it was possible to calculate the average number of dwellings per hectare (19.27) constructed in Fife in 2023.

The development area that could be available for housing at Thornton Greyhounds was estimated by measuring the length and width of the site on Google Maps. In this way, it was estimated that the development area would be approximately 15,000 m² (1.5 hectares). Using these assumptions, it was estimated that the site at Thornton Greyhounds has the potential for a housing development with 29 housing units.

²⁰ Fife Council (2024), Fife housing land Audit 2023, available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cc5d42b117574d8fb66211d0c877c52d>



The economic analysis has assumed a median cost of £205,546²¹ per housing unit. However, this figure is likely conservative, considering recent inflation in material and construction costs. This gives an estimated potential construction investment of £5.9 million.

The potential direct GVA impacts for this construction activity have been estimated by dividing this estimated expenditure by the turnover/GVA ratio for the construction sector. Indirect and induced GVA have then been estimated using sectoral multipliers for the construction sector. The total GVA was estimated by summing the direct, indirect, and induced GVA. A similar approach was followed in estimating the number of temporary jobs supported by construction activity.

As shown in Table 7-1, it was estimated that construction activity could generate a total impact of £1.5 million GVA and 18 job years in Fife, and £3.2 million GVA and 53 job years in Scotland.

Table 7-1 Economic Impact of Housing Construction

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£m)	1.5	3.2
Employment (Jobs Years)	18	53

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

7.1.2 Resident Expenditure Impact

The residents of the new housing development will spend money in the local economy in turn increasing the turnover of local businesses, which will employ more staff and spend more on suppliers.

The scale of the economic impact from the new residents' expenditure will depend on the number of new residents and how much they spend in Fife. The economic analysis has assumed average weekly household expenditure of £413.40²², amounting to £21,500 annually. It was assumed that 8% of this would go towards VAT and, as such, was excluded from the calculations²³.

It was further assumed that 50% of residents' expenditure will be retained within Fife and that 50% of the residents' expenditure would have occurred anyway, as some of the new occupants may have already lived in Fife. The subsequent household expenditure figure was then multiplied by the number of residential units to establish total expenditure from residents.

The direct GVA and direct employment impacts for this expenditure have been estimated based on turnover (dividing expenditure by the turnover/GVA ratio or the

²¹ Registers of Scotland (2023), Registers of Scotland quarterly house price statistics: Average of mean house prices from 2023-24 Q1 – 2024/25 Q1.

²² ONS (2023), Family Spending – Workbook 3, expenditure by region FYE 2022. Excludes interest and tax.

²³ European Commission (2013), A Study on the Economic Effects of Current VAT Rates Structures.



turnover/employee ratio for the household spending sectoral data). Indirect and induced GVA have then been estimated using sectoral multipliers for household spending. The total GVA was estimated by summing the direct, indirect, and induced GVA. A similar approach was followed in estimating the number of jobs supported by household expenditure.

As shown in Table 7-2, it was estimated that the annual resident expenditure could generate a total impact of £137,000 GVA and one job in Fife, and £209,000 GVA and two jobs in Scotland.

Table 7-2 Economic Impact of Resident Expenditure

	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)	137,000	209,000
Employment (FTE)	1	2

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

7.1.3 Fiscal Impacts

The occupants of the new houses would be liable to pay Council Tax contributing to the public finances of Fife Council. This additional revenue would help to fund public services in Fife.

The scale of the additional Council Tax revenues attributable to the new housing would depend on the number of houses and the Council Tax band of each house. It was assumed conservatively that each house would fall under Council Tax band C. The total Council Tax raised from the occupants of the new houses was estimated by multiplying the number of houses of each type by the corresponding annual Council Tax bill (1,716.95 for band C)²⁴, generating an annual revenue of £49,622.

7.1.4 Capital Assets

The construction of a housing development in Fife would contribute to the capital asset stock in the local authority. Capital assets are vital to economic development and societal wellbeing.

A new housing development would improve living conditions, reduce overcrowding, enhance community safety, and contribute to overall wellbeing. The value of the capital assets is represented by the value of the housing units built, which could amount to £5.9 million on the potential site.

7.1.5 Housing Development: Summary of Impacts

The development of a new housing at the site of Thornton Greyhounds would generate a range of economic impacts in Fife, and across Scotland. This includes:

²⁴ Fife Council (2024), Council tax bands and charges, available at: <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/housing/council-tax/council-tax-bands-and-charges>



- a construction impact of **£1.5 million GVA** and **18 job years** in **Fife**, and **£3.2 million GVA** and **53 job years** in **Scotland**; and
- an annual impact from resident expenditure of **£137,000 GVA** and **one job** in **Fife**, and **£209,000 GVA** and **two jobs** in **Scotland**.

The council tax raised from the occupants of the new houses could also generate annual revenues of **£49,622** for Fife Council. Furthermore, the development of new houses would add to the capital stock of Fife, amounting to a capital asset value of **£5.9 million**.

Table 7-3 Housing Development: Summary of Economic Impacts

Source of Impact	Fife	Scotland
GVA (£)		
Construction Impact	1,543,000	3,160,000
Resident Expenditure Impact (annually)	137,000	209,000
Jobs / Job Years		
Construction Impact	18	90
Resident Expenditure Impact (annually)	1	2

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

8. Economic Impact Under Alternative Site Uses

This section compares the economic impact from Thornton Greyhounds and from its potential repurposing as a housing development.

As set out in Section 5, it was estimated that current activity at Thornton Greyhounds supports a total economic impact of:

- £62,000 GVA and two jobs in Fife; and
- £107,000 GVA and four jobs in Scotland.

In line with local priorities around housing, repurposing Thornton Greyhounds as a housing development could support each year:

- £137,000 GVA and one job in Fife; and
- £209,000 GVA and two jobs in Scotland.

When considering the overall value added by the two site uses, a housing development would support more than twice as much GVA than a greyhound racing facility.

Figure 8-1 GVA in Fife from Different Site Uses



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis



A housing development would also go beyond the provision of economic benefits and contribute towards improved social outcomes.

In addition to supporting a higher level of annual economic activity, repurposing of Thornton Greyhounds would result in temporary benefits from construction activity, including:

- £1.5 million GVA and 18 job years in Fife; and
- £3.2 million GVA and 53 job years in Scotland.

Assuming a construction period of two years, this is equivalent to an average of nine jobs supported each year during the delivery of the project, over four times as many jobs as Thornton Greyhounds supports in any given year.

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