



# Impact Assessment– Stirling Community Enterprise: A Critical Resource

## Our Mission & Values Infographic 2025



# Executive Summary

## Context and Challenge

Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE) is a **vital resource** tackling Stirling's most pressing social and economic challenges, including unemployment, poverty, low pay, financial disparity, mental and physical health issues, homelessness, and justice system involvement.

By equipping individuals with **skills, education, and employment opportunities**, SCE directly supports Stirling Council's priorities of **reducing inequalities, fostering inclusive growth, and building resilient communities**. However, with Stirling Council's projected **£12.9m budget shortfall for 2025/26**, the proposed withdrawal of **SCE's core funding** puts these essential services at risk.

If funding is removed, there is **no clear strategy** on how the Council will replace the support provided to **250+ individuals annually**. The consequences include **deepening inequalities, increased unemployment, and reduced community resilience**, undermining national objectives on **health, education, poverty reduction, and social justice**.

## Key National Outcomes Impacted

SCE contributes directly to Scotland's **National Performance Framework** objectives:

- **Reducing Poverty:** Creating pathways to employment and financial independence.
- **Improving Wellbeing:** Trauma-informed services enhance mental health and prevent crises.
- **Sustainable Communities:** Preparing individuals for emerging job sectors and strengthening local economies.
- **Justice & Community Safety:** Providing diversionary programmes that reduce reoffending



## **SCE's Role and Impact**

SCE delivers a **multi-dimensional support model**, integrating training, wraparound services, and collaborative initiatives:

### **Key Services Provided:**

- **Targeted Training Programmes:** Vocational qualifications tailored to industry needs (construction, retail, administration, and environmental sustainability).
- **Wraparound Support:** Mental health interventions, financial literacy workshops, addiction recovery support, and confidence-building sessions.
- **Community Resilience Hub:** A partnership model hosting services from the NHS, DWP, Skills Development Scotland, and other key organisations.
- **Collaborative Networks:** SCE plays a key role in **Local Employability Partnership (LEP), Alcohol & Drugs Partnership, Employability Provider Forum, and Criminal Justice Steering Groups.**
- **Innovative Initiatives:** Including **Traditional Building Skills, Wood Upcycling Programme, and GROW Stirling**, combining employment training with environmental sustainability.

## Quantifiable Impacts



**250 + PEOPLE  
SUPPORTED PER  
YEAR**

We support and empower individuals to achieve employment, reach their potential, improve their resilience and overcome barriers.

Impact Area	2022-2023 Data	2023-2024 Projections
Individuals Supported	255	+10% Increase
New Clients Engaged	N/A	+21% Increase
Employment Conversion Rate	18%	21%
Schools Transition & Pre-Apprenticeship Participants	8 per cohort	8 per cohort
Cost per Participant	£595 - £1,190	Lower than homelessness/criminal justice costs
Return on Investment	£1 invested = Community savings through reduced healthcare and justice costs	Continued cost savings
Clients from Priority Areas	55%	Growing demand



**£2,382,380**

Monetary value of supporting 154 people into employment, training or education assuming it has caused a significant change in life satisfaction.

SCE's cost per participant (£595-£1,190) is **significantly lower** than alternative interventions such as **homelessness services or the criminal justice system**.

**£13.50**

Social return for every £1 invested in our core services.



## **Implications of Funding Cuts**

The **withdrawal of SCE funding** would have severe economic and social consequences:

### **1. Service Users**

- **Loss of critical support:** Over **250 vulnerable individuals** left without employability and mental health interventions.
- **Deepened inequalities:** Increased unemployment, addiction, and mental health crises in **Stirling's most deprived communities**.
- **Escalating demand on public services:** Rising pressure on **NHS, welfare, and criminal justice** systems.

### **2. Community Resilience**

- **Dismantled support networks:** Loss of partnerships with schools, local employers, and charities.
- **Increased crime & social harm:** Higher rates of reoffending and anti-social behaviour.
- **Loss of sustainability initiatives:** Closure of **GROW Stirling and Wood Upcycling** programmes.

### **3. Economic Costs**

- **Higher unemployment:** More individuals unable to enter or sustain employment.
- **Reduced productivity:** Local businesses and SMEs lose trained employees.
- **Higher public spending:** Increased reliance on **social security, mental health services, and the justice system**.

## **The Voice of People with Lived Experience / Partner Endorsements**

- Intelligence and evaluations gathered highlight that withdrawing funding from SCE is a short-sighted economic mistake that will increase public spending on welfare, healthcare, policing, and justice services. It betrays vulnerable individuals, pushing many into homelessness, crime, addiction, and unemployment. Without SCE, reoffending rates will rise, mental health services will be overwhelmed, and youth disengagement will escalate, leading to long-term social and economic harm. The local economy will suffer, businesses will lose skilled workers, and community resilience will weaken. Once dismantled, SCE cannot be replaced, reversing decades of progress and leaving a lasting void in essential services for future generations.

## Considerations

To sustain SCE's impact and safeguard vulnerable individuals, the following actions are suggested:

1. To review and reshape the SLA to reflect the breadth and scope of the SCE's work, to include all corporate areas of Stirling Council service delivery
2. To realign KPIs to support the above, reflective to Stirling Councils key priorities (see Appendix 1)
3. Realign the SLA with the original Stirling Single Outcome Agreement 2013 - 2023. Where the agreement itself may be outdated, both the council priorities and single outcomes agreement priorities identified at the time are relevant to today's challenging socio-economic climate and more reflective of the work delivered by SCE than the current KPIs.
4. Co-develop a separate SLA around preferred contractor status procurement / community benefit / spot purchase of Civil Amenities division for jobs to the value of £10 -£50k or to adhere to procurement regulations.
5. Include job creation / supported business opportunities in the above.
6. Ring fence financial support for SCE for a period of 3 years to allow for journey towards sustainability.



### **DELIVER ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY AREAS.**

All our work is delivered against an aligned vision of supporting local and national policy and strategic aims.



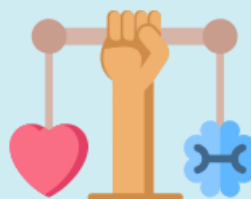
### **SOCIAL ENTERPRISE & CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The ££ invested in the SLA allows Stirling Council to save money on the delivery of public services by using our Civil Amenities division.



### **VALUE FOR MONEY**

For every £1 spent through the SLA, we return £13.50 in social value.



### **RESILIENCE**

The SLA has allowed SCE to develop a community resilience hub, hosting a wide range of partners to deliver holistic support.

## **Conclusion**

**SCE is not just an employability service — it is a cornerstone of Stirling’s social and economic stability.** The proposed **funding cuts are short-sighted and financially counterproductive**, increasing public costs in healthcare, welfare, and criminal justice.

**Securing the future of SCE represents an investment in Stirling’s people and its communities.** With continued funding, SCE can:

- **Expand its reach** to support more individuals.
- **Attract external funding** to enhance its programmes.
- **Continue providing cost-effective, evidence-based interventions** that align with **national and local priorities**.

**Stirling Council is urged to reconsider its funding withdrawal. The Scottish Government and key stakeholders must support and take decisive action to protect and sustain these essential services.**

## Context and Challenge

Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE) is a vital resource in tackling the Stirling Council area's most challenging and dynamic social and economic challenges. These fall under a broad spectrum of inequality and poverty, consisting of a wide range of complex issues; unemployment and underemployment, low pay and financial disparity, lone parents, and substance use. They also extend to issues of physical and mental health, homelessness, care experience, individuals within or on the periphery of the justice system, young people not engaged in employment, education or training, issues related to Additional Support Needs or literacy and numeracy.

Therefore, by equipping individuals with skills, education, and employment opportunities, SCE plays its part in directly supports Stirling Council's priorities of reducing inequalities, fostering inclusive growth, and building resilient communities. Its collaborative, trauma-informed approach aligns with national and local strategies, enabling tangible, long-term benefits for individuals and communities.

As part of the Council's projected £12.9m budget gap for 2025/26, announced towards the end of 2024, and ongoing fiscal challenges, the proposed withdrawal of SCE's core funding jeopardises these essential services. Such a decision would not only risk dismantling a proven pathway to employability, mental health support, and community regeneration but also exacerbate inequalities and weaken the Council's ability to deliver on its own strategic objectives.

Presently there is no clear strategy of what Stirling Council's employability support looks like to accommodate the 250+ individuals that receive support from SCE on annual basis. An additional significant consequence is the potential damage to the Council's reputation and its ability to achieve national objectives. These national objectives include portfolio areas of Finance and Local Government, Social Justice, Education and Skills and Justice. While developing the thematic framework of SCE's Resilience Pathway (Appendix 1) SCE aligned all activities and services with these portfolio areas and Stirling Council's key priorities.

### ***Key National Outcomes***

- Health
- Children and Young People
- Communities
- Human Rights
- Economy
- Education
- Fair work and business
- Poverty



Over the years, SCE has supported individuals disproportionately affected by poverty, rising living costs, and inequalities in their health, through tailored wraparound services. By breaking down barriers to employment and social inclusion, SCE contributes directly to building community resilience and inclusive economic growth at a time when these are most needed.

Appendix 1 undoubtedly demonstrates the breadth of the organisation's work and its strategic and operational links with both local and national policy outcomes.

### ▪ **Objective of This Paper**

This purpose of this paper is to highlight SCE's transformative impact, presenting compelling evidence-based arguments for its continuing funding.

Drawing on Stirling Council's Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, published as part of the recent 'Big Conversation' consultation process and operational data from SCE, it emphasises the broader implications of funding cuts and proposes sustainable solutions to preserve and expand SCE's role.

In terms of the content, the paper draws attention to –

- The Role and Impact of SCE
- Alignment with Strategic Priorities
- Implications of Funding Cuts
- Case Studies (Voice of People with Lived Experience)
- Stakeholder Endorsements

Securing the future of SCE represents an investment in Stirling's people and its communities, while serving as a crucial measure to safeguard the area's economic and social stability, especially in times of significant financial challenges.

The sustainability and secure future of SCE also allows the organisation a platform to attract external funding, adding value to the support available to the citizens and communities of Stirling, further supporting local and national priority outcomes.

### ▪ **The Role and Impact of SCE**

#### **Holistic and Multi-Dimensional Support**

- **Targeted Training Programmes:** SCE delivers accredited vocational training aligned with local economic needs, including construction, retail, and administration or need identified through SCE's evidence-based approach to collecting data and analysis of emerging themes.
- **Wraparound Support Services:** SCE offers mental health interventions, financial literacy workshops, addictions support and confidence-building sessions to address participation barriers.

- **Community Resilience Hub:** SCE host a wide range of internal and external partners within their Community Hub estate to provide holistic wrap around services. These include:
  - Homestart Stirling
  - Includem
  - Central Scotland Regional Equalities Council
  - DWP – Job Centre Youth Work Coach
  - Skills Development Scotland
  - The NHS
  - Trossachs Health and Wellbeing
  - Recovery Scotland
  - Criminal Justice Social Work
  
- **Collaborating Activities:** SCE is a major partner and facilitator in the local employability, education, health, social and justice landscapes, including:
  - Local Employability Partnership (LEP),
  - LEP Justice Sub-group, chaired by SCE's CEO,
  - LEP Data Sub-group
  - Local Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
  - Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector steering group
  - ASB Steering Group
  - Employability Provider Forum
  - Employer Engagement Forum,
  - Frontline Workers Group(s)
  - Whole Systems Approach
  - Rapid Rehousing steering group
  - Social Enterprise Steering Group
  
- **Innovative Initiatives:** Programmes like the Traditional Building Skills, Land Services Training Schemes for Stirling Council, Wood Upcycling Programme and GROW Stirling combine skills development with environmental sustainability.

### **Quantifiable Impacts**

- In 2022-2023, SCE supported **255** individuals, exceeding its target by **15%**. The organisation is projecting an increase of 10% on this figure for the current financial year. It is also anticipated the number of new clients, for this year, will increase by **21%**.
  
- **Schools Transitions and Pre Apprenticeship:** Over the past five years SCE have supported bi-annual programmes of **8** pupils per cohort, transitioning from high school to employment, training or further education. Pupils are supported to develop a wide range of life skills, personal development, achieve vocational qualifications and explore opportunities for the next stage of their lives.

- Employment conversion rates improved to a projected 21% for 2023-2024, reflecting the organisation's effectiveness despite the increasing complexity of client needs.
- SCE's cost per participant (£595 - £1,190), as part of experiential assessment, is significantly lower than alternative interventions such as homelessness or criminal justice services.
- SCE's Civil Amenities Division provides valuable training, volunteering and employment opportunities for local people through the delivery of a wide range of public realms, landscaping, small scale construction and roads works. This approach allows SCE's core grant to transcend its intended Learning and Employability remit by delivering cost effective services for multiple council divisions.

**Social Return on Investment (SROI):** For every £1 invested in SCE, measurable community savings are generated through reduced healthcare costs, fewer justice interventions, and increased economic productivity. This SROI demonstrates the value of preventative, community-based services.

**Building Resilience and Reducing Inequality** SCE's initiatives, especially where these are delivered in the most deprived communities, foster community bonds and social capital while reducing dependency on health social care services. By empowering individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, SCE contributes to long-term public sector savings and a more equitable society.

This approach, in the organisational contribution, to reducing inequality and poverty is supported by quantitative and qualitative data, as part of our robust evaluation and measurement framework. From data collected over the past 2 years and set against original SLA targets and funding, this experiential evaluation indicates -

- Continued stretching of targets to cope with increased demand against a reduction in available resources; In 2017 the average spend available per client supported was £993. Currently it is £595 per head. So while the information is telling us that it is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to access employment, SCE's KPIs in relation to this have increased, while financial resources available to deliver these outcomes have decreased by almost 50%.
- An increase of + 33% of clients supported from targeted groups or communities. KPI 22%. Actual 55%.
- Referrals come from 30 different organisations. 24% of these are from the recovery community or justice system.
- 55% of individuals reside in 8 of the identified key priority areas in Stirling that face the biggest socio-economic challenges.
- There is waiting list of +30 individuals to engage in either the NHS KeepWell support of Trossachs Health and Wellbeing support.

Furthermore, all of the above is supported by conclusions drawn in Stirling's Employability Delivery Plan that state *"there are long standing inequalities in Stirling, with persistent pockets of deprivation and relative poverty."*

This data suggests that **50%** of Raploch's population reside in the top **5%** deprived areas within Scotland and a further 4 datazones within Stirling are among the most **5-10%** deprived. There are multiple other areas within Stirling that are categorised within the **10-15%** and **15-20%** most deprived areas. All these datazones are included in Stirling's 8 key priority areas for localised support and are consistent with the geographic areas where SCE have seen a significant rise in individuals accessing services.

## ▪ **Alignment with Strategic Priorities**

**Scotland's National Performance Framework** SCE's activities contribute directly to the framework's key outcomes, including:

- **Reducing Poverty:** SCE provides pathways to employment and financial independence, breaking cycles of deprivation.
- **Improving Wellbeing:** Trauma-informed services enhance mental health and reduce reliance on crisis interventions.
- **Sustainable Communities:** By equipping individuals with skills for emerging job sectors, SCE builds economic resilience.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** Innovative peer led partnership with Police Scotland and Local Business Improvement District to address anti-social behaviour and feed directly into Scottish Governments national ASB steering group.

**Stirling Council's Strategic Objectives:** SCE aligns with the council's goals of fostering fairness, inclusive growth, and thriving communities. Its employability programmes directly support the Stirling Local Employability Partnership and the city's economic development strategy.

**The Promise Scotland:** SCE's focus on early intervention aligns with Scotland's commitment to improving outcomes for young people, particularly those aged 14-24, who are at heightened risk of social exclusion.

## ▪ **Implications of Funding Cuts**

### **Service Users**

- **Loss of Critical Support:** A 100% funding cut would eliminate all SCE programmes, leaving vulnerable individuals without pathways to stability.
- **Increased Vulnerabilities:** Without intervention, challenges such as mental health issues, addiction, and unemployment are likely to escalate.
- **Deepened Inequalities:** The cessation of services risks exacerbating socio-economic divides, particularly in Stirling's most deprived areas.
- **Loss of External Funding:** Additional discretionary funding used increase innovative solutions to Stirling's most complex issues would require to be returned to funders.

## Community Resilience

- **Dismantled Support Networks:** Established networks of mentorship, peer support, and community engagement would collapse, weakening social cohesion.
- **Increased Social Harm:** The absence of interventions such as the Employability Pipeline would likely lead to higher crime rates and social unrest.
- **Lost Sustainability Efforts:** Programmes like GROW Stirling and the Wood Upcycling initiative, which combine environmental and social objectives, would cease.

## SCE Staff and Partners

- **Job Losses:** The entire SCE staff would face redundancy, leading to local unemployment and the loss of skilled professionals.
- **Erosion of Expertise:** Significant experience in delivering innovative, community-based solutions would be lost.
- **Disrupted Collaborations:** Partnerships with schools, employers, and other organisations would be severely affected, reducing collective impact. Inevitably, this would erode the multi-agency approach, which has been instrumental in tackling social and economic challenges in Stirling. The absence of SCE's facilitation role would lead to fragmented service delivery, reduced efficiency, and increased hardship for the most vulnerable individuals and communities.
- **Increased Pressure on local charities and community groups:** A number of vital local charities rent office space within SCE's community hub at affordable costs. These charities would face increased costs should SCE cease to exist. There are a number of mental health and recovery organisations that use SCE space free of charge for their local community groups that would require to find resources to relocate.
- **SME's:** SCE leases premises to STEP at affordable rates to allow 12 small local businesses access to affordable office space. These independent businesses would be faced with increased costs should SCE cease to exist.

## Broader Economic Costs

- The proposed funding cuts to Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE) would have significant long-term economic repercussions, far outweighing any short-term savings. By eliminating a service that actively supports individuals in gaining employment, improving mental health, and fostering social inclusion, the financial burden on public services would increase substantially.
- **Increased Demand on Public Services:** Removing SCE's support structures would leave vulnerable individuals without the skills, training, and assistance needed to achieve stability. This would result in higher reliance on social security, healthcare services, and crisis interventions, ultimately negating any

intended budgetary savings. The knock-on effect would include greater pressure on job centres, housing assistance programs, and mental health services, leading to escalating costs for local and national government bodies.

- **Impact on Employment and Economic Productivity:** SCE plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between unemployment and sustainable careers by equipping individuals with skills aligned with local workforce needs. Without this intervention, many individuals may remain unemployed or underemployed, reducing overall economic productivity and increasing dependency on welfare support. Businesses in the region may also struggle to find trained workers, negatively impacting economic growth and job market stability.
- **Increased Criminal Justice Costs:** The absence of targeted interventions — such as employability programs, mentoring, and structured community engagement — increases the risk of individuals falling into cycles of reoffending, homelessness, or substance use. The resulting strain on police, courts, and correctional facilities would lead to rising public expenditures in these sectors, further eroding any perceived financial savings from cutting SCE's funding.
- **Loss of a Unique Regional Asset:** The absence of similar facilities in Central Scotland underscores the irreplaceable role of SCE in the Stirling area. Unlike generic employment support services, SCE provides trauma-informed, person-centred, and community-driven interventions that address deep-rooted social and economic barriers. The loss of this resource would create a gap in provision, leaving many individuals and families without a viable support system.

### **Narrative Misinformation**

- The Council's Equality and Socio-economic Impact Assessment document for the withdrawal of the funding identifies a "false narrative" in equating cuts to third-sector investment with genuine savings. This highlights the need for more nuanced communication to policymakers and the public.

Further, there appears to be a perception of a lack of authenticity in the tone of this publicly available document, which provides limited detail regarding potential mitigations. This perception could undermine trust and confidence among stakeholders, leaving individuals and communities feeling unsupported and uncertain about the steps being taken to address key challenges. Such a disconnect may discourage engagement, hinder collaboration, and exacerbate feelings of vulnerability among those most affected by the proposed changes.

There has been additional information requested by the Council, especially for the staff implications, suggesting this component was not comprehensively considered earlier in the planning process. Having such would have enabled this important component to be proactively addressed.

There has been an impartial approach to engaging the wider public in the impact of budget cuts to the third sector, with a lack of transparency towards cause and effect of any potential cuts.

Furthermore, an ongoing project is actively gathering evidence to update the Council's Equality Outcomes, an initiative that directly contradicts the severe consequences of these proposed funding cuts. While the Council aims to promote equality and inclusivity, withdrawing financial support from Stirling Community Enterprise would exacerbate inequalities, limit opportunities for vulnerable groups, and undermine the very objectives the Equality Outcomes seek to achieve.

Compounding this issue is the lack of coordination between these two critical activities. On one hand, the Council is working to establish policies that advance fairness and inclusion, while on the other, it is simultaneously considering cuts that would dismantle essential services designed to achieve these goals. This misalignment not only weakens the credibility of the Council's commitment to equality but also risks creating policy contradictions that will have long-term negative impacts on the communities that need support the most.

▪ **Voice of the People with Lived Experience**

Central to SCE's service delivery is prioritising the voices of the people it serves, creating a moral responsibility to sustain and nurture this approach. During ongoing data collection efforts, many individuals who have previously engaged with SCE have expressed a strong desire to share their stories. Specifically, these narratives highlight the transformative impact of tailored, person-centred interventions in addressing complex barriers faced by individuals across diverse circumstances. Therefore, SCE's services provide a lifeline to those struggling with unemployment, mental health challenges, and social exclusion. For example –

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Supporting Quotes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>1. Transforming Lives Through Employment</b>	SCE provides <b>structured employability support</b> for individuals facing long-term unemployment, low confidence, and lack of experience. Through <b>1-1 guidance, CV building, and interview preparation</b> , individuals move into work.	<i>"I am grateful to my work coach for referring me to SCE and for the support I received. Although I am working part-time, I would still like to attend SCE as they will continue to help me." "Thanks for all your help, it was really appreciated. Without the support from you, I wouldn't have been able to complete the training course and might</i>	<b>Without SCE, individuals will remain trapped in unemployment</b> , worsening financial hardship and increasing reliance on benefits and crisis services.

		<i>not have got the job."</i>	
<b>2. Breaking the Cycle of Offending and Reoffending</b>	SCE provides <b>justice system interventions</b> that divert individuals away from crime and support long-term rehabilitation. Through employability training, mentoring, and social support, SCE reduces reoffending rates.	<i>"Without the support and encouragement of SCE, I would not even have considered the army was a possibility for me." "Every time I came out of prison, I always ended up back at SCE. The help was always offered, not that I always took it, but the opportunity was there."</i>	<b>Defunding SCE will drive up crime rates</b> , increasing the burden on <b>police, courts, and prisons</b> , costing the public more in the long term.
<b>3. Mental Health and Wellbeing Support</b>	Many individuals face <b>debilitating anxiety, depression, and trauma</b> , preventing them from moving forward. SCE provides <b>resilience-focused programmes</b> that rebuild confidence and mental stability.	<i>"With the help of SCE, they have managed to get me out of the house when simply setting foot out of the door caused my anxiety to rise." "The support I have received from SCE has been great. My confidence and other skills have been boosted. If this support had to stop now, I know I would be impacted."</i>	<b>Without this support, mental health crises will increase</b> , leading to <b>greater pressure on NHS services, hospital admissions, and suicide prevention teams</b> .
<b>4. Supporting Young People to Avoid Negative Pathways</b>	Disengaged young people at risk of <b>anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, or school dropout</b> receive early intervention from SCE. Structured programmes provide practical skills and stability.	<i>"YP has increased in confidence and sense of self and reduced his involvement in anti-social behaviour." "YP was successful in obtaining a 4-year apprenticeship with Saltire Conservation." "I want to get to a position where I can be a peer mentor and help young</i>	<b>Without these interventions, youth crime, school disengagement, and unemployment will rise</b> , leading to <b>greater societal instability and economic loss</b> .



		<i>people who were like me, have the same upbringing and lifestyle and help them see where I went wrong."</i>	
<b>5. Rehabilitation and Second Chances</b>	SCE provides a <b>safe space for those with past convictions</b> , helping them rebuild confidence, gain employment, and reintegrate into society.	<i>"I had been struggling with this information [from other agencies] and could not get a straight answer from several other people. Within a few moments, I felt a renewed hopefulness when I was told I no longer needed to disclose my past conviction." "I couldn't be here without you; your support truly means a lot. Thank you."</i>	<b>Without SCE, individuals with convictions will struggle to reintegrate, leading to greater social isolation, poverty, and increased likelihood of reoffending.</b>
<b>6. Housing, Stability, and Independent Living Skills</b>	Many individuals supported by SCE have <b>unstable housing situations</b> . SCE helps them <b>navigate social housing, gain life skills, and secure employment to maintain independence</b> .	<i>"C looks forward to going to the workshop, it motivates him and gives him a sense of purpose in going." "The work I did, alongside my partner, meant that our child's name was removed from the child protection register."</i>	<b>Defunding SCE will increase homelessness and housing instability, placing greater strain on emergency housing and homelessness prevention services.</b>
<b>7. Holistic Support for Families in Crisis</b>	SCE supports individuals dealing with <b>complex family breakdowns, child protection cases, and social work interventions</b> , ensuring families stay together where possible.	<i>"The resilience officer was able to advocate on my behalf. My relationship with social work improved, and I now feel much more confident in engaging with other people." "Now the family has various</i>	<b>Without SCE, more families will be torn apart, increasing the number of children entering the care system, which is extremely costly and damaging.</b>

		<i>professionals involved, ensuring that they are supported, not just through the court process, but also into life afterwards too."</i>	
<b>8. Skills Development and Long-Term Career Progression</b>	Many individuals arrive at SCE <b>without formal qualifications</b> or employability skills. SCE offers <b>practical training, certifications, and pathways into sustainable careers.</b>	<i>"YP was successful in obtaining a 4-year apprenticeship with Saltire Conservation." "I have personally seen individual and professional lives be turned around by the services provided."</i>	<b>Without SCE, individuals will be locked out of job opportunities, increasing dependency on welfare and lowering the local skilled workforce.</b>
<b>9. Community Integration and Social Belonging</b>	Many participants struggle with <b>isolation, past trauma, and lack of positive relationships.</b> SCE offers a <b>safe, non-judgmental environment</b> where individuals can rebuild social connections.	<i>"This place is inspirational. I want to get to a position where I can be a Peer Mentor and help young people who were like me." "SCE has been essential in helping me turn around my life. Since then, I have completed a Masters and started my own business."</i>	<b>If SCE is removed, many individuals will be left isolated, leading to increased mental health issues, substance abuse, and community disengagement.</b>
<b>10. Preventing Economic Decline in Stirling</b>	SCE plays a <b>vital role in economic growth</b> , ensuring individuals <b>gain employment, contribute to the local economy, and reduce reliance on public services.</b>	<i>"SCE has been essential in helping me turn around my life. Since then, I have completed a Masters and started my own business." "SCE successfully manages people into positive destinations—into healthy, happier, and better productive lives."</i>	<b>Defunding SCE will worsen unemployment, increase welfare dependency, and reduce economic productivity, weakening Stirling's long-term financial stability.</b>

Consequently, the above unequivocally highlights that withdrawing SCE's services would mean vulnerable individuals would face worsening inequality, increased reliance on other public services, and a loss of crucial pathways to recovery and employment.

▪ **Stakeholder Endorsements**

Several partners have made contact with the SCE to offer their unwavering support for the organisation. These are summarised as follows –

Theme	Key Findings	Supporting Quotes	Implications
<b>1. Life-Changing Impact on Vulnerable Individuals</b>	SCE is a <b>lifeline</b> for individuals facing multiple disadvantages, including unemployment, poverty, addiction, and mental health struggles. It provides <b>person-centred interventions</b> that break cycles of hardship and support long-term recovery.	<i>"Stirling Community Enterprise empowers people to build themselves back up from situations of crisis and puts them back on a path where they are safe and supported to thrive."</i> – CAPS Stirling <i>"Many of the individuals that I see on a regular basis, in addition to criminal records, face several other barriers that may cause them to reoffend and prevent them from attaining employment."</i> – Criminal Justice Officer, Stirling Social Work	<b>Withdrawing SCE's funding will push vulnerable individuals back into crisis</b> , increasing homelessness, addiction, and reoffending rates. This will place <b>greater pressure on emergency services, welfare, and criminal justice systems</b> , creating long-term social and economic damage.
<b>2. Critical Support for Young People and Education</b>	SCE provides <b>alternative learning opportunities</b> for disengaged young people, giving them skills, structure, and confidence to transition into employment or further education. It prevents youth unemployment and <b>reduces the risk of lifelong dependency on welfare</b> .	<i>"SCE has played a key role in helping learners who are disengaged from formal learning to experience success and work towards positive adult outcomes."</i> – Principal Teacher ASN & Inclusion, Stirling Council <i>"Fit for Work gives these young people regular exercise, a sense of responsibility and commitment... a</i>	<b>Withdrawing funding SCE will leave vulnerable young people without structured support</b> , increasing dropout rates and unemployment. <b>More young people will become disengaged from education and work, heightening the risk of long-term joblessness</b> ,

		<i>really strong opportunity for people to turn their lives around."</i> – Active Stirling 'Fit for Work' Project	<b>criminal behaviour, and social exclusion.</b>
<b>3. Proven Economic and Social Value</b>	SCE provides a <b>significant return on investment</b> by reducing the demand for welfare, healthcare, and justice services. Its work saves public money and contributes to the economy by helping people gain employment and financial independence.	<i>"The economic, health, and social benefits incurred down the line more than tenfold outweigh the cost of running your brilliant, established, and interconnected service."</i> – Equi-Power Central Scotland <i>"SCE offers us great value for money and a very flexible, responsive service... which we cannot access elsewhere easily."</i> – Forth Housing Association Limited	<b>Eliminating SCE's funding is not a cost-saving measure—it is a reckless financial decision.</b> The resulting strain on social services, healthcare, and welfare systems will <b>far exceed any short-term budgetary reductions</b> , ultimately costing taxpayers more.
<b>4. Essential Multi-Agency Partnerships and Service Coordination</b>	SCE acts as a <b>coordinating hub</b> , connecting individuals with services such as employability training, housing support, mental health services, and financial assistance. Its work strengthens <b>collaboration between the NHS, local authorities, employers, and education providers.</b>	<i>"The Stirling SDS team regard Stirling Community Enterprise as a vital key partner in our work to support the community, not just within the Raploch, but Stirling in general."</i> – Skills Development Scotland <i>"CSREC have been fortunate to lease office accommodation at SCE, making this the first time in our history we have secure accommodation—crucial in enabling us to continue our work with ethnic minority communities."</i> – Central Scotland	<b>Defunding SCE will collapse an essential support network, leaving service users isolated and without guidance.</b> Other agencies will struggle to meet demand, leading to <b>fragmented and less effective service provision</b> , harming those in greatest need.

		Regional Equality Council (CSREC)	
<b>5. Preventing a Backslide into Poverty, Crime, and Mental Health Crises</b>	SCE provides <b>early intervention services</b> that prevent individuals from falling into <b>poverty, long-term unemployment, addiction, and criminal activity.</b> By offering structured support and guidance, it helps people achieve stability and self-sufficiency.	<i>"Who is going to bridge the void that will be left when services are withdrawn? People will find themselves back in the situations they have worked so hard to get away from."</i> – Police Inspector <i>"If funding is withdrawn, it will directly, detrimentally affect local residents in most need of help and support."</i> – Solicitor, Stirling	<b>Cutting SCE's funding will undo years of progress,</b> forcing people back into cycles of crime, poverty, and mental health crises. This will <b>drive up policing costs, court cases, and hospital admissions,</b> making Stirling a less safe and stable community.
<b>6. Irreplaceable Community Asset at Risk</b>	There is no equivalent service to SCE in Central Scotland. It is a <b>unique and essential resource</b> that directly supports employability, rehabilitation, and social inclusion in ways that other organisations cannot replicate.	<i>"It would be an act of social and economic vandalism were Stirling Council to remove SCE's core grant."</i> – Managing Director, 3fiftysixmedia Ltd <i>"I can't say enough good about SCE and the work they do... I think this is something we should continue to develop rather than step away from."</i> – Police Inspector	<b>Closing SCE would be an irreversible mistake,</b> eliminating a proven, trusted, and highly effective service. Once lost, <b>the community will be left without a critical safety net, forcing more people into crisis with no alternative support in place.</b>

These messages of SCE's partners clearly demonstrate a unified voice that withdrawing funding from SCE is not just short-sighted — it is reckless and self-defeating. The impact will be devastating for individuals, destructive for communities, and financially disastrous for public services. Therefore, investing in SCE is not an option; it is an absolute necessity to prevent widespread harm and to protect the future stability of the Stirling area.

## ▪ Considerations and Conclusion

Based on all of the above, SCE offer the following considerations –

- To review and reshape the SLA to reflect the breadth and scope of the SCE's work, to include all corporate areas of Stirling Council service delivery.
- Realign the SLA with the original Stirling Single Outcome Agreement 2013 - 2023. Where the agreement itself may be outdated, both the council priorities and single outcomes agreement priorities identified at the time are relevant to today's challenging socio-economic climate and more reflective of the work delivered by SCE than the current KPIs.
- To realign KPIs to support the above, reflective to Stirling Council's key priorities (see Appendix 1)
- Co-develop a separate SLA around preferred contractor status procurement / community benefit / spot purchase of Civil Amenities division for jobs to the value of £10 -£50k or to adhere to procurement regulations.
- Include job creation / supported business opportunities in the above.
- Ring fence financial support for SCE for a period of 3 years to allow for journey towards sustainability.

Stirling Community Enterprise is not merely an employability service; it is a vital pillar of Stirling's social and economic infrastructure. The proposed funding cuts jeopardise the significant progress made in reducing inequality, fostering resilience, and creating opportunities for those furthest from the job market. Investing in SCE is a prudent, cost-effective choice that aligns with Stirling Council's strategic priorities and Scotland's national goals. By securing SCE's future, the organisation can continue in its mission to significantly contribute to building a fairer, more inclusive Stirling where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Given the compelling evidence presented in this paper, Stirling Council is urged to **reconsider and reverse** its decision to withdraw funding for SCE. The Scottish Government and relevant stakeholders are called upon to take decisive action to **protect, sustain, and strengthen** this essential service, ensuring its continuing positive impacts for the most vulnerable in the community.

## Appendices

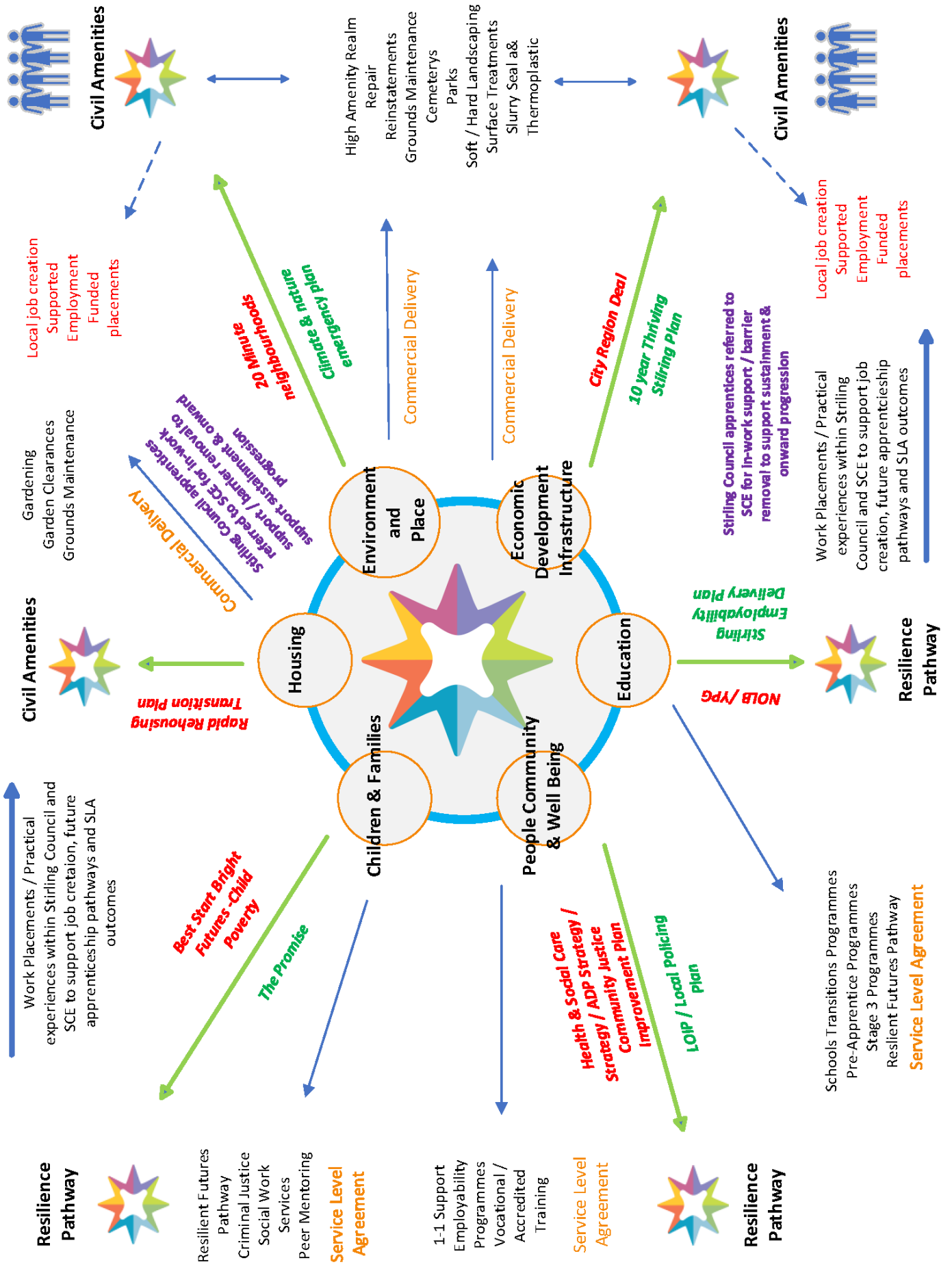
### Appendix 1: SCE's Resilience Pathway

### Appendix 2: Data Visualisation on the Impact of the Funding Cuts

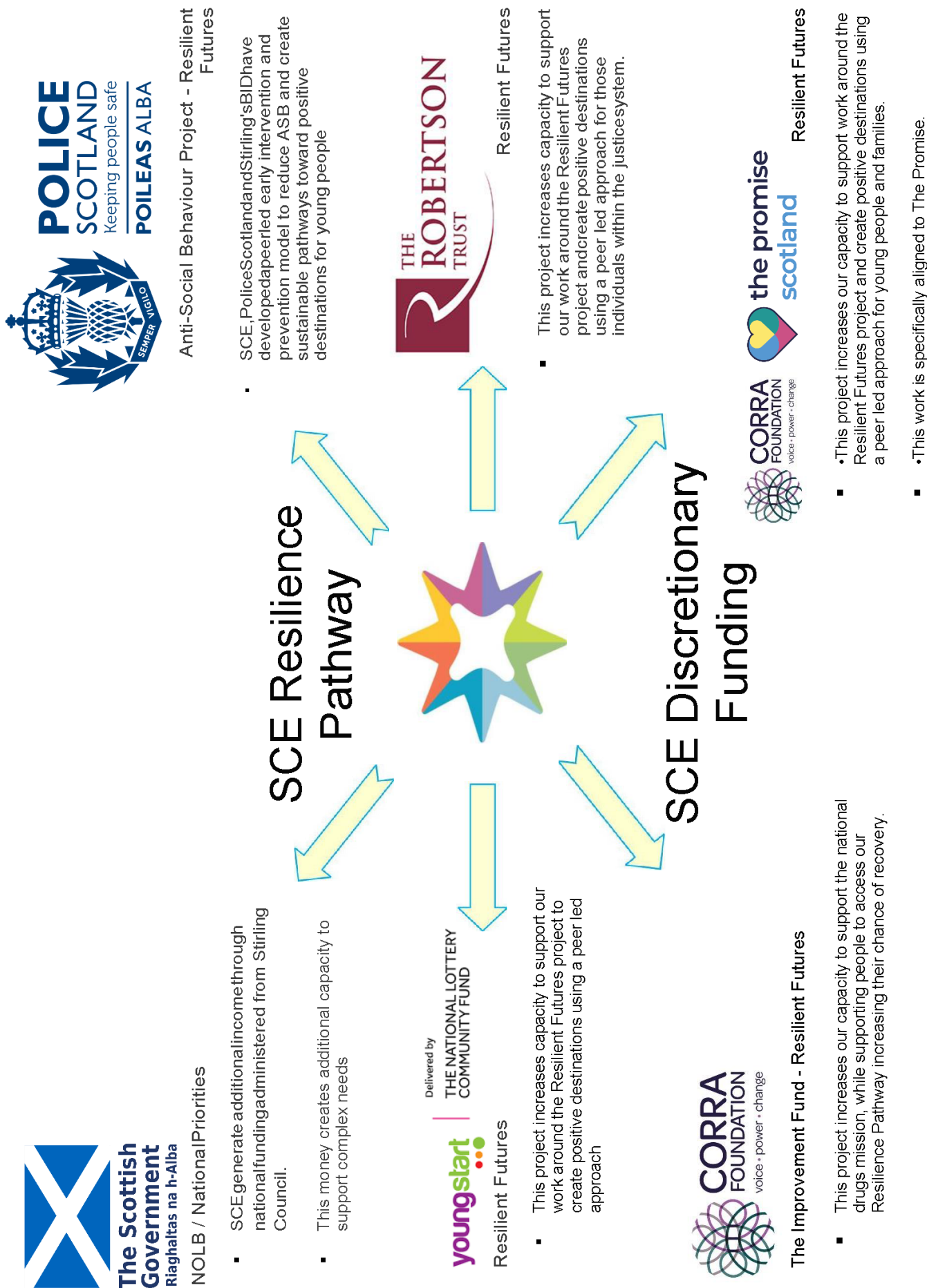
### Appendix 3: Case Studies and Testimonials (Personal Stories)

### Appendix 4: Stakeholder Endorsements

# Appendix 1: SCE's Resilience Pathway



## Appendix 2: Data Visualisation on the Impact of the Funding Cuts





# Impact of Budget Cuts

This outlines the negative outcomes for individuals, families and communities

## Mental Health

**Reduced** availability of support leading to increase mental health issues and decreased coping mechanisms.

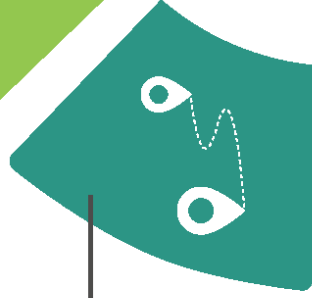


## Poverty and Inequality

**Decrease** in opportunities to training, education and employment

## Positive Destinations

**Decrease** in the number of people reaching positive destinations

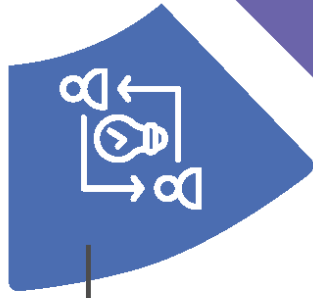


## Relationships

**Increase** in family breakdown, and disengagement with support services

## NEET

**Increase** number of young people at risk of 'not engaging in employment and education'.

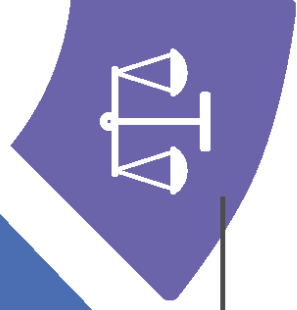


## Substance use

**Reduced** coping mechanisms and increase vulnerability leads to alcohol and drugs use

## Offending Behaviour

**Increase** in offending behaviour, connection with justice system and harm associated



## Anti Social Behaviour

**Decrease** in daily support structures, routine, opportunities and mentoring

# Individuals and Families

# Impact of Budget Cuts

This outlines the consequences for investment and demand on other services across Stirling.



## Appendix 3: Case Studies and Testimonials (Personal Stories)

### Case Study 1:

*The support I have received from SCE has been great as my confidence and other skills have been boosted. The support and chats have been great. If this support had to stop now, I know I would be impacted. The team have helped a lot and I would be lost without this support and advice.*

### Case Study 2:

*I started engaging here at 14/15years old, school wasn't for me, and I came here to do practical stuff - grass cutting, mono-blocking, scaffolding, eventually I got my CSCS card which lead me into employment. I went into various apprenticeships and then industrial cleaning.*

*Things fell apart with my family and my dad died. I went in and out of prison. Every time I came out, I always ended up back at SCE, the help was always offered, not that I always took it but the opportunity was there for me and I had relationships with staff. I'm now taking the opportunity, attending various group sessions, 1-1 sessions and looking to the future. I hope to gain employment and stay out of prison.*

*This place is inspirational. I want to get to a position where I can be a Peer Mentor and help young people who were like me, have the same upbringing and lifestyle and help them see where I went wrong.*

### Case Study 3:

*SCE has done tremendous work in the time that i've been with working with them. with the help of SCE, they have managed to get me out of the house when simply setting foot out of the door caused my anxiety to rise. since working with ellie at SCE, i have been able to leave my comfort zone and attend to appointments in person, travel as well as attend a major event called stirling pride! within less than a year, the resources and help of SCE has done so much for me that i will forever be grateful for and am thankful to the team!*

#### *Case Study 4:*

Professionally and personally, Stirling Community Enterprise has been of great service to me and I think it is an essential resource for the Stirling community. Having reached a positive destination through the combined efforts of the Community Enterprise team, I now work as an English Language tutor helping people from across the world. I have seen both clients and mentors come together to reach a wide range of different positive destinations, all through the work of the team. It is astoundingly clear that Stirling Community Enterprise is an essential asset to the Stirling community and that, as such, should be maintained and supported.

There is a very easy way to understand the effectiveness of the efforts of the Community Enterprise team, including the various diverse skills brought together by different members of the team. On entering the team workspace, there is a large white board on the wall which depicts all the efforts of the organisation. The output section of the whiteboard is always inspiring. In terms of concrete numbers, it clearly demonstrated how effective and how influential Community Enterprise is for local attendees.

I've had the privilege to see myself, the work of various parts of the service at Stirling Community Enterprise. As part of their justice efforts, and as part of their health and fitness focus, I managed to tackle a challenging illness and indeed to turn around my life. Since then, I have been put forward for various jobs, completed a Masters, and started my own business. SCE has been essential in helping me to do so. Their team have been patient and supportive, but above all it is the organisation's ability to bring together comprehensive and diverse knowledges that has helped me. Community Enterprise has proven that despite what problems may arise, they are adept at adapting towards solutions.

Currently, politically, and economically, what Stirling needs is the efforts of Stirling Community Enterprise. It's clear that there are major changes happening globally and locally, and the funding needs to be there, exactly where it counts. SCE is where this is. If the services provided here were to be rendered obsolete, then there would be a significant loss to Central Scotland communities. The organisation clearly demonstrates the ability to successfully manage people into positive destinations- into healthy, happier, and better productive lives. I have personally seen individual and professional lives be turned around by the services provided. For these above reasons, it is astoundingly clear that the efforts of Stirling Community Enterprise must be maintained and progressed.

## Case Study 5:

My name is Vincent McNeice, and I'm writing to express my support for Stirling Community Enterprise and the work that they do, as well as to provide my own testimony on how their work has directly helped me. In short, I sincerely believe that without the support and resources of Stirling Community Enterprise, I would be miserable and destitute at best, and more likely homeless or worse. While that may seem a dramatic statement, I hold it to be true.

For context, I moved to Stirling in 2019 to attend the University of Stirling, and have remained a resident since then. Since graduating in 2023, I've faced a series of incredibly difficult events in my life; being dropped from a jobs program, struggling to find employment, bereavement and estrangement, increasing debt and my previous flat flooding to the point it became uninhabitable. All of these would be difficult enough for anyone to go through, let alone someone with lifelong mental disabilities who struggles to navigate complicated administrative tasks and a seemingly hostile system like myself.

However, due to the work of Stirling Community Enterprise- their resilience training, their contacts with other charities and organisations, and their ability to support me during crisis- I am in a secure, stable situation where I can recover and continue to work towards full time employment, while knowing I have a support network I can fall back on if need be. And I know that the same is true for dozens, if not hundreds, of vulnerable people in the broader Stirlingshire population. By cutting funding, their ability to provide that support- to people like early school leavers, people with prior convictions, chronically ill and disabled youth, the elderly and those undergoing severe life disruption- you would be disrupting many lives, and possibly endangering others.

Not only that, but SCE's work with other local organisations and charities would mean that cutting funding to the Community Enterprise would also severely hamstring those organisations as well- organisations that provide employability training and support, like Inspiride and local police programs to support vulnerable youth. These services provide vital support and networking to young people, and also greatly increases the overall productivity of the city- productivity that can provide more jobs, educated voters and a healthier overall populace.

It would also make accessing certain parts of the Council itself, such as benefits, crisis help, social care and housing significantly more difficult for the people who need it the most. I worry that, as a result, this could lead to further cuts to those services in the future.

So I strongly urge you to reconsider cutting funding to the SCE; it provides a vital service to local residents, and directly supports not only you but other important charitable organisations in and outside of Stirling. Loss of that funding would be a huge blow to the health of our community, and could lead to vulnerable people being unable to access the support they need to pull themselves out of some seriously dire situations.

### *Case Study 6:*

20-year-old male, residing in the Causewayhead area of Stirling, referred to SCE by his DWP Work Coach. He required assistance in applying for job vacancies and needed guidance with interview skills. Upon completion of Outcome Star assessment, the individual identified that he lacked confidence, lacked any interview experience and had very little work experience. The individual had left school with no qualifications, after disengaging due to anxiety.

The individual was allocated to one of SCE's Resilience Officers and participated in 1-1 sessions to increase his confidence, reduce his barriers and support him to identify his employment goals. He attended various appointments, and as his confidence increased, he was able to identify various strengths he had and collated information for his CV.

He received support in relation to job searching, completing applications and took part in a range of interview technique sessions and mock interviews. He also attended the weekly job club sessions at SCE, outwith his 1-1 sessions.

The individual gained part time permanent employment with Kildean Market as a yard man, working 15 hours a week.

By gaining part time employment the individual will be able to build his skills, work experience and confidence and will be able to apply with more confidence to future job positions in the construction field that he is interested in.

The individual said 'I am grateful to my work coach for referring me to SCE and for the support I received. Although I am working part time I would still like to attend SCE as they will continue to help me with searching for other job vacancies and apprenticeships'.

### *Case Study 7:*

18-year-old male, referred to SCE via Youth Justice, who stated that he was looking for assistance in gaining employment. Youth Justice worker stated that the individual suffered from extreme anxiety, didn't like meeting new people and would require a lot of support to attend appointments.

On attendance at SCE, he was quickly put at ease with the Community Justice Officer, who was quick to build rapport with him. The individual stated he had suspected ADHD and was awaiting formal diagnosis of this. He also stated he had criminal convictions and wasn't sure how this would impact his opportunities for employment. At this point he did state he was looking into construction opportunities, which he wasn't really interested in but thought would be his only path. He stated his real dream was to join the army, which he didn't think would be a possibility.

Throughout his 1-1 sessions, the individual was referred to 'Fit for Work' to increase his fitness, he completed a CV, was supported to contact the army to discuss opportunities available to him and he was supported with job searching and applications.

The discussions with the army were very positive and the individual was encouraged to apply. He completed his application and is currently waiting for GP assessments in relation to his ADHD.

The individual gained full time job through DRS employment agency, working at GIST warehouse, Cumbernauld and has stated that he will remain there until he is able to join the army.

Without the support and encouragement of SCE the individual stated he would not even have considered the army was a possibility for him. He thought the only possible career path would be construction, which he really wasn't interested in. The individual stated "I can't wait to join the army, it will give me loads of different opportunities."

### Case Study 8:

Male, 58years old living in the Stirling Council area. Has been unemployed for almost 10years, referred to SCE for disclosure support and 1-1 employability after wishing to return to employment. Male was a registered sex offender and felt this was what was making it difficult for him to return to work. He felt a real lack of motivation and had a "what's the point?" attitude to job searching due to past experiences of being rejected due to his disclosure.

He had been engaging with various supports over the years to move toward employment but had not had no success. The main issue he was finding was when he disclosed his conviction. Upon referral, we gained his conviction information so we could provide accurate disclosure advice. Upon finding out the information, it transpired that his conviction was "spent" and had been for some time, so he had been unnecessarily disclosing. This was due to incorrect advice provided by a different service. Male was very relieved to hear he no longer needed to disclose this information and felt much more positive about returning to the workforce and applying for opportunities. With his biggest barrier out of the way we completed some employability work such as: Creating a new and up to date CV, registering for different job sites and setting up a profile on LinkedIn. The participant has gained confidence and motivation within themselves with the newfound knowledge of not needing to disclose.

Quote from client:

"When I was first put in contact with SCE, I have to be honest that I was not entirely hopeful, since previous agencies had been somewhat lacking. However, within a few moments of meeting her for the first time I felt a renewed hopefulness when she informed me that I did not need to disclose my prior conviction and it would not show on a basic disclosure check. I had been struggling with this information and could not get a straight answer from several other people. With this information in mind we updated my CV which I am very happy with. I have, in just a couple of meetings, regained much of my confidence regarding applying for jobs and even just looking for them. Overall I would have to say she did a brilliant job with the advice, such as signing up for LinkedIn to improve my job networking access, and generally helping me dig out of the low I was in about getting a job with my past conviction"



### *Case Study 9:*

Female, 22, living in the Stirling area. Barriers included anxiety, depression and drug addiction. Referred for 1-1 support from SCE Peer Mentor to address her barriers and work towards employment. Various 1-1 sessions took place on a weekly basis including being involved in the Resilient Futures Programme. She felt the one to one support had been beneficial, being able to talk about her life, helping her to get things off her chest. This relieved her stress and allowed her to gain a new perspective on things. Her anxiety reduced and her confidence increased. She is now being more physically active - going out for walks regularly. She has also drastically reduced her cannabis consumption. She has now started to volunteer regularly to prepare her for returning to full time work.

### Case Study 10:

C is a man in his sixties who, after a conviction in the 1990's experienced a breakdown and spent a two decades in hospital. He is now living in supported accommodation and has been attending the Friday morning wood upcycling session since October 2022.

C first engaged with SCE accompanied by a mental health support worker, but it took several visits before he was able to overcome his anxiety and be able to travel to SCE premises by himself. Other than staff holiday and on one occasion heavy snowfall, he has not missed a single week's attendance at the sessions and has gained visibly in confidence. From the anxious individual who found it difficult to speak to staff he now walks confidently into the centre and chats to whoever he sees. During his time here he has chatted a bit about his past, his time in America and in Europe when a lot younger and working as a joiner. Although medication can sometimes limit what he can do, he often comments on how much he enjoys coming to the centre:

"I really enjoy this...all sorts of things are coming back to me" "It feels good to be back using tools, I haven't done it for so long"

C has been involved in making some items of outdoor furniture for use at his accommodation and has gained a great deal of satisfaction from contributing to the service which looks after him. Although there is no expectation that he will seek employment he has expressed a wish to start gathering tools in the expectation he will be able to move to his own accommodation.

Staff at his accommodation have said:

"He really looks forward to going there every week, he's disappointed if for some reason he can't make it".

### Summary from Manager at supported accommodation

C looks forward to going to the workshop, it motivates him and gives him a sense of purpose in going. He always returns to chat to staff how much he enjoys it and would like to attend more than one day. Staff observe his confidence has grown and his anxiety of going for buses to get there has reduced. He proudly shows staff and visitors his work, planters. Staff and external professionals all agree how well he is doing.

### Case Study 11:

Male, 40years old with a cycle of court appearances and prison sentences that had become "a revolving door". He receives a prison sentence, gets released with no fixed abode, has no family to support him and within a matter of 2days maximum he has been arrested for committing an offence of dishonesty, usually to obtain either alcohol or food. There is usually then associated disorderly behaviour when he is arrested.

He appeared at Stirling Sheriff Court and pled guilty to a charge of theft and a contravention of s38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. He was sentenced to 2 months imprisonment. He had asked to receive a further prison sentence rather than be remanded since when he is remanded, he has no-one to put money into his personal possessions for him in prison and has less facilities from the prison than someone who is serving a sentence (his opinion).

His lawyer spoke to him about the fact something needs to be done to break the cycle he is in. Upon discussion about SCE, and the support that could be offered he asked that his lawyer make a referral for him in the hope that support and structure could be provided for him upon his release.

A visit took place in prison, at this point he had made up his mind that upon his return to the community he would re-offend to return to prison. A lengthy discussion took place about his history, family dynamics, substance misuse, previous employment and the support that could be offered should he change his mind. By the end of the meeting, he had new hope and decided that he should attempt to engage and asked that an appointment be made, and that staff contact both housing and CADS. Upon release, he did engage however found himself back in custody after 4days. His lawyer explained that he had engaged with SCE, and he had been attending appointments but had struggled over the bank holiday period. The Sheriff agreed to release him on bail with a review in 2weeks on the condition he engaged with SCE on a daily basis. He was able to do this, even over the weekend and further bank holiday weekend and was able to be in the community for his longest period of time.

## Case Study 12:

17-year-old youth, referred to SCE by a Community Police Officer. Although no criminal convictions, he has frequent contact with the police. YP has an abundance of energy and likes to climb onto rooftops and relishes being chased. The Community Police Officer felt that finding activities to divert this energy would be a positive step. Ongoing trauma resulting from behaviour from family members and an unsettled home life. Disengaged from school. He is also dealing with depression and anxiety issues and attends sessions with CAHMS regarding this. Ongoing trauma resulting from behaviour from family members and an unsettled home life. Disengaged from school. He is also dealing with depression and anxiety issues and attends sessions with CAHMS regarding this.

He engaged regularly in one to one support from peer mentors for barrier removal and support and attended weekly wood upcycling programme.

YP is a very personable and gregarious individual and is very open about his difficulties. He gets on well with other members of the group and engages with more reticent participants. He has shown great willingness and interest in the upcycling sessions and is currently engaged in a project to make a gift for his grandad.

The YP has engaged fully and seems to enjoy not only the practical side but also the sociable element of the sessions. He has increased in confidence and sense of self and reduced his involvement in anti-social behaviour. With increased confidence, he is now attending fitness classes at the local Forth Valley College campus and has applied to join the police. It is hoped that the relaxed, non-judgemental aim of the upcycling sessions will allow him a space to be creative and sociable and have a steady influence on his wilder impulses.

The YP has recently completed a 12 week work experience placement with the Thistle Shopping Centre where most of his ASB behaviours took place. This restorative element had a powerful impact on the YP who continues to volunteer there.

### *Case Study 13:*

YP, 17years old living in Stirling. YP referred to gain employment but also wanted to develop confidence, improve mental health and gain skills/qualifications. The young person had poor mental health, ADHD and had disengaged from school, left with no qualifications. He also had family relationship breakdown.

Initially referred for the school transition programme, the yp required ongoing support. He struggled to consistently show up, had issues with family relationships, negative peer influences and erratic sleep pattern. With persistence, his engagement improved, and he has been engaging in weekly 1-1 support focusing on outcomes identified in his initial outcome star assessment.

As his confidence increased, he started engaging in the Active Stirling Fit For Work project, attending the gym regularly with peer mentor support and in his own time. He was then able to actively engage in the Construction Skills Academy and ultimately was able to start in full time employment in the construction industry..

YP has attained SQA Health & Safety qualification, SQA First Aid, SQA Manual Handling.

Gained employability skills.

Gained practical skills.

His confidence has increased massively.

His communication skills have improved.

Family relationships increased.

Cannabis use decreased.

Involvement in anti-social behaviour decreased.

### *Case Study 14:*

16-year-old male, referred initially through school and had later returned for 1-1 support. Individual was disengaging from school, engaging in ASB within the town centre which brought him to the attention of Police Scotland and was later charged with wilful fire-raising (a significantly high profile case in Stirling).

Individual was a particularly vulnerable young person with learning/processing issues. He was also Care experienced.

Individual received 1-1 support from both Community Resilience Officer and Training officer.

He came to us for support when he had been breakdown in family relationships which resulted in him needing to access homeless accommodation. He was supported with the meetings with Housing Officers and moving into his allocated accommodation. In addition to 1-1 support, the individual also attended a Woodwork upcycling workshop where he learned to develop his practical skills, he created his own shelf. He also participated in the Employability Award and he gained an SQA in Employability skills.

Individual has built strong, safe relationships with staff within SCE and he feels safe to reach out for support when a crisis arises, or with other concerns. He now lives in safe accommodation and has access to support to build his resilience and skills for employment and independence.

His engagement with SCE was taken into account where he received diversion from prosecution for his wilful fire raising case, which was initially a High Court matter. The individual stated he was very grateful for the support he received and that staff helped him through a very tough time in his life.

### *Case Study 15:*

19-year-old male, Stirling, referred by his mother, seeking access to support through court process for ASB related behaviours and for employability skills development

In addition to going through criminal justice process, the individual has learning difficulties, ADHD, missing chromosome deletion disorder, care experienced and from an employment deprived area.

The individual's mother came to the office feeling quite upset and alone. There had been a lot going on for this family, and they felt as though they had been let down by other services and had been navigating the court system without support

Individual was allocated to one of the Resilience Officers at SCE who is supporting the professionals around to create a cohesive package of support for him. This package will consider advocacy support, social work input, building of employability skills through positive use of free time and developing his independent living skills

The Resilience Officer liaised with social work, mum and Who Cares Scotland, and a package of support was developed. The individual attends 1-1 weekly appointments with his Resilience Officer where they have identified his needs, his views and his goals to create a plan to get him there.

Now the family have various professionals involved, ensuring that they are supported, not just through the court process, but also into life afterwards too.

### *Case Study 16:*

19-year-old male, Raploch, referred by Fiona McKenzie (NHS Keepwell nurse), referred originally for well-being support.

Individual was originally referred for well-being and resilience support, as he was considering asking his GP to refer him for an autism assessment. Through his Outcome Star assessment, the individual identified he had multiple complex barriers in his life, including his daughter being on the child protection register, him being care experienced, childhood trauma he had experienced and was struggling with life skills to do the day to day running of his house.

The individual attended 1-1 appointments with SCE Community Resilience Officer, and over the first few months of engaging, he built up trust and spoke about his situation. Initially, support focused on routine building and resilience, then as the individual explained his situation, the community resilience officer linked in with social work and Home Start.

The resilience officer was asked to attend the individuals core groups and RCCMPs with him to help support with understanding what was being asked of him and to help him meet social work's expectations. This also enabled the individuals voice to be heard at these meetings, as she was able to advocate on his behalf. The individual would share some frustrations he was having with social work, and the worker was then able to communicate this in an appropriate way to social work to ensure a positive way forward for both parties. They also discussed seeking Through Care After Care support due to him being care experienced. Individual also attends his jobcentre appointments at the DWP Youth Hub and this has been useful in liaising with any issues he has had with them.

Individual has more recently been engaging very well and feels comfortable discussing difficult subjects. His relationship with social work improved, and the work he has done around building positive routines and engaging with services (as well as the work put in by his partner) has meant that he and his partner got full-time care of their child in and her name removed from the child protection register. The individuals confidence has increased in this time, and he seems much more confident in engaging with other people and more enthusiastic about opportunities presented to him. Referrals have also made for Mellow Parenting and the wood upcycling workshop.

Individual is much more confident and enthusiastic and expresses himself more openly than when he first engaged. He has built healthy routines revolved around his childcare and housework and has clearly put thought into these. If the individual ever struggled with attending jobcentre appointments, our relationship with his work coach has meant that he has avoided any sanctions.



### *Case Study 17:*

Young male, aged 15, charged with attempt murder following an incident in the local community. He started with Stirling Community Enterprise as part of their 'School Leavers Programme'. This programme, designed for young people leaving school with no identified positive destination, offers learners an opportunity to increase their resilience, experience a range of practical skills and employability training. YP was identified for this course due to issues arising following his police charge. YP attended this course two days per week for a period of 6 weeks and engaged in a variety of both accredited and non-accredited training, confidence and self-esteem building, employability skills and life skills. Throughout this course, YP showed a high level of commitment and was respectful, well-mannered, and enthusiastic throughout.

He progressed onto our 'Stage 3 Construction Course' and attended this for a period of 12 weeks. This course included practical projects to develop key construction skills and classroom-based employability training. Ten weeks of this course included a work placement with Stirling Community Enterprises Contracts Division. Again, YP showed an exceptional work ethic, developing his skills and confidence.

Within Stirling Community Enterprise and out on placement, YP presented a very positive and pro-social attitude, both with staff and other peers. He was a natural leader and well respected amongst his peer group. YP was respectful and well-mannered to staff and a real credit to himself. YP was very keen and enthusiastic with regards to college and employment opportunities, attending workshops out with his course for modern apprenticeships with the council and applying for opportunities as they arose. YP was successful in obtaining a 4 year apprenticeship with Saltire Conservation.

Throughout one-to-one support discussions, YP presented a very responsible attitude about peer relationships and previous behaviours. Staff continually made comment on YP's positive, mature attitude. Throughout the court process, support was provided to YP and reports were provided with recommendation that YP's case was dealt with through Children's reporter rather than court. When his Children's Hearing took place, reports were provided and due to the positive changes made by YP, no further offending and his engagement with services and employment opportunity, YP was not made subject to any compulsory measures.

### *Case Study 18:*

30 year old male, Braehead, self-referred through a Jobcentre provider event, looking for employment support.

Individual has a degree in Digital Media and has had some work experience in this area, but this has been fairly limited, and he has struggled to get a paid job in his chosen field. He is open to working in admin but again has limited experience of this. The sort of jobs he is skilled in rarely come up, especially locally. Individuals' mental health also suffers, and he gets support through the NHS for this.

Alongside his allocated staff member at SCE, he identified local companies within his chosen field and contacted them for work experience. They also focused on his mental health and steps he could take to improve this, including establishing routines and encouraging the individual to get out of the house more.

The individual was successful in securing volunteering with Citizens Advice on a weekly basis. From this opportunity he was able to access training through them, and his digital and social media skills have been of interest to them, giving him a specific purpose in this role. Individuals confidence increased and he began working with a group on a podcast about people in Stirling. This is a long-term project that he is seeing through.

Through the work experience, he has been able to develop his skills and add to his CV. He is gaining more structure and purpose throughout his week. The individual appears confident when speaking about these opportunities as he recognises what skills he brings to the roles.

## **Appendix 4: Stakeholder Endorsements**

1. Active Stirling
2. ASN Principle Support Teacher (Stirling Council)
3. Central Scotland Regional Equalities Council
4. CAPS
5. Justice Services (Stirling Council)
6. The NHS
7. Police Scotland
8. Virgil Crawford Solicitors
9. Skills Development Scotland 1.
10. Skills Development Scotland 2.
11. Historic Environment Scotland
12. Equi Power Central Scotland
13. 3fiftysixmedia.ltd

## **Partnership Working - Active Stirling's 'Fit for Work' project**

Active Stirling have been working in partnership with Stirling Community Enterprise since June 2023 on the Fit to Work project, which forms part of Stirling Council's approach to the Government's 'No one Left behind' project. Fit for Work gives individuals who are currently unemployed the chance to exercise regularly through a 6-month membership with Active Stirling.

The project involves me working with various Keyworkers throughout Stirling Council, of which the Stirling Community Enterprise is one organisation, to actively encourage identified participants in undertaking regular exercise as part of their daily routine. Once an individual is identified, a meeting takes place between the Referral, Keyworker and me, to run through the outline of the 6-month programme. If the Referral agrees to commit, then they work alongside myself in the gym once a week on a 121 basis to improve their fitness and knowledge of fitness. They also get a fitness programme to work with on other visits to assist them with their training.

This approach benefits both the physical and mental wellbeing of the participants involved. The majority of Referrals face situations where, due to unemployment, they suffer from low self-esteem, poor levels of confidence and lack of physical health.

Allied to this, a number of Referrals are classified as 'Young People, under 20 years of age, who have been absent from school since the end of the Pandemic and are perhaps heading down the wrong path in life. Fit for Work gives these Young people regular exercise, a sense of responsibility and commitment. With the gym and fitness classes/swimming pool being a daily alternative to staying in the house or getting into trouble potentially, this partnership is a really strong opportunity for people to turn their lives around significantly in the 6 month period.

In the period June 2023-March 2024, 39 Referrals joined the Fit for Work project from Stirling Community Enterprise. This number represented over a third of the total figure of 102 total Referrals who went through the project during that period. Of this figure, 10 went on to find employment, and a further 5 went into further education or volunteering. (This figure may be higher, as several of the Referrals have moved on in recent months).

With the project being extended in August 2024 to March 2025, a further 14 Referrals have been received directly from Stirling Community Enterprise and are actively engaged in fitness. Given time, a number of these individuals will get back into work or further education within the year.

Overall, the partnership between Stirling Enterprise and Active Stirling has been really beneficial for 53 individuals in the past 18 months, and it would be great for this to continue through 2025 if possible.

Fraser Scott

Active Living For Life Instructor

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Continued Funding of Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE)

Central Scotland Regional Equality Council have been fortunate to lease office accommodation at Stirling Community Enterprise since June 2024 making this the first time in CSREC's history that we have secure accommodation. This has been crucial in the security of our organisation, enabling us to continue our vital work with the ethnic minority communities both in Stirling and across Central Scotland. CSRECs Team has been trained to OISC level 1 to provide advice on Asylum and Protection and the EU Settlement Scheme, and our Equalities & Engagement Officer is working towards his OISC level 1 Immigration advisor qualification. CSREC is the only grassroots organisation currently providing these services for free in Central Scotland.

Outwith our organisation, we can see daily the vital work that Stirling Community Enterprise do with people in Stirling, enabling them to move forward with their lives, despite their struggles, and become assets to the community.

Loss of Stirling Council funding for SCE would not only be detrimental to the longevity of SCE, but also to the organisations it supports and, most importantly, the people it helps to become assets to Stirling's economy by enabling them to rejoin the workforce.

We ask that you consider the wider impact that a reduction in Council funding will have on the local community.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elaine Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Elaine Hill  
Co-Chief Executive Officer

I am writing to you as a local advocacy provider for CAPs Stirling, urging you to reconsider the removal of SLA funding to Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE).

Stirling Community Enterprise provides valuable services to vulnerable people in our community. Their support is wide-reaching, and the loss of their services would have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable in our community. Stirling Community Enterprise empowers people to build themselves back up from situations of crisis and puts them back on a path where they are safe and supported to thrive.

Having grown up in Raploch, I am fully aware of the lifelong impact that issues of poverty, high unemployment rates, child neglect and abuse, domestic violence, and addiction can have on individuals and communities. These traumas can last a lifetime and there are very few organisations that can help with more than one of these issues at a time.

One such organisation that can help individuals and their families is Stirling Community Enterprise. Seen as an employability organisation, SCE is so much more than that.

Service users of SCE can access help with a number of different issues that affect their day-to-day life and include the following

- Mental health issues through dedicated NHS nursing as well as health and wellbeing counsellors
- Literacy and computer skills
- Homelessness, housing and tenancy issues
- Life skills including cooking and budgeting
- All aspects of employability, including disclosure applications, CV's, cover letters and job applications
- 1-1 counselling sessions that concentrate on individual needs of service users

In addition to the above, SCE run transition and Stage 3 courses for young people who are struggling with and failing to attend school. These courses give these young people an understanding on what life is like after school and helps them find their way into employment or further education.

SCE arrange and run various other courses both within the grounds of SCE and externally including wood up cycling course and Land services seasonal work courses in partnership with Stirling District Council, to name but a few.

By removing funding for SCE, there is a great possibility that their services to our community and vulnerable individuals could be reduced or completely withdrawn. This would have a devastating effect on our poorer, more deprived communities and services users within Stirling District area and surrounding areas, many of whom have already been let down by various organisations and systems already.

Helen Heppenstall

As a Criminal Justice officer with Stirling Social work, I work with individuals who for a number of reasons have come into contact with the justice system.

Many of the individuals that I see on a regular basis, in addition to criminal records, face several other barriers that may cause them to reoffend and prevent them from attaining employment.

Whilst working with these individuals I utilise several third party and external partner agencies. One such outside agency that I regularly refer service users to is Stirling Community Enterprise.

Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE) are able to provide a wide range of support and assistance to service users, including access to an NHS nurse who help individuals suffering from various issues including mental health issues and addiction. In addition to the NHS nurse, each month a health and wellbeing counsellor attends SCE to assist people with stress, anxiety and trauma experienced. SCE's Community Justice Officer, Peer Mentors and Resilience Officers assist people in breaking down barriers to employment by addressing disclosure issues and appealing disclosure decisions. Individuals dealing with homelessness are assisted in gaining temporary accommodation and completing housing applications. 1-1 counselling sessions provide those who need it with advice on financial debts, in the form of budgeting and life skills sessions.

In addition to the above I have referred service users to SCE who are seeking support to gain further education, including those with limited numeracy and literacy skills or those that require to upskill in an effort to improve their future employability.

SCE assist in the formatting of CV's and in completing job application forms and thereafter carrying out mock interviews and providing advice for attending interviews.

SCE also provide and run courses in conjunction with Stirling District Council and other local and national companies and organisations including a seasonal landscaping maintenance course, a number of my service workers have participated in this particular course.

SCE further run internal programmes which assist users in gaining confidence and learn new skills such as wood upcycling and various fitness and wellbeing classes.

SCE have further provided support and advice in regards accessing DWP, Universal credit and other such support agencies to users who find the process daunting and without this assistance would miss out on vital benefits.

SCE are a vital partner agency who provide not only justice clients but individuals from the Stirling District and surrounding areas with support for a large number of barriers and would be a great loss to current and future service users.

### **NHS Forth Valley -Healthier Future team Partnership with Stirling Community Enterprise**

Stirling Community Enterprise has been a valued partner of NHS Forth Valley for a number of years.

The Public Health Nutrition team have worked and continue to work in partnership to develop the GROW project and maintain the growing space. Key Stakeholders from FV college; SVE; NHS Public Health; Forth Environment Link; Start Up Stirling and Stirling Food partnership.

In addition they have trained staff and volunteers to deliver food activities. These have included:

REHIS How to Run a Cooking group training to SCE support staff to deliver REHIS certification in Elementary cooking to their groups. REHIS training was also delivered to partner groups who resided at SCE such as Stirling Home Start and their Kitchen Garden Volunteers.

Our Child Healthy Weight team have used SCE resources such as Staff; kitchen; training rooms and garden space to deliver their programme to young people and their families.

We have also used their training rooms and lovely outdoor space to run a Food champion event and summer picnics for our young people.



Stirling Community Enterprise is a phenomenal resource for Stirling and its community. It provides a safe space and support to a number of young people and adults who at times have been failed by statutory services. They offer guidance, training and skills to allow people to move forward towards positive destinations, including things like sustaining their own budget and tenancy, being able to feed their family, further education, work placements and employment.

They have a key role in offering outcomes for those on the periphery of offending or rehabilitation options for those already in the justice system particularly through their mentor programmes and the support and lived experience they provide.

I personally feel they have a key role in providing best value and outcomes for both statutory organisations and the people they support through their 'one stop shop' approach. They strive to remove barriers and create opportunities for people.

There is no doubt that money needs to be saved, but I do not feel cutting ties with SCE is the answer. Who is going to bridge the void that will be left when services are withdrawn? People will find themselves back in the situations they have worked so hard to get away from and will ultimately increase pressure on statutory services. Initial savings will soon be surpassed by the demand created.

I can't say enough good about SCE and the work they do. It doesn't seem that long since I was co delivering an input to the Minister for Victims and Community Safety with the team from SCE, highlighting all this fantastic work and the joined-up approach being adopted in Stirling. I think this is something we should continue to develop rather than step away from.

Kind regards

Sonia

Sonia Connolly

Police Inspector

Falkirk Community Team

Falkirk Police Station

Forth Valley Division

Police Scotland

Partner:

Virgil M.  
Crawford

LL.B.  
(Hons.), Dip L.P.,  
N.P.

**Virgil M. Crawford**  
SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

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Telephone: 01786 464055

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Date: 31 January 2025

To whom it may concern

## **STIRLING COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE**

### **POTENTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDING BY STIRLING COUNCIL**

I refer to the above.

By way of background, I am a solicitor practicing in Stirling City Centre, my business having operated there for over 30 years now. My business deals primarily with what is referred to as "court work", a very large proportion of that being criminal cases. In relation to civil court work, my firm deals with mainly family issues and persons involved in the children's hearing system.

The nature of the work undertaken is such that a very large proportion of my clients are from low socio-economic groups, under privileged, often living in poverty and many having issues with addictions to alcohol, drugs, and separately, having mental health issues. A large number have housing difficulties.

Again, simply to highlight the extent of the issues which prevail in the local community, the number of clients I have dealt with since 2003 (when my current case management software system was installed) exceeds eleven thousand.

Having dealt with – and continuing to deal with - large numbers of clients with the personal difficulties and lifestyle issues referred to, I am somewhat concerned to learn of the possibility that funding for Stirling Community Enterprise may be withdrawn by the local authority.

Stirling Community Enterprise, as I understand it, is a charitable organisation which requires funding from outside agencies and local government to survive.

The work undertaken by Stirling Community Enterprise within the local community should not be underestimated. I have referred numerous clients to Stirling Community Enterprise due to the assistance they can provide, assistance which, generally, is not available elsewhere, or certainly not available without a significant waiting time.

Stirling Community Enterprise provides support to persons to:-

- secure housing
- to access education (having links with Forth Valley College)
- to access benefits – and to ensure persons are claiming all benefits to which they are entitled (failure to do so often resulting in poverty)
- to secure access to services for mental health, drug and alcohol addiction – while providing significant support from their own staff also
- assisting in securing employment for numerous persons (including employment by Stirling Council itself!)

The work done by Stirling Community Enterprise has undoubtedly assisted numerous clients in all areas of their life – including reducing offending - as a result of the supports provided and the structure which is then introduced into the lives of clients. Indeed, one of the peer mentors at Stirling Community Enterprise is a former client of mine and, having met with him at a launch event by Stirling Community Enterprise (attended also by Police Scotland, the senior sheriff from Stirling Sheriff Court, criminal justice partners, including persons from Stirling Criminal Justice social work department and various other businesses including large employers in the area) I commented on the remarkable change, both physically and mentally, in that particular person. That was entirely due to the work put in by Stirling Community Enterprise over a period of time.

While I am writing from the perspective of my firm and my clients, I am well aware of the extensive links Stirling Community Enterprise has with businesses and organisations throughout Stirling, and the work undertaken by them in securing those connections and obtaining support for their clients cannot be underestimated.

In the event that Stirling Community Enterprise is unable to continue, it will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect upon everyone engaging with their services at present and will remove a significant service available to persons within the local community – persons who are in most need of the very support provided.

I would hope that, if it is being determined that funding is to be withdrawn, that decision be reconsidered and reversed. While I appreciate local authorities are seeking to reduce their outgoings, removing funding from this organisation will directly, detrimentally, affect local residents in most need of help and support.

I am, of course, happy to provide any further information, should that be required.

Yours faithfully

**VIRGIL M CRAWFORD**

I have worked from Stirling Community Enterprise for many years. For the last 3 years, I have been based there on a Wednesday afternoon. I meet my own clients on the premises, as well as supporting SCE and JCP clients. The experience for both myself and the young people I support, is always extremely positive. SCE provide a variety of excellent provision to suit the needs of a range of clients. I have worked with several school leavers who have progressed into positive destinations, through the tailored support that SCE offer. SCE provide a welcoming hub, giving clients the opportunity to access a range of services. I feel it is partnership working as it is meant to be - with a range of organisations providing person centred service in a community venue

Vicky Wilson, Careers Adviser, Skills Development Scotland

The Stirling SDS team regard Stirling Community Enterprise as a vital key partner in our work to support the community, not just within the Raploch, but Stirling in general. As an all-age careers guidance service, we can refer to the adult programmes, we have a particular focus to support younger post school customers and those still in school, working to transition beyond school. We enjoy the opportunity to work on the premises each week and as a result, Vicky and the wider team have great links to the variety of support SCE can potentially offer our customers.

Susan McCurry, Team Leader, Skills Development Scotland

It will be a travesty if your funding is lost. You do great, life changing work."

Catherine Cartmell, Skills Investment Plan Manager, Historic Environment Scotland.

"I truly hope Stirling Council understand the value of your services and keep your funding in place. It would be nonsensical to remove this funding. The economic, health and social benefits incurred down the line more than tenfold outweigh the cost of running your brilliant, established and interconnected service that is everything Scottish Government

Policy supports. It truly would be shooting local wellbeing in the foot/unbelievably short sighted to lose something so *established* for a 'this year cash saving'.

Amanda Namey, Service Manager, Equi-Power Central Scotland.

"I do hope that Stirling Council see the incredible value Stirling Community Enterprise deliver to its target audience. The award of your core grant is critical to enable you and your colleagues to help those in society whom need it most. It would be an act of social and economic vandalism were Stirling Council to remove Stirling Community Enterprises core grant. Lets hope Stirling Council see some sense in supporting you to support those in greatest need.

Terry O'hare, Managing Director, 3fiftysixmedia Ltd