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European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Social Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes in Scotland

2020 case studies booklet

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1. Foreword from the Minister

As Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation, I am proud to introduce this booklet to celebrate and mark the official final year of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund programmes.

While the featured case studies only provide a brief glimpse of the achievements of the programmes, hopefully it will shine a light on the many different ways in which the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) have benefitted Scotland's economy and society.

From an unemployed young person learning new skills to an innovative entrepreneur receiving vital seed funding, the 2014-2020 programmes have improved the lives and livelihoods of many individuals.

Thanks to ESF and ERDF support, we have been able to support significant national initiatives like apprenticeships, as well as smaller local community-based projects. Running throughout the programmes has been our commitment to the environment, backing low-carbon solutions in transport, energy and business.

Though 2020 is the final year of the programmes on paper, due to their long-term and complex nature, the Scottish Government will continue to allocate grant payments to Lead Partners to deliver operations until 2023.

This continuous support over the next three years will help boost smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in our country, and seek to mitigate the adverse effects of Scotland having to leave the EU with the UK. The funding will also help local communities to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created both a health and an economic crisis.

Until now, Scotland has been able to decide for itself how and where we direct this vital funding. This has allowed us to ensure ESF and ERDF projects have fulfilled our priorities and addressed our distinct needs and interests, bringing the full benefits of the funds to our citizens and communities all across the country.

Scotland's long and proud participation in the European Structural and Investment Funds programmes demonstrates the international, outward-facing nature of our nation. It remains a deep disappointment that we will not be able to play our full part in the European Commission's 2021-2027 programmes.

However, we can look back with pride at all that we have achieved since 2014. From my own visits to ESF and ERDF projects, which have ranged from inner-city charities to innovative tech companies, I know that their outcomes have been truly remarkable and will be long-lasting.

These outcomes have been achieved thanks to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in delivering projects supported by the funds. I look forward with anticipation to discovering what else our Lead Partners, delivery agents and beneficiaries are able to achieve in the remainder of the programmes.

I hope you enjoy reading this booklet.

Ivan McKee MSP

Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation



2. Introduction from Hilary Pearce

As we approach the end of the 2014-2020 programmes, and indeed the UK's exit from the European Union, it is worth reflecting on what the programmes were set up to achieve.

The overarching purpose of European Structural and Investment Funds has been to support economic development in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The programmes in Scotland have done exactly that – by supporting a huge range of activities and projects aimed at achieving the priorities for each fund.

The European Social Fund (ESF) has helped people to improve skills and get better jobs, while the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has increased economic cohesion between regions. Our projects, many of which will run until 2023, have stimulated economic innovation, provided support for protecting the natural environment and have assisted many people to gain skills and training to improve their employment prospects.

I will not easily forget a visit that I made to a third sector organisation in Glasgow in 2019. Here I met a group of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds practising role-play to demonstrate their understanding of the correct way to care for older vulnerable people. Although many lacked self-confidence, they rose to the challenge. A few months later I learned that all had passed the course and been placed into probationary employment. This shows the real value that the funding can bring to those participants and to wider society. During this past year of global pandemic, the skills demonstrated on that day are in demand more than ever.

Our operations, which number over 120 over the length of the programme, are varied in terms of their focus, scale and the method of delivery. Our partners in managing and delivering the funds include local authorities, enterprise agencies, third sector and voluntary organisations, businesses and parts of government. That range, and the associated match funding arrangements, have enabled a diverse and flexible approach to how projects are run and what they achieve. My team have kept in close contact with our partners over the whole course of the programme and have frequently been impressed by the scope, creativity and energy of the projects as they have developed.

I hope this booklet gives a flavour of the diverse activities which the funding has achieved in Scotland – from preserving our natural and cultural heritage to helping the most vulnerable individuals in our communities to manage their financial security. As the projects come to an end, there will be a lasting legacy for the people and places which have benefitted over the past seven years.

Hilary Pearce

Head of the Managing Authority
Deputy Director of European Structural Funds & State Aid Division
Scottish Government



3. What are European Structural and Investment Funds?

European Structural and Investment Funds are forms of financial assistance provided by the European Commission to Member States.

The key aim of the funds is to strengthen economic and social cohesion by correcting imbalances between regions.

European Structural and Investment Funds are made up of two distinct strands:

- The European Social Fund (ESF)
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The ESF was established in 1958 to help people improve their lives by learning new skills, finding better jobs and lifting them out of poverty.

The ERDF was established in 1975 to support business growth, investment and infrastructure.

The ESF and ERDF programmes operate in seven-year cycles and fund a variety of projects in terms of length, scale and beneficiaries.

Scotland has benefitted from European Structural and Investment Funds since 1973, when the United Kingdom joined the European Community.



4. Overview of 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund programmes

What are the aims of the 2014-2020 programmes?

In Scotland, we have used the funds to help achieve our aims of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:

- **Smart Growth** – supporting Scotland’s businesses and workforce;
- **Sustainable Growth** – making Scotland a greener, cleaner place to live and work; and
- **Inclusive Growth** – removing barriers from disadvantaged communities and lifting people out of poverty.

The overarching priorities of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund programmes are designed by the European Commission¹.

Countries design the programmes so that they satisfy their own priorities as well as those of the European Commission.

How do the 2014-2020 programmes work in Scotland?

The Scottish Government is the Managing Authority of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Programmes.

We allocate funding to Lead Partners who then bring their own match funding to increase the total amount available for operations.

Lead Partners then distribute funding between individual projects and organisations and/or deliver projects themselves.

Our Lead Partners are made up of:

- Scotland’s 32 local authorities;
- Scottish Enterprise;
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise;
- Transport Scotland;
- NatureScot;
- Zero Waste Scotland;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Scottish Funding Council;
- National Lottery Community Fund; and
- Other Scottish Government Directorates.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/priorities

5. Smart Growth

Smart Growth means investing European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support into Scotland's businesses and workforce.

Working since 2014 with Lead Partners, the Scottish Government has allocated £260m in ESF and ERDF grants towards our Smart Growth areas. These include:

- **Developing Scotland's Workforce**
Creating new places for skills development at Scotland's colleges, providing training courses for careers in Scotland's growth sectors, and expanding Scotland's Modern, Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeship programmes.
- **Youth Employment Initiative**
Helping young people, particularly those not in employment, education or training, into work, and reducing the number of unemployed and socially excluded young people in south west Scotland.

- **Business Competitiveness**
Helping SMEs to become more innovative and to grow in regional, national and international markets.
- **Business Innovation**
Promoting investment in research, innovation, manufacturing and product development.
- **SME Holding Fund**
Providing access to financing for SMEs and start-ups looking to enhance competitiveness and grow in regional, national and international markets.

Lead Partners:

- Local authorities;
- Scottish Enterprise;
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise;
- Scottish Funding Council;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Scottish Government Directorate for International Trade and Investment; and
- Business Gateway.



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5.1 Supporting a national programme of Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships

The expansion and growth of Scottish Apprenticeships has been delivered with support from the European Social Fund (ESF). Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships have helped thousands of Scots learn new skills, gain qualifications and work at the same time.

A Foundation Apprenticeship was the ideal first career step for teenager Heather Wilson from Gourock. Heather has experienced all aspects of engineering thanks to the valuable combination of school, college and work-based learning with ferries operator CalMac.

For Jordanne Currie of Kirkcaldy, a Modern Apprenticeship allowed her to instantly begin working on the development of radar systems at leading aerospace engineering organisation Leonardo in Edinburgh. As her learning is work-based, she has been able to try different types of engineering to see where her passion in the industry lay.

Katy Beckett jumped at the chance to work, earn and learn while studying for her Engineering Design and Manufacture degree as part of her Graduate Apprenticeship. Thanks to the adaptable nature of the apprenticeship, the working mum has been able to broaden her technical skills at Bray Controls in Inchinnan and advocate for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Apprenticeships do not just help individuals. They also provide employers with the skills they need to adapt, sustain and strengthen. Scottish businesses have been able to upskill their workforce, meet future skills' needs and increase productivity by taking part in the ESF-supported scheme.

Thanks to ESF support, these three different types of apprenticeships have enabled people like Heather, Jordanne and Katy to develop their career in a way that suits them.

£16m

Apprenticeships across Scotland have been supported with an ESF allocation of £16m

"The Foundation Apprenticeship is a great way to gain experience before I join the Navy. I learn better by doing something practical, so the Foundation Apprenticeship has been ideal."
Heather Wilson, Foundation Apprentice

"It's important that women see STEM as a potential career path. There is a high number of females in engineering roles at Bray. I never considered STEM when I was at school and thankfully my Graduate Apprenticeship has allowed me to pursue it now."

Katy Beckett, Graduate Apprentice



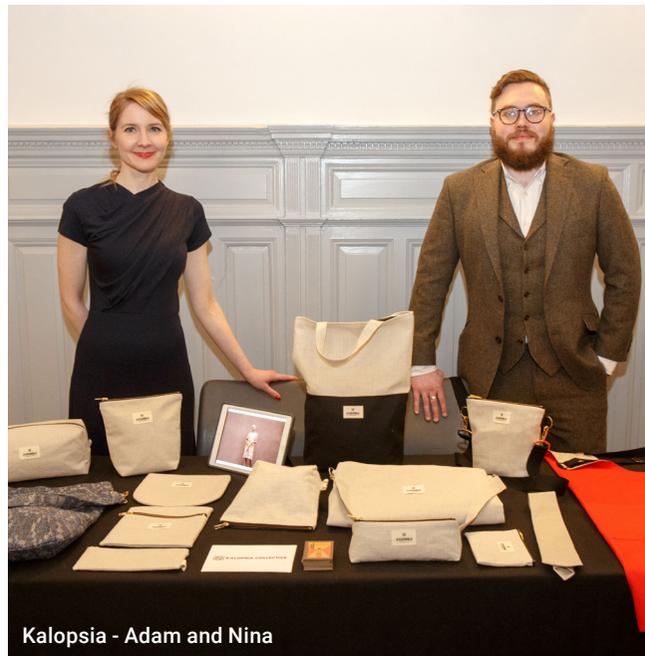
5.2 Investing in Scotland's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The SME Holding Fund is managed by a team within the Scottish Government's Directorate for International Trade and Investment. While they are ultimately responsible for the fund, they distribute the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support via investment firms like DSL Business Finance, who are well placed to identify firms in need of finance to grow.

DSL has assisted businesses like Kalopsia and The Refillery, both based in Edinburgh, with ERDF-supported finance.

Kalopsia, established as a textiles artists' collective in 2012, supplies mills, retailers and independent businesses with ethically-, efficiently- and sustainably-made textile products, such as accessory bags and clothing. This forward-thinking approach to textiles' manufacturing led to Kalopsia being shortlisted for Manufacturer of the year at the Made in Scotland awards 2018. Thanks to ERDF support, DSL has provided two rounds of investment to Kalopsia, totalling £25,000.

"The first round of ERDF-supported investment helped us improve operations and stabilise production, getting us to a consistent turnover. The second round allowed us to invest in our website which has increased sales, improving cashflow and customer experience. We also took on our first two permanent employees, both newly graduated textiles practitioners. Their input has been a massive boost. All of this support has allowed us to take on more and higher quality orders."
Adam Robertson of Kalopsia



Kalopsia - Adam and Nina

The Refillery, established in 2019, is an ethical grocery store offering everyday groceries but without the plastic packaging. They have become a real hub of the local community, stocking locally produced and organic products and providing advice on how to shop more consciously. They also offer an online service for click & collect or local delivery and have recently launched a franchise package. Thanks to ERDF support, DSL provided loan funding to part finance start-up costs and working capital.

£78.2m

The SME Holding Fund has been allocated £78.2m of ERDF support

"From initial contact right through until now – DSL was just so supportive. My dream became a reality because of the ERDF-supported finance from DSL."
Kelly Wright of The Refillery



The Refillery

5.3 Providing expert advice to local businesses in Fife

Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Fife is delivered through Business Gateway Fife, an arm's length company wholly owned by Fife Council.

Thanks to European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support, they were able to offer a range of services to businesses in their local areas. This support has included:

- Expert advice to help businesses achieve their growth potential, covering topics like HR, Finance and IT; and
- A non-repayable grant scheme to support SMEs to upskill their workforce and participate in trade shows and visits.

Bikeworks were just one of many businesses that Business Gateway Fife has assisted. The successful social enterprise recycles, repairs and maintains bikes for the local community, but realised that its digital platforms were restricting it from growing.

Thanks to ERDF-supported advice from Business Gateway Fife, Bikeworks were able to redevelop their website and online strategy. This proved invaluable when COVID-19 struck, as the new website has allowed Bikeworks to continue to sell refurbished bikes and bike parts to the public. The assistance that they have received means that Bikeworks is well positioned to maximise the uptake in interest in cycling and expand its customer base in the future.

£2m

Business Gateway activity in Fife has been supported with an ERDF allocation of £2m



"Business Gateway Fife has been a great help to us. The web developer worked closely with us to understand and interpret our needs, all of which was accomplished remotely. The timing of this could not have been better for Bikeworks, as our new website was operational just as we opened for business at the end of lockdown. Thanks to ERDF support, we are in a much better position to serve customers and grow our company."

Rory Sillar of Bikeworks



5.4 Driving up youth employment in Dumfries and Galloway

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was launched by the European Commission to specifically support regions across Europe that had experienced a significant increase in youth unemployment and inactivity.

For Scotland, this meant twelve local authorities in the south west were supported with the European Social Fund (ESF) to provide dedicated support to young people aged 16-29 not in employment, education or training (NEET). A key aspect of YEI was providing wage incentives to businesses to take on young workers.

Dumfries and Galloway Council was one of the local authorities tasked with improving youth employment. They helped people like Nick, who did not know what he wanted to do when he left school.

During Nick's sessions with support worker Marie, he expressed an interest in working with cars and motorbikes, so some work experience was arranged for Nick at Bridge End Garage in Dumfries.

The owners of the garage were impressed with Nick's enthusiasm and willingness to learn, and agreed to take him on as Trainee Mechanic using the YEI-funded Young Person Wage Incentive. At the same time, Nick started an apprenticeship mechanic course at Dumfries College.

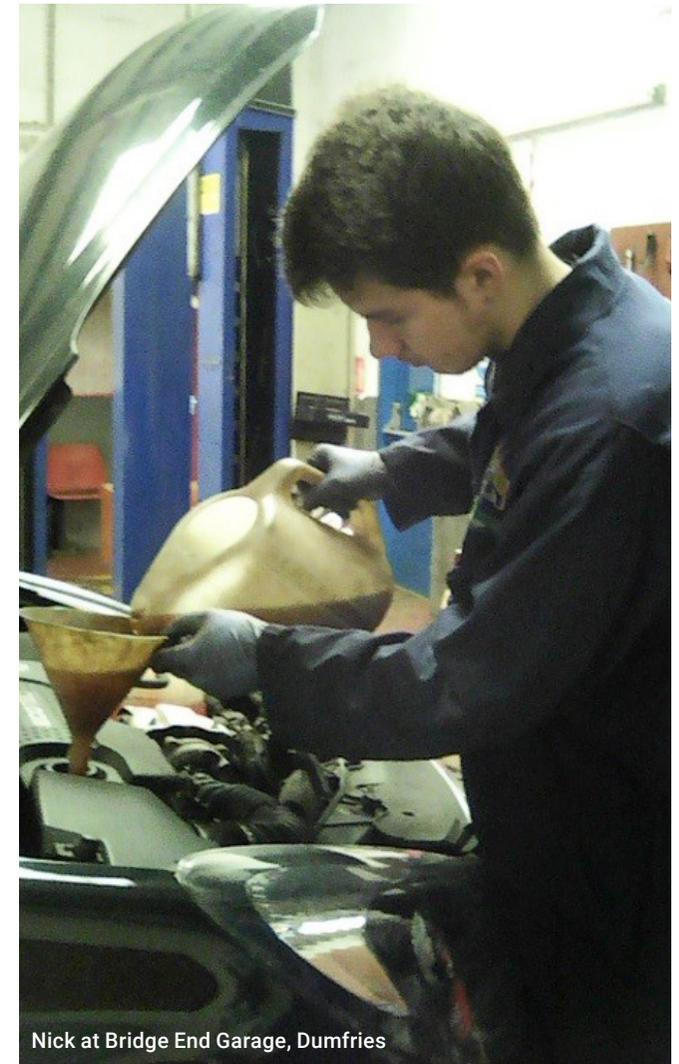
As a result of the actions taken by the Dumfries and Galloway Council employability team, Nick obtained his apprenticeship, improved his communication and confidence skills, and thrived as a mechanic at Bridge End Garage.

Thanks to ESF support in south west Scotland, local businesses were encouraged to take on trainee workers and scores of young people moved into employment, education or training.

£43m

£43m of ESF support was allocated to YEI projects across south west Scotland

"ESF support in D&G through the Employability & Skills Service is a tailored, person-centred approach, engaging individuals who have barriers to employment, training and/or further education. Our Key Worker service offers one-to-one support to overcome these barriers and progress people to achieve their goals."
Marie McKeown, Dumfries and Galloway Council



Nick at Bridge End Garage, Dumfries

6. Sustainable Growth

Sustainable Growth means investing European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support to make Scotland a greener, cleaner place to live and work.

Working since 2014 with Lead Partners, the Scottish Government has allocated approximately £164m in ERDF grant towards our Sustainable Growth areas. These include:

- **Green Infrastructure**
Improving the quality, accessibility and quantity of green areas in Scotland's towns and cities to address inequality and improve public health.
- **Scotland's 8th City – The Smart City**
Addressing urban challenges by using new technologies and data, improving sustainability, resilience and service efficiency across all Scottish cities.

- **Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund**
Investing in infrastructure supporting the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage assets in the Highlands and Islands region.
- **Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme**
Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy, encouraging investment in technology and development to exploit Scotland's low-carbon potential.
- **Low Carbon Travel and Transport Programme**
Increasing the number of journeys made by public transport, low-energy vehicles, on foot and by bike.

- **Resource Efficient Circular Economy**
Promoting environmental innovation and performance management in the public and private sectors, and increasing business competitiveness by increasing resource efficiency.
- **Digital Infrastructure**
Delivering 100% superfast broadband access and improving the availability of mobile connectivity across the Highlands and Island region.

Lead Partners:

- Local authorities;
- NatureScot;
- Transport Scotland;
- Zero Waste Scotland;
- Scottish Government Digital Directorate;
- Scottish Government Directorate for Energy and Climate Change; and
- Scottish Cities Alliance.



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6.1 Powering electric vehicles and low carbon travel options

The Low Carbon Travel and Transport Programme is managed by Transport Scotland and aims to boost the number of journeys made by public transport, low-energy vehicles, bike and on foot.

Working with the Energy Saving Trust, local authorities across Scotland have been able to increase low-carbon and active travel options for people, businesses and communities thanks to European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support.

Falkirk Council used the funding to create one of the largest electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Scotland. The £1.4m facility at the Falkirk Stadium, which has capacity for 26 electric vehicles, was officially opened by Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity on 11 August 2020.

The EV station generates over 30% of the required electricity to power the facility from its own solar canopy made up of 1,272 panels, saving 75 tonnes of carbon per year.

£22.3m

£22.3m of ERDF support has been allocated to the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Programme

“This hub entirely supports the Scottish Government’s bold ambition to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032. These 26 charging bays, including fast and rapid chargers, are welcome additions to our public electric vehicle charging network – ChargePlace Scotland. I know that this facility is already greatly appreciated by people visiting and living in Falkirk who have made the switch to electric vehicles and are already experiencing the many benefits that they bring.”
Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Key Falkirk Stadium EV station facts:

- The self-service facility is open 24/7 all year round;
- 10 rapid (50kW) charging bays;
- 16 fast (22kW) charging bays;
- 3 designated bays for disabled users;
- 1,272 TrinaSolar panels generating an estimated 300,644kWh annually;
- Bluetop solar canopy covers 2,082sqm – equivalent to almost a third of a football pitch; and
- Energy generated will be stored in 3 storage systems capable of holding up to 201kWh of energy and delivering up to 183kW of power.



6.2 Transforming vacant land into new greenspace in urban areas

The Green Infrastructure Fund is managed by NatureScot. Working with local authorities, housing associations, and other public sector organisations, it targets urban areas in Scotland that have a deficit of good quality greenspace, an excess of vacant land and suffer from multiple levels of deprivation.

One such area is in north Glasgow, between Firhill and Sighthill. The Canal and North Gateway project, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is creating new greenspace for local communities and a new habitat that will enable wildlife to flourish.

The Canal and North Gateway Project is made up of two parts:

1. Improving access to and within Claypits Local Nature Reserve.

The plans for the reserve feature a barrier-free path and boardwalk network, mountain bike trail, disabled access fishing pegs, re-designed gateway entrances, viewpoints, and a feature canal pedestrian bridge. This is dramatically improving active travel options for the local community, especially the new bridge which links Maryhill and Woodside communities with Hamiltonhill and Possilpark.

2. Providing a surface water drainage solution for the regeneration of key vacant and derelict sites, including Sighthill.

This is achieved by dynamically managing the water level in the canal to provide flood storage, mitigating the predicted increase in rainfall associated with climate change and allowing for flora and fauna to thrive in a new habitat network.

The Canal and North Gateway project is not only playing its part in the wider regeneration of north Glasgow and the Scottish canal network, but will relieve pressure on current greenspaces that experienced increased use during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Thanks to ERDF support, the people of north Glasgow have vital blue-green infrastructure and a new active travel network on their doorstep.

£17.7m

Green Infrastructure projects have been supported with an ERDF allocation of £17.7m



6.3 Connecting communities across the Highlands and Islands

The Scottish Government's £25 million 4G Infill Programme is improving Scotland's rural mobile phone coverage in selected 'not spots' – areas where no commercial coverage has been rolled out. Without this intervention, these rural areas would miss out on improved connectivity and the benefits this could bring to home, working life and the wider local economy.

Strathconon is one such site in the Highlands and Islands region. Its new mobile phone mast was installed in October 2020 thanks to support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Not only does this mast provide improved 4G coverage, but it will also play a vital role in the Emergency Services Network. Thanks to ERDF support, police, ambulance and mountain rescue emergency services can provide rapid response to local and national crises, offering better resilience as a result of improved communication between people in the control rooms and those out in the field.

For the local community, improved 4G coverage potentially makes the area more attractive to tourists and offers social benefits, such as improved access to services and keeping in touch during COVID-19.

£20m

Digital connectivity projects in the Highlands and Islands have been allocated £20m of ERDF support

"Improved mobile connectivity has made such a difference to myself, my wife and the local community. Thanks to the ERDF-supported programme, we can now connect to faster, reliable speeds, which is crucial during the current pandemic. Like many people living in Strathconon and the surrounding area, I work from home and now I'm able to take part in online meetings without experiencing time lags and colleagues talking over each other due to the poor connection."

John Turner, Local resident



6.4 Installing 'intelligent' street lighting in Aberdeen

The 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City' is an ambitious programme of collaborative innovation across Scotland's seven cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Perth, and Stirling. By working and sharing knowledge together, the cities have been able to become more attractive, liveable and resilient through use of data and digital technology.

For example, thanks to European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support, Aberdeen City Council has been able to replace old inefficient street lighting with brand new LED optical units along a high profile area in the centre of Aberdeen. This change has reduced energy consumption by up to 60% compared with the old units, bringing down the city's carbon footprint and energy bills.

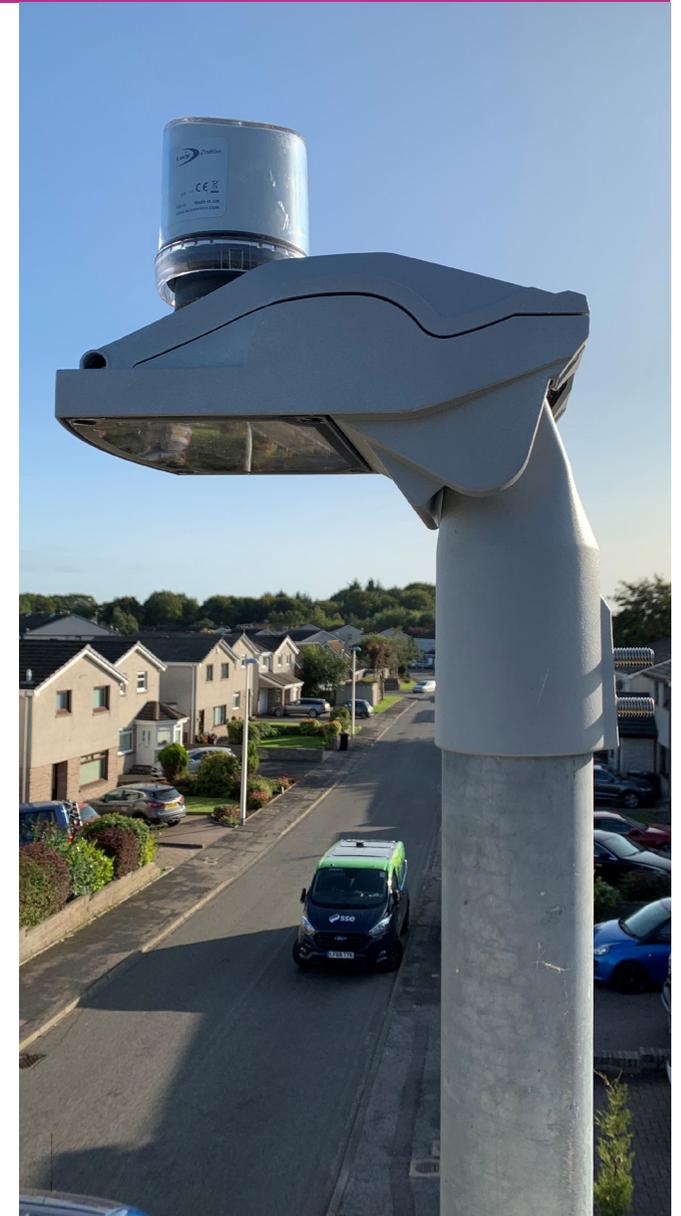
There is now adaptive control of the lighting system remotely through a central management system. This means the system can alert users to any faults as they occur, removing the need to wait for a complaint to come through from the public.

However, the new street lighting does more than just illuminate the area. Sensors have been installed on the street lights that provide data on when interventions are required to prevent flooding, enabling the council to be ahead of the curve and reduce the level of disruption. Nearby road safety signs have also been connected to the same system so that they can be switched on and off as required.

This ERDF project has not only contributed to the council's ambition to implement a variety of 'Smart City' solutions, but also created a more efficient and safer environment for the people of Aberdeen.

£22.2m

£22.2m of ERDF support has been allocated to 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City'



7. Inclusive Growth

Inclusive Growth means investing European Social Fund (ESF) support to remove barriers from disadvantaged communities and lift people out of poverty.

Working since 2014 with Lead Partners, the Scottish Government has allocated £167m in ESF grants towards our Inclusive Growth areas. These include:

- **Employability**

Providing routes to sustainable employment for and increasing the skill levels of unemployed people with multiple barriers to work.

- **Poverty and Social Inclusion**

Assisting the most disadvantaged individuals and households in financial and employment matters, enabling disadvantaged communities to develop long-term solutions for reducing poverty, and increasing the sustainability and capacity of Scotland's non-profit sector.

Lead Partners:

- Local authorities;
- The Scottish Government's Housing and Social Justice Directorate; and
- The National Lottery Community Fund.



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7.1 Bringing the 'financially excluded' back into the community

With support from the European Social Fund (ESF), the National Lottery Community Fund has been working with local authorities across Scotland to deliver 'financial inclusion'. This means supporting some of the most disadvantaged households by improving their money management skills and ensuring debt is less of a barrier to social inclusion.

The Inverclyde Delivering Effective Advice and Support (I:DEAS) project began helping one such couple in August 2018. When Mr and Mrs J registered with I:DEAS, they were at risk of house repossession due to mortgage arrears. They were both suffering from poor health, had been unemployed for several years and had accrued debts of more than £40,000.

On the couple's behalf, the I:DEAS team liaised with local services, including adult protection social work, homelessness prevention, housing and legal advice, to ensure that appropriate support was given.

Following visits from social services, it became apparent that the house was in a state of extreme disrepair and that the best option for the couple would be to sell the house, clear debts and move into social housing.

With the help of the I:DEAS team, Mr and Mrs J were allocated a new one-bedroom housing association flat and even received a Community Care Grant to help purchase new furniture that was required. The couple's former home was eventually sold at auction and the proceeds were used to clear all remaining debts.

Mr and Mrs J no longer rely on benefits. They are debt free, in a stable financial position, and are able to move forward in life with new money management skills. As a result, they have reconnected with family and friends and their health is much better compared with when they first registered with I:DEAS in August 2018.

Thanks to ESF support, teams like I:DEAS have been able to transform the lives of disadvantaged people across Scotland by improving their relationship with money and debt.

£7.3m

£7.3m of ESF support has been allocated to deliver 'financial inclusion' across Scotland

"Before I felt things were impossible and a mess – now, thanks to I:DEAS, things are fixed."

Mr J



7.2 Mapping out routes to work in North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire's Working is an employability service delivered by North Lanarkshire Council, part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Thanks to ESF support, it is able to run projects like Routes to Work that match people who are unsure about how to start or progress their career with job opportunities that meet their skills and needs.

The service helps people like Dominic Lunny in Wishaw. While his fellow students were preparing for college and university, Dominic was unsure about his next steps. He knew he wanted to work instead of going into further or higher education and that a practical role where he could learn on the job would be best suited to him.

The team at North Lanarkshire's Working provided Dominic with confidence-building courses and support to improve his CV and interview skills. Following their help, he was successful in gaining a role as an Apprentice Plumber with Cruden, which he continues to enjoy and excel in.

Thanks to ESF support, people like Dominic are able to find employment that suits their desires and qualities, and employers are able to recruit a new generation of motivated and committed workers.

£10.3m

North Lanarkshire's Working has been supported with an ESF allocation of £10.3m

"Before I started at Cruden, I had no idea where I would get a job as school just wasn't for me. I am delighted with the support I was given from North Lanarkshire's Working, as it gave me confidence and opened up opportunities for me. The ability to make a full-time wage right out of school is a massive benefit as well as the opportunity to go to college once a week. I am now looking forward to many more years with Cruden and want to thank Routes to Work for the support they have given me to get into this job."
Dominic Lunny, ESF beneficiary



NLW team



Dominic Lunny

7.3 Giving a Positive Future to people in Perth and Kinross

Thanks to support from the European Social Fund (ESF), Perth and Kinross Council have been coordinating 'Positive Future' projects that provide support to people in poverty. These individuals face a combination of barriers and require holistic advice and assistance on finances, housing benefits, health employment and education.

For example, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Perth have received ESF support to help people like Ms T, a lady in her forties. She approached Perth CAB having recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Previously, she had a high income and debts that were manageable while she was working. However, Ms T has had to stop working due to her illness and her debts accrued to an unsustainable level. Her social security situation was complicated by intermittent stays in hospitals and hospices. As a result, she was extremely anxious not to leave her finances in a poor state for her children's sake.

With Ms T's permission, Perth CAB spoke with her oncologist and obtained medical evidence of her condition. This has allowed them to complete the laborious task of negotiating with and providing evidence to numerous creditors on their client's behalf, so that Ms T can dedicate her time to the important things in life.

Thanks to ESF support, Ms T is able to spend the remainder of her life free from worrying about her financial situation.

£343,000

Positive Futures in Perth and Kinross has been supported with an ESF allocation of £343,000

"What kind of impact has this had on the client's situation? She said it's allowing her to enjoy her last few years or months – she doesn't know exactly how long she has – with one fewer thing to worry about so she can focus on what's important to her. She's also more comfortable that she's not leaving behind a mess for her family. The ESF support allows me to do this particular type of work. Because of the extra time that Positive Futures gives us, we can go the extra mile."
Alastair Hood, Perth CAB



Alastair Hood, Perth CAB

7.4 Filling COVID-19 'key worker' vacancies in Stirling

Learning, Employability & Progression in Stirling (LEAPS) is a service provided by Stirling Council that is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF). It helps people find work, gain qualifications or move on to further education.

In normal times, LEAPS provides much-needed assistance to individuals in the local authority area, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, their services were especially valuable. Due to the extra precautions required to make places of work safe from COVID-19, Stirling Council was in desperate need of cleaning assistants and care workers.

When the local authority began its recruitment drive, LEAPS was able to source from its client base multiple candidates for the new job opportunities. The team delivered interview preparation and other essential training for the candidates, including courses on Health and Safety in workplaces. As a result, many LEAPS clients were successful in gaining employment, for the first time in years in some cases.

Traditionally, the recruitment process for these roles has been challenging, but the LEAPS team was able to assist with pre-employment checks to make the process as quick as possible. This meant the posts were created and filled within a four week period.

Thanks to ESF support, long-term unemployed people in Stirling were able to gain jobs and essential 'key worker' roles were filled quickly.

£1.3m

Stirling Council employability projects have been allocated £1.3m of ESF support

"I was with the LEAPS programme for about six months before gaining employment with Stirling Council as a cleaner in a local primary school. It was with the help of my LEAPS advisers, with the advice and tips for applying for jobs, interview techniques and other necessary training, that I gained employment after three years of struggling on my own. The scheme is very useful, and the advice and help has been invaluable."
Damon, LEAPS participant



ESF support has helped Stirling respond to the COVID-19 pandemic



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