



Social Enterprise NI

EMPOWERING PROFIT WITH PURPOSE, INSPIRING LASTING IMPACT.

Social Enterprise NI, the representative body for the sector in NI welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

In terms of the overall context we are pleased to see references which confirm the view that social enterprises are businesses. Whilst a proportion of grant funding is acceptable, required, and useful, the mention of “Profit with Purpose” is reflective of the aims of social businesses to generate income from the trading of goods and services.

Having a policy in place to support and grow the sector is welcomed and indeed is something that Social Enterprise NI is keen to replicate in Northern Ireland working alongside Department for the Economy.

Social Enterprise NI agrees with the 5 policy objectives and would highlight the following additional comments.

Any Policy should support Inclusivity and Diversity, something that the social economy is well placed to help deliver on.

Social Partnerships should be encouraged ie organisations from the public and private sector working alongside social enterprises to help deliver better outcomes for all, better use of spend and greater impact to those who need it most in society. This would bring support to social enterprise supply chains and enable other businesses to incorporate social value by having social enterprises involved in creating social value. Additionally building relationships to enable the transfer of skills into the social economy sector is also a means to help develop the sector.

We welcome the focus on young people and align this with our work in NI to work closely with schools, colleges, and universities to raise the awareness of the social enterprise business model to encourage young people into the sector and choose the social enterprise business model.

Creating opportunities for mentoring with individuals and organisations outside the sector is also welcomed, enabling transfer of skills and learnings across jurisdictions.

Whilst a procurement focus is important, it is important to get legislation on to the statute books. In NI this is a driver and focus of the sector.

Positive also that you are considering the legal status of a social enterprise and if defined would be useful to revisit the census statistics to confirm numbers.

In closing we would strongly support the need for a representative body, an organisation appointed to deliver government policy and in a consistent manner. However this would need to be funded appropriately and for a period of no less than 3 years to provide the opportunity for the organisation to be established, grow, and develop the sector. This should be through a commission process but from our experience this is important in order to guide and fund the sector.

Colin Jess

Chief Executive

Social Enterprise NI