



# ***Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024***





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***Our first foray into the world of social enterprise has been a great success with many positive outcomes...***

**REFRESH GROUP. NEWTOWNARDS**

# Foreword



**PROFESSOR  
PETER ROBERTS**  
**CHAIR**



**CLARK BAILIE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Since our inception, the Housing Executive has worked closely with tenants and residents in Housing Executive estates to foster vibrant, stable and sustainable communities. This remains a key priority for the Housing Executive.**

In 2015, the Housing Executive developed its first Social Housing Enterprise Strategy to complement existing community based strategies. In developing this ground-breaking strategy we acknowledged the particular challenges our communities face in terms of social disadvantage and exclusion from the wider economy. We wanted to support wider government objectives as outlined in the Programme for Government and provide additional finance and other resources to invest in the development of the local social economy and in the creation of community-owned social enterprises within and for the benefit of our housing communities.

Since the development of this first strategy, our communities have faced additional challenges, and statistics relating to poverty, economic inactivity and deprivation are a matter of increasing concern. Now, more than ever, the onus is on us as a social landlord to work in conjunction with partner stakeholders and government departments to do all that we can to help improve the financial well-being of our tenants. Experience of social enterprise elsewhere shows that social enterprises can play a vital role in sustainable job creation, in facilitating social integration, in providing local services that meet many social needs and mobilise community resources to develop innovative local solutions.

Our first foray into the world of social enterprise has been a great success with many positive outcomes for participants, users of services, our tenants and our communities. For example, over the life of the last strategy, we made 160 funding awards equating to an investment of just over £1.4 million into our Social Housing Enterprise Programme. This led to the establishment and development of almost 90 social enterprises and the creation of more than 150 new jobs. The programme helped sustain another 194 existing jobs and provided training opportunities for over 1800 participants as well as over 940 volunteering opportunities.

In terms of monetary return, an external evaluation of the 2015-2018 strategy indicates very encouraging returns in terms of our pound for pound investment. Using an accredited formula, an external evaluation established that for every £1 invested, the return was £4.52. It also established a Social Return on Investment for our communities worth £4.97 for every pound we invested. There is more detail on these findings later in this document.



**TRAINING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
MADE  
POSSIBLE**

**1800**



**VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES  
MADE  
POSSIBLE**

**940**

However, the real value of the programme has been the level of engagement within our communities, particularly those which other employment and training programmes have been struggling to reach. Since the beginning of Housing Executive's Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy, relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders have been created and a network of engagement and peer mentoring has built up. This network can facilitate, enable and support individuals and communities in ways that were not possible before and it is important that this work in our communities continues.

Collaboration, partnering and working together towards greater social inclusion and prosperity is designed to raise aspirations, support skills development and enable our tenants and residents to engage fully in society and to prosper to the best of their abilities. New relationships with key stakeholders in the burgeoning social economy sector are reaping the rewards for our social housing customers and entrepreneurs in terms of finding knowledgeable experienced peer mentors and being able to access investment and financial assistance from the financial sector.

In terms of individuals, the Social (Housing) Enterprise Programme has been shown to provide practical accessible pathways to employment for excluded groups or people from communities for whom traditional interventions have not worked; this has numerous benefits and social impacts for our communities. A more detailed review of the results, including case studies, is contained in Chapter 3 of this document.

The many successful outcomes of the strategy are underscored by the awards secured over the last number of years:

- The 2018 NI Housing Council Jack Baillie Award for innovation.
- The 2018 Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Statutory Stakeholder of the Year.
- The CIH Housing Story of the Year 2019 for Social Enterprise
- CIH Working in Partnership Award 2019 following work with Hive Studios

In order to build on all of this positive work, the new Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will embed learning to date and focus on education and developing the skills of tenants and residents within our communities. Good educational outcomes support people to succeed economically and are linked to better health and mental well-being. In line with government thinking, the strategy is committed to helping all our tenants enjoy the independence, security and good health that being in work can bring.

The objectives of the new Social Enterprise Plus Strategy are focused on continuing to expand work related to supporting social enterprises with an emphasis on developing individuals, strengthening our communities and maximising partnership working. It is known that the longer a person is out of work the more their health and wellbeing is likely to deteriorate and the more likely they are to remain outside the world of work. It becomes increasingly more difficult for them to return. The Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will work with other government initiatives to address this downward spiral.

We are confident that the delivery of this strategy will continue to bring real and sustainable benefits and transformational change to local communities and their residents.

We wish all our communities well, and hope they will continue to engage with this important area of work but more importantly take the opportunity to progress business ideas, innovation, learning and training opportunities.



Professor Peter Roberts  
Chair



Clark Bailie  
Chief Executive



***Social Enterprise Plus proposes three objectives focused on social enterprise businesses, individuals who wish to develop as social entrepreneurs or build skills and, finally, partnership/ collaborative working.***

LINK LOGS, COLERAINE

# ***Introduction***



**In drafting the new Social Enterprise Plus Strategy, we need to examine the work carried out over the last three years under the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy and review the changes that have happened in the wider economic environment and social economy sector in Northern Ireland.**

It is also necessary to take stock of the impact of the 2015/18 strategy so that, with an understanding of key changes and events to date, we can critically examine the success of the 2015-18 strategy and look forward to our next steps on this innovative journey.

To that end, Chapter 1 of this document reviews current issues relating to social enterprise and the wider social economy and sets out background detail relating to the role of the Housing Executive as a social landlord in social enterprise as well as outlining the economic status of its tenant base.

In Chapter 2, the strategic context and the framework in which social enterprise sits within the broader programme for government is portrayed along with the Housing Executive's alignment within this framework.

Chapter 3 reviews the impact of the 2015-18 Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy and provides a short summary of an independent evaluation carried out earlier this year. A more detailed summary of the evaluation is attached as Appendix 1.

The strategic plan for Social Enterprise Plus in Chapter 4 embeds learning from both the recommendations from the independent evaluation and feedback from users and participants to improve what we offer to our communities.

Social Enterprise Plus proposes three objectives focused on social enterprise businesses, individuals who wish to develop as social entrepreneurs or build skills and, finally, partnership/collaborative working. These form the key elements of a strong strategy which will be administered with due diligence and good governance.

Financing for the awards scheme and Next Steps are outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.



***... [our] approach to date has provided an avenue to improve life chances via the creation of community-owned social enterprises and training opportunities***

WEE CHICKS CRECHE  
COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY  
NORTH BELFAST

# 1

## **Background**

### **Northern Ireland Social Economy**

Social Enterprises are businesses, operating on a sound commercial footing, which return their profits to the communities within which they operate. Many social enterprises serve a particular local community or operate in some of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities where they provide valuable facilities and services in areas where it is not commercially viable for the private sector to do so.

The Housing Executive's approach to date has provided an avenue to improve life chances via the creation of community-owned social enterprises and training opportunities within and for the benefit of our housing communities.

A recent survey of social enterprises operating in Northern Ireland was carried out by Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI), a representative body set up by the Department for the Economy in 2013. SENI provides support and networking opportunities to connect and support social enterprises and social entrepreneurs across Northern Ireland.

The findings of the survey indicated that local communities are the single biggest beneficiary of social enterprise activity. Of those social enterprises surveyed, 53% indicated that they employ half of their workforce from the immediate locality.

In the last five years, social enterprise represents a major new growth area within Northern Ireland's economy and it is important that, as a social landlord, the Housing Executive ensures that its tenants, and the communities it seeks to serve, are supported and included in this area of economic growth in very difficult political and economic conditions.

### **Why is the Housing Executive Involved?**

Working closely within our estates to foster vibrant, stable and sustainable communities has always been a key priority for the Housing Executive. In September 2015, the vision of the first Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy was to create social capital and social value within local social housing communities, to stimulate and develop economically vibrant, self-sustaining communities by supporting and investing in the creation of community-owned, community-led social enterprises, harnessing local talent to deliver local solutions and work collectively to build a better future.

A key focus of the strategy was to influence, engage and enable individuals and communities within Housing Executive estates, some of which are rated to be among the most severely deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

*Employing people who live locally 'places the sector as an important vehicle for delivering draft Programme for Government outcomes around disadvantage, deprivation, reducing economic inactivity and delivering greater innovations.*

RE-BALANCING OF NI  
ECONOMY REPORT - SENI  
2019



WEE CHICKS CRECHE  
COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY  
NORTH BELFAST

The Housing Executive, along with other Northern Ireland public sector organisations, is charged with providing more and better services to social housing communities many of which have high concentrations of more vulnerable, marginalised households. As a large social landlord, with a duty of care to many thousands of tenants and their families, the Housing Executive is uniquely positioned to assist in improving the life chances of many who are living as the most marginalised and excluded in society.

With a strong community infrastructure already in place and relationships embedded across Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive was well-placed to achieve our core value of 'making a difference'.

The 2015-2018 Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy complements and expands the existing community-themed strategies, (the Community Cohesion Strategy, the Community Safety Strategy and the Community Involvement Strategy), which were being actively pursued by the Division to deliver against the Housing Executive's Corporate Outcome 3, which commits the organisation to foster 'vibrant sustainable communities'.

Together these community-enabling strategies create a continuum of social investment geared towards supporting and inspiring community-led initiatives.

The Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy provides additional important components to move a community project from inception to self-sustainment - via mentoring, funding, networking, best practice support and business signposting.

The unique position of the Housing Executive and its community involvement structure ensures that the resources released under the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy encourage entrepreneurship and stimulate growth which assists vulnerable groups. This in turn encourages investment in and development of local social economies within social housing estates or develops agencies which provide services to more disadvantaged communities.

### **Economic Circumstances of Housing Executive Tenants**

Statistics available from our 2017 Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey provide useful information on the economic status of our tenant base, notably:

- 22% of households stated in surveys conducted in 2017 that their employment status was unemployed;
- In the same survey, 37% had an income of less than £10,400

Benefit dependency is evidenced by the fact that 78% of Housing Executive tenants were in receipt of assistance with their housing costs in August 2019.



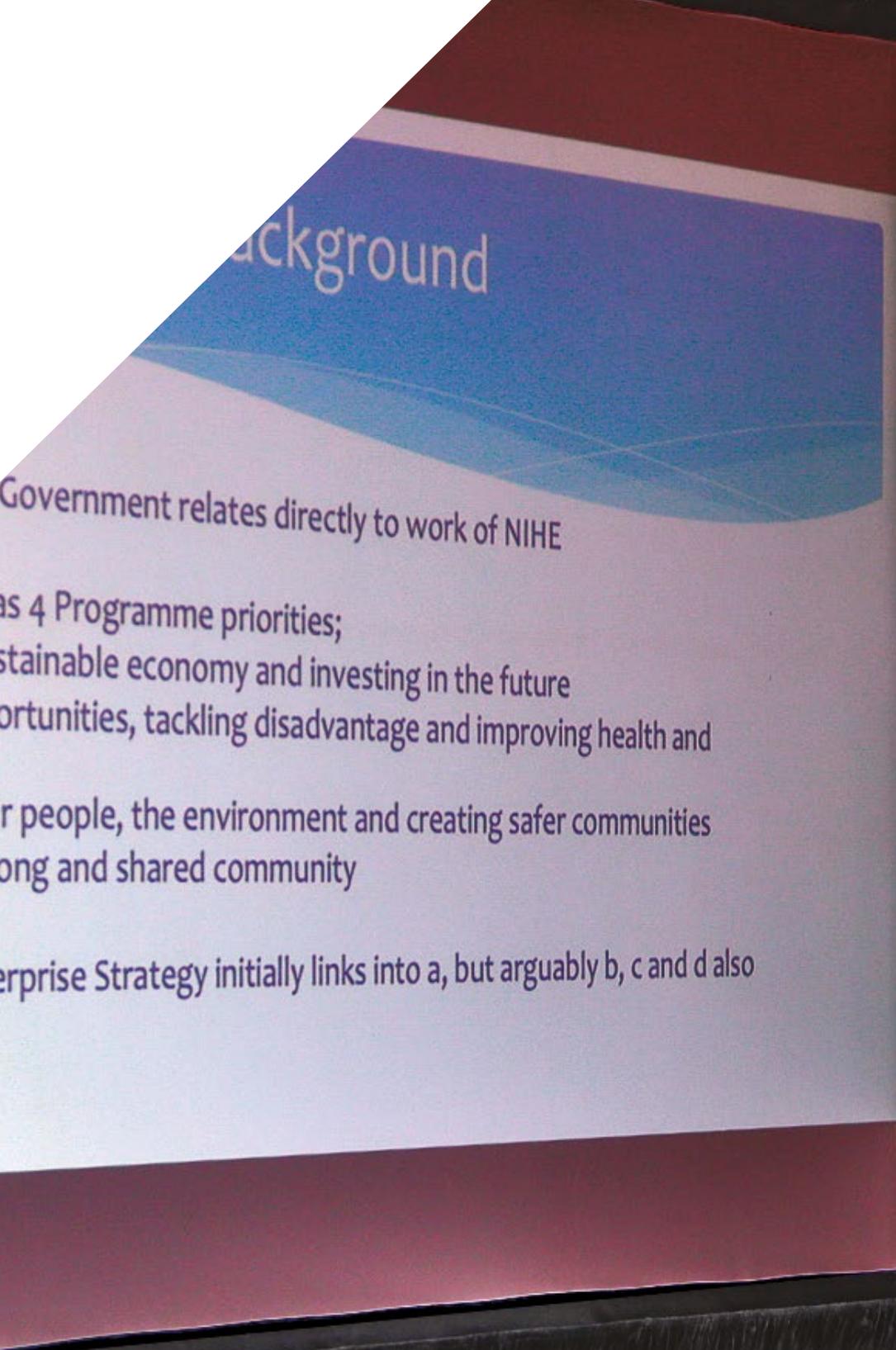
**22%**

**HOUSEHOLD  
STATUS IS  
UNEMPLOYED**



**37%**

**INCOME  
LESS THAN  
£10,400**



# Background

Government relates directly to work of NIHE

as 4 Programme priorities;  
sustainable economy and investing in the future  
opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and  
for people, the environment and creating safer communities  
strong and shared community

Enterprise Strategy initially links into a, but arguably b, c and d also



***The overarching purpose is to improve wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage, and driving economic growth.***

CONNOR SMITH, ASSISTANT MANAGER  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

# 2

## **Strategic Context**

### **Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021**

The Northern Ireland Assembly's Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21 sets out the ambition of the NI Executive for our society. There are 4 Programme Priorities

- Growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future
- Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and wellbeing
- Protecting our people, the environment and creating safer communities
- Building a strong and shared Community.

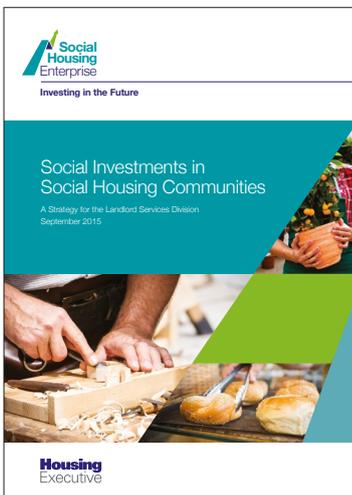
The programme focuses on major societal outcomes and provides a basis for all sectors, including housing, to contribute to the development of plans and actions. The overarching purpose is to improve wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage, and driving economic growth. A number of the individual outcomes relate directly, and, are complementary to, the work of the Housing Executive, in particular, its strategies and programmes aimed at improving health and wellbeing within our communities.

The evaluation of the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy 2015-2018 provides evidence of contribution to all 4 NI Programme for Government Programme priorities. It is also complementary to a number of Programmes for Government intended outcomes:

- We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy
- We have a more equal society - this outcome is about creating a society in which access to opportunity is open to everyone, whatever their identity. Indicators:
  - Reduce poverty
  - Increase economic opportunities for our most deprived communities
  - Reduce educational inequalities
  - Increase quality of life for people with disabilities
- We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential
- We have more people working in better jobs
- We care for others and help those in need
- We give our children and young people the best start in life

### **Department for Communities**

The Department for Communities' Work and Wellbeing Division has drafted a NI Employability Strategy which seeks to outline a range of strategic employment interventions to target economic inactivity and develop and implement a fresh suite of programmes and services to support people to find work and remain in work. The Strategy will give priority to addressing the problem of economic inactivity with a particular emphasis on tackling the barriers to employment faced



by those with a disability and/or health condition, by those with family or caring responsibilities, as well as those facing long term unemployment. Many people in such circumstances are living in Housing Executive homes.

The evaluation of the Housing Executive's 2015-18 Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy, (outlined in the next section), provides strong evidence that the strategy reached and engaged tenants, groups and communities which other education and training programmes have not managed to connect with. It makes sense therefore, given the priorities of the DfC NI Employability Strategy, that a key objective of the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will be to work in partnership with others to connect individuals, communities and opportunities. The Housing Executive is very well placed to work collaboratively in a variety of ways that are complementary to the DfC Programme.

For example, many long term unemployed tenants may have a general lack of skills, both in terms of qualifications levels and employability skills. They may need pre-employment skills development before moving into employment where they can develop their skills and qualifications once in work. Local social enterprises may provide volunteering or work experience opportunities, which provide such pre-employment development. And there is much work that can be done with schools and educational establishments which may assist future tenants to achieve their potential.

## Welfare Reform

The aim of Welfare Reform is to improve the incentive to work by making it easier for people who have temporary, low-paid work to move in and out of employment without losing benefits, and to simplify the benefits system by bringing together several benefits into a single payment. Through this scheme, it was envisaged that unemployed people will be encouraged to take on more work for any period of time that is available.

Our strategic social enterprise approach is consistent with the Welfare Reform agenda of the current government with its emphasis on reducing poverty and welfare dependency by addressing education, employability and worklessness. Social enterprises are uniquely placed to deliver outcomes in areas of social exclusion and deprivation and to empower social housing communities to tackle difficult issues which affect their quality of life.

Evidence indicates that workless adults are concentrated at the bottom of the household income distribution, with the majority being classed as economically inactive. Social Enterprise, in tackling economic inactivity and worklessness is complementary to the Housing Executive's Financial Inclusion and government anti-poverty policies in that it provides opportunities and pathways to employment.

## Housing Executive Corporate Plan 2017/18-2020/21

The Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy has made and will continue to make a significant contribution to the key strategic themes of the Housing Executive's Corporate Plan 2017-21.

There is a commitment, within the plan, to continue to reach out to the customer in innovative ways in order to improve customer experience and to help deliver even better services in the years ahead. Part of this commitment will involve continuing to implement a Social Enterprise Programme and work with the Housing Community Network to shape services for the future.

Over the last three years, the complementary range of social investment funding streams, (Community Cohesion, Community Safety and Community Involvement and Social (Housing) Enterprise), have been providing successful confidence-building pathways in locations which are facing complex and severe challenges. The continuum of social investment provides opportunities for natural progression from very simple one-off projects funded by a small community grant, to larger projects and then more comprehensive programme delivery through to fully-fledged, self-sustaining social enterprises.

Under the 'Places' theme of our Corporate Plan, the Housing Executive statement of purpose is:

*"To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places."*

The new Social Enterprise Plus Strategy, in conjunction with our three community strategies, aims to support the development of economically active places and will work collaboratively to deliver this purpose.

The last three years have demonstrated that a strong partnership approach is required to meet the objectives of the strategy. Creative collaborative working arrangements will help to continue 'to ensure that everyone has access to a good affordable home in a safe and healthy community.'

## Community Planning

In April 2015, the reform of Local Government resulted in the creation of 11 new councils. The new councils were given the responsibility of leading the community planning process for their district. Community Planning aims to improve the connection between all the tiers of government and wider society through partnership working to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone. Community plans identify long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of districts and the people who live there.

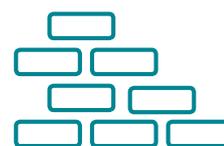
As a statutory partner, the Housing Executive has been involved in Community Planning Partnerships which have been established in each district comprising council, statutory bodies, agencies and the wider community, as well as the community and voluntary sector. The partners seek to develop and implement a shared plan for promoting

## The 3 key themes of the Corporate Plan



### PEOPLE

**TO PROVIDE HOUSING SOLUTIONS, SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND**



### PROPERTY

**TO ENSURE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO A QUALITY HOME WHICH IS SAFE, AFFORDABLE, WARM AND APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS**



### PLACE

**TO WORK WITH OTHERS TO DEVELOP, MAINTAIN AND SUSTAIN ATTRACTIVE, CONNECTED, HEALTHY AND ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE PLACES**

*The impacts of our social investments will help to transform local social housing communities and the lives of the individuals and families within them, by increasing inward investment, creating new and innovative self-sustaining development opportunities and improving life chances*

HOUSING EXECUTIVE  
CORPORATE PLAN 2017-2021

the well-being of an area, improving community cohesion and the quality of life for all citizens.

Many Housing Executive staff, across all divisions, play a key role in contributing to economic, health and local regeneration action plans across Northern Ireland. Among the many points of contact, Housing Services Area Managers bring detailed local knowledge and links with the many community groups with whom they engage and Social Enterprise staff support local councils in respect of employment workshops, locality planning, dragon's den type events all of which assist local elected representatives and council staff in providing advice on funding award bids or interventions to move people toward becoming more employable.

### **Strategic and Operational Stakeholder Engagement**

The growth in the social economy and the vision of the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy in 2015 have created a range of new internal and external partnerships for the Housing Executive to become involved in with a view to improving social housing communities.

#### **External Stakeholders**

##### ***i. Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG)***

In recognition of the strategic importance of the social economy, the NI Executive's draft Industrial Strategy, "Driving Inclusive Sustainable Growth", commits to providing support to the social enterprise sector. As a result, the SEPG is comprised of officials nominated by Northern Ireland Civil Service Board to represent their respective departments as nominated "champions" for the social enterprise sector.

The policy group is chaired by the Department for the Economy, and representatives from the Departments of Health, Finance, Communities and Infrastructure attend along with the Executive Office, Strategic Investment Board, SOLACE, SEUPB, and SENI. Housing Executive Social Enterprise Managers are represented on this key policy group and, with the strong local housing community connection, can provide two-way feedback on initiatives and collaborative innovation.

SEPG members are expected to identify opportunities within their respective departmental policy areas where support for the social enterprise sector might be strengthened through an agreed action plan within the context of the Executive's Industrial Strategy, setting the scene for increased innovation and creative partnership working.

Economic inactivity, underachievement in education and tackling poverty is an issue which transcends departmental boundaries and it is anticipated that there will be strategic engagement and partnerships with members of the group via the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy.

## ***ii. Social Enterprise NI (SENI)***

Social Enterprise NI (SENI) was set up by the Department for the Economy as the independent representative body for social enterprises and social entrepreneurs across Northern Ireland. Their role is to connect, support, develop and sustain vibrant businesses to create social change throughout Northern Ireland.

They are a member-led organisation and a gateway for social enterprises in Northern Ireland. The Housing Executive has partnered SENI since its inception, by introducing recipients of Social (Housing) Enterprise funding to SENI and its network of contacts across the sector and by supporting the extensive range of networking stakeholder events organised by SENI across Northern Ireland. This collaborative working has been mutually beneficial and continues to expand.

## ***Internal Stakeholders***

### ***iii. The Social Enterprise (Social Clauses) Working Group***

The Housing Executive's Central Housing Forum nominated a number of representatives from both urban and rural areas to scrutinise the activities of the social enterprise strategy in the first instance including the implementation of the social clauses in the context of 'Buy Social'. The representatives of this group who report back to the Central Housing Forum also include representatives of key influencers such as SENI, the Strategic Investment Board, Supporting Communities, and senior Housing Executive managers.

### ***iv. Social Clauses within Maintenance Contracts***

The inclusion of Social Clauses within public procurement contracts is a statutory requirement for all public authorities and agencies. Buy Social clauses require public bodies to ensure successful private contractors deliver on specific targets relating to work experience, training, apprenticeships and, more recently, job creation within their contract period. Targets are proportionate to a contract's value.

In 2016, Landlord Services Division - facilitated by the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy - introduced supplementary social clauses to its construction related contracts. The existing supplementary social clauses require each successful contractor to engage with local communities and to support social enterprise development within respective Contract Lot areas, while also delivering the key services for which they were appointed.

Implementation of this element of the social clauses has been more challenging than originally anticipated. As such, the clauses are currently subject to review.

The review will deliver robust, evidence-based recommendations derived from a combination of internal, community, and contractor feedback and the Social Enterprise Working Group will continue to monitor and influence this area of work.

## **Rural Communities**

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 came into operation for the Housing Executive in June 2018. The Act places a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to have due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, plans and services.

Social enterprises can play a vital role in contributing to the vision of vibrant, shared, healthy and sustainable rural communities. As an example, an “Assisted Living” pilot has been implemented in the West Area in conjunction with the Western Trust Senior Occupational Therapists. The concept of this innovative prize-winning initiative was developed initially as a result of an inspirational community social enterprise which had been supported by the Housing Executive for a number of years.

The potential for this pilot to diversify and provide technical solutions to community safety and tenancy sustainment in isolated rural areas is apparent as the technology concerned can address social isolation, reduce fear of crime and reduce the immediate need for family involvement in certain cases.

The new Social Enterprise Strategy will continue to ensure that people in rural areas are encouraged and enabled to have fair and equitable access to the support available through the Social Enterprise Programme. This will be achieved by carrying out targeted promotional activities in rural areas, attending rural events, working with the Housing Executive’s Rural Unit, internal managers from rural areas and our Rural Residents’ Forum. We will also engage with external rural stakeholders via a range of fora including Community Planning Partnerships.

## **Equality**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.

The Housing Executive's Equality Scheme sets out proposals to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

This new strategy will align with the legislation and actively serve all those who live in our communities. We will do this through promotion of the strategy in the following forums on a regular basis

- The Strategic Cohesion Forum
- Rural Residents Forum
- Disability Forum
- Youth Forum

During the lifetime of this strategy we will work with all sections of our communities and the fora listed above to implement and raise awareness of the opportunities presented via the social enterprise strategy.

Section 75 monitoring throughout the Social Enterprise funding process will continue to be captured.



***An outstanding feature of the 2015-18 strategy was the network of connections made between interested entrepreneurial individuals and agencies within the sector.***

**MUDDY PAWS, DOG WALKING  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, BELFAST**

# 3

## **Review of the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy 2015-2018**

*The wide ranging activities supported by the Housing Executive's Social Enterprise Intervention created significant social value for the participants and their communities.*

**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION  
REPORT 2019**

**The aim of the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy in 2015-2018 was to support communities by investing in social housing enterprises and by identifying opportunities for growth of the social economy sector within our estates and communities.**

The supporting objectives of the Housing Executive's Social Housing Enterprise Strategy were to:

1. Develop local social (housing) enterprises and social entrepreneurs
2. Support them to access the funding and business support they require to generate wealth for their social housing communities
3. Create opportunities for social enterprises to deliver key outcomes which impact positively on the well-being within those communities and neighbourhoods
4. Encourage and facilitate partnering arrangements with other key stakeholders to optimise local social housing enterprises initiatives and outcomes
5. Encourage and support the social enterprise sector in Northern Ireland to grow within social housing areas in order to build sustainable neighbourhoods.

A total of £1.4m was invested over the lifetime of the 3 year strategy, delivered through three annual investment programmes. An independent evaluation of the strategy was undertaken and the key findings are detailed in Appendix 1.

There were many outstanding results highlighted by the independent evaluation but the main achievements can be summarised as follows:

a) New social enterprises and employment



**NEW  
SOCIAL  
ECONOMIES  
CREATED**

**39**



**EXISTING  
SOCIAL  
ECONOMIES  
SUPPORTED**

**50**



**NEW  
PART-TIME  
JOBS  
CREATED**

**115**



**EXISTING  
PART-TIME  
JOBS  
SUSTAINED**

**94**



**NEW  
FULL-TIME  
JOBS  
CREATED**

**37**



**EXISTING  
FULL-TIME  
JOBS  
SUSTAINED**

**100**



**ADDITIONAL  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS  
EACH WEEK**

**3663**



**VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES  
CREATED  
OR SUSTAINED**

**940**



**TRAINING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
CREATED  
OR SUSTAINED**

**1802**

A summary of the consultation and engagement findings show the following benefits for participants:



**community-led economic activity**

*in social housing communities experiencing extreme multiple deprivation*



**individual and organisational financial capability**



**individual and organisational business acumen**



**community capacity (skills, knowledge and confidence)**



**engaged in positive relationships with residents from different community backgrounds**



**identified social resilience**



**improved social inclusion**



**increased sense of place**



**improved levels of collaboration and partnership working**



**health and wellbeing**



**sustainability of community-led services**



**access to affordable services**

*The success of this programme is in engaging communities which other employment and training programmes have struggled to reach.*

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION  
REPORT 2019

## **b) Skills, training and work experience opportunities**

A key focus of the programme was investment in social enterprises that created opportunities for training. Since 2015, the Housing Executive collaborated with others to create three new accredited social enterprise qualifications:

- Working in partnership with the University of Ulster and the Flax Trust, the Housing Executive supported 13 tenants to complete the Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise.
- OCN level 2 and level 3 in Social Enterprise is now delivered through our funding arrangement with Supporting Communities and a total of 107 tenants have so far been successful in gaining this qualification

A total of 1802 individuals received training support through the small awards programme. The small awards programme opened a range of opportunities such as training to become care workers and domestic assistants and SIA and CSR training for entry to the hospitality and construction industries. In addition a total of 940 volunteer opportunities were created through work experience and on many occasions this work experience leads to greater employability.

## **c) Benefits to participants**

The consultation and engagement undertaken during the independent evaluation identified that the wide-ranging activities stimulated by the Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy created significant social value for the participants and their communities (see p23). These were particularly related to supporting objective three of the 2015-2018 Strategy - 'create opportunities for social enterprises to deliver key outcomes which impact positively on the well-being within those communities and neighbourhoods'.

## **d) Enabling, supporting, networking opportunities**

An outstanding feature of the 2015-18 strategy was the network of connections made between interested entrepreneurial individuals and agencies within the sector. The success of the relationships built, the many introductions and links between social enterprises at various stages of development cannot be underestimated. It was an exceptional programme offering a unique package of support, funding and advice from other entrepreneurs, leading to opportunities and benefits and an unforeseen level of engagement within our communities.

Over 115 best practice visits during 2015-18 were hosted and these visits were instrumental in assisting organisations and social enterprises by showcasing best practice models across Northern Ireland. The visits provided an arena for discussion of mutual



**BEST  
PRACTICE  
VISITS  
2015-18**

**115**

challenges, cross-fertilisation of ideas and problem solving. An extensive range of opportunities to learn from others who were at a more advanced stage were afforded to a large number of participants.

The quality, range and longevity of the developmental support provided within the 2015-2018 strategy was considered to be 'exceptional' by the independent evaluator and some of it 'not available elsewhere'. The evaluation identified additional good relations benefits from the social enterprise programme as groups willingly engaged with groups from other areas to share problem-solving experiences.

The learning from this 'enabling, supporting and networking' will be brought forward into the new strategy.

### e) Return on Investment

Assessment of the outputs and outcomes of the investment made from 2015-2018 was used to identify both a fiscal and Social Return on the Investment (SROI). The approach is a tried and tested methodology based on the outcomes framework that is based on the theory of change:

"The theory of change is an account of how the organisation takes in resources (inputs) to do its work (activities) which leads to direct results (outputs) and longer term or more significant results (outcomes), as well as the part of those outcomes the organisation can take credit for (impacts)."

The theory of change is central to SROI, as it "tells the story" of how an organisation utilises its inputs to deliver activities, producing outputs which, in turn, create outcomes for the stakeholders. A SROI captures what are the primary changes because of the initial investment.

Using the SROI methodology the identified primary outcomes were given a financial value to identify the impact created by the intervention. The report reflects the proposed impact created by the activities delivered by the programme. The impact analysis is based on the Outcomes Framework that investigates how investment (inputs) in activities creates outputs and outcomes.

#### **IMPACT BASED ON THE RETURN TO THE INDIVIDUAL**

**£1 ▶▶▶▶ £4.19**

The continued return for every £1 invested FIVE YEARS after the initial investment is £4.19

#### **IMPACT BASED ON THE RETURN TO THE PUBLIC PURSE**

**£1 ▶▶▶▶ £4.52**

The continued return for every £1 invested FIVE YEARS after the initial investment is £4.52

#### **SOCIAL RETURN IN INVESTMENT**

**£1 = £4.97**

#### **f) Asset Use**

The Housing Executive has continued to contribute to the social economy through utilisation of assets including a small number of residential properties or community houses and 5 commercial property lettings.

#### **g) Increasing Communication and Stakeholder Engagement**

The Housing Executive hosted a conference, entitled '#startitupNI' in order to showcase some enterprises, operating from within social housing communities. Over 200 stakeholders from across Northern Ireland attended the best practice event and many new relationships were formed as a result.

An interactive GIS map detailing, on a geographical basis, all the investments made on the previous investment scheme was developed during the lifetime of the strategy and is used to provide insight into the geographic spread of social enterprise so that areas of lower take-up can be targeted.

10k



## CASE STUDY

### Bosco Bakery

Artillery Youth Group run a well-established youth facility in the heart of the New Lodge, a single identity community experiencing generational multiple deprivation in North Belfast. The programme works with young adults who experience extensive challenges and barriers to securing employment.

#### What support did the Housing Executive provide?

The Housing Executive provided developmental support, liaised with the Housing Executive Commercial Lettings team, provided £10k capital support and introduced and promoted the service to potential users.

#### What was the change directly attributed to the intervention?

A previously vacant commercial let, in an area of multiple deprivation, was renovated to provide a high quality, affordable deli where marginalised young adults are trained and provided with transferable skills which have enabled them to secure local employment.

#### What was the legacy of the support provided?

'The Housing Executive were brave... they listened to us, a youth service with no previous experience in retail, but saw beyond that we had a great idea but needed some support to make it a reality.

No-one else was prepared to do that... because of their willingness to support us both financially and developmentally we have been able to create a Social Housing Enterprise run, managed and used by local people.

In the year we have been operational we have created jobs for five local people who for a variety of barriers had not been able to secure permanent employment previously.

We also have worked in partnership with Artillery Youth Club to develop a structured, supportive pathway to employment programme for 26 young adults with no previous experience of working... 13 of them are working in entry level jobs.'

*A Senior Manager in Bosco Bakery*

50k



## CASE STUDY

### Hive

Hive Studio is a community focused interactive media studio based in Creggan in the heart of Derry/Londonderry. Hive evolved from an earlier project developed by Creggan Enterprises and Guildhall Press under the original name of 'the Digital Art Studio' and funded initially through the DSD Capital Fund in 2012. The success of this pilot led the product promoters to believe that although the project could not survive as a 100% grant funded entity it did have the potential to be developed as a social economy.

#### What support did the Housing Executive provide?

In April 2016 Creggan Enterprises received funding from the programme to establish the Hive as a new stand-alone Social Enterprise. This Community Interest Company now provides a range of commercial and subsidised digital services to the community and local businesses in the North West.

#### What was the change directly attributed to the intervention?

'The support provided particularly in relation to the development of our SMART Home Assistive Technology has been particularly impactful. The Housing Executive staff took time to introduce the Hive Team to a range of relevant stakeholders to help raise the profile of our products through the affirmation of a large regional body.'

#### What was the legacy of the support provided?

In September 2017, Hive studios in association with the Housing Executive selected a number of local homes to participate in an Assistive Technology Smart Home Pilot Programme.

The outcome of the pilot project provided a real time example of the impact/potential benefit arising from the installation of a variety of modern Smart Technologies within the homes of participants, with a variety of different needs.

At the core of this system was the use of the clients own voice recognition systems (Amazon, Google or Echo) to trigger the automation of a variety of functions using connected smart devices.

50k

space

creative people



## CASE STUDY

### **SPACE** Artisan Upcycling and Crafting

SPACE is a community organisation, located in Warrenpoint whose core aim and objective is to support individuals and families in need, helping them find strengths, overcome difficulties and build better futures. Services are flexible, and innovative.

#### **What support did the Housing Executive provide?**

Their social enterprise - Love your Space (LYS) initially generated its income from selling donated and up-cycled goods. The organisation wanted to provide a limited number of quality supported volunteer and training opportunities for those returning to work after ill health, or for those with additional needs in a funky creative retail facility. The Housing Executive staff not only supported the organisation with a fiscal award, but they also helped secured a shop space in Newry Town.

#### **What was the change directly attributed to the intervention?**

The CEO of SPACE said of the programme:

The Housing Executive staff... they believe in us and what we do and more importantly they rate us and what we do. When I won Social Enterprise leader of the year in 2017 they were like proud parents saying that's fabulous but what are you going to do next...

#### **What was the legacy of the support provided?**

The legacy was the platform their support provided.

When SPACE started making artisan candles with adults with additional needs the support and publicity provided through this programme contributed to the organisation securing a contract with a large local chemist chain to be the supplier of their luxury candle range.



***Community learning and development programmes ... will improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged including children and young people.***

**BOSCO FOOTBALL GROUP  
DERRY/LONDONDERRY**

# 4

## **Social Enterprise Plus 2020-2024**

**Having reviewed the successful impact of the 2015-18 Social (Housing) Enterprise Strategy, it can be seen that its contribution to the Housing Executive's key strategic objectives of 'building stronger communities' and 'delivering quality services' are comprehensive and wide-ranging.**

In seeking to build on this positive work, the new Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will focus on the struggle to tackle disadvantage by supporting individuals who live in our homes and social housing communities to realise their full potential. Increasing the levels of skills and training among our tenant base and providing tailored solutions required to move people into employment will help prevent individuals and families from falling into poverty and regenerate the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Community learning and development programmes will provide opportunities and the possibility of a route out of unemployment and economic inactivity which will improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged including children and young people.

We will work with partners to find new and better ways of nurturing the contribution of community leaders, developing social enterprise leaders of the future. Collaboration with others will ensure that our communities, particularly those experiencing deprivation, receive continuous community development support.

Going forward we have incorporated learning from the implementation of the 2015-2018 strategy into to the new Social Enterprise Plus strategic plan. The objectives of the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will continue to generate interventions which create or sustain employment opportunities and pathways with the aim of decreasing benefit dependency by job creation and sustainment within our communities.

The new 4 year Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2019-2023 has 3 key objectives:



**STRENGTHEN  
OUR  
COMMUNITIES**



**IMPROVE OUR  
CUSTOMERS  
ECONOMIC  
CIRCUMSTANCES**



**WORK IN  
PARTNERSHIP  
WITH OTHERS**



## **OBJECTIVE 1**

### **To strengthen our communities**

**Investing in social enterprises which create products and services for and on behalf of Housing Executive communities, thereby helping to create a place where people want to live, work, to visit and invest in.**

**Social Enterprise has played a key role in introducing, strengthening and increasing the social enterprise sector within our communities by developing partnerships with others in the sector, brokering support and encouraging and assisting social enterprises to provide new products and services.**

We will continue to do this by:

- Providing advice and assistance to potential social entrepreneurs
- Linking or signposting to other community funding streams
- Supporting new social enterprises setting up to address unmet needs
- Helping existing services diversify into social enterprises
- Helping newly formed social enterprises to develop and expand
- Investing in line with governing criteria to help grow new social enterprises
- Collaborating with statutory agencies or other agencies
- Using other housing assets such as commercial property or land to facilitate social enterprises where appropriate
- Investing in established Social Enterprises to create additional opportunities in terms of employment and work experience

## OBJECTIVE 2

### To improve the economic circumstances of our customers

**Enabling and supporting employment pathways, training and volunteering opportunities to assist disadvantaged or vulnerable people to fulfil their potential.**

**We want to tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity by supporting housing customers within our communities to realise their economic potential. We also want to reduce economic inactivity and encourage entrepreneurship among our customers by directly assisting them to sustain existing and develop new social enterprises.**

We will continue to do this by:

- Opening conversations with those who are less-included or who may be more difficult to reach
- Increasing access to volunteering opportunities, work experience and apprenticeships where we make an investment in a new or existing social enterprise
- Working within our communities through the HCN Youth Forum to prepare young people for the world of work.
- Developing Community Champions for Social Enterprise
- Providing or arranging access to education and pre-employment skills where possible
- Proactively encouraging and engaging with agencies and initiatives such as Young Enterprise, Social Supermarkets, Social Prescribing and Adult Literacy Groups to connect individuals, opportunities and communities through our infrastructure
- Providing training opportunities through our Business Start-up, Education & Training funding stream
- Collaborating with others to ensure our customers can avail of the three new accredited social enterprise qualifications. The OCN Levels 2 and 3 in Social Enterprise delivered by Supporting Communities, and the advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise through the University of Ulster will create career opportunities in the third sector and maximise learning of the sector so that social enterprise can become a career option.



**IMPROVE OUR  
CUSTOMERS  
ECONOMIC  
CIRCUMSTANCES**



### OBJECTIVE 3

#### To work in partnership with others

**Proactively encourage new or enhanced partnership arrangements to connect individuals, communities and opportunities**

**As a result of the Social Housing Enterprise Strategy we have developed partnerships within the third sector and elsewhere over the last three years. In Social Enterprise Plus we will build on existing relationships and collaborate creatively with others from all sectors.**

**We will work with others, including the community learning and development sector, to ensure that our communities, particularly those experiencing deprivation, receive the continuous community development support needed to define their objectives, initiate community activity, develop their skills and run local assets and services in an enterprising way.**

We will continue to do this by:

- Working with current and new partners in the development of our programme
- Working in partnership with our Housing Community Network, front line staff and other policy areas
- Partnering with others especially in the areas of health, education and employability to create opportunity through development to help people realise their full potential and improve their well-being
- Identifying and sharing good practice and facilitating best practice networking visits
- Continuing to support Economic Development and Community Planning initiatives with a range of councils to address poverty and disadvantage
- Encouraging imaginative collaborative arrangements leading to better coordination of services and shared impacts
- Ensuring the social enterprise programme is promoted through various formats to both our internal and external stakeholders

### How will we measure success?

A robust monitoring programme will actively measure and monitor the impact of Social Enterprise investment in our communities. An annual action plan will be developed establishing actions and expected outcomes for each year of the strategy and reported through our Board, Senior Management Team and our Central Housing Forum.

The key outcomes will include:

- Job creation and sustainment,
- New enterprises created
- Enterprises sustained or expanded
- Training and volunteering opportunities provided

### Social Return on Investment (SROI) Outcomes

A robust monitoring programme will actively measure and monitor the impact of our investment (both financial and non-financial) on our communities.

Social return on investment (SROI) is a principles-based method for measuring extra-financial value (such as environmental or social value) not currently reflected or involved in conventional financial accounts. Capturing the SROI is key to understanding the non-financial impact. We commit to measuring the SROI within the Social Enterprise Plus Programme.

### Government Funding Database

The Government Funding Database allows public sector funders to share information. We will continue to update and monitoring this system in the process of awarding public funds.

### User Experience

Stakeholder consultation will be used to gauge both the processes of the Social Enterprise Team and whether any additional low-cost services could be considered or sourced.





***The Housing Executive has a long history of providing resources to assist in community development and regeneration.***

WOMEN'S TEC #NOTJUSTFORBOYS

# 5

## Financing the Strategy

**As a social landlord it is anticipated that the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy will put money into the economy and can be used by tenants to pay rent.**

It is proposed that the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024 will be funded up to a maximum of £300,000 for the first two years.

At the end of the second year, a report of outcomes will be brought to the Board for review and decision on funding for the next two years.

In addition, it is proposed to provide an innovation fund of up to £40,000 per annum to support best practice visits and assist in funding educational or work experience opportunities for our tenants.



**300k**  
**FUNDING**  
**FOR NEXT**  
**2 YEARS**

### Other Support and Development Resources

The Housing Executive has a long history of providing resources to assist in community development and regeneration. We will continue to support our communities where practical to do so, going forward through the provision of:

- **Residential properties or community houses**  
Rent-free places to meet and work for community and voluntary organisations.
- **Commercial property lettings**  
Where there are long term void commercial properties within our portfolio, we may consider these for social enterprise use where they meet the objectives of the programme.
- **Land Leasehold**  
We will work with our colleagues in Place Shaping where an approach for land is made in relation to social enterprise use.
- **Meanwhile use**  
Where practical we may consider interim use of land, property or other facilities for social enterprise use.

### Tiered financing Programme

INVESTMENT	TARGET AUDIENCE	AWARD VALUE
Business start-up, Education and Training	Primarily to support individuals on business development, education and training. Also applicable to groups.	Up to £1000
Embryonic	Newly established social enterprises within or serving Housing Executive Communities.	Up to £10,000
Emerging and established	Emerging and established social enterprises which are more developed, but still require support to grow the enterprise and enhance services.	Up to £25,000



***The focus will be on improving public understanding of social enterprises and their contribution to our housing communities and the local economy.***

SPACE ARTISAN UPCYCLING AND CRAFTING  
WARRENPOINT

# 6

## **Next Steps**

### **Action and Communication Plans**

Next steps will include drafting Action and Communication Plans which will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. These will be built around the strategic objectives for businesses, individuals and partnerships.

The Communication Plan will be drawn up in consultation with key stakeholders and agreed by our Central Housing Forum and will include awareness building sessions, ways in which we can disseminate information and share best practice.

The focus will be on improving public understanding of social enterprises and their contribution to our housing communities and the local economy.

Areas of low uptake and areas identified in collaboration with the Housing Executive's Rural Unit will continue to be a focus for information sharing and encouragement.

The Action Plan will focus on growing and strengthening social enterprises, supporting individuals to achieve their full potential and working with others to further support the development of social innovation, paths to employment and a way forward for people who live in social housing communities.

## Appendix 1: Key findings of the 2019 Independent Evaluation, set against the Supporting Objectives

2015-2018 SOCIAL (HOUSING) ENTERPRISE STRATEGY		
2019 INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE 2015-2018 SOCIAL (HOUSING) ENTERPRISE STRATEGY		
Objectives	Outputs	Customer Feedback & Outcomes
<p><b>1. Develop local social(housing enterprises &amp; social entrepreneurs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39 new social economies were created or progressed</li> <li>• 50 existing social economies were further developed</li> <li>• 37 full-time jobs &amp; 115 new part-time jobs were created as a direct result of the intervention</li> <li>• 100 full-time jobs &amp; 94 part-time jobs were sustained as a direct result of the intervention</li> <li>• 940 volunteer opportunities created or sustained as a direct result of the intervention</li> <li>• 1802 training opportunities created or sustained because of the intervention</li> </ul>	<p>“The Housing Executive are helping to make Social Enterprise a career or business model of choice for a range of individuals and organisations who previously would not have considered it as an option. This programme provides a practical , accessible pathway to employment for communities for whom traditional interventions have not worked’ (John Mc Mullan Social Enterprise NI)</p> <p>“This investment has increased our capacity which in turn has led to the creation of new jobs and more placements opportunities for vulnerable adults. I think there are bodies who could take their lead from the Housing Executive and their new practical approach to how they support and encourage social enterprise. They are a great example for the other statutory agencies.” (Chief Executive of AEL David Hunter)</p>
<p><b>2. Support them to access the funding &amp; business support they require to generate wealth for their social housing communities</b></p>		
<p><b>3. Create opportunities for social enterprises to deliver key outcomes which impact positively on the well-being within those communities &amp; neighbourhoods</b></p>	<p>The Independent Evaluation Team consulted extensively with participants and found the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 82% of participants &amp; users identified reduced social isolation</li> <li>• 85% of participants &amp; users identified increased social resilience</li> <li>• 85% of participants &amp; users identified increased health and mental well-being (mental, emotional, physical and social)</li> <li>• 92% of participants &amp; users identified improved social inclusion</li> <li>• 88% of participants &amp; users identified an increased sense of place</li> <li>• 92% of participants &amp; users identified increased community-led economic activity in social housing communities experiencing extreme multiple deprivation</li> <li>• 3663 additional volunteer hours each week undertaken(equivalent to £30,073.23 based on adult minimum wage of £8.21)</li> </ul>	<p>“The longevity of the relationship development between the participants and the small Housing Executive Social Enterprise Team and the quality and range of the developmental support was in all cases considered to be exceptional” Independent Evaluation Report 2019)</p> <p>“For those who volunteer within BKN, having the chance to use their skills to create beautiful objects from waste materials is an important step in regaining purpose, building confidence and contributing positively to the local environment and economy.” (Yvonne Fallis, BKN Up-cycling co-ordinator)</p>

<p><b>4. Encourage and facilitate partnering arrangements with other key stakeholders to optimise local social housing enterprise initiatives &amp; outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of participants &amp; users identified improved connectivity between the community and voluntary sectors</li> <li>• The relationship which has developed between the Housing Executive team and local third level education /training providers has resulted in 120 Housing Executive tenants achieving an accredited qualification in Social Enterprise ( 107x OCN level 2 and 13 x Diploma in Social Enterprise).</li> <li>• The Social (Housing) Enterprise Team have also developed relationships with the Enterprise Teams in each of the eleven council areas to ensure that a network of regional support is created.</li> <li>• The team's relationship with Social Enterprise (NI) has continued to grow with both organisations managing to add a layer of additionality to their counterparts' work.</li> <li>• The team have to date undertaken 115 best practice visits, introducing groups at different stages of development with a view to creating a peer support network.</li> </ul>	<p>"The relationship felt like a partnership of equals, the Housing Executive team respected that we as a successful existing social Enterprise had an expertise and transferable skills which could support new and emerging social economies in our local area." (Paul Roberts Ashton Community Trust)</p> <p>"Commitment to partnership working was formally recognised twice in the last year, firstly when the programme was awarded a Northern Ireland Housing Council Award for innovation and secondly when the programme was recognised as the 2018 Statutory Stakeholder of the year by Social Enterprise NI." (Quarter Accountants Independent Evaluation Report 2019)</p> <p>"One element of this partnership working which could easily be overlooked is the high level of peace and reconciliation work which is undertaken by skilled experienced team members' build on their personal relationships with the groups to encourage them to engage with groups with similar economic aspirations who face similar challenges but who come from different community backgrounds. " (Independent Evaluation Report 2019)</p>
<p><b>5. Encourage &amp; support the social enterprises sector in NI to grow within social housing areas in order to build sustainable neighbourhoods</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86% identified access to affordable services for their community</li> <li>• 92 % identified that their engagement had contributed to the community-led social, economic and physical regeneration of social housing communities</li> <li>• 95% of participants identified increased individual and organisational financial capability</li> <li>• 99 % identified increased sustainability of community-led services</li> <li>• 91 % identified improved community capacity (skills, knowledge and confidence)</li> <li>• 99% identified increased awareness of the possibility of developing a social economy</li> <li>• 90% identified increased individual and organisational business acumen</li> <li>• Four out of the six finalists in the Social Housing Enterprise NI 2019 Social Value Conference were clients of the Social Enterprise Programme.</li> <li>• The overall Social Enterprise and Social Entrepreneur of the year were Acceptable Enterprises LTD and their CEO David Hunter have had a developmental relationship with this project for a number of years.</li> </ul>	<p>"Because of their (NI) Housing Executive Social Enterprise) willingness to support us both financially and developmentally we have been able to create a Social Housing Enterprise run, managed and used by local people...In the year we have been operational we have created jobs for five local people who for a variety of barriers had not been able to secure permanent employment previously. We also have worked in partnership with Artillery Youth Club to develop a structured, supportive pathway to employment programme for 26 young adults with no previous experience of working ... 13 of them are working in entry level jobs" (Harry Murphy Bosco Bakery)</p> <p>Although the projects considered ranged in scale, geographic location and focus there were several common threads which linked the support provided through the intervention;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The longevity of the relationship development between the participants and the small Project Team</li> <li>• The quality and range of the developmental support provided was in all cases considered to be exceptional</li> <li>• The active signposting of the scheme which physically introduced stakeholders to new individuals/organisations who could be of use to their fledgling business (Independent Evaluation Report 2019)</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Action Plan Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024

### Year 1 Action Plan

#### Introduction

Many social enterprises start out as a response to a situation that local citizens and their communities face. They are strongly rooted in villages, towns and neighbourhoods, and increasingly among groups that come together based on shared interests and needs.

Our ambition is to create the conditions where community enterprise can flourish and increase their impact for Housing Executive communities. For this reason, in March 2020, prior to the outbreak of the covid -19 pandemic, our Central Housing Forum helped set and agree the following priorities for investment funding:

1. Address unmet needs in our housing estates
2. Assist existing Housing Executive community groups who want to transform their services into a viable social enterprises
3. Grow the Social Enterprise Sector within our estates
4. Increase youth outreach in our catchment areas
5. Education/skills development
6. Job creation/employability
7. Health & Social Care
8. Poverty and disadvantage

The Social Enterprise Plus Awards Programme had been due to launch mid March 2020 but was postponed as a result of the pandemic. Meetings however with the Social Clauses/ Social Enterprise Working Group have continued taking cognisance of both Covid 19-related community challenges and needs and the action plan has been adapted accordingly:

ACTIONS - WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT?	ANTICIPATED OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
<b>Delivery of Objective 1 - strengthen our communities</b>			
Provide <u>Advice, Guidance, Connection and Support</u> to individuals and community groups on social enterprise and opportunities	We will enable social enterprises to get off the ground or enhance their service delivery by providing advice, introductions and exploring appropriate funding opportunities with them. We will use other housing assets such as commercial property or land to facilitate social enterprises where appropriate	New and/or enhanced social enterprises will be created, with new jobs, training and volunteer opportunities sustained and created	Aim to launch funding July 2020
Provide <u>at least one opportunity</u> for social enterprises and other participants to come together to share learning, to network and to learn.	When government guidelines allow, we will host a conference for Social Enterprises and individuals who have been both successful and unsuccessful so that learning is maximised.	Helpful connections and interactions are made possible leading to stronger interconnections and joint working	Jan - Mar 2021

ACTIONS - WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT?	ANTICIPATED OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
<b>Delivery of Objective 2 - improve the economic circumstances of our customers by:</b>			
<u>Skills Development &amp; Education</u> Encourage entrepreneurship	We will to deliver an accredited entrepreneurial qualification on request across our communities. We will follow up with community groups who receive this qualification	Education and personal development will assist in raising individual potential to improve their own economic circumstances and support others to help themselves.	Sept 2020 onwards
Maximise learning and skills development opportunities	We will continue to interact with academic and accrediting bodies and interagency partnerships, gathering knowledge information and contacts for the benefit of individuals and our communities.	Local level knowledge will grow and be disseminated	Ongoing
Support initiatives to promote and share excellence in the governance and/or evaluation of impact of social enterprises.	We will work with others to provide signposting and information services around governance and evaluation	Social enterprise leaders will develop skills in the area of governance and evaluation which will work towards building sustainable businesses.	Ongoing
<b>Delivery of Objective 3: To Work in Partnership with Others</b>			
<u>Partnerships</u> Seek out and work with others to find opportunities for bursaries	We will pursue an opportunity to partner with Mugshots on their Bursary Scheme for Prisoners and other similar opportunities. We will seek out and work with others to find opportunities for business support and mentoring for the individuals and enterprises we support, for example Ulster Bank mentoring pilot. We will also work with other funders in the sectors, namely Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) to provide low cost affordable loans for the community voluntary and social enterprise sector.	Partnerships will enhance the reach of the Social Enterprise programme engaging those groups which traditional find greater challenge in finding employment	Ongoing
<u>Create Opportunities</u> Continue to scan and source relationships with organisations who can provide benefit to our tenants and communities.	Continue to develop relationships and partnerships with others including Social Enterprise NI, Enterprise NI, Local Councils, Ulster Bank, UCIT and Mugshots.	Growth of awareness and growth of social enterprises	Ongoing
<u>Distribute Learning</u>	We will continue to liaise with Social Enterprise NI, the social enterprise community and others so that good practice and other learning is available to those enterprises we have supported	Growth of learning and sharing of good practice	Ongoing
<u>Financial Assistance</u> Explore funding opportunities and work in partnership to enhance access to investment	We will monitor funding opportunities from partners within the sector.	Funding opportunities are enhanced for our communities	Ongoing





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# Housing Executive

February 2020

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