



# Social Investment Strategy 2025-2030

## PEOPLE, PLACE & PROSPERITY



**Housing  
Executive**

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# 1 Foreword

As the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland and a public landlord at scale, the Housing Executive plays a key role in improving the health, social and economic outcomes of households and communities in Northern Ireland.

This new Social Investment Strategy outlines our plans to contribute to social and economic sustainability in our communities. Thank you to all those who took part in the consultation which we undertook in Spring of this year. Your input has been essential to the development of this document, and your support for our ambition has been encouraging.

We know that in areas where there are high levels of deprivation and unemployment, social enterprises have been essential in building and sustaining opportunity. They have been the innovators in creating new services, new paths to employment and reskilling at a local level. It is imperative as a social housing landlord, The Housing Executive should play our role in creating self-sustaining, vibrant, and economically active communities. The spin-off from our investment has been the creation and growth of social enterprises locally with the creation of new employment and training opportunities. The reinvestment of profits from these social enterprises provides the opportunity for these enterprises to plug the gap, take control and provide solutions at both local and regional level.

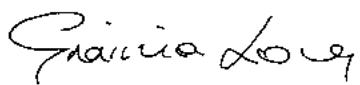
We understand the challenges that our tenants face regarding the cost-of-living and wider external pressures, all of which have an effect on households. Social enterprises play an important role in meeting these challenges head on.

Recent research analysis of our current previous Social Enterprise Strategy 2020-2024 shows that our investment in social enterprises has a positive return. We carried out a wide-ranging exercise using the Social Value Engine, using an accredited formula. This independent external evaluation established that for every **£1 invested, the return was £5.09** to the Housing Executive and the communities we serve. An analysis of this work is detailed in Section 5.

We acknowledge that social enterprises contribute to boosting the local economy, increasing social value, community wealth building, employability and their contribution to the climate agenda. As part of our engagement with our Housing Community Network, statutory partners, and the wider sector we have decided to formally incorporate these named themes into this Social Investment Strategy.

We are excited to present this Social Investment Strategy and look forward to this strategy and programme being delivered in the heart of our communities. We are committed to creating and investing in social enterprises that play a crucial role in promoting social inclusion and building a stronger, more resilient society.

We look forward to seeing how those in our communities benefit as a result of the hard work and commitment that those social enterprises deliver each and every day. A social enterprise, or social business, is a business designed to achieve specific social objectives as its primary purpose. Social enterprises strive to maximise profits while also maximising positive impacts on society and the environment. The profits generated are primarily used to fund social programs in the communities in which they are positioned. Like traditional businesses, they work to make a profit, but it's what they do with their profits that sets them apart.



Grainia Long  
Chief Executive



Nicole Lappin  
NIHE Chair

## 2 Executive Summary

As the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, we are acutely aware of the challenges facing our tenants and wider community, including economic uncertainty, inflation and the increased cost of living. The Housing Executive's Corporate plan outlines how we will invest in our local economy, through our housing services, construction activity, employment opportunities and through our support for the voluntary and community and social enterprise sectors.

The Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' details its first theme as 'Grow a globally competitive and sustainable economy' with social enterprises at the heart of this and further details a commitment on productivity and decarbonisation. This Social Investment Strategy aims to complement that vision primarily via social enterprise activity and the three main proposed priorities of Community Wealth Building, Social Value and Employability.

Under the authority conferred by Article 28(1)(h), of the Housing (N.I) Order 1981, we have been supporting innovative initiatives at the heart of our communities for more than 50 years, including supporting the social enterprise sector.

There are a number of supporting strategies within our Housing Services Division which play a key role in supporting our communities, including the Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy 2024 – 2029, Community Safety Strategy 2025 – 2030 and Sustaining Tenancies Strategy 2024 – 2030. We will aim to complement the themes and actions outlined in these strategies.

The Customer Service Excellent (CSE) assessor has highlighted this during his many visits to the community, voluntary and social enterprises; "The NIHE works with communities in ways that are well outside what could be considered normal for a social housing provider, such as the provision of social enterprise support funding to a wide range of communities. This level of engagement is exceptional".

We have seen the benefits of that investment, with 90% of customers in our 2023 Continuous Omnibus Tenant Survey (CTOS) saying they are content with where they live and therefore remaining a top quartile performing Landlord in this area as benchmarked by Housemark (the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector). As we emerge from recent external world affairs, the scale of the impact on our communities and on the public services are obvious, and we recognise the vital importance of our continued investment.

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During the latest Housemark/Benchmarking exercise 2022-23 the Housing Executive was compared to similarly large stock holding landlords (with a minimum stock size of 20,000 units), from across the UK and across all social housing providers: local authorities, Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), and Housing Associations. It found the Housing Executive invests a significant number of funding opportunities into our communities, in comparison to our size comparable counterparts across the United Kingdom. Resident Involvement cost (£70.96) is significantly higher than the peer group median (£41.58) and reflects the organisation's investment in this area including the Housing Community Network, Supporting Communities, and community project workers. Given community tensions and the legacy of conflict, community involvement has always been a key priority for the Housing Executive.

Social Enterprises and co-operatives are businesses, operating on a sound commercial footing, which return their profits to the communities in which they operate. Many social enterprises serve a particular local community or operate in some of the most disadvantaged communities where they provide valuable facilities and services. Sometimes in areas where it is not commercially viable for the private sector to do so. Social enterprises help address social deprivation by providing innovative solutions to support those same people.

Since our first Social Enterprise Strategy in 2015 we have invested in some inspirational social enterprises, this has ranged from maintenance related social enterprises, community cafes, tourism and health and social care related enterprises. These enterprises have had a significant positive impact at a local and regional level. This is evident, both in respect of the financial and non-financial impacts. These benefits span a wide range of social and economic factors. Social return of investment (SROI) is a methodology that allows a deeper understanding of the social, health, environmental and economic values created.

Social enterprises are widely recognised for building social value and sustainability within some of our most disadvantaged communities. We know our previous social enterprise strategies and investment programmes have helped create hundreds of new full and part time employment opportunities, created dozens of new social enterprises and helped expand many more existing social enterprises within our communities.

An external evaluation carried out a social return of investment which has indicated as a result of our investment for every **£1 invested it averages £5.09 of a return**. The aim of this research was to provide an evaluation of the impact of the Social Enterprise Plus Programme (2020-2024), which will demonstrate both the financial and nonfinancial impacts including its social return of investment (SROI). More detail is included in section 5 of this Strategy.

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Our investment in communities complements our other Community strategies. Our focus is also highly complementary to the efforts of Government, the Sector, and anticipates the local Councils' leadership through community planning and community wealth building. We have reach regionally into grassroots communities and the capacity to influence the quality of life experienced by so many households as the Housing Executive.

By supporting the development of the local social economy, through social enterprise investment, our communities can build self-sustaining and vibrant communities which, in turn, will deliver against the agreed social value outcomes of Social Capital, Social Economy, the Environment, Health and Well-being.

Each of these will address the factors experienced by our communities and their residents by raising skills and capacity levels, creating employability, and ultimately, reducing poverty. All of which will provide measurable social return of investment, a reduction of the demands on the public purse, and assist in the delivery of good housing management.

It must also be recognised that the efforts to realise Social Value within our public service contracts is widely applauded and, indeed, remarked upon by the sector other statutory and private sector bodies.

The opportunities which will be created through Public, Private and Community collaborative arrangements will contribute greatly to the Strategy's outcomes and is preparatory to Social Value, a key objective of Government. It also aligns well with our intention to be better engaged with the supply chain.

Our communities are often excluded from the benefits of the wider economy. The Housing Executive endeavour to ensure that we fulfil our statutory duty to all in our communities, this include ensuring those within Section 75. Section 75 requires public authorities to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity between: persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation.

# 3 What is Social Investment?

Since our first Social Enterprise Strategy in 2015 we have witnessed how social enterprises in Housing Executive communities play a vital role in addressing social deprivation by providing targeted services, empowering communities, driving innovation, creating employment opportunities, stimulating economic development, promoting social integration, and advocating for systemic change. Through their holistic approach to social impact, social enterprises contribute to building more inclusive, resilient, and thriving communities within our society.

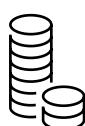
The Housing Executive understands that in order to build safe, welcoming and economically vibrant communities we need to invest in more than the provision of housing. As an organisation we provide a wide range of support to our tenants and communities. This Social Investment Strategy sets out how we invest in our community, from boosting community wealth, ensuring social value in our procurement benefits our tenant base and that we look after our climate in doing so. This Strategy will outlay some of that work.

As the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, we have wide ranging responsibility that affect a high proportion of people in our society. This includes assessing housing need, proving housing support services and providing homeless support via our community partners. As the Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) for Northern Ireland with 83,000 properties, our footprint extends to more than 220,000 homes, and our services impact on the lives of one in every three people. The decisions we take as an organisation can and do have a lasting impact.

## Who we are



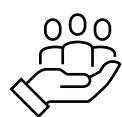
Strategic Housing Authority



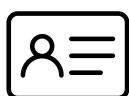
£1.2 billion annual budget



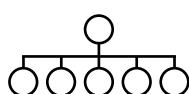
83,000 homes



159,000 tenants



3,200 staff



Five directorates



Offices across Northern Ireland



Investors In People accredited organisation

Through this Social Investment Strategy, we want to continue to boost economic growth within the communities we serve. One key element of this is the continued growth of the local economy by investing in embryonic, emerging and established social enterprise such as maintenance related social enterprises, childcare facilities, community cafes, recycling enterprises, health and social care enterprises, training & recruitment businesses, and tourism-based businesses.

Our commitment to invest in the local economy with a focus on employment, the creation of new social enterprises and investing in growth of existing enterprises continues. We acknowledge the key role that the Housing Executive play in our communities and the realisation that as a social housing body we have a key role in the development of stable and sustainable communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Our role as a social landlord is one of more than bricks and mortar. Our influence as a large economic driver within the local economy and also one that has a social conscience for those in our communities. Our footprint extends to more than 220,000 homes, and our services impact on the lives of one in every three people. Residents who occupy our homes gives us a unique opportunity to assist our tenants in improving life opportunities.

## **Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI)**

SENI is the official membership body for social enterprises in Northern Ireland, Funded by the Department for Economy (DfE). They have a remit to strengthen the social enterprise sector in Northern Ireland and support businesses at all stages of their entrepreneurial journey. They represent local social enterprises and work together to build a stronger collective voice and grow the social enterprise movement.

SENI are dedicated to a mission of connecting, supporting and empowering dynamic social enterprise that drive positive change. Their primary goal is to assist these businesses in generating profits with purpose, inspire lasting impact and create a more inclusive and sustainable society.

The change in policy in respect of social value in public procurement is a growing area of significance for the sector and one in which SENI have a leading role. Through this Strategy we continue to work in partnership with SENI, social enterprises within our communities and the private sector to ensure that our communities get the maximum benefit from the public spend in Northern Ireland, valued at over £3 billion per annum.

## Co-operatives

A co-operative is a business or organisation that is owned and controlled by its members, to meet their shared needs. The members can be its customers, employees, residents, or suppliers, each has a say in how the co-op is run.

There are co-operative greengrocers and shops, energy suppliers, taxi firms, bookstores, community gardens, farms, and sports clubs. There are housing co-ops. Health care co-ops and much more.

Within the lifetime of this Social Investment Strategy, we will actively engage with the Co-op movement in Northern Ireland to ensure that they are visible and included within the promotion and delivery of this Strategy and associated programme, including equitable access to the funding and application process. We will work with the co-operative societies here in Northern Ireland, with the hope to grow that sector as part of the wider economy.



Happy Days, Ashton Centre, Belfast

# 4 Legislative and policy Context

## The Programme for Government (PfG)

The Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' sets out the actions the Northern Ireland Assembly will take in the coming year and beyond, resulting in lasting, positive and meaningful change in people's lives. It includes the legislative programme for the next parliamentary year to drive forward change across all levels of society. This Strategy will align itself with commitments as those as relayed by both our sponsoring department (DfC) and other government departments including DfE.

The PfG details its first theme 'Grow a globally competitive and sustainable economy' with social enterprises at the heart of this.

We are conscious that the priorities set out by the PfG are there to ensure that those who are socially disadvantaged and excluded from the wider economy and sometimes society have the opportunity to benefit and improve their life chances.

In response to those challenges being felt by our tenants we want to ensure that we renew our efforts to help them become more self-sustaining and economically vibrant. In order to do so this Strategy has been developed to align closely with those PfG priorities and those of the wider government departments in Northern Ireland.

## Department for Economy

The Department for the Economy (DfE) has responsibility for implementation and oversight for social enterprise activity in Northern Ireland. This is managed through the Social Enterprise Policy Group (SEPG) which has representation from senior members from across relevant departments. The Housing Executive is represented on this.

The economic mission as set out by the Minister for the Economy in 2024 prioritises 4 elements for growth of the economy;

1. Good jobs.
2. Promoting regional balance.
3. Raise productivity.
4. Reduce carbon emissions.

One of the commitments detailed within the 4 priorities above it that; Invest NI needs a new regional structure dedicated to home-grown SMEs and start-ups.

It should provide a similar service to that previously provided by LEDU, and that provided by Enterprise Ireland in the south.

Regional Offices are being directed to work on an inclusive basis and in partnership with Councils, the business community, trade unions, and Local Enterprise Agencies.

Through this Social Investment Strategy, we will work closely with the DfE and SENI on this emerging area of business and lend support where possible in line with this Strategy and associated programme.

The DfE's 3-year Social Enterprise Action Plan, launched in December 2024 sets out its vision for the growth of the sector. It identifies 14 actions across five objectives; to raise awareness of the sector, support leadership and training, to improve access to support, provide investment, and overcome procurement challenges.

Based on recommendations from the Community Wealth Building report published in October 2022, the Minister initiated the development of a three-year Social Enterprise Action Plan through a sector led co-design group. The DfE worked closely with sector representatives to ensure the action plan aligns with the Minister's Economic Vision.

Our Social Investment Strategy and associated action plan will work in tandem to ensure it delivers on inclusive economic development at the heart of our communities.

## Department for Communities

The Department for Communities (DfC) as our sponsoring department sets out its strategic priorities which include, 'the promotion of healthy housing and the provision of a decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing supporting services, including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas.' also have a keen interest to ensure that social enterprise plays a key role within the wider Community voluntary and social enterprise sector (CVSE).

Some of the department's strategic priorities include.

- the promotion of a healthy housing and the provision of decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support services
- a social welfare system including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas.

- bringing divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace.
- tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity by reducing poverty, promoting and protecting the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, and other socially excluded groups, addressing inequality and disadvantage.

All of which have a strong coloration with the work of the Housing Executive and in particular Wider Communities' Team including sustaining tenancies and homelessness.

One key element of the Department for economy's remit is in supporting communities via Community wealth Building.

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a fast-emerging new approach to economic development that seeks to transform local economies based on direct community ownership and control of assets and wealth by the people of those communities themselves.

The Department for Communities (DfC) released their 'Recommendations to advance Community Wealth Building in Northern Ireland' in 2022. This independent report details how the 5 pillars of CWB are:

1. Plural ownership
2. Locally rooted finance
3. Fair employment
4. Socially productive use of land and property
5. Progressive commissions, sourcing and procurement for goods and services.

The report acknowledges that our communities are facing profound and growing political, economic, and ecological difficulties. Deep economic and regional inequalities persist and are worsening. The Social Investment programme aims to work in tandem with the department's goals and aspirations.

During 2023 – 2024 DfC have been consulting on their Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Framework. The framework aims to get views on 4 areas of interest.

1. Overview of the sector
2. Supporting the Sector's Relationship with Government
3. Vision and Outcomes
4. Delivering the Ambition

Many of the organisations within our communities have participated in this consultation process, as have Housing Executive staff.

### **Partnership Agreement between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland**

The Partnership Agreement between the Northern Ireland government and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), endorsed in June 2025, establishes a framework for enhanced collaboration and fair funding. This agreement seeks to build a stronger, more resilient sector through shared values, ways of working, and Fair Funding Principles for public sector and voluntary organisations

The Partnership Agreement builds on and takes the place of the Concordat between the Voluntary & Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government. Agreed in 2011, the Concordat has guided the relationship between the VCS and Government Departments and public bodies. We recognise the significant role played by the CVSE sector and its contribution to society and through this strategy and the Partnership Agreement we will ensure that we build on those foundations.

### **The Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy (2025-2035)**

The Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy sets out the Executive's commitment to a joined up, long term approach to addressing poverty. It seeks to remove barriers and support equality of opportunity for those experiencing or at risk of poverty. While the Executive has previously taken forward a wide range of initiatives and actions which help support those in or at risk of poverty, this is the first time it has published a Strategy dedicated to tackling this issue in a holistic manner.

We want to ensure that the Housing Executive's Social Investment Strategy 2025-2030 complements and can work in tandem with the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

At the time of writing this, the Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy (2025-2035) was out for consultation. Once the final Anti-Poverty Strategy is published, we will keep the relevant priorities under review.

## Housing Executive Policy Drivers

### Housing Executive Corporate Strategy 2025/2026 – 2027/2028

At the time of writing the Social Investment Strategy, the Housing Executive's Corporate Strategy is currently in the process of being finalised. The Social Investment Strategy will align to the high level themes included within the strategy.

### Asset management & Social Enterprise

Our Housing Executive colleagues in Asset Management play an integral part in the delivery of this Strategy, through social value and their contracts. We want to ensure that we use our spend as a public authority in the best interest of our tenant base and that they get the full social value benefit as a result of this. Our commitment is to ensure that our spending power delivers real and meaningful impacts for those in our communities.

In a recent policy change regarding social value in public sector, namely procurement (PPN/21) contracts (1st June 2022), it became mandatory to score social value within public sector procurement. Social value relates to:

- **increasing secure employment and skills,**
- **building ethical and resilient supply chains.**
- **delivering zero carbon:**
- **and promoting well-being.**

The Housing Executive's Social Value Working (SVWG) as part of the Central Housing Forum (CHF) was reformed in early 2024. The working group is made up of community members from the CHF, Housing Executive staff and other statutory partners on an ad hoc basis.

The working group was established to act as a consultative forum on matters relating to Social Value, Social Clauses, Social Impact and Social Investment.

The working group meet bi-monthly and report back to CHF on matters relating to the four social value themes listed above.

### Social Value

As an organisation with an annual budget of £1.2 billion per year, and as one of the largest contributors to the local economy in respect of our procurement spending, we in turn have the opportunity to create real tangible outcomes through social value within our contracts.

It is therefore imperative that this Strategy works in tandem with our Asset Management and Procurement colleagues in the development of their Social Value Strategy with the principal aim of ensuring maximum benefit to our tenants and communities. This of course is only possible through a close working relationship with our contractors and suppliers. The Social Value Working Group (as part of our Central Housing Forum), which is made up of tenants, community and voluntary sector partners and other statutory partners, will continue to act in a consultative role.

We know the difference that social value in procurement can make within our communities. We will continue to engage with our statutory and community partners as the role of social value increases.

There has been some success in this area. Several social enterprises secured subcontracts through existing contract arrangements with our maintenance contractors, and this positioned them to take advantage of opportunities arising from the Housing Executive maintenance contracts and social clauses.

Through this Strategy we see this as a growing area of business delivering many benefits for those in our communities in terms of increased community wealth, increased employability, and training opportunities.

## Reserved Contracts

As an organisation we have not developed any reserved contracts yet. Both our Asset Management and Procurement teams are open to discussion and one which we will continue to investigate throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.

The use of reserved contracts has been limited across all government departments throughout NI to date. We would like to explore potential opportunities through the lifetime of this new Social Investment Strategy.

## Social Enterprise in our Supply Chain

As an organisation we will explore opportunities where we can use social enterprises in the supply chain across all the procurement we conduct. This is an objective in which we will work in partnership with both our Social Value Working Group and social enterprises and other partners in our communities.

In summary, we will see how, through our procurement and commission powers, we can ensure, where suitable, that social enterprises have an ability to be involved in opportunities in the following.

- Have the ability to be considered for procurement contracts under £5k.

- Have the ability to be considered for procurement contracts over £10k.
- Have the ability to be considered where there are opportunities for reserved contracts.
- Have the ability to be considered in a sub-contracting capacity i.e., maintenance-related contracts or retrofit contracts, for example.

## **Sustainable Development Working Group**

The Sustainable Development Working Group, chaired by our partners Supporting Communities, is a subgroup of the Central Housing Forum where we update members on progress and get input into activities for delivery of our Sustainable Development Strategy. The Interdivisional Sustainability Forum is an internal working group that combines all internal business owners with delivery responsibilities within the Sustainable Development Strategy. This includes principally the future decarbonisation of our houses, sustainable living, sustainable transport and sustainable communities.

From a social enterprise perspective, we want to ensure that social enterprises have the opportunity to be part of that solution, whether this be in the supply chain, sub-contracting or other aspects.

Our Corporate Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) Delivering Sustainable Homes and Communities sets out our vision; ‘Everyone is able to live in an affordable, sustainable and decent home, appropriate to their needs, in a safe and climate-resilient place’.

The Strategy sets out our objectives to be net zero in all our operations by 2050.

Through the Sustainable Development Working groups we want to ensure that that social enterprises have the opportunity to work alongside the Housing Executive as we try to reach our green targets. We will investigate the use of social enterprises in the supply chain and also sub-contracting arrangements. This has the potential to bring widespread benefits to our tenants and the wider community.

## **Rural Communities**

In accordance with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, the Housing Executive has a statutory duty to pay due regard to the needs of rural communities in the development of our policies, strategies and plans and in the delivery of our services.

The Housing Executive understands that a specific rural approach is required in order to ensure an equitable delivery of our housing related services in rural communities, to address the housing issues faced within these areas and to contribute to sustainable rural communities.

The Housing Executive's 'Reaching Rural Strategy 2020 – 2025' considers how we can maintain the momentum achieved over the last 30 years in channelling investment and support into our rural communities and identifies the issues and challenges which must be addressed through local engagement, investment and collaborative working over the next four years. These challenges include:

- The existing shortage of homes which are affordable and accessible.
- Hidden housing need in rural villages and small settlements.
- The often-reduced access to basic services, facilities, advice and support; and
- A higher occurrence of less energy efficient homes and fuel poverty.

As in previous social enterprise strategies, we will ensure that our rural communities have fair and equitable access to all resources as detailed within this Strategy. The Social Enterprise Team will work closely with our Rural Unit, Rural Resident's Forum and all those rural Housing Executive communities in the development and delivery of the Strategy and associated investment programme and other strands.

## Economic circumstances of our tenants

### **Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (CTOS)**

We are also mindful of the financial pressures on households within communities. One measurement of these circumstances is The Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (CTOS); the main way we collect information about what our tenants think about their tenancy, their home, the service they receive and about the neighbourhood they live in. This is completed on an annual basis.

On average 2600 tenant interviews are completed annually, randomly selected to represent households across our 13 Area Offices. Interviews are completed in main with the household reference person (HRP).

Some notable data from the 2023 CTOS survey from 2600 participants, show:

**Employment status of Household reference person; employed 23.9%, retired 28.5%, sick/ disabled 22.1%, unemployed 20.6%, other inc. looking after family, home, student 4.9%.**

**In regard to benefits participants received either one or multiple of the following, disability benefit – 47.7%, employment and support allowance – 18.2%, universal credit – 17.5%.**

**59.5% of participants received Housing Benefit.**

These figures demonstrate the high degree of economic inactivity spanning unemployment, sick, caring responsibility, and retirement. Taking this data into consideration, we are mindful of the levels of deprivation that exists and that those same communities remain the most disadvantaged and are likely to be socially disadvantaged and often excluded from wider society.

It is envisaged that this Social Investment Strategy will go some way to provide support to our social housing communities and help them to become more self-sufficient and economically vibrant.

## **Equality**

The Housing Executive has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in carrying out its functions. We are required to do this under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

### **Equality screening and consideration of rural needs**

The Housing Executive has considered the following in the preparation of this Strategy:

- Equality and Human Rights – how we pay due regard to promoting equality, how we assess the potential impacts on Section 75 groups, human rights implications and opportunities for promoting good relations; and
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment – to assess the potential impacts of this Strategy on people living in rural areas.

All partners will work together to identify appropriate measures which will ensure and demonstrate a service that promotes equality to all clients irrespective of their difference or circumstance and we will continue to monitor our performance per our obligations under the Equality Legislation.

We will also monitor our performance in keeping with the Housing Executive's Rural Strategy and the requirements under the legislation.

Appropriate place-based responses will be developed, which are informed by local needs, context and capacity. Enhancing the role and capacity for regional and local area decision making is important to help make sure the right responses are delivered in the right places, 'Think Local.'

The Housing Community Network and strategic partners will play a key role in ensuring this strategy is meeting the needs of our population, whether they live in urban or rural areas.

Equality issues are central to this Strategy and will also be central to monitoring the delivery of the Strategy. In developing this Strategy, the Housing Executive has considered the views of organisations representing a range of client groups. While this Strategy will adopt a community centred approach in meeting our equality obligations, we will engage with stakeholders representing all equality groups from across the community sector to ensure that our annual action plans are reflective of any emerging equality issues.



Happy Days, Ashton Centre, Belfast

# 5 Key Achievements

We commissioned an external evaluation of the Social Enterprise Plus Programme 2020 – 2024 that provided a financial and non-financial return on our investment, demonstrating a social return of investment (SROI).

The previous 4 Year Social Enterprise Plus Strategy (2020-2024) built on the success of the innovative Social Housing Enterprise Strategy (2015-2018), by continuing to invest in existing and creating new social enterprises. The Strategy also endeavoured to create opportunities for employment, volunteering, work experience and training for marginalised groups and individuals who would not generally be engaged via traditional educational and work experience routes.

The 2020 – 2024 Social Enterprise Plus Strategy has 3 core objectives and the mid-point review gave an opportunity to review progress against these and re-evaluate the current worldwide and economic circumstances. The 3 core objectives were:

- **Objective 1 - Strengthening Housing Executive Communities**
- **Objective 2 - Improving the economic circumstances of our customers.**
- **Objective 3 - Working in partnership with others for the benefit of Housing Executive communities.**

The mid-point strategy review took account of changes in the operational environment following the pandemic and determined the following as additional objectives, **global energy and environmental issues, cost of living, the introduction of social value in public sector procurement.**

The 2020-2024 Strategy was introduced at the time where social clauses within maintenance contracts were being re-designed in order to have a direct impact within Housing Executive Communities. Social clauses and in particular those within response maintenance contracts were seen as a way of investing in the social enterprise sector within Housing Executive communities via our contractors. Through this Strategy we will continue to promote and invest in social enterprises that can deliver for us or wider government contracts where social value can deliver key benefits to those in our communities.

## **Social return of investment (SROI) for the Housing Executive's Social Enterprise Plus Programme 2020 - 2024**

Rose Regeneration were commissioned to carry out a social return of investment Evaluation of the Housing Executive's Social Enterprise Plus Strategy for the period of 2020-2024.

The aim of this research was to provide an evaluation of the impact of the Social Enterprise Plus Programme (2020-2024), which will demonstrate both the financial and non-financial impacts including its social return of investment (SROI). It will also provide evidence to inform the design and implementation of the new Social Enterprise Strategy.

This research included working closely with Housing Executive staff, carrying out desk research of available monitoring information, arranging interviews of a sample of organisations that received support from the scheme, and using the Social Value Engine (<https://socialvalueengine.com/>), an online measurement tool which has assisted over 100 organisations and projects across UK and Ireland to determine the impact of the work they do.

During the lifetime of this Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020 – 2024 we made an investment of approximately £721,146 into social enterprise activity in our communities with approximately 75 awards.

**The table below outlines the total value of the Strategy's outcomes;**

Activities Value	£
<b>Strategy Benefits (Impact figure minus 3.5% discount)</b>	<b>£3,624,318.11</b>
<b>Social Value SROI</b>	<b>£5.09</b>

**During the 2020 – 2024 period the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy demonstrates an impressive social value of £5.09 for every £1 spent.**

**EVERY**

**£1 = £5.09**

**SPENT**

**SOCIAL VALUE**

### Funding Support Key Highlights: -

- 41 jobs created as a result of funding and support
- 43 additional jobs supported
- 21 new social enterprises created
- 45 social enterprises helped to grow and be supported
- 38 pieces of equipment purchased
- 3096 Housing Executive tenants benefited from the investment
- 238 accredited training opportunities availed of
- 527 non-accredited training opportunities availed of
- 5702 volunteer hours as a result of investment

The report details: Delivering **£5.09 of Social Value for every £1** spent is a highly credible achievement and illustrates the high value for money that The Housing Executive delivers in terms of its funding.

## Case Studies

Below are social enterprises the Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024 has invested in during the lifetime of the social enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024.

### Portadown Wellness & Garden Centre

Based in Portadown this social enterprise has two main elements; a garden centre and the mental health hub located on the premises. Profits from the garden enterprise help support the wide range of dedicated professional, therapeutic services provided by a counselling team of qualified therapists as well as a selection of inspirational and therapeutic activities facilitated by highly skilled, qualified, caring and empathetic tutors. With our social enterprise funding, the organisation assisted with some staff costs towards the sustainability of the garden centre which in turn supports the mental health facilities.



Portadown Wellness & Garden Centre

## Blackmountain Shared Space – West Belfast

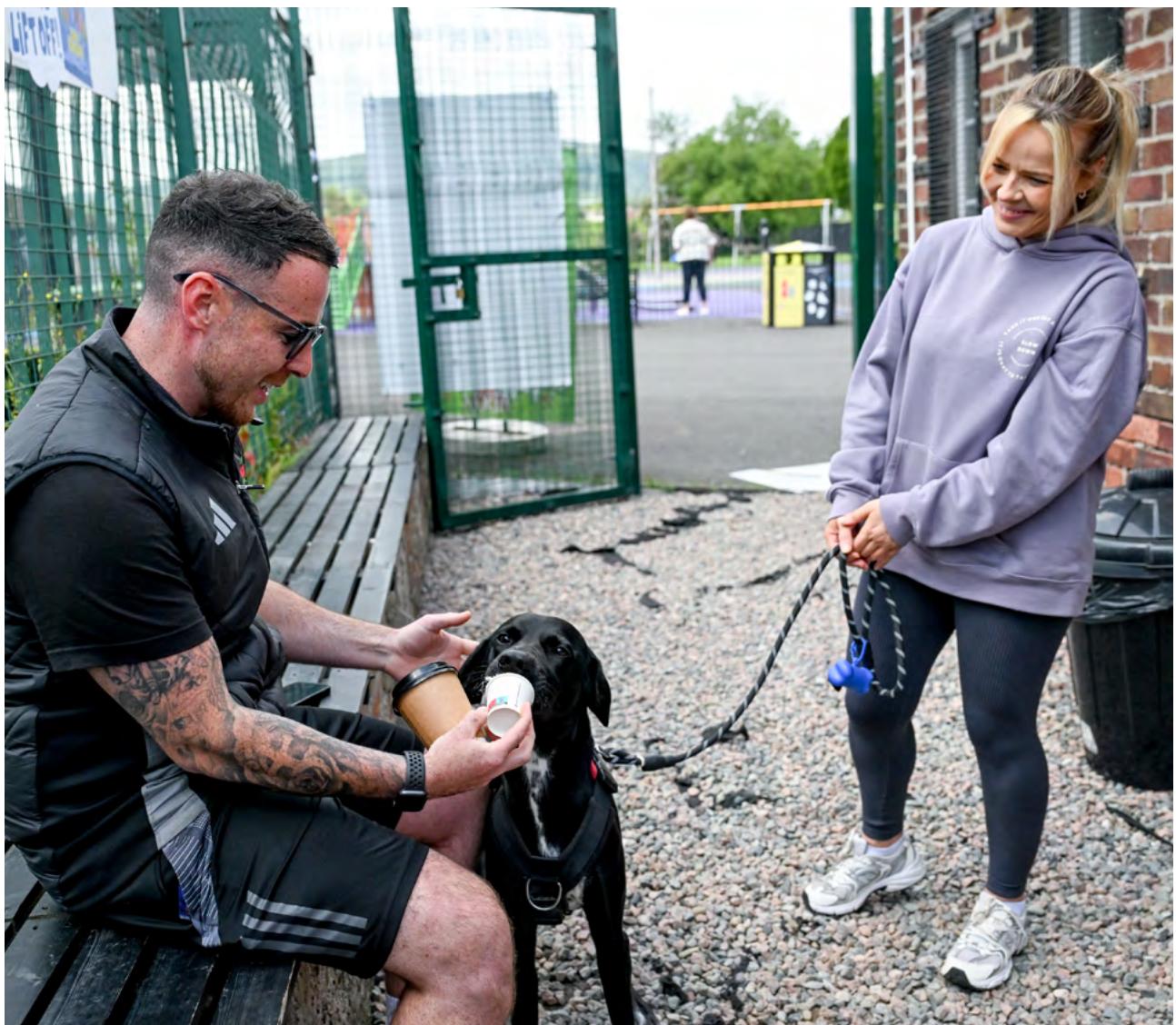
The Housing Executive have been working with Blackmountain Shared Space project for over 10 years on their vision for a new shared community space building in West Belfast. The building, which was funded through assistance from SEUPB Peace Plus Programme, International Fund for Ireland and Belfast City Council, is located on a shared space in west Belfast with access for all members of the community. The building will host a wide range of community events and also has office space and enterprise facilities. Through the social enterprise programme, we were able to assist with some staff costs towards a Social Enterprise Officer post, which will further develop the organisations income generation and longer-term sustainability.



Blackmountain Shared Space – Belfast

## North Belfast Play Forum – North Belfast

North Belfast Play Forum are a youth-based organisation with a focus on improvement of confidence, skills, and self-esteem. In order to become more self-sustaining whilst providing employment and training opportunities for young people, they have embarked on establishing a social enterprise café within the Waterworks in North Belfast. This enterprise helps skill up young people from the organisation from North Belfast area, creating employment opportunities whilst proving a much-welcomed new social enterprise in that community. Our social enterprise funding has assisted in covering staff costs in the start-up phase of this social enterprise.



North Belfast Play Forum, The Waterworks – Belfast

## TRIAX Coffee Cart – Derry / Londonderry

Social enterprise funding assisted the TRIAX team in purchasing a new coffee cart to add to their social enterprise activities. This cart will provide employment and training opportunities to those in the local community. It will also help increase income generation with a focus on becoming more economically self-sustaining. The coffee cart will have the ability to pop up in a wide range of community, sporting, and private events where there is a niche for this service contributing to the economic activity of the area.



The Coffee Trailer, Triax neighbourhood – Derry-Londonderry

## Agewell – Mid & East Antrim

This social enterprise, based in Mid & East Antrim is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of older adults. Supporting over 6,500 older individuals, operating across health and community development sectors, they have identified a need for tailored home support for older people. To meet this need, they have developed, a social enterprise providing high-quality solutions, starting with Home Care and Home Care Plus. Through the social enterprise programme, we were able to assist this service by supporting some staff costs to build the enterprise model, ensuring long term sustainability and improved health and wellbeing for the service users within the Mid & East Antrim area.



Agewell - Mid & East Antrim

# 6 Our Plan for Social Investment

As a social housing landlord with 83,000 homes, we are acutely aware of the financial circumstances of tenants and the elevated levels of hardship and deprivation that some experience. We are also mindful that in the day-to-day service we provide in regard to good housing and understand that we have a duty to ensure that tenants have a home in a community that itself is vibrant and sustainable.

As with previous social enterprise strategies, we hope to meet some of these issues incurred by our tenants especially issues around combating social deprivation, reducing hardship whilst creating opportunities for employment.

We want to ensure that this Social Investment Strategy helps create real opportunities to delivery key outcomes which impact and deliver wellbeing for those communities we represent. We want to make certain that those same communities maximise those opportunities in the creation of new and the growth of existing social enterprises, creating community wealth in its broadest sense, maximising social value and creating new employment opportunities. This will be achieved through our priorities outlined below.



## Priority 1

### Community Wealth Building

#### Cross Cutting priorities

- Improving the **financial wellbeing** in our communities.
- Working in partnership to provide opportunities for increased **Community Investment** initiatives.
- Increase opportunities for **increased employment opportunities** in the development and growth of new, developing and established social enterprises within our communities.

Our ambition is to ensure that Housing Executive communities have the means through social enterprise to help create communities that are self-sustaining and that are economically vibrant. We will work in partnership to create community wealth, with a focus on creating employment and training opportunities and investing in growth of social enterprises at the embryonic, emerging and established stages.

Through this Social Investment strategy and associated action plan we plan to deliver on the above cross cutting priorities to support the Department for Communities (DfC) 'Recommendations to advance Community wealth building in Northern Ireland' report, 2022. DfC have set out 5 Community wealth Building pillars.

- Plural ownership,
- Locally rooted finance,
- Fair employment,
- Socially productive use of land and property and finally
- Progressive commissions, sourcing and procurement for goods and services.

Community Wealth Building albeit in a different name has been at forefront of our activities as a social housing landlord over the past 50 years having supported and delivered on many of the 5 Community Wealth Building themes.

This Strategy will seek to utilise a variety of resources to support Community Wealth Building to achieve sustainable outcomes within our communities. This may relate to financial investment via our programme, use of other resources such as land and property and implementation of social clauses.

We will also continue to work closely with the Housing Executive Housing for All team and the Housing Associations to support the delivery of the Shared Housing Programme Good Relations plans and associated exit strategies by delivering joined up support to develop, enhance and grow social enterprise opportunities

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within the Shared Housing areas to ensure sustainable outcomes and support DfC's Community Wealth Building Strategy, Programme for Government commitments and our Corporate Strategy.

It is important to link labour market interventions with support for social enterprises. We will work with Shared Housing schemes to review options in regard to their uplift to focus more on the economic inclusion of shared communities that will compliment soft and short-term community projects.

## Enablers and Partnership

Through delivery of the past two social enterprise strategies, we, as an organisation, have established some key partnerships. These range from statutory departments, various educational establishments to organisations in the community, voluntary and social enterprise (CVSE) sector. Without these partnerships delivery of our Strategy and associated investment programme would not be possible. It is therefore imperative that we recognise the part they play in assisting us in delivering our programs as in previous years, we also appreciate their importance as we move forward to our new Social Investment Strategy. This leads us to where we go next.

Understanding the complexities that exist within the communities we represent highlights how crucial it is that we engage and partner with as wide a range of organisations as possible in the delivery of this Social Investment Strategy.

Those partnerships, both in the statutory and public sector, will provide invaluable support in enhancing opportunities to increase community wealth, including opportunities for increased employability, increased social enterprise and wider economic activity. We are acutely aware that we do not aim to duplicate or displace others' efforts but simply wish to play our part.

In developing this Strategy, a number of key organisations, where relations already exist, were consulted on their role within the social enterprise sector and how their role as enablers complements the work of this Social Investment Strategy. Some of the key partners include.



It is intended that the continued development of such partnership enablers within the sector in Northern Ireland will be a central feature of the strategies' implementation and its successful delivery.

In order to ensure our communities thrive economically, to ensure those communities and people who are most disadvantaged feel real benefit - It is therefore essential that we further enhance these partnerships ensuring that there is not just a strategic fit with the Social Investment Strategy but also a practical & operational relationship with each of the partners. It has therefore been agreed with each of the partners to implement a framework for delivery during the lifetime of this Strategy, this will include.

Organisation	Bio	Agreement
<b>Central Housing Forum; Social Value Working Group</b>	This group, with membership from members of the Housing Community Network and Housing Executive staff from Landlord Services & Asset Management department has a co-design brief in relation to social clauses and social enterprise.	As per the Terms of Reference we will continue to actively engage with the working group on all matters related to social value and social enterprise, ensuring maximum benefit for our communities.
<b>School Social Enterprise Ireland (SSEI)</b>	<p>The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI) is the sole organisation in Ireland devoted exclusively to leadership, management and business development programmes and events for the social economy sector.</p> <p>Founded in 2005, SSEI was formed as a strategic alliance between the <b>University of Ulster</b> and <b>The Flax Trust</b>, designed to promote sustainable community enterprise and economic development.</p>	<p>Through ongoing engagement, we have agreed to meet regularly and discuss matters of common interest relating to social enterprise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some involvement in our social enterprise conference</li> <li>• Potential partnership in relation to any new educational programme / qualification</li> </ul>
<b>Go Succeed Programme</b>	Go Succeed is the source for expert business, including social enterprises advice led by Northern Ireland's eleven local councils, funded via the DfE.	We will continue to partner with all councils with our new and emerging social enterprises, where there is a range of expert advice and guidance, including in the provision of business plans.

Organisation	Bio	Agreement
<b>Local Councils</b>	<p>The 11 local council provide a range of support via Labour market partnerships (LMP's) and Local Economic Partnerships (LEP's)</p> <p>The Labour Market Partnerships aim to address local labour market challenges by bringing together various stakeholders, including council representatives, educational institutions, employers, and community organisations. The Local Economic Partnerships (which are in the process of being set up) LEPs will focus on broader economic growth and regional balance.</p>	<p>We will actively engage with Councils through their LPM's and LEP's. The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) which is the "Go To" Body for councils in Northern Ireland. NILGA promotes, develops and champions local government. We will engage with NILGA to ensure there are opportunities to share knowledge and provide opportunities for broader economic co-operation.</p>
<b>Queens university QCAP Programme</b>	<p>QCAP's 6 pillars provide a framework to connect and successfully engage with disadvantaged places and communities, these include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Data for action</li> <li>• Translational tools</li> <li>• Policy advocacy</li> <li>• Building capabilities</li> </ul>	<p>Given Queens outreach via the QCAP initiative we have agreed to ensure there is close co-operation within the existing areas that QCAP operate but also where new communities are embedded within the initiative.</p>
<b>Ulster University</b>	<p>Working with the Dept. of management, Leadership and Marketing we will continue to engage across a wide range of social enterprise initiatives.</p>	<p>We will continue to meet regularly to discuss all social enterprise and social investment matters including partnership with other bodies including local council and other statutory partners.</p>

Organisation	Bio	Agreement
<b>Social Enterprise NI</b>	<p>Social Enterprise NI is the representative body for social enterprises and social entrepreneurs across Northern Ireland. Connecting, supporting, developing, and sustaining vibrant businesses to create social change. They are an independent, member-led organisation and a gateway for social enterprises in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The Social Enterprise team will continue to support SENI in the delivery of the programme over the next number of years. This includes sponsorship support for the annual conference and awards. As a member we will also continue to avail of SENI events and promote within social enterprises in our communities.</p>
<b>Development Trust NI</b>	<p>DTNI was established in 2010 to bring together the interests of a number of community-based organisations who were seeking to promote their model of community development and social enterprise, Community Asset Transfer. Their core activities include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community rights.</li> <li>• local economy.</li> <li>• participative democracy.</li> <li>• the delivery of public services.</li> </ul>	<p>We will continue engagement with DTNI across all mutual areas of agreement including land and property, Community Asset Transfer and Community Wealth Building. DTNI published the Community Wealth Building report Recommendations to advance Community Wealth Building in Northern Ireland' on behalf of the Department for Communities in 2022. We will continue to engage with DTNI on the 5 pillars detailed in this report.</p>
<b>Department for Economy (DfE)</b>	<p>DfE are the lead department for social enterprise, they commission Social Enterprise NI on their behalf to deliver the social enterprise programme throughout NI.</p>	<p>As active partners on the department's Social Enterprise Policy Group (SEPG) we will continue to help set the agenda and feed into government policy for the social enterprise sector in NI.</p> <p>We will also engage with DfE on their Employment and skills programmes (including apprenticeships) and see where possible we can maximise opportunities for our tenant base to avail of these.</p>

Organisation	Bio	Agreement
<b>Co-op Alternatives &amp; Trademark</b>	<p>Support the development of co-operatives and community benefit societies and contribute to the creation of a co-operative economy in the North and South of Ireland.</p> <p>Provide services and business support to enterprises and projects that value people and the environment as much as profit.</p> <p>Provide information and share resources and encourage co-operation among co-operatives nationally and internationally.</p>	We will actively engage with the Co-op movement to look at how we can best use our resources, mentoring and advice to the sector in this new Strategy.

## Priority 2

### Social Value

#### Cross Cutting priorities

- Increasing opportunities for the **development and growth of new, developing and established social enterprises** within our communities through partnering on **social value in public procurement opportunities**.
- Increasing opportunities for social enterprises to partner on **Energy, net carbon & environmental impact initiatives / contract delivery**.

Our ambition is to ensure that the communities we represent are prepared and ready to avail of social value opportunities. We want to raise awareness and capacity in communities to avail of opportunities becoming available as a result of not just wider Government spend but also of the Housing Executive's annual spend and the social value benefits.

In a recent policy change regarding social value relating to public sector procurement (PPN/21) contracts (1st June 2022), it became mandatory to score social value within public sector procurement. The Northern Ireland Executive spends more than £3 billion per year in public sector contracts, so the new policy has potential to release significant amounts of money for social value activity.

Social value refers to wider financial and non-financial impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the environment. Public procurement is an important source of expenditure in Northern Ireland, with central and local government spending upwards of £3 billion annually on supplies, services and construction works. This expenditure offers significant potential to contribute to the economic, environmental, and social outcomes contained in the Executive's Programme for Government. There are four social value themes: increasing **secure employment and skills, building ethical and resilient supply chains; delivering zero carbon: and promoting well-being**.

We will continue exploring how Housing Executive communities can benefit from these new arrangements. Working with our Community Involvement Team we will assist our community organisations and social enterprises to be listed on the Social Value website as brokers so as they will be in visible and in a position to partner with suppliers if and when the opportunity arises.

In December 2021, updated social clauses were introduced in Housing Executive Maintenance Contracts. We have worked in partnership across our divisions to allow further opportunities for Social Enterprises working within our communities

even prior to the changes for public sector procurement in June 2022.

There has been some success in this area. Several social enterprises secured subcontracts through existing contract arrangements with Housing Executive maintenance contractors, and this positioned them to take advantage of opportunities arising from some of our maintenance contracts and social clauses.

Several social enterprises, mainly in the Greater Belfast area, are now partnering with some of our maintenance contractors in a sub-contracting arrangement.

## Reserved Contracts

As an organisation we have not developed any reserved contracts yet. Both our Asset Management and Procurement teams are open to discussion and one which we will continue to investigate throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.

## Social Enterprise in our Supply Chain

During the lifetime of the strategy, we will continue to engage internally with our Procurement and Asset Management teams, as well as our tenant base through the Social Value Working Group and social enterprises in our communities to ensure social enterprises can play an active part in our supply chain.

## The Climate Agenda

The UK Government has set in law a target to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. To achieve this, we need to work collaboratively with government and other partners to insulate homes and replace fossil fuel heating systems with ‘clean heat’ technologies, such as heat pumps and heat networks.

Our Corporate Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) focuses on the urgency of the climate emergency but also acknowledges the need to prioritise solutions that benefit both society and the planet. This sets out our ideas and proposals on tackling the planetary emergency, and how we intend to play our part in helping to sustain the environment for future generations.

We want to complement the work being carried out by Sustainability Development Team and see how social enterprises within our communities can be part of the solution to be net zero by 2050. We believe that social enterprises can be part of that solution and through this Strategy and its associated investment programme we aim to assist them in doing so.

## Priority 3

### Employment, including apprenticeships.

#### Cross Cutting priorities

- Improving **financial wellbeing** in our communities.
- Ensuring tenants have access to **employment opportunities**, both directly and indirectly, for example better access to apprenticeships both internally and through our contractors.
- Increasing opportunities social enterprises to partner on **Energy, net carbon & environmental impact** initiatives / contract delivery.

Our ambition is to ensure that this Social Investment Strategy is a key driver for creating new jobs and the growth of existing employment opportunities within our communities.

Through this Social Investment Strategy and associated action plan we plan to deliver on the above cross cutting priorities to ensure that tenants in our communities are aware of and have access to employment and apprenticeship opportunities. This relates to opportunities created by social enterprises in our communities, and where social value opportunities and the wider government initiatives can add to these cross-cutting priorities.

We know the value that social enterprises bring in respect of opportunities for the creation of employment, training, and volunteering at a local and regional level.

During our previous social enterprise strategies, we were identified how an initial investment in various social enterprises spurred additional employment opportunities in those same local communities. This was achieved through seed funding from our Social Enterprise Team, some mentoring and of course a lot of challenging work from the social enterprises themselves. We want to continue to build on that.

We realise the significant role that social enterprises play within our communities and the impact this has regarding the provision of services and job creation. They can have an all-round impact on matters including community development, social integration and inclusion, environmental sustainability, local sourcing and procurement, community ownership and governance and of course partnerships in both the public and private sectors.

Specific actions in relation to employment and apprenticeships for this Strategy include:

- **Job creation via Social Investment funding programme**

We want to ensure that we continue to invest and support the social enterprise sector within our communities regarding the creation of new employment opportunities. We know from experience where there is a solid foundation, and investment is made in job creation locally; the social enterprise sector will in many instances grow that employment base.

- **Job creation via social value outcomes within our contracts**

**Specific actions in relation to social value include:**

- 1) Growth and promotion of **apprenticeship opportunities via our maintenance contracts**, linked to the social value outcomes – ensuring that those from Housing Executive communities have fair and equitable access to these.
- 2) Creating meaningful opportunities for **sub-contracting arrangements** within our maintenance contracts, where social enterprises can be part of that supply chain. A prime example of this are the 4 grounds maintenance social enterprises in Belfast and Lisburn who have sub-contracting arrangements with our main contractors. This Strategy will aim to build on this.
- 3) Continue investing in new employment opportunities through our **Social Investment programme**.

In partnership with our Asset Management Department and DfE we want to ensure that any future initiatives related to employability and apprenticeships are directly associated with those within our communities.

## Our Investment

The Strategy will ensure that any investment made will work toward the wider objectives as outlined in the Programme for Government, and the Housing Executive's Corporate Strategy objectives.

Considering best practice with other funders throughout the UK and Ireland we will incorporate an incremental tiered programme of investment. From experience, in order for social enterprises to be self-sustaining, ensuring that there is the potential for a tiered investment model i.e. a start-up enterprise may require seed funding to help establish and a further investment to ensure there is stability and a prospect of the social enterprise becoming self-sufficient. This of course will be dependent on each individual case and as in previous investment awards we will ensure that the same organisations are not funded for the same thing, but rather funded where there is growth or diversification of that social enterprise. Ensuring sustainability and protecting our investment is key.

In line with previous social enterprise investment awards, the programme will launch an open call for applications on an annual basis.

We have reintroduced the incremental investment awards allowing, where eligible, social enterprises to avail of the opportunity to create a sustainable enterprise with a possible multiyear investment opportunity. It is important to note this will only occur where there is growth, diversification or entry into additional products / services or new social enterprise streams within that organisation. We expect all funded enterprises to develop a sustainability plan during the period of our investment, so that they are able to secure their future. We will not provide repeat funding.

## Reviewing the Strategy

Reviewing the impact of the Strategy and associated investment awards and other support resources available through the Social Investment Strategy is an important aspect of the programme delivery. The ability to demonstrate, on an annual basis, the impact of the Strategy will be crucial to its success. The impact will be measured by the following key actions.

- Bi-annual review of the Strategy's action plan, this is essential to look back and ensure that the commitments as laid out the strategy are being met. The action plans also allow us to ensure that there is regular and continued review of the work and implement adjustments as the strategy develops.
- Annual impact measurement using a new Impact tool with a Social Return of Investment (SROI). This will have an external validation model built in to ensure there is no overreporting in respect of the impact of our investment. This will relate to all funding strands managed by Housing Services but also our colleagues in Asset management and Homelessness / Sustaining tenancies.

# 7 Action Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 - BUILD COMMUNITY WEALTH WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES	
Aim:	Action
Improve <b>financial wellbeing</b> in our communities by raising awareness of social enterprise opportunities.	<p>Develop a <b>Communications Plan</b> to include a wide range of communications e.g. social media, website, events, Housing Community Network to launch the new fund.</p> <p>Meet with various statutory, voluntary and third sector <b>stakeholders</b> to promote the Social Investment Strategy which work within or closely to our communities.</p> <p><b>Annual investment awards:</b> Establishment of an annual funding programme, ensuring that the Strategy supports the embryonic, emerging and established Social Enterprises within Housing Executive communities.</p> <p>Promote the new Social Enterprise Investment Fund via a range of <b>social media</b>.</p>
Work in <b>partnership</b> to provide opportunities for increased Community Investment initiatives.	<p>Continue to engage with partners regarding the <b>Community Wealth Building</b> pillars.</p> <p><b>Engage with community voluntary and sector partners</b> to include local councils, Enterprise Agencies, Social Enterprise NI and statutory partners to include DfC and DfE (Social Enterprise policy Group) and local Universities and further education colleges.</p> <p>Establish 3 <b>regional Social Enterprise forums</b> to meet once a year.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for <b>external funding opportunities</b> relating to Social Enterprise / community organisations.</p> <p>Work with our colleagues in the <b>Housing for All</b> programme to share knowledge of Social Enterprise and social value opportunities.</p> <p>Organise <b>best practice visits</b> between Social Enterprises, showcasing where social enterprise can be established in other communities.</p> <p>Work with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to seek opportunities to engage with council on their Local Market partnership and Local Economic partnerships to strengthen and build on opportunities for enhanced economic opportunities including increased employability options.</p>

<p>Increase opportunities for <b>employment opportunities</b> in the development and growth of new, developing and established social enterprises within our communities.</p>	<p>Encourage <b>job creation</b> within our communities through our investment awards.</p> <p>Work with our colleagues internally to ensure that <b>social value</b> opportunities are maximised to benefit our tenants where there are additional employment opportunities.</p> <p>Work with other statutory partners and identify employment opportunities / apprenticeship programmes that could benefit our tenants.</p>
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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - HELP BUILD SOCIAL VALUE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES

Aim:	Action
<p>Increase opportunities for the <b>development and growth of new, developing and established social enterprises</b> within our communities through partnering on <b>social value in public procurement opportunities</b>.</p>	<p>Ensure Social Enterprises within our communities are aware of <b>social value within government contracts</b> and how they can benefit as a result of wider government spend.</p> <p>Work with the <b>Social Value Working Group</b> and Housing Executive Procurement Teams to explore social clauses within Housing Executive contracts.</p> <p>Increase our own understanding of <b>social clauses in public sector procurement</b> by connecting with stakeholders relating to Social Value Clauses and how Housing Executive communities can benefit from them.</p> <p>Support initiatives to promote and share excellence in the governance and/or evaluation of impact of social enterprises so that we build an understand of <b>Social Value and its measurement</b>.</p> <p>Housing Executive <b>Social Enterprise Directory</b> to be updated and consider wider usage options.</p> <p>Create a <b>social value procurement database</b> for internal use to identify social enterprise who could form part of the Housing Executive procurement exercises.</p> <p>Assist those social enterprise who will benefit from social value initiatives where a financial investment would help them become more financially self-sustaining and be in a position to tender or <b>sub-contract in the provision of services across all government procurement</b>.</p> <p>Explore methods to how to <b>increase awareness of social clauses</b> to include social value in wider Government contracts and Social Clauses in Housing Executive contracts including Response, Planned, Heating and Grounds.</p>

<p>Increasing opportunities social enterprises to partner on <b>Energy, net carbon &amp; environmental impact</b> initiatives / contract delivery.</p>	<p>Work with the Housing Executive Sustainability, Procurement and Asset units to ensure that social enterprises are equipped, where feasible to work with us or our contractors on matters relating to <b>energy, net carbon, and environmental impacts</b>.</p> <p>Support Social Enterprises through our financial investment awards to ensure they are prepared, where appropriate, to assist in social value opportunities related to the green agenda, this may include <b>sub-contracting arrangements, being part of the procurement process or in identifying training opportunities</b>.</p> <p>Working with social enterprises to provide opportunities for enhanced <b>upskilling and training</b> in the green agenda, with a focus on increased employment opportunities.</p> <p>Support social enterprises which have a green commitment &amp; Work in partnership with internal colleagues on the <b>Sustainability Working Group</b> on all matters related to the climate agenda.</p>
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### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - EMPLOYABILITY & APPRENTICESHIPS

Aim:	Action
<p>Improving <b>financial wellbeing</b> in our communities</p>	<p>Continue to invest in Social Enterprises where they require assistance for <b>increased / new employability &amp; training</b> and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Support delivery of an accredited entrepreneurial qualification <b>Open College Network (OCN) Level 2 &amp; Level 3</b> in social enterprise on request across our communities.</p> <p>Maximise other learning and skills development opportunities by engaging with <b>academic and accrediting bodies</b> and interagency partnerships, gathering knowledge, information, and contacts for the benefit of individuals and our communities.</p> <p>Work with the Housing Executive <b>Financial Inclusion Managers</b> on opportunities for tenants, where employment or training opportunities could exist through Social Enterprise or social value outcomes.</p> <p>Work internally on the establishment of a social return of investment model that can demonstrate the value of our investment.</p>

<p>Ensuring tenants have access to <b>employment opportunities</b>, to include better access to apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Work with Housing Executive <b>Asset Management and Procurement Departments</b> to ensure that social value elements within our procurement can potentially provide increased employment and apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>Work in partnership through the Central Housing Forum <b>Social Value Working Group</b> to ensure that employability and apprenticeships remain active within all procurement and social value work.</p> <p>Work in partnership with our <b>Central Housing Forum</b> and Housing Community Network (HCN) to explore opportunities for tenants relating to employment and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Work with our <b>statutory partners to identity employment opportunities</b> for tenants.</p>
<p>Increasing opportunities Social Enterprises to partner on <b>Energy, Net Carbon &amp; Environmental</b> impact initiatives / contract delivery.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with established and new social enterprises to help them to prepare for opportunities where they may be able to act in a <b>sub-contractor capacity</b> to assist on our contract delivery.</p> <p>Continue to engage by <b>mentoring and proving financial assistance</b>, where appropriate, to those social enterprises who have a focus on project delivery on energy, net carbon and environmental initiatives.</p> <p>Continue to engage with our internal stakeholders including our Sustainability and Asset Colleagues as well as other statutory and private sector partners where there is a role for <b>Social Enterprises in acting as a delivery partners</b> whilst creating employment and apprenticeship opportunities for tenants.</p>



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