For the Good of Everyone

THE MANIFESTO FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The Scottish Parliament Elections 2016

#VoteSocialEnterprise
INTRODUCTION

WE’VE REACHED A TURNING POINT IN THE JOURNEY OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN SCOTLAND

The 2016 Scottish Parliament election is a unique chance to make our collective social enterprise voice heard loud and clear. Rapidly increasing public and media awareness, comprehensive statistics for the very first time, a national vision and strategy, a supportive national policy environment and the gradual opening up of public services to social enterprise innovation means a perfect storm of opportunity.

Social enterprises seek to change the world for the better but we also need realistic expectations and appropriate support. We believe in partnership and shared values and we can demonstrate to others a better way to do business. We seek to build bridges outwards to our friends in the private sector, particularly to ethical and green businesses, aspiring social enterprises and local SMEs, as well as to partners in the public sector.

Influencing the 2016 election candidates with this manifesto is just the starting point, as we seek to change or improve the policies of The Scottish Government and Parliament and public bodies over the next few years.

2016 is a time for social enterprises of every kind and in every part of urban and rural Scotland. Please share this manifesto in meetings with business and public sector contacts, post it on social media and send to all your friends and colleagues in social enterprise and beyond. Together we’ll make a real difference.

#VoteSocialEnterprise
WHAT IS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Social enterprises are innovative, independent businesses that exist to deliver a specific social and/or environmental mission. This could be employing homeless people, providing social housing, recycling waste or something similar. They aim to make profit like any other business, but invest 100% of it in their social purpose. Social enterprises in Scotland are “asset locked” (all property, money etc. can only be used for a social mission). They’re a more ethical and sustainable way of doing business. Social enterprises are not charities that simply get all income from grants/donations and they’re not a business simply behaving ethically or an arms-length company of a public body.

THE POLICY CONTEXT AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND

Scotland has a constructive and positive national policy environment for social enterprise development. As the national membership body, Social Enterprise Scotland exists to promote and raise the profile of Scottish social enterprises and the social enterprise way of doing business. Our remit is to campaign on behalf of all types of social enterprise, ask them what they want and need and seek to change national and local government policy as a result. We consult on and draft policy manifestos around elections, inform and respond to a wide variety of policy consultations and raise the profile of social enterprise to the media, public and other diverse audiences.
PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BRAND

The Scottish Government and Parliament, local authorities, public bodies and others should appreciate social enterprise diversity and be fully informed about what we mean by “social enterprise” in Scotland (i.e. The Voluntary Code of Practice), including, for example, no reclassification of Housing Associations as public bodies. Also recognise the ongoing, open debate around what we mean by “social enterprise” and the social impact of all businesses in Scotland. Recognise social enterprises as key economic drivers and as businesses run by professionals. Work in partnership with the social enterprise community to promote and mainstream social enterprise as the business model of choice for start ups, for commissioners of contracts, for investors and for consumers.

BUILDING MASS PUBLIC AWARENESS

A well-resourced advertising campaign to raise the profile of social enterprise across Scotland - essential to boost the sale of social enterprise goods and services. It should consist of a series of local campaigns, informed by social enterprises in each local area and tailored to local levels of social enterprise activity. A campaign could include TV, radio and billboard advertising and must include the promotion of all types of social enterprise, in consultation with social enterprise representative bodies. Preceding this campaign social enterprises should be offered quality, tailored training in marketing and media communications, with funding to improve online trading and marketing tools.
TAKING A GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Social enterprises that want to export should be given full, tailored support to do so by business support organisations. The public sector should choose social enterprise and international fair trade goods and services by default, whenever possible. Invest in and support local social enterprises that are at the forefront of tackling global climate change and supporting refugees and asylum seekers, as well as migrants. Regularly learn from other European nations and beyond about how to improve public services, replicating success from other countries across all strands of public policy.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AT THE HEART OF THE SCOTTISH BUSINESS PLEDGE

Build upon the nine commitments in the Pledge (particularly the Living Wage pledge) to include “Opening your supply chain to at least one social enterprise”, with information provided to signatories about the benefits of social enterprise to their business and to society. Heavily promote the Pledge to all private sector businesses, including as part of the process when awarding any public sector contract.

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TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SERVICES

The typical model for public services should be social enterprise, democratic and local - not large, distant and corporate. All public services should operate with flexibility, joined-up working and prevention of social problems as the starting point. Person-centred services and the direct involvement of service users and social enterprises should be at every level of design and delivery. Explore the creation of public sector spin-outs, transforming some public services into independent, democratic, employee-managed co-operatives. Mandate public sector arms-length companies (ALEOs) to work in supportive and constructive partnerships with local, established social enterprises. Resource tailored business support to encourage ALEOs to become fully independent, authentic social enterprises. Public-Social Partnerships (PSPs) should become the norm. When awarding contracts, commissioners should ensure that social enterprise delivery is the default and that assessment criteria are fully transparent, with ongoing measurement of the true social impacts of the organisation. Freedom of Information (FOI) laws should be extended to cover any big, for-private-profit business delivering Scottish public services.

DRIVING BUSINESS SUPPORT FORWARD

Continue, review and improve specialist social enterprise business support, as provided by Just Enterprise and others. Learn from and replicate the social and community enterprise remit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise in all public sector business support. Recognise and adapt support to distinct rural and urban needs. Improve all support by learning about future growth and business needs from Social Enterprise in Scotland: Census 2015.
We should clearly demonstrate how business investment can and must be about more than financial return. Promote and build a combined affordable loan and grant model of social investment, to encourage an independent, enterprising culture in all social enterprises and voluntary sector organisations. Provide specific social investment training to social entrepreneurs and private sector investors. Consider reduced loan repayment rates linked to business performance. Explore a Scottish Government-backed loan guarantee scheme, learning from schemes in other countries. Support innovations such as Community Shares. Look into an “open creativity” risky investments fund, with small loans and few restrictions to encourage unusual and experimental innovations. Encourage local authorities and all other relevant local forums to protect and enhance social enterprise support budgets, mandating a specific percentage of the local authority budget for social enterprise development. Ensure all loan/grant applications are simple, accessible, flexible and without overly restrictive criteria, with equal opportunities for all sizes and types of social enterprise. Ensure that all funding decisions are open, transparent and inclusive as standard. Implement a pro-active, specific and co-ordinated divestment policy around unethical uses of public money by all national and local public bodies.

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TARGETED TAX CUTS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Too much tax can hold back social enterprise development. Understand and appreciate the many challenges that social enterprises experience in addition to the challenges of running a standard business. Prioritise measured, targeted tax cuts to all current and newly devolved taxes applying to business, to level the playing field. Cut taxes and contributions paid by social enterprise employees wherever possible, to attract people to a career in social enterprise. Consider introducing Business Rates for empty business premises to boost regeneration and encourage productive use for local communities. Lobby for reduced VAT rates on products and services manufactured and delivered by social enterprises.

VALUING INTERNS, VOLUNTEERS AND APPRENTICES

Invest in, replicate and improve on successful initiatives like Community Jobs Scotland and Third Sector Internships Scotland to encourage people of all ages to get experience working in social enterprises and consider social enterprise as a serious, professional career option. Interns should be paid wherever possible. Use the full resources of Skills Development Scotland and similar public agencies to realise this potential, with a specific social enterprise remit. Protect any potential loss of social security benefits as a result of volunteering and recognise and value this voluntary community contribution.
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN OUR SCHOOLS

Ensure that practical social enterprise skills and expertise, ethical living, community-led regeneration, co-operative values and new economic thinking are mainstreamed throughout the school curriculum. Bring in the expertise of social entrepreneurs and youth enterprise organisations and organise visits to local social enterprises. Learn from, promote and replicate the increasing number of innovative social enterprises led by young people in Scotland’s schools.

LOCAL SOLUTIONS AS STANDARD

Solutions to our social and environmental challenges are best solved at the most local level possible, in our neighbourhoods, streets, villages, towns, cities and islands. Policy-making and service delivery should be devolved from The Scottish Government and Parliament and public bodies to the local level at every possible opportunity - from preventative healthcare to employment support, community renewable energy and more. This doesn't just mean to local authorities - but equally importantly the empowerment of individuals, social enterprises, development trusts, community groups and other hyper-local and democratic forums. All new and existing policy powers of The Scottish Government must be pro-actively used to build a fair, equal, inclusive and socially enterprising Scotland.
Find out more about social enterprise at:
www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk
#VoteSocialEnterprise

In addition to this manifesto we encourage you to read and consider the policy proposals being promoted by organisations such as:

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), Co-operatives UK, Scottish Community Alliance, Scottish League of Credit Unions, Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL), Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF), Community Resources Network Scotland (CRNS), Community Energy Scotland, Community Transport Association, Nourish Scotland, Community Land Scotland and the Health and Social Care Alliance.
JOIN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND TODAY!

Anyone can join online at: socialenterprisescotland.org.uk/join

Be a part of Scotland’s most innovative business community and connect with social enterprises and supporters from across Scotland.

Call or email us to talk about social enterprise or to ask a question:
0131 243 2650 / hello@socialenterprisescotland.org.uk

Send your news for our Social Enterprise Weekly member magazine to:
news@socialenterprisescotland.org.uk

twitter.com/socentscot
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