



Galway City Community Network
Líonra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe

SOCIAL FUTURE

SUPPORTING A THRIVING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR FOR GALWAY

Overview

Three local social enterprises shared their models of good practice and demonstrated the cross-cutting social policy areas that social enterprises are delivering on including job creation, skills development, community education, social justice, inclusion and diversity, circular economy and sustainability. The event also examined the challenges that the sector is facing and solutions which would foster the development of a thriving social enterprise sector both in Galway and nationally. The event aimed to bring together social enterprises, decision makers and policy makers, locally and nationally, to create a space for dialogue on these challenges and to find solutions

The presenting Social Enterprises identified key challenges and proposed solutions:

Core support: There is a need for a larger core contribution and a more appropriate funding model. Within the current funding model some grants can cost social enterprises as there is an emphasis on project funding that doesn't allow for a core contribution, coordination and administration costs.

Cross Departmental Role: As well as the Department of Rural and Community Development the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should also play a role in developing the sector and deliver a Social Enterprise Fund to be administered through Local Enterprise Offices.

Varied Space: Social enterprise supports should include access to varied spaces; community spaces, retail, manufacturing, industrial, educational

Accessible Supports: Social Enterprises should be able to access appropriate enterprise and community development supports. Social enterprises' status as not-for-profit should not exclude them from accessing enterprise support as they are still trading entities however, they reinvest their surplus towards their social mission.



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Appropriate supports:

- Funding for peer support models so knowledge transfer between social enterprises is resourced
- Suitable marketing and fundraising supports

Implementation of Social and Green Procurement by public bodies would support social enterprises to complete tendering processes and deliver services, providing additional social and environmental impacts.

Legislative Framework: An overhaul of Cooperative Legislation (Friendly Societies Acts 1896 to 2014) is necessary to create legislation which is fit for purpose and facilitates community led solutions to local needs.

Reduced Tax rates for circular economy products: Reduced Vat charged on circular economy products would support Social and Sustainable Enterprise and encourage people to purchase these products which have positive social and environmental benefits over new products.

Partnership Approach: Collaborative engagement between the public sector, civil society and business sector to support the development of the social and solidarity economy.

Raising Awareness: Department of Rural and Community Development should increase awareness of the sector and its impacts and roll out awareness raising campaigns

GCCN members call for the following actions to be included in the Galway City Development Plan:

- Establish the conditions for supporting social enterprise by including social enterprise hubs and sites in all development and redevelopment sites
- Provide spaces at affordable rents and rates levels for a range and variety of social enterprises
- Audit vacant and derelict sites for the potential to be used as sites for social enterprise
- Ensure complementarity with the Local Economic and Community Plan supports for social enterprise.



AN MHEITHEAL ROTHAR
GALWAY'S COMMUNITY BIKE WORKSHOP





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Discussion

- **Funding:** Social Enterprises present agreed that the current funding model was very challenging as it does not allow for administration and coordination costs. This burden of managing project funding without being resourced to do so was cited as unsustainable.
- **Expansion of Current Programmes:** Such as the Community Services Programme
- **Support for community led solutions:** Targeted supports for marginalised groups like new communities and people with disabilities to develop initiatives.
- **Procurement:** Social and Green Procurement was cited as very important and that social enterprises' social and environmental impact should be recognised in the tendering process through allocation of additional points. One model mentioned which could support the expansion of social and green procurement was Community Wealth Building. Councillors mentioned putting forward policies that support social enterprises and community wealth building.
- **Infrastructure:** There was agreement about the need for affordable and suitable buildings. The redevelopment of Sandy Road and ensuring there are spaces for social enterprises was highlighted.
- **Enterprise Supports:** Most Social Enterprises do not qualify for many supports from Local Enterprise Offices. Discussion as to a widening of remit needed with additional resources or the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment ensuring there is an alternative avenue of enterprise support for social enterprises. The Department of Rural and Community Development is engaging with Department of Business, Enterprise and Trade to ensure there is fair access to funding for social enterprises.
- **Challenges for Co-operatives:** Members of co-operatives highlighted challenges due to the lack of understanding of the co-operative model; seen as not fitting into charity model but also not into business model. The appropriate supports are not available. The barriers created by outdated legislative were also highlighted.



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