

## **Report from the 8th meeting of Scotland's Cross-Party Group on Social Enterprise in The Scottish Parliament**

### **AGM and Annual Review – 6 May 2014**

Chic Brodie MSP was the nominated candidate for Convener of the CPG. A unanimous vote of those attending the AGM voted in favour of Chic Brodie MSP continuing as Convener of the group.

Anne McTaggart MSP was the nominated candidate for Vice Convener of the CPG. A unanimous vote of those attending the AGM voted in favour of Anne McTaggart MSP continuing as Vice Convener of the group.

There were no financial matters to report. A full annual return form will be submitted to the parliamentary Standards Committee.

Members should note that the only direct costs associated with the group are for refreshments and these are currently covered in full by the Secretariat, Social Enterprise Scotland.

Attendees debated a wide variety of issues that the group may choose as meeting topics over the coming year. Below is a summary of the main discussion at the meeting.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** There may be a visit from a Chinese delegation after contact was made. Myself and our Vice Convener are also looking into a private members' debate within the Scottish Parliament on a social enterprise topic. We will also look into having a joint CPG with others e.g. Co-ops or credit unions CPGs.

**Duncan Thorp, Social Enterprise Scotland:** (Duncan read and explained the Social Enterprise CPG facts and figures information sheet that was given to attendees).

**Anne McTaggart MSP:** We have got a lot out of our CPG discussions around welfare reform and also the Community Empowerment Bill debate.

**Sandy Watson, Scottish Enterprise:** We didn't have this kind of forum before, good attendance and good variety of topics. The group might look at how more of the ideas and topics covered can be turned into actions. Social enterprise has made a lot of progress over the last five years but the key priorities remain the same, access to finance, procurement and commissioning and awareness-raising. Also issue about what people actually do with social enterprise messages - particularly the public and consumers.

**Duncan Osler, Chair, Social Enterprise Scotland:** The CPG brings issues to the attention of MSPs, such as the implications of welfare reform. It's a voice for our members and it demonstrates the impact of social enterprise.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** Interesting to note the growth of social enterprise overseas e.g. China and potential for partnerships with Scotland. In addition to topics mentioned we could discuss town centres, young people and social enterprise involvement, the issue of many funding streams and also a social enterprise "bank".

**Bosco Santimano, You Can Cook:** We've been trying to get a foothold into the NHS. There are great pilot studies but then we're kicked out of the process. The NHS doesn't understand social enterprise. They should use our expertise.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** There are opportunities with the current Procurement Reform Bill.

**Jennifer Robertson, CVS Falkirk and District:** There is the issue of taking of other people's ideas e.g. community trusts and arms length organisations like Falkirk Community Trust taking ideas as their own. Social enterprises also face resistance from public authorities.

**Duncan Osler, Chair, Social Enterprise Scotland:** The issues of finance, regulation and scrutiny of public bodies is important. We do what we do in social enterprise to increase social impact - why are both we in social enterprise and public bodies not moving in the same direction, as we have the same aims? It's about partnership and collaboration. Also about measuring social impact.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** What can MSPs do to help?

**Bosco Santimano, You Can Cook:** Local public bodies and the NHS have exclusive control over their budget, no one else does. We are seen as a threat. There is much to benefit the NHS in terms of prevention and savings. But they have many regulations and restrictions. Sharing budgets is needed. 0.007% of NHS budget is spent on prevention. Can their budget be regulated?

**Mary McLuskey, CRNS:** I agree with much of what's been said. Social enterprise is low on the agenda for public bodies. Even if we have an audience with public bodies, so what? We're the grassroots, direct engagement with people, MSPs should also engage more.

**Alex Dunedin, Ragged University:** MSPs should open up data and information from meetings. In terms of large organisations much information goes in but not enough comes out. Also impact measurement is stifling.

**John Hughes, CEIS:** The Developing Markets contract deals with procurement specifically, we're doing work with NHS procurement officers and a couple are on board.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** How aware of social enterprise are procurement officers in public bodies?

**John Hughes, CEIS:** You can engage with one department but then other departments not engaged, one officer can face barriers within their own organisation. Scottish Government work has been good but the barriers are at a local level.

**Mary McLuskey, CRNS:** In the real world if a contract doesn't specifically state "social enterprise" then it's about the cheapest cost.

**Lucy Haughey, The Plan B Partnership:** Intellectual property theft an issue. Need training in this for social entrepreneurs. Glasgow City Council stole an idea and we were in dispute with them. I don't go for any funding, only contracts. Restrictions on funding, preference to usual suspects. Charities don't want to work with social enterprises because it's about making money. Public bodies taking ideas is an issue.

**Jennifer Robertson, CVS Falkirk and District:** An issue with public and private sector perceptions of social enterprise - social enterprises *are* professional. The "not-for-profit" phrase is unhelpful and shouldn't be used.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** There is a collective "brand" issue, perception of "polly filler" organisations plugging gaps - but it's a vibrant sector that delivers. We should be telling the story of social enterprise using case studies.

**Marianne Paterson, Ayrshire Childrens Services CIC:** Previously there was a resistance but it's a bit better now. We need to publicise ourselves better. In North Ayrshire it's been difficult.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** What methods should we use? Social media?

**Mary McLuskey, CRNS:** I was previously at COSLA, lots of good work happening in councils but people can't see the innovation and good work etc. COSLA excellence awards worth looking at.

**Jennifer Robertson, CVS Falkirk and District:** We must encourage local social enterprises to see themselves not just as social enterprises but as *businesses* first and foremost, competing against private businesses.

**Bosco Santimano, You Can Cook:** Good stories regionally but media coverage needs to be increased.

**Duncan Thorp, Social Enterprise Scotland:** In much better position with media coverage now e.g. SES has a few regular columns and news articles and tabloids like Daily Record now regularly use "social enterprise" phrase, we had article in there recently.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** Can a series of local social enterprise awards programmes then go on to national Scotland awards?

**Marianne Paterson, Ayrshire Childrens Services CIC:** We need a big expo every year.

**Duncan Thorp, Social Enterprise Scotland:** We've had the Social Enterprise Exchange and S2S, taking different approach this year with evening event for private/public engagement and more local events like trade fairs.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** Scottish Parliament Private Members' debate would raise the profile?

**Alex Dunedin, Ragged University:** Academics and social entrepreneurs should work together more. What barriers are being removed from vulnerable service users? Opportunities for SME businesses not just corporates.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** The Clean Close Company in Dundee is a good case study of developing work, started off small, went into other areas of work, profitable and successful. There is also a big role for the Community Empowerment Bill.

**Marianne Paterson, Ayrshire Childrens Services CIC:** Volunteering, training and work placements issues to address. What about employment and the role of social enterprise? We're also involved in an SROI project.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** Capacity building of social enterprises an important issue.

**Duncan Osler, Chair, Social Enterprise Scotland:** The role of social enterprises in employability and job creation is big. We need to profile raise among MSPs and others.

**Jennifer Robertson, CVS Falkirk and District:** There are trainee placements in social enterprises but then people are out of work again, there is a conveyer belt of employment, no long-term, permanent job creation.

**Mary McLuskey, CRNS:** There is a need to be more business savvy, social enterprises need *proper* business support.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** Business support is certainly an issue.

**Lucy Haughey, The Plan B Partnership:** We could have joint CPG meetings. Theme of employment too. Social enterprises need financial skills, no one is offering this.

**Sandy Watson, Scottish Enterprise:** Business Gateway response to social enterprise has improved over the last five years. Its main priority, the vast majority of its work, is to support the private sector. The resources available to social enterprise need to be proportional to the size of the sector. Business Gateways do have a specific remit to serve social enterprise.

**Robert Jacobs, Ayrshire Community Media CIC:** We're setting up a media centre in Irvine, involving young people. Ideas are often welcomed but not backed by action by public authorities.

**Mary McLuskey, CRNS:** A one-size-fits-all approach to business support doesn't work for any business.

**Marianne Paterson, Ayrshire Childrens Services CIC:** Some support has been great, including Business Gateway. Good support from Social Enterprise Scotland, Firstport, Social Enterprise Academy etc. We need to look at the evolution of social enterprise as we go forward.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** We need discipline into the sector and co-ordination.

**Bosco Santimano, You Can Cook:** Seven years ago things were very different. Been rattling cages over the years. Some charities will close because they are just focusing on funding and not business and are not fit to continue. Though not all charities can be social enterprises.

**Anne MacDonald, Highlands & Islands Enterprise:** We offer a lot of business support. There is still a lack of capacity in social enterprise to deliver contracts. Opportunities in setting up your business in the Highlands.

**Alex Dunedin, Ragged University:** Access to funding streams issue. Can we get a list of all of them? Fees and joining Social Enterprise Scotland.

**Duncan Thorp, Social Enterprise Scotland:** Start-up members get a cheap rate of just £65 for two years, fees based on turnover. Will try and get list of funding streams.

**Chic Brodie MSP:** We should look into having CPG meetings outside of parliament. Let's go out and tell the story of social enterprise.

**END**

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