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DTNI presents 'What Needs to be Done' for debate and comment by its membership and wider civil society for an agreed set of recommendations.

For further information

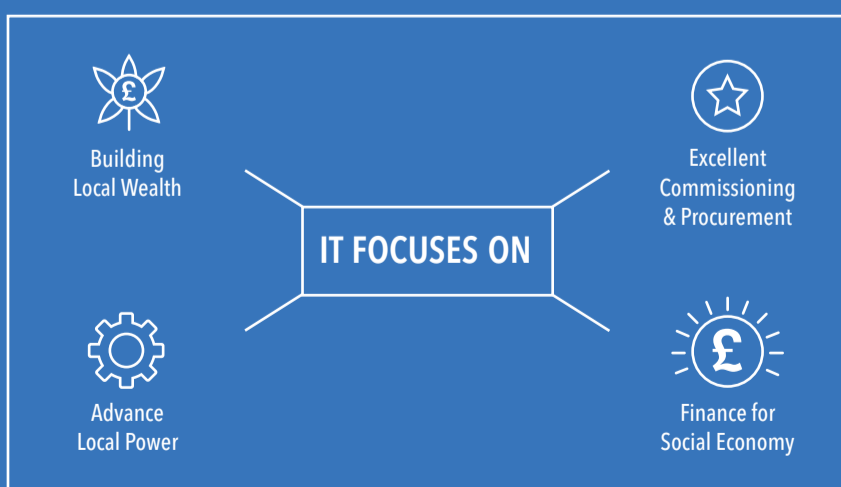
Email: info@dtni.org.uk | Tel: 02890311132 | Twitter: @devtrustsni

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'WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE'

A series of recommendations for change that are intended to advance:

'An inclusive economy that is focused on social goals, social justice, environmental sustainability and prosperity for all.'



1

It has two main purposes

2

To frame the work of DTNI members & third sector organisations within a wider economic agenda

To identify key strategic policy actions

New ideas and practice are starting to emerge across the world, on how we build a more inclusive economy.

Within this - and to break with some traditional thinking - is the assertion that an inclusive economy can only be achieved when the public, social and commercial sectors, mutually support and develop one another. The social economy, that is community development sector and social enterprise, should be fully recognised and woven into the work and thinking of public agencies and other commercial partners.

Key to advancing an inclusive economy is how people, communities and citizens are embraced as active players in wealth creation. Within this, social capital is firmly linked to and interwoven within economic prosperity. We need a new strategy to address poverty, wage stagnation, under-investment, low productivity and widening inequalities of income and wealth, which are now entrenched features of the Northern Ireland economy.

Economic development thinking tends to view the social economy of citizens and communities as merely recipients of wealth, rather than producers. This is folly. The economic world is not distinct from the social; they are one and the same. Local economic development practice should be about ensuring that an economy is developed in a way in which local people and communities are active players in delivering prosperity. In that way, social outcomes are secured, and wealth is more broadly held and fairly distributed.

It is imperative that the NI economy is rooted in the social lives of our communities and be guided. An inclusive strong, enterprising, resilient economy needs a strong community economic development sector. Key to this is a new mindset. As such, we must think less

about what we can attract or construct through external investment, but more about what we already have and how we build from within. Support for social and creative industries, environment focused enterprise and wider local enterprise activity are key and often under-respected components of economic development. Yet, they are more likely to root and retain wealth within localities, create effective local economic multipliers, bring greater social return for productivity and build long-lasting prosperity.

We must build more from the assets NI has, the talent of its people and communities across the region. In every corner of NI there is no shortage of innovation from community organisations, social enterprises and private businesses. In this, NI already has the seeds of a more inclusive economy. Public sector organisations are also responding, with a recognition that reform needs to happen. The task now is to ensure this flourishing of innovation is matched with a sympathetic policy regime and support for the social economy.

The themes outlined in 'What Needs to be Done' aim to help us reflect on how we progress to build a more inclusive economy. Some of these suggestions and policy recommendations are very aspirational, challenging and long term, whilst others are more short term and easily implemented. However, if implemented, they would, we believe, transform the economic and social life of NI, creating a place where wealth is enjoyed by everyone.



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