

ANNOUNCEMENT

A wide-ranging coalition of sixty-four Scottish economists, charities, think tanks, and businesses have sent an open letter to the First Minister to voice concern over the proposed nature of the economic recovery plans of the Scottish Government.

The group calls for a radically fairer Scotland focussing on closing the employment gap for women and disabled people, plus fairer wages and lower carbon.

To do this, the group proposes practical steps for a nationwide pivot towards community-led social enterprises - a Wellbeing Economy. While the letter acknowledges that the First Minister appears to share the same hopes, it also notes that to date there has been not one mention of the social enterprise sector in any of the Government's reports, terms of reference or statements on recovery.

Looking to New Zealand and looking at Scotland's own history leading the way in creating social enterprises the challenge is set to move towards 1 in 10 jobs being in these community-led and wellbeing-led workplaces by the end of the recovery, placing Scotland top of international league tables for fair work and equality

ENDS

Notes:

The letter, sent on 9 July 2020, is found attached.

Queries can be made via the person asked to the person asked to coordinate the signing and release of the letter, John Halliday on 07944062201 / john@jrhalliday.co.uk

The First Minister
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

9 July 2020

Dear First Minister,

As academics, business leaders, politicians, and community leaders we call for an economic stimulus in Scotland which really places **equality, community and wellness first**. This means making a disproportionate investment in community, cooperative and social enterprises in redesigning Scotland's economic stimulus. This in turn will result in closing the employment gap for **women and disabled people, plus fairer wages and lower carbon**.

The lives of people rich or poor in communities across Scotland have been devastated by Coronavirus, with too many losing loved ones and livelihoods. Rightly, the Government response has been the biggest seen in peacetime. The ongoing economic stimulus response will be similarly unparalleled in scale. While there are plenty of #BringBackBetter slogans and strong ideas in the recent Economic Recovery Advisory Group report, it is not clear we are heading to a **radically fairer** Scotland.

Even well-designed tax-cuts, job creation schemes and business investment guarantees will overall favour corporations, business owners, lenders, and the better off. Scotland's stated aim to invest public money in "high growth potential enterprises" such as digital start-ups or technology giants creates jobs, but does it always share the benefits of that growth?

Yet Scotland already has a unique asset. **This is the birthplace of alternate business** models in which **power and wealth can be shared by communities and workers**: social enterprises; cooperatives; mutuals and unions; community share issues; development trusts; social firms; rural community businesses; credit unions; and community shops.

Already **1 in 25 workers in Scotland have jobs in social enterprises**, although mostly in small or fragile businesses vulnerable to competition from private or multinational corporations. They are far more likely to employ and be led-by women or disabled people than private businesses and 28% of them focus on green-energy, carbon reduction or circular-economy jobs. This is the economy Scotland needs to bring back even better.

A decade ago, New Zealand looked to us to learn how to build social enterprises; now they surpass us. The Advisory Group report didn't even mention them. Yet it is reasonable to **aspire to 1 in 10 jobs to be in these community- and wellbeing-led workplaces by the end of this recovery**, placing us top of international league tables for fair work and equality.

We should consider the **£200m New Deal for Communities** proposed by Scottish Community Alliance. Perhaps private **businesses needing bailouts could be handing ownership to communities, customers or workers**. New public works and regeneration schemes should genuinely **advantage contractors who place community ownership first**. Vitally, **trusting in and investing at a community level** must become the default, from rural towns to deprived urban neighbourhoods.

This is the time to harness the power of our communities towards a Wellbeing Economy.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Mike Danson, Professor Emeritus of Enterprise Policy at Heriot-Watt University

Lynn Henderson, Convenor at the Jimmy Reid Foundation

Colin Lee, Chief Executive at CEMVO Scotland

Douglas Westwater, CEO at Community Enterprise

Rodney Stares, Treasurer at Senscot

Robin McAlpine, Director at Common Weal

Etienne d'Aboville, CEO at Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living

Professor Nick Watson, Centre for Disability Research at University of Glasgow

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

Grant Thoms, Social entrepreneur

Pheona Matovu, Director at Radiant and Brighter Community Interest Company

Professor Gregor Gall, Director at the Jimmy Reid Foundation

Jackie Brock, CEO at Children in Scotland

Mark McRitchie, Chair at Glasgow Social Enterprise Network

Liz Gardiner, Cultural planner and social entrepreneur

Pauline Gordon, Director at Social Enterprise Network Scotland

Claire Stevens, Chief Executive at Voluntary Health Scotland

Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive at Space & Broomhouse Hub

Alistair Grimes, Former Chair at Responsible Finance

Thomas Fisher, Director at CoDeL

Jenni Inglis, Director at VIE Ltd

Ailsa Clark, Founder at Inspiralba

Julia Morton, Founding Director at The Haven in Stonehaven

Nick Hopkins, Social value consultant

Bob Marshall, Social entrepreneur and Trustee at Queens Park Arena

Robert Calder, Social enterprise supporter

Doug Summers, Creative Director at Bold Studio

Laurence Demarco, Retired community sector leader

Geoff Leask, Trustee at Stirling Community Media

Katy Whitelaw, Social enterprise supporter

David Henderson, Insight Collective

Diane Cameron, West Lothian Social Enterprise Network Coordinator

Stephen McMurray, Social enterprise supporter

Fiona Taylor, Social enterprise adviser

Jane Churchill, Third sector development consultant

Norman Chipakupaku, Social Enterprise Officer at CEMVO

Sophy Green, Chief Executive at Instant Neighbour

Jonny Kinross, CEO at Grassmarket Community Project

Christopher Seely, Social enterprise supporter

Pasna Sallis, Director at Wow Factor CIC

John Halliday, Social entrepreneur

Kaytie Lilley, Founder at Make Do and Grow CIC

Angela Friel, Manager at C.O.J.A.C. Centre

Alex Weir, General Manager at Spruce Carpets

Lisa Duthie, CEO at Community Food Initiatives North East

Neil Lovelock, Project Manager at Glasgow Eco Trust

Gerry Baldwin, CEO at Fuse Youth Café Glasgow

Sue Laughlin, Retired health service planner

John Hilton, Executive Director at Move On

Jayne Chappell, Finance and Development Manager at Social Firms Scotland

Angela Moohan, CEO at The Larder

Stephanie Bowring, Edinburgh Remakery

Helen Mill, Executive Director at The Village Storytelling Centre

Mark Langdon, Chair at GMACFILM and North United Communities

Graham Branscombe, Development Officer at East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action

Alan Ferry, Retired social work lecturer

Kim Wallace, Deputy Director at Social Enterprise Network Scotland

Nicky Thomson, CEO at Good Morning Service

Fariha Thomas, Manager at Youth Community Support Agency

Christopher Gray, Social entrepreneur

Elaine Brown CEO, Edinburgh Remakery

Rick Rijdsdijk, Director at Social Value Lab

Micheal Matovu, Director at Radiant and Brighter Community Interest Company

Professor Michael Roy, Professor of Economic Sociology at Glasgow Caledonian University