



Enterprise

NORTHERN IRELAND



WESTMINSTER ENGAGEMENT MAY 2023



Westminster Engagement

May 2023



A delegation from across the Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI) network travelled to Westminster on 24 May 2023.

There were two primary objectives of the engagement at Westminster. Firstly, to further develop and activate the collaboration with the National Enterprise Network (NEN) and secondly, to continue the campaign raising awareness of the value of the ENI / LEA network in the Northern Irish enterprise support ecosystem.

The engagement provided an excellent opportunity to deepen links with political representatives and key policy decision-makers in UK Government.

Aligning with the ENI Strategy objective of 'Strengthening and Cohering the ENI / LEA Network' the trip also provided a great opportunity for members to collectively engage on a professional level and catch up socially.

Enterprise NI was powerfully represented by LEA members and the ENI team:

- Jonathan McAlpin, Chair ENI, CEO East Belfast Enterprise
- Cara Dallat, CEO CIDO
- Jim Eastwood, CEO Cookstown Enterprise Centre
- Emma Garrett, CEO Mallusk Enterprise Park
- Patricia McNeill, CEO Ormeau Business Park
- Martin Devlin, CEO Roe Valley Enterprise
- Ken Nelson, CEO LEDCOM
- Michael McQuillan, CEO ENI
- Amy Junkin, ENI



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Joint Meeting with the National Enterprise Network (NEN) and UK Small Business Commissioner - *Meeting One*

- The key focus of discussions with the National Enterprise Network (NEN), addressed cooperation and collaboration around the critical importance of local enterprise networks in the support of start-ups and local micro and small businesses. The meeting agreed on three actions:
 - ENI and NEN have committed to ramping up engagement with regular executive meetings and at least two wider joint network meetings per annum.
 - NEN, using the successful template of the NI Enterprise Barometer will carry out an inaugural Enterprise Barometer (England), coinciding with the fifth NI Enterprise Barometer (Autumn 2023). Alongside the dissemination of the NI findings, we will organise a joint NI/England dissemination.
 - ENI has committed to working closely with NEN on the outcomes of the 'Adding Value Across Enterprise Support' Report (2023). This collaboration aims to assess how we can effectively and collectively promote the invaluable role of the enterprise network to both the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Together, we aspire to create a compelling case for the significance of the enterprise network in driving economic growth and prosperity.
- The joint meeting was attended by the UK Small Business Commissioner (Liz Barclay) who has committed to using her office to promote and support the actions of joint ENI / NEN engagement.

Engagement with MPs, Members of the House of Lords, and NI Minister of State - *Meeting Two*

- At an insightful and impactful meeting with Minister Baker (NI Office), Northern Ireland MPs, party representatives, and members of the House of Lords from Alliance, DUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin, and UUP, we actively discussed three key asks – Government should:
 - acknowledge that start-ups, and micro, & small businesses form the biggest part of our economy & require proportional recognition and support.
 - build policy and interventions, required to help more start-ups, and micro & small businesses to export, get access to finance, and invest in innovation.
 - harness and invest in the local enterprise network to ensure the experience, structures, and local connectivity are not lost.

Additionally...

There was meaningful engagement with political representatives on ongoing challenges around achieving a workable and viable solution for the delivery of the UK SPF-Funded NI Entrepreneurship Support Service. All NI political parties have asked to be kept informed and have committed their support to a workable solution that harnesses the ENI/LEA network.



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