

SURE Enterprise – a draft outline

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This Social Enterprise company is envisaged as a specialist construction / contracting company providing services directly aimed at improving the energy efficiency of domestic properties, community buildings and commercial premises.

There would be three main elements to the business:

Energy Auditing – leading to a prioritised list of key actions to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills. It could be possible to additionally provide specification sheets describing in detail the measures being recommended. SURE Enterprise could provide the first quote for owners to consider. This element of the business is seen as being in the main a free service. It would definitely be aimed at seeking business for the company and additionally to raise awareness of energy efficiency issues and the importance of the correct choice of materials and installation methods to address them. This awareness raising would influence both the consumer and also other construction companies who are invited to give a quote for the work.

Energy Efficiency Construction Services – specialising in the more complex build projects connected with energy efficiency improvements. For example:

- Dry-lined wall insulation measures for solid-wall, 'hard to treat' properties.
- Underfloor insulation in difficult access situations.
- Secondary double-glazing – design and fit.

Sale of Specialist Energy Efficiency Equipment – to provide a 'one stop shop' for a range of energy efficiency devices. Some of which these devices could be hard to source from elsewhere (eg high brightness LED bulbs). This would not be an attempt to compete with the big DIY stores for the cheap and simple products (draught strip, mineral wool insulation) but could include occupancy detection switches, pressure pad switches, high efficiency shower heads, chimney balloons, energy monitors etc).

The workforce could comprise of a core group of individuals / tradespeople with additional, periodic assistance from other specialists. It could be possible to take on young people / volunteers to train up. Some specialist training qualification / accreditation could also be sought to add to the unique selling points of the business.

Because this company is operating as a Social Enterprise it should be able to provide competitive quotes for work. In addition it is expected that it would have an inherent advantage when bidding for larger contracts including from the local city councils.

It is believed that significant start up funding will be available for such a Social Enterprise. This is particularly given the increasing commitment by cities and regions to move the housing stock towards being lower-carbon and lower-energy using. The increase of fuel poverty in all regions is another driver which could attract funds.

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