



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade  
and Investment**

[www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)

Business Regulation Division  
Netherleigh  
Massey Avenue  
Belfast  
BT4 2JP

27 October 2015

James Wright  
Co-operatives UK  
Holyoake House  
Hanover Street  
Manchester  
M60 0AS

Dear Mr Wright,

Thank you for your letter of 14 October 2015 to the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill, which has been passed to me for reply.

I note your concerns about how new societies will be registered in Northern Ireland by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. The registration process is an operational matter outside the immediate legislative scope of the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill.

In your letter you refer to a need to allow for the creation of a hybrid co-operative/community benefit society. The Department has not been made aware by the IPS movement in NI of any demand to create such a society. There is nothing at present preventing a co-operative with a strong social or community purpose from behaving in such a way so long as this is included in the society's rules. However, it may be difficult to pursue two distinct objectives: benefit of members and benefit of the community; with equal effort.

You also suggest in your letter further possible changes to the Bill, with regard to industrial and provident society (IPS) insolvency procedures and asset locks. With the progress the Bill has made to date, there is unfortunately not now the scope to properly develop these with a view to inclusion in the Bill. However, the Department will continue to review the legislative framework underpinning IPSs after conclusion of work on the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill,

including consideration of such recent developments in IPS legislation in Great Britain.

I would add that the Department does not appear to have received the earlier correspondence referred to in paragraph 6.2 of the Annex to your letter.

As your letter of 14 October was copied to the NI Assembly Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, I am copying this response to the Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized capital 'K' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Keith Brown**  
**Business Regulation Division**