



FROM CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS TO CO-OPERATIVE PLACES:

.....

A review and forward view for the CCIN

HENRY KIPPIN
ANNA RANDLE

MARCH 2017



CONTENTS

.....

Foreword	4
Executive Summary and Key Messages	5
Where Next?	8
Section One:	9
Section Two:	12
Section Three:	22
Section Four:	26
Footnotes	27



**People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first**



ABOUT COLLABORATE:

Collaborate CIC is a social consultancy that promotes and supports social change through collaboration. We help organisations, services and systems respond to increasingly complex social challenges (such as rising inequality, multiple needs, devolution and fairer economic growth) that require a collaborative response that goes beyond traditional silos. Collaborate builds partnerships that get beyond the rhetoric and deliver credible change on the ground. Our clients and partners span local government, NHS, civil society and the private sector. We are values-led, not for profit and driven by a belief in the power of collaborative services as a force for social and economic progress. For more information, see www.collaboratecic.com

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Henry Kippin is Chief Executive and Anna Randle is Director of Public Services for Collaborate CIC.

ABOUT THE CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS' INNOVATION NETWORK:

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network is a collaboration between local authorities who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community. Our work recognises the need to define a new model for local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities. The network is open to all UK councils regardless of political affiliation who can demonstrate innovation and a willingness to drive forward the Co-operative Council agenda. For more information, see www.councils.coop

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Our thanks to the CCIN, and in particular to Jonathan Downs, Jenni Barker, Jackie Wilson, Carolyn Wilkins, Phil Spooner, Sarah Reed and participants at a 2016 workshop from which several of the questions explored in this report were derived. Many thanks to interviewees in Oldham, Sunderland and elsewhere who shared their opinions, insights and sense of passion about their place. Thanks to Alex Robinson at Collaborate for editorial support. All errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

FOREWORD

In a post-Brexit world local government has an even more fundamental role to play in re-engaging with our communities than ever before. There is a growing resentment about how decisions are made by Whitehall, especially when those decisions directly impact people's quality of life. Our communities are telling us that they are tired of their lives being adversely impacted by policy makers who do not understand local issues and are not directly accountable for their decisions. Local government has clearly articulated its desire for powers to be transferred to town halls and local communities, but only together can we make it work – and only by working co-operatively.

I was delighted and privileged to have recently been elected as the new Chair for the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network. The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) has been advocating a fundamentally new relationship between councils and citizens since its formation in 2013. Its 22 member councils have been blazing a trail by developing and sharing innovative co-operative policies and practices to make a real difference to the communities we serve.

This report explores how the Co-operative Council movement has helped create the conditions for deeper collaboration with our communities and considers how successfully this has translated into new ways of working and, most importantly, into outcomes. It provides a full and frank overview of the challenges facing Co-operative Councils in the future, and impresses the importance of moving to the next level in our journey. If the Co-operative Council approach is to shape and influence the important national debates around devolution, inclusive growth and health and social care reform, the overriding message from the report is clear: as Co-operative Councils we need to be bold.

We need to consciously develop our co-operative approach with our communities and proactively deliver it in partnership. We need to be strong role models of our values and stand firmly committed to our principles, despite the changing social landscape and stormy economic forecast. We need to work together to drive the co-operative policy agenda forward, seeking out opportunities to use what we learn to inform national thinking on local government policy.

Make no mistake though: co-operative working isn't easy and it isn't a quick fix. It means transforming the way we work as local councils. It means influencing our partners to create co-operative places. Most importantly, it means empowering residents to play their part, be that in making decisions, delivering services or supporting others in the community.

For me, the co-operative journey is one that is rich with stories of real people living in real places and I feel privileged to be a part of it. Through sharing our experiences I hope that we can fulfil our potential as a non-party political active hub for co-operative policy development, innovation and advocacy.

I hope you enjoy the report.

Cllr Sharon Taylor
LEADER OF STEVENAGE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES

The Co-operative Council concept is five years old. Twenty-two councils have now declared themselves 'co-operative' and become members of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN). They can be proud of the value set they have created, and proud of the changes in culture and practice they have sought to achieve.

The context for Co-operative Councils has been stark. Massive demand challenges and a climate of fiscal austerity. Big ticket reform areas in health, education, criminal justice and welfare re-shaping the landscape within which they operate. The emergence of devolution and city-regional working as the new vehicle for growth and public service reform within places. And, latterly, the Brexit vote illustrating a profound disconnect between some civic institutions and the people they represent and serve.

We believe that the Co-operative Council ethos is more important than ever. It is a strong statement of intent about the power of collaboration, and a bulwark against what can feel like an increasingly fragmenting and negative political discourse. But a powerful ethos is not enough. More needs to be done to turn hitherto marginal gains into tangible shifts in mainstream practice that make a real difference to citizens.

Our hope is that Co-operative Councils can draw from the foundations outlined in this report to begin shaping answers to a problem that we have heard again and again through our research and practice with local authorities, namely: "we know more about what we don't want, than what we do..." It is up to Co-operative Councils to take the intellectual and policy risks required of their strong social ethos. They must take the lead in meeting the challenges of community dislocation with a radical approach that is fundamentally rooted in strong relationships up and down the chain from communities to ballot box and back.



"The basic unit of sustained innovation is not a creative individual, nor even a team, but a creative community with a cause..." 1.

CHARLES LEADBEATER

'This is a watershed moment for Co-operative Council'

INTERVIEWEE

An idea whose time has come...again?

The Co-operative Council ethos speaks to a need for deeper collaboration to improve outcomes for people and places. Achieving positive social change in complex times is impossible for councils to do on their own. Health, social care and other welfare support services are becoming increasingly interdependent. Co-operation with the public – so often underdeveloped in service reform agendas – will be critical to the future sustainability of public services across the board. And at a time when traditional boundaries between the public, private and social sector are becoming increasingly blurred, working with a strong value set is ever more vital to the integrity of civic institutions.

We have written this review because we want to celebrate the progress of Co-operative Councils; but also because we think the movement as a whole needs to be honest about the scale of the challenges ahead. Both authors were involved in establishing the Network. We are champions of what it represents. But we need to be equally clear about its shortfalls.

Without developing a strong account of how values and principles can develop into credible strategies for outcome improvement, the movement will remain marginal to the factors driving large scale change in local government and public services. This is already happening to some extent, with the devolution agenda being driven by largely economic concerns, and through a narrow lens that risks Co-operative Councils playing catch up within a model that values agglomeration over inclusion.



“Our communities aren’t stupid. They can see what goes on around them and what is on the news. We need to get better at working with them to give them different possibilities.”

ELECTED MEMBER,
SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Two futures, and five new strategic foundations

The Co-operative Councils movement faces two possible futures. The first is an extension of the status quo. Great innovation and collaborative practice that is celebrated and makes a difference, but that remains on the margins of the fundamental changes taking place in governance, service delivery and the social life of places.

The second future is more ambitious. Co-operative Councils starting to shape the agenda on devolution, inclusive growth, health and social care reform, seizing the post-referendum moment to lead efforts to embed co-production within the mainstream service offer to citizens.

We will sleepwalk into the first future without a real effort to redefine what local government stands for along these radical and politically risky lines.

Leaders within the Co-operative Council movement thus need to be bold. The pace of change in our economy, society and policy context mean that the old model of project-by-project working will not carry the weight of the changes we expect from it. Co-operative Councils can no longer look to national politics or Whitehall policymakers for answers. So it is critical that Co-operative Councils work more systematically to translate a meaningful platform for change into a credible set of practices and leadership behaviours that can influence national and city-regional public service reform agendas.

This is both a challenge and an opportunity. In place of the old departmental silos of public services, we believe that Co-operative Councils need to develop their own set of ‘co-operative relationships’. These should cut across the sectors, and focus on themes like social capital, demand management and inclusive growth over traditional service demarcations. They form what we call the five new foundations of co-operative public service reform.



CO-OPERATIVE
GROWTH STRATEGY

PLACE BASED
HEALTH STRATEGY

HUMAN CAPITAL
STRATEGY

DEMAND
MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY

SOCIAL CAPITAL
STRATEGY

FOUNDATION 1 CO-OPERATIVE GROWTH STRATEGY

Economic growth and participation will inevitably be imbalanced without deliberate action from a range of social partners and anchor institutions. Co-operative Councils should take the lead on developing 'inclusive' or 'fair' growth strategies that blend local job creation with incentives for in-work progression, vocational learning and more holistic support for people and families furthest from the labour market.

FOUNDATION 2 PLACE BASED HEALTH STRATEGY

NHS reform will fail without credible strategies to shift resources into community based settings in support of individual resilience and self-care. This cannot be done with supply side reform alone, as debates on Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) demonstrate. Co-operative Councils should take the lead on developing place-based health approaches that minimise clinical and unplanned interventions, and drive forward attempts to see health as a social movement powered by communities.

FOUNDATION 3 HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY

Human capital is, as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has argued, the single biggest determinant of city performance. But our definition of a 'human capital strategy' has been too narrow. Co-operative Councils should develop strategies for their places that mix investment in people and civic identity (Oldham's Town Hall and Cinema is a great example) to promote what Sunderland housing provider Gentoo calls the 'art of living' in a place.

FOUNDATION 4 DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Demand management is about flipping the starting point for public services – focusing first on developing a nuanced understanding of the root causes of demand. Co-operative Councils need strong political leadership to carry this approach. Elected members must play a community leadership role to support positive behaviour change in their neighbourhoods, while Leaders must take political risks to provide the right cover for their organisations.

FOUNDATION 5 SOCIAL CAPITAL STRATEGY

Structural and process reform in public services will not achieve change on its own. The root of renewal needs to be stronger social capital in communities and specific policies to reduce isolation, loneliness and the systematic marginalisation of some groups and individuals from leading productive and healthy lives. A co-operative social capital strategy is enabled by local government, led by civil society, supported by local public services and public investment, and has a key role for business such as the Post Office and banks who play a connecting role in their places.

WHERE NEXT?

In an era when many people in local government are questioning the sector's future sustainability, Co-operative Councils have an opportunity to lead from the front. They need to be brave, bold, and creative about a new enabling and collaborative role for the local public sector in building a deeper and more productive relationship with local people. It is the only way that Prime Minister Theresa May's calls for a new focus on 'people and places left behind' will become a reality.

Local leaders can only transform places if they see their role as key players collaborating within a broader system of local partners: public sector, citizens, and the voluntary and business sectors. In this context, a Co-operative Council is "necessary but not sufficient", as collaborative place-based approaches to health and social care, urban governance and local services become part of the public management mainstream. Co-operative Councils must become Co-operative Places. This should be the ultimate test of the next five years.



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

“We’re reaching the tipping point for Co-operative Councils. We’re going to have to go for it!”

INTERVIEWEE

The Co-operative Councils concept has existed for approximately five years. Twenty-two councils have now declared themselves ‘co-operative’ and become members of the Co-operative Councils’ Innovation Network (CCIN).

The past five years has been a period of rapid and intense change for all public services. The Co-operative Council idea did not emerge from austerity, but has had to evolve within its limits. The public spending squeeze looks like it is here to stay and local public services are increasingly stretched. Research suggests that demand from citizens will continue to rise and increase in complexity, particularly as welfare reform agendas kick in.

There has been a great deal of national political change too. The coalition government has been followed by a Conservative majority government. The leadership of all the major political parties has changed, bringing new policy emphasis and direction. Devolution deals have been agreed in several areas of the UK, with more to follow. And as well as creating ongoing economic and political uncertainty, last June’s Brexit vote has prompted deep self-reflection among those involved in public services about the ways in which economic and social change have been experienced by many in our communities.

Five years in, then, is a good point for Co-operative Councils to take pause and ask three questions:

- What progress have Co-operative Councils made in the past five years?
- Where has progress been lacking?
- What should the next five years look like for Co-operative Councils?

The purpose of this report is threefold:

- To begin to build a body of evidence supporting the Co-operative Council agenda
- To provide a draft framework for a five year forward plan for Co-operative Councils, that can be used and adapted by all member authorities to meet local circumstances, as well as provide the basis for agreeing the forward strategy for the movement in general and the CCIN in particular
- To provide content for influencing and lobbying, particularly in the context of devolution

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Collaborate was commissioned to undertake research in two Co-operative Councils, Oldham and Sunderland, and provide short reports for both councils and a 'meta' report for the CCIN, that draws on the insights from the two 'deep dives'.

This meta report is comprised of the headline findings from Oldham and Sunderland. It is augmented by the work that Collaborate has undertaken for these two councils over the past five years, as well as our work with the CCIN and other local authorities, and Collaborate's broader policy work on the future of local public services.

The research methodology was as follows:

- A deep dive diagnostic in Oldham Council, based on primary interviews conducted by Collaborate with senior leaders from the council (including the Leader, Chief Executive and other senior officers), middle managers and frontline staff and key council partners such as health and the voluntary sector. A workshop was also held with a group of active citizens from the community. The purpose of the interviews was to test participants' understanding of the coop council agenda, explore areas of progress and weakness and help identify areas of focus over the next five years;
- Interviews were also conducted with Sunderland Council officers and the Chief Executive of a social care organisation which was spun out from the council; and with individuals from the broader policy world.
- A literature review of council documents and communications materials relating to the Co-operative Councils in Oldham and Sunderland, enabling us to identify key commitments and test progress against them;
- The review of limited data sources relating to improvements in social and economic outcomes in Oldham, to explore whether Co-operative Council could be directly connected to tangible changes in outcomes for residents;
- Comparative analysis drawn from our work with Oldham and Sunderland, experience in Lambeth and our work across public services nationally;
- Review of the CCIN website and limited desk research into the progress made by other CCIN members
- A report was produced for Oldham Council: 'The Co-operative in Oldham: Reviewing Progress in the first five years and Building a five Year Forward View'

We also need to offer a disclosure: The authors have played a role since 2011 supporting Oldham Council's co-operative agenda, and Collaborate worked in Sunderland between 2012-15 to support the development of community leadership and public service reform approaches. Also, the authors helped establish the CCIN when we were based at the RSA, which coordinated the Network in its first two years. One of us (Anna) was Co-Operative Implementation Lead and then Head of Policy and Strategy for Lambeth Council – one of the first Co-operative Councils – between 2011-2015.

We believe that the Co-operative Council agenda is distinctive and inspiring, guided by a value set that we share. We therefore want to be positive, but also as evidence-led and constructively critical as possible in this paper, making the case for how the co-operative idea and ethos can become a platform for change in the context of significant challenges facing local public services. We believe, on the strength of the evidence we have seen through this research and other work, that co-operative values and principles can, when translated into culture, practice and delivery, offer the potential to support positive changes in social and economic outcomes in our communities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS MOVEMENT

From its origins in Lambeth and Oldham in 2010-11, the concept has spread over the past five years to include twenty-two councils at the time of writing, with a geographic spread across England, Scotland and Wales.

In 2013 the Co-operative Councils, led primarily by Oldham, collaborated to establish the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN). They aimed to:

- Bring coherence to the Co-operative agenda (which was, at that time, gaining momentum among councils nationally and attracting some national political and press interest) by defining the values and principles of Co-operative Councils;
- Define a new model for local government built on councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities
- Support Co-operative Councils to work together, share and develop innovative approaches to translating co-operative principles into local practice that makes a tangible difference in communities
- Provide a national voice for Co-operative Councils, informed by experience and practice, with the aim of drawing on, influencing and framing national policy and political debates about the future of public services, local democracy and communities across the country

WHAT ARE THE STATED AIMS OF CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS?

The Values and Principles of Co-operative Councils were agreed through the CCIN in 2014 and updated in November 2016. These represent the clearest and most cohesive statement of the ideas underpinning the Co-operative Councils movement, and therefore a benchmark against which to assess the progress that has been made by Co-operative Councils.

(A full statement can be found at www.councils.coop).

- Social partnership
- Democratic engagement
- Co-production
- Enterprise and social economy
- Maximising social value
- Community leadership and a new role for councillors
- New models of meeting priority needs
- Innovation
- Learning
- Walking the talk

SECTION 2

WHAT PROGRESS HAVE CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS MADE IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS?

The Co-operative Council concept has always trodden a fine line between political narrative, rhetoric and vision on the one hand, and pointers towards deeper changes in culture and practice on the other. In reality of course, the two are interdependent: the political vision cannot be realised without changes in culture and practice. The practice itself needs an over-arching vision to set direction and continually remind us why we are doing this.

The scope of this research did not allow for a full review of the progress made by all Co-operative Councils, but it is clear that there has always been a high level of local variation in the use of co-operative language and the implementation of co-operative principles. Different members of the Network have adopted co-operative principles and ways of working at different times during the five-year period. All are at different stages in their co-operative journey now.

Co-operative Councils have used different points of emphasis and language in their areas and their organisations, and the visibility of the agenda to the public varies across different places. For some, it is a language and brand that has provided a foundation for deep-rooted changes in culture and practice change. For others, it is primarily a political language; a means of expressing political values and points of difference.

This report cannot reflect the breadth of approach taken by CCIN members. Rather it draws on the evidence from two Co-operative Councils and working knowledge of the movement to draw some conclusions and form some ideas about the next five years. Usefully, Oldham and Sunderland represent two very different approaches in this respect. In Oldham, Co-operative Council has been front and centre over the past five years: the language (or 'brand') has been highly visible, embedded in the council's communications materials, public speeches - we even saw it represented on the T-shirts of staff in the central library when visiting to undertake staff interviews.

In Sunderland, by contrast, the co-operative language has been far less visible; arguably the co-operative approach is consistent with the council's more publicly visible 'community leadership' agenda and 'Sunderland Way of Working', and the key benefit of the co-operative agenda there has been connecting with other like-minded councils and sharing learning and ideas.

We have drawn three emergent conclusions based on our research, and explore each in turn in this section of the report:

1

CONCLUSION ONE:

Co-operative Councils have made important progress against their stated aims

2

CONCLUSION TWO:

Co-operative Councils cannot yet evidence a relationship between co-operative ambition, principles and practice and an attendant positive shift in local outcomes

3

CONCLUSION THREE:

The next five years need to be about more systematically building the pre-conditions for deeper public service reform as a route to a more socially and economically sustainable future.



CONCLUSION ONE:

Co-operative Councils have made important progress against stated aims

Our research suggests that, five years in, there is much that Co-operative Councils can be proud of in their local. These include:

CLARITY OF POLITICAL MESSAGE AND DIRECTION

Where the Co-operative Council concept has been an explicit part of councils' outward facing identity and narrative, the evidence from our research suggests that most staff and some local partners can give a clear and coherent account of what it means to be a Co-operative Council, and why this is different from what's gone before.

.....
"IT WAS A BRAND BUT NOW ITS STARTING TO BECOME EMBEDDED..."

INTERVIEWEE
.....

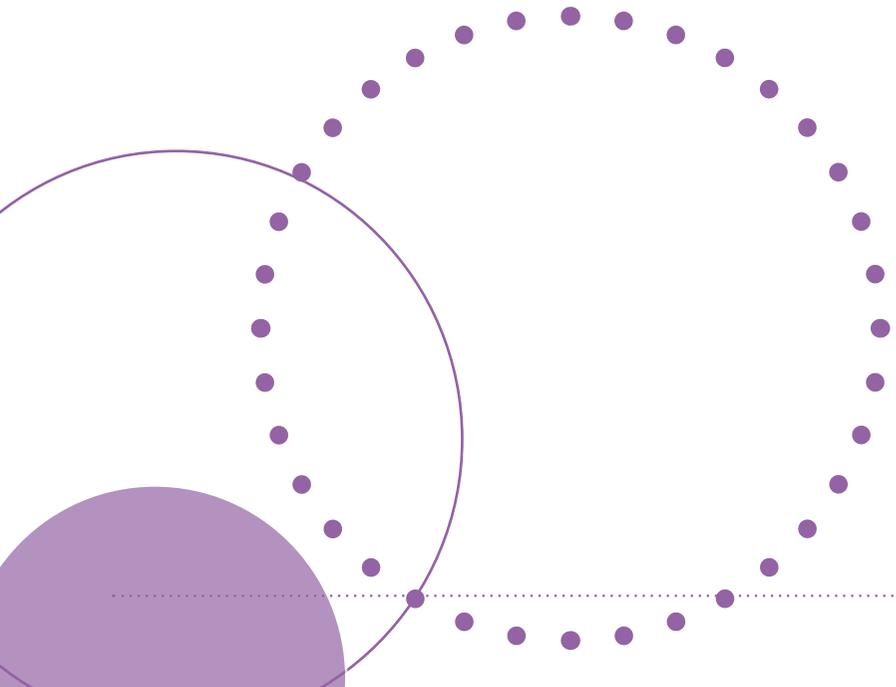
THE CREATION OF A NEW LANGUAGE AND A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Many interviewees for this research also reflected that there was value in the distinctiveness of the Co-operative Council brand and its provision of an organising principle for the ways that Co-operative Councils work. Interviewees generally commented that it can mean different things to different people and be something of a 'catch-all' label, but they did give reasonably consistent responses when asked what the Co-operative Council meant to them, which were also cogent with the values and principles articulated by the CCIN. Many observed that this language and conceptual framework gives an identity to Co-operative Councils that amounts to more than just 'the council' or a traditional service delivery role.

.....
"WE HAVE BEEN AUTOCRATIC, NOW WE WANT TO BE CO-OPERATIVE"

INTERVIEWEE
.....

The Co-operative Council identity was valued by many staff, even when it was acknowledged that it was not well-understood. People observed that Co-operative Council acted as a "good starting point" for people to think about a different relationship with citizens and, to some extent, partners. Importantly, people also commented that the co-operative ambition had value in giving the council something to hold itself to account by.



THE BUILDING OF SUCCESSFUL FLAGSHIP CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS

We think it is a fair observation that many Co-operative Councils invested a great deal of effort in the first few years in what one interviewee for this research described as “‘capital C’ co-operative projects”: visible, high profile campaigns and initiatives which were inspired by the political language and vision. This was partly driven by the need to illustrate the ‘co-operative difference’ early on, and make progress with tangible projects that can be well understood by the public. It was also a way of testing new ways of working on a relatively small scale. Such projects acted as useful signifiers of shifts in culture and practice.

To this end, most CCIN councils have a number of publicly visible flagship projects that they can – and have - pointed to as evidence of a different approach being put into practice. Some examples are listed below:

In Oldham these include the setting up of the Co-operative Oldham Grant, Get Oldham Growing, the Love Where You Live campaign, the ‘Fair Fares’ campaign and Get Oldham Working, as well as a strong Co-operative thread within flagship health and social care reforms within the Greater Manchester health and social care devolution agreement.

In Sunderland they include innovations in community leadership, co-operative energy projects such as the Low Carbon Social Housing Demonstrator Project, and the use of WARPit to find ways of reusing surplus items – what started as an internal tool for the council was rolled out to the public as part of the Community Reuse Project.

Plymouth has shown particular leadership around employment and education, as well as environmental issues. Established in 2013, Plymouth Energy Community has grown from a council initiative into a large Community Benefit Society offering many different services addressing fuel poverty and carbon emissions, and the next year they launched PEC Renewables, a second Community Benefit Society, to enable community-owned renewable energy installations.

Newcastle has explored neighbourhood-level devolution, notably in the Blakelaw Partnership (which has explored community asset transfer and co-operative ways of improving housing) and Byker Community Trust. Newcastle has also explored the use of participatory budgeting at a ward level.

Glasgow founded a Co-operative Development Unit (CDU) to provide direct support and advice to help people develop co-operative business models, and provide small grants for co-operative business start-up activity or business development. Glasgow Business Development Fund was established to help promote, develop and support the co-operative sector. The city’s award-winning Stalled Spaces programme has taken land for which development has halted and returned it to temporary community use for a wide variety of growing projects and creative programmes. There are even two bee colonies on the roof of the Glasgow City Council HQ.

Lambeth established the Young Lambeth Co-operative to take over the commissioning of youth services with young people, developed a high profile co-operative parks programmes to enable the community to take over their local parks, and supported a number of community-led initiatives such as food growing and greening projects.

Stevenage’s Business Technology Centre is an enterprise hub for innovation, business incubation and engagement providing integrated business support. A CCIN report claims that if each of the 256 district authorities in England established a similar hub, the resulting small business growth would create 90,000 jobs. The Centre generates an income stream so the cost of business support per job is less than half that calculated for previous national programmes.

It may be that some of these initiatives would have happened without the co-operative agenda; however we think that the co-operative language and ethos brings a coherence that assists with communicating their value and purpose to the public and local partners. We also think this means they are more likely to amount to more than the sum of their parts, because in total they form part of a broader programme of change that is underpinned by common principles and articulated in a common language.

THE CREATION OF A DISTINCTIVE APPROACH TO TACKLING LOCAL CHALLENGES

It is clear that co-operative language and principles have inspired collective action in new areas. Campaigns such as those outlined above illustrate the way in which the co-operative agenda has in many cases created the incentive and 'permission' for councils to act in areas that are in the interests of citizens, but that would previously have been ignored or underplayed because they are not directly related to traditional service interests. As one interviewee said,

"IT GAVE US CONFIDENCE TO FIGHT BACK AND DO THINGS ON OUR OWN TERMS"

INTERVIEWEE

Through the CCIN, Co-operative Councils have also led policy inquiries into important issues such as community resilience, jobs and enterprise and - currently - housing. These have been helpful in clarifying how a co-operative approach to local issues is distinctive. As observers of these processes, it would seem like the real value of these inquiries lies in a collaborative approach to problem solving by a number of councils, underpinned by a shared value set, rather than influencing national debate. Member Councils are likely to generate new ideas for local action through participating in the inquiries.

We can clearly see examples of Co-operative Councils changing the way they work and the terms of engagement between local partners, anchor institutions and leaders

Many interviewees could provide examples of having considered co-operative values and principles in relation to something they were working on. Some had used the commitment to co-operative working to challenge others within their organisational to remove barriers and act in a more enabling fashion. Several examples were given of working with partners and other local organisations in different ways, and those organisations also embedding co-operative principles in what they do (for example local housing associations or social care spin out organisations).



The collaborative sentiment is not shared across the board; evidence suggests that for some - particularly key strategic partners such as the NHS with strong identities and national agendas - co-operative language has at times been a barrier to engagement.

CO-OPERATIVE LANGUAGE AND PROGRESS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGING THE 'MOOD MUSIC' IN SOME CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL AREAS

We suspect this varies across different Co-operative Council areas (because of the variation in the visibility of the co-operative agenda and the personal qualities of political leaders), but in some (including Oldham) there appears to be a clear relationship between Co-operative Council ambition and a change in the sense of ambition that residents and business have about the future of the place. This is also related to the clear political leadership and vision that some leaders of Co-operative Councils have provided.

BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM - SOWING THE SEEDS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Some of our interviewees in Oldham argued strongly that the co-operative agenda had helped “create the conditions” for deeper public service reform, and traced a direct link (or at least the possibility of one) between co-operative values and principles and real changes in service delivery: a different vision for future public services, the role they should play alongside community activity and the ways services should work together and with communities.



This is about strengthening communities and reforming services together. If we aren't doing that, we can't call it co-operative!”

CIVIL SOCIETY LEADER, OLDHAM

This is extremely encouraging, suggesting that the Co-operative Council agenda has planted seeds that have started to grow deeper roots, at least in some places. Our historical involvement with some of these agendas would strongly support this notion too. Oldham's work on building a co-operative borough is an important example. Lambeth's new Community Plan, which sets out a partnership approach to achieving three key strategic priorities, based on co-operative principles, is another. Sunderland's nascent 'All Together' partnership shared a similar ethos. And, based on our desk research, the work of the Edinburgh Partnership in creating a new Community Plan 2015-18 that commits to joint planning and resourcing, joint service delivery, and joint performance reporting on new citywide strategic priorities, is another sign of the deepening of the co-operative agenda. In these places, local partners have deliberately advanced beyond an approach that reflected every partner's priorities, to an approach that reflected shared priorities, designed to tackle the complex challenges that require a collaborative response.

We reflect on this more in the following sections, as we believe that building whole system, whole place collaboration, underpinned by co-operative principles, is the area of greatest potential over the next five years.

THE END OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Against the stated aims of Co-operative Councils, we believe that the evidence shows that much progress has been made and we therefore believe there is much to celebrate at the end of the first five years. None of this has been easy in the face of austerity and in an operating context which has been fast-changing and uncertain. In the next sections, we will consider how the progress so far can act as a platform for deeper change, and the reasons why we believe this is needed.

CONCLUSION TWO:

Co-operative Councils cannot currently evidence a relationship between co-operative ambition, principles and practice and a positive shift in local outcomes

This is a difficult area for us to judge, and our tentative conclusion could be contested on the basis that co-operative working has been more about a guiding set of principles than a route to improved social and economic outcomes in communities. We have limited evidence to go on, and it could justifiably be argued that the successes above are about shifting expectations, culture and practice in co-operative areas as part of a new route to better outcomes.

.....
"THIS IS A CRITICAL TIME FOR CO-OP COUNCILS.
IT NEEDS TO BE MORE THAN WINDOW DRESSING..."

ELECTED MEMBER

.....
Improving or influencing outcomes is one of the basic functions of local authorities. It is the result of the financial choices that they make, the services that they provide, the relationships that they build and the ways that they work. If co-operative working is to gain traction as a platform for lobbying and engagement with central government, other local authorities and public services through devolution - one of the aims of this piece of work - then it seems essential that we can point to more than a set of values and a language and the 'flagship' successes identified above.

Co-operative Councils should be - and are - ambitious for their next period of development. They should be asking themselves:

- What difference would a resident in a co-operative place experience?
- What shifts in outcomes should we seek to achieve through new ways of working? And how will we evidence the progress?
- How can Co-operative Councils work with local people and local partners to build co-operative places, with a common approach to public service reform?

Embedding co-operative values over the first five years means that many of the preconditions are now in place for a more economically and socially sustainable future for co-operative places. We do not underestimate the hard yards travelled to achieve this. Yet preconditions are not the same as outcomes, and on the evidence available to us, suggests that significant changes in outcomes have either not yet been achieved in co-operative areas, or cannot be traced directly to the co-operative agenda.

This is understandable: profound change in the relationship between public services and society is both incredibly hard and largely uncharted territory. And of course Co-operative Councils have been dealing with huge cuts to their funding over the same period - it was suggested to us in some interviews that survival was itself a measure of success.

.....
"CO-OPERATION IS A MINOR DISTRACTION NEXT TO THE
CHALLENGE OF TAKING MONEY OUT."

INTERVIEWEE

But the sustainability and legitimacy of the co-operative agenda depends on doing what many councils and places have tried and failed to do: building a platform for collaborative working that can enable meaningful change in mainstream public service delivery and be an enabler for better outcomes for residents.

Based on interview evidence, many people don't make the connection between the Co-operative Council and 'public service reform', perhaps because so much of this (e.g. around welfare, health and cuts) has been externally driven, and because it is easy to regard Co-operative Council principally as a political brand which is useful for campaigning, culture change and ambition, but less relevant to mainstream service delivery. It is also true that the 'surface' changes - in language, campaigning, and flagship projects that are largely outside the territory of mainstream services - are, with the right political leadership in place, easier to make than deeper cultural shifts which are almost certainly part of a longer term culture change process.

"CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL IS THE ICING
ON THE CAKE THAT HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN
BAKED WELL. THE CAKE IS THE CULTURE..."

INTERVIEWEE

The Co-operative Councils agenda has struggled to gain political traction at a national level, even when the political winds were fair in the run up to the 2015 general election. The question of what would be done differently and how this would improve outcomes has always been difficult to articulate. This needs to change. And some Co-operative Councils are starting to flesh out the answers to this question.



CONCLUSION THREE:

Co-operative Councils have been building the pre-conditions for deeper public service reform as a route to a more socially and economically sustainable future. There are big choices ahead.

“REMEMBER HOW IT FELT IN THE FIRST ROUND OF CHANGE? TAKE THE LEAP OF FAITH WITH US AGAIN, WORK WITH US, HELP US TO SHAPE IT AGAIN...BUT WE CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT OUR PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC”

INTERVIEWEE

The future success of Co-operative Councils need to be considered in relation not just to progress so far, but also to what we know about the challenges on the horizon. Drawing on the insights outlined in Sections 1 and 2, in this section we identify key challenges we think should be addressed over the next five years and propose five pillars of future strategy for co-operative places.

This is not about reinventing the wheel, but building on the progress made so far to shift progress further towards deeper change in public service culture and practice over the next period. To do this, Co-operative Councils should be clear about what is unique about co-operative values and principles in relation to an account of how we create change in our communities. Our strong view – based on our experiences to date - is that a deepening of the co-operative agenda through public service reform is more important now than ever.

“CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL HAS DRIVEN STUFF – BUT IT’S AN ECLECTIC MIX OF NEW PROJECTS LIKE SOLAR PANELS AND FOOD – STUFF THAT’S ON THE MARGINS. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE REFORM HAS BEEN ‘LASSOED’ UNDER THE CO-OP ROOF, BUT NOT DRIVEN BY IT...”

INTERVIEWEE, SENIOR COUNCIL OFFICER

If an evolving public service reform agenda is built upon a co-operative foundation, we think this would help address the following challenges that we identified through our research:

- Perceptions that Co-operative Councils are mainly about flagship projects, while public services remain largely unchanged
- The lack of understanding of how co-operative values and principles are meaningful in the context of public services
- The lack of connection in the minds of staff between the co-operative narrative and ambition and social outcomes
- The corresponding gaps in the understanding of some public sector partners of how Co-operative Council is relevant to them and their services, and the challenge of articulating a more systematic account of co-operative working
- We think this would also help Co-operative Councils articulate more clearly the ‘co-op difference’: to other public sector partners, local authorities, central government and political parties.

The research for this report points towards the following three challenges:

CHALLENGE 1.

Changing the relationship between citizens and services is vital but remains a work in progress – our interviews revealed that most council staff, partners and citizens saw no ‘at scale’ change in the engagement or behaviour of citizens beyond specific small-scale examples, and see this as a major challenge. Co-operative Councils’ vision for public services should - and does in many cases - get beyond both linear notions of service delivery, and the transactional concept of a ‘deal’. It is not about ‘them and us’ or the state ‘getting out of the way’, but more about using the power, influence and resources of the state to enable social action as a route to outcomes. Places such as Oldham are thinking innovatively about how they and other partners can use the resources of frontline staff in new ways to enable this.

“IT HASN’T BROADLY CHANGED RELATIONSHIPS WITH RESIDENTS.....
I’M NOT SURE WHAT THE NARRATIVE TO RESIDENTS IS...”

INTERVIEWEE

CHALLENGE 2.

Neighbourhood working may be a critical route to strengthening civil society and reforming the frontline delivery of services with a view to improving outcomes and managing demand. Modelling work undertaken by Oldham suggests that there is the opportunity more systematically to build the evidence base that community participation and social networks - a key part of the co-operative agenda - can help improve outcomes and manage demand for services. Oldham’s ‘place-based’ early adopters - in which a range of public service partners are working through integrated local teams - are a good model for other Co-operative Councils to look at. Oldham has also made an explicit link between social action on the one hand and public services on the other, and is beginning to blur the lines between ‘service’ and social action and networks through those neighbourhood arrangements. In our experience this knitting together of social action and frontline services is something that other places are trying, and often struggling, to do, and we think it offers much to Co-operative Councils more broadly. Working in neighbourhoods also offers the opportunity for ward councillors to play a community connecting and enabling role alongside frontline staff.

“THE OFFER IS ABOUT A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY.
PICKING PROBLEMS UP EARLY, OFFERING HELP EARLY, BUILDING NETWORKS,
GENERATING LOCAL INTELLIGENCE, SUPPORTING LOCAL ACTIVITIES.
WE HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH PEOPLE. WE DON’T TELL THEM
WHAT’S BEST FOR THEM; NOT ‘WHAT’S WRONG AND HOW CAN WE FIX IT’;
BUT: WHAT CAN YOU DO?”

INTERVIEWEE

CHALLENGE 3.

Co-operative Councils should seek to shift from a project-based approach to ‘whole system, whole place’ reform. A small number, including Oldham, Lambeth, Plymouth, Edinburgh and Sunderland, are on this journey already. Shifting towards whole system, whole place reform includes:

- Looking beyond the council and towards all the local organisations that can help achieve positive change in outcomes in a place. This includes the public sector, but also the third sector and business, and anchor institutions such as universities. Working through this local system will require Co-operative Councils to build strong local partnerships and relationships that can carry the weight of collaboration to enable a genuinely place-based approach.
- Cross-sector public service reform underpinned by co-operative principles, including a shared view about the importance of supporting active citizens. We think co-operative principles can provide a foundation for a new approach to public services and place-based collaboration across the system, but this means that ‘Co-operative Council’ will need to be understood as ‘co-operative place’. Partners should work towards supporting citizens to play a more active role in achieving outcomes, and investment in community activity should be regarded as a shared investment in shared outcomes.
- Attention to building deeper workforce collaboration across services and sectors, including at the frontline. Building integrated frontline services that respond to the root causes of people’s needs, and help local people develop social networks as well as providing appropriate service support.
- The development of place-based strategies shared across the public sector. We think this is a key piece of ‘system infrastructure’ which enables local partners to pull in the same direction and provides the basis on which to begin to explore other collaborative building blocks, such as shared outcomes frameworks, data and intelligence platforms, funding and commissioning and workforce development. (We suggest five pillars of future place-based strategy below).

SECTION 3

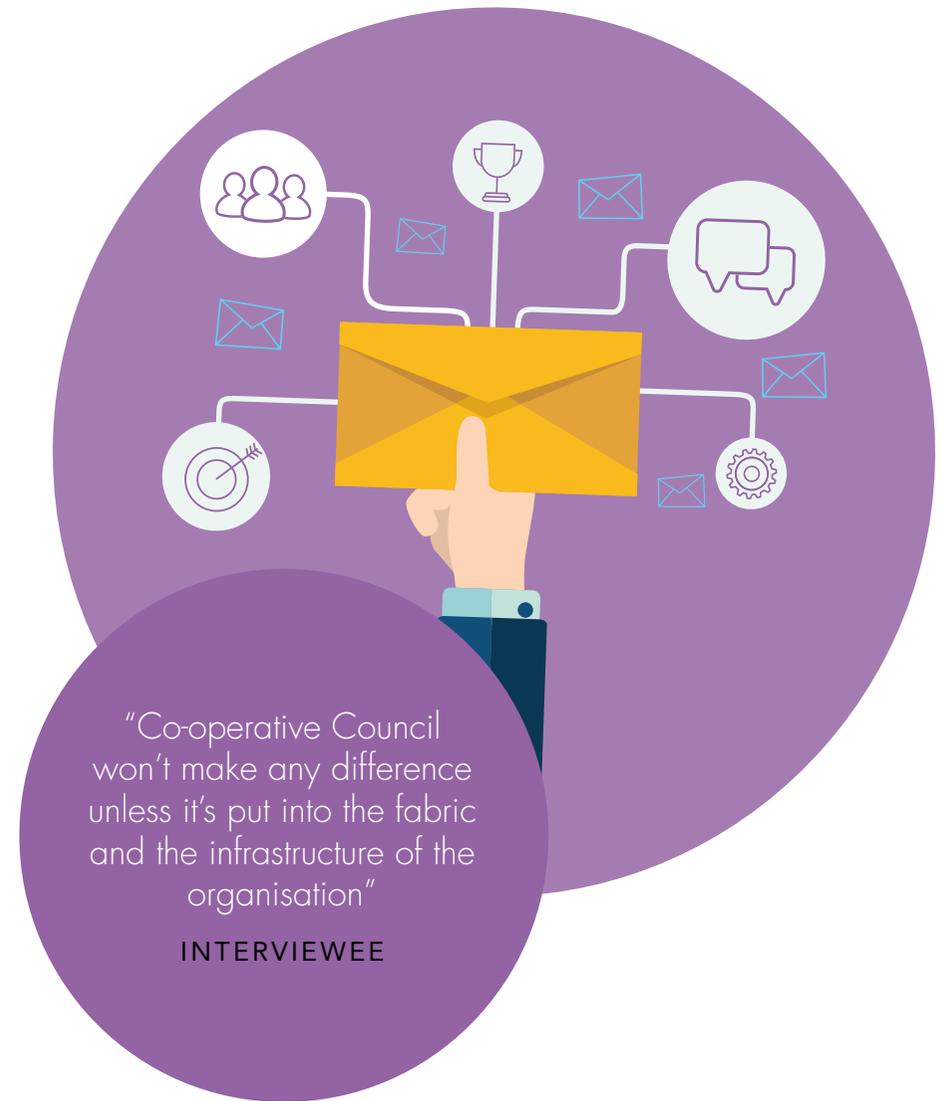
THE NEXT STAGE

FIVE NEW STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS FOR CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS

Drawing on the report produced for Oldham Council as part of this research and a previous report produced for Sunderland Council, we offer five pillars of future public sector strategy that we believe Co-operative Councils should build into their thinking about the next five year period. They complement other recent research such as Neil McInroy's manifesto for 'good local societies', and recent research on inclusive growth and poverty reduction from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the RSA and others.³

Leaders within the Co-operative Council movement need to be bold. The pace of change in our economy, society and policy context mean that the old model of project-by-project working will not carry the weight of the changes we expect from it. Co-operative Councils can no longer look to national politics or Whitehall policymakers for answers. So it is critical that Co-operative Councils work more systematically to translate a meaningful platform for change into a credible set of practices that can influence big ticket public service reform agendas.

This is both a challenge and an opportunity. In place of the old departmental silos of public services, we believe that Co-operative Councils need to develop their own set of 'co-operative silos'. These should cut across the sectors, and focus on themes like social capital, demand management and inclusive growth over traditional service demarcations. They form what we call the five new foundations of co-operative public service reform.



"Co-operative Council won't make any difference unless it's put into the fabric and the infrastructure of the organisation"

INTERVIEWEE

FOUNDATION 1

CO-OPERATIVE GROWTH STRATEGY

“EVERYONE WHO LIVES AND WORKS IN GREATER MANCHESTER MUST BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM OUR GROWING ECONOMY AND TRANSFORMED LOCAL SERVICES...”

CLLR JEAN STRETTON, LEADER OF OLDHAM COUNCIL

An inclusive, fair or ‘good’ growth strategy recognises that economic growth and participation will be imbalanced without deliberate action from a range of social partners. As economist Branko Milanovic argues, “a narrow focus on ‘benign’ economic forces alone is insufficient and naïve...income inequality is, almost by definition, an outcome of social and political struggles.”⁴ Co-operative growth is built on the notion that job creation is possible, that those jobs can be meaningful and rewarding for more people, and that a range of public and social agencies can create wrap-around services that help people from the margins of employment to build secure livelihoods in a context of labour market fragility. Given the values of Co-operative Councils, this feels like a critical element of any future place-based strategy, and is already central to some Co-operative Councils’ strategies, including Lambeth and Oldham. In places like Sunderland for example, drawing the right links between education and skills incentives and large employers like Nissan is vital. We think that Co-operative Councils could develop a more distinctive voice in current debates about inclusive growth and local productivity, and get under the skin of a progressive concept which, without asking the hard local questions, could end up meaning more of the same for local people.

Examples:

- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has highlighted a number of case study cities in a recent report on international exemplars of inclusive growth. These include the U.S. city of Cleveland, which has demonstrated the role that ‘anchor institutions’ can play in supporting access to jobs and promoting in-work progression for people in low paid employment ⁵.
 - Oldham has made notable progress on developing a model of active state intervention to promote fairer growth. This is exemplified by initiatives such as Warehouse to Wheels which encourages warehouse workers to gain HGV licenses, and a new career advancement service with the borough-wide ‘Get Oldham Working’ programme which invests in employed residents’ capacity to boost their earning potential.
-

FOUNDATION 2

PLACE-BASED HEALTH STRATEGY

“THE FOUNDATION OF [PLACE BASED HEALTH] SHOULD BE MUCH BETTER AND MORE CONSISTENTLY USED INSIGHT INTO COMMUNITIES AND THE ASPIRATIONS AND ASSETS OF LOCAL PEOPLE.”

DUNCAN SELBIE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND AND HENRY KIPPIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COLLABORATE ⁶.

Place based health is the logical extension of the current direction of travel within the NHS and social care. A true place-based health strategy would integrate NHS, social care, housing and the range of out-of-hospital services that should be keeping people healthy, active, connected with others and out of medical institutions. Place-based health is planned on a city-regional or sub-regional basis, and funded via whole-population-and-place capitated budgets that incentivise prevention and enable a more streamlined and nimble form of service organisation. Primary care remains the front-door for citizens, but is interdisciplinary and focused on keeping people at home and able to co-design their own pathways of care and support. Co-operative Councils should take a lead on developing place-based health because it is fundamentally underpinned by collaboration across organisations and co-operation with communities. Oldham’s emerging Thriving Communities approach is an important case example, and evidence from places like Bromley-by-Bow, Rotherham and Wakefield suggests that a different way of working is possible. The Co-operative Council movement has an opportunity to promote radical models that subvert the overly clinical, and drive forward attempts to see health as a social movement powered by communities.

Examples:

- The Greater Manchester borough of Stockport has made strides towards place-based health through its Stockport Together model. This is based on radical recommissioning of primary care, public health social care and community-based services to create the conditions for co-production: constructed through alliance commissioning and a more strategic relationship with the voluntary sector.
 - Fulfilling Lives is a long-term programme of work supporting system change across the Newcastle and Gateshead health economy. The programme, supported by the Big Lottery Fund, is designed to build the readiness and social connectivity of people with multiple and complex needs to better manage their lives and conditions.
-

FOUNDATION 3

HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY

“IF YOU PUT PEOPLE FIRST, WE START TO SEE INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRESS AS BOTH AN INPUT AND AN OUTCOME OF ECONOMIC SUCCESS...”

NEIL MCINROY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES 7.

Human capital is, as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has argued, the single biggest determinant of city performance 8. But our definition of a ‘human capital strategy’ has been too narrow. For Co-operative Councils, a human capital strategy would span early years, school age, further and higher education, in-work skills training and a range of functions that incentivise strong partnerships between the public and private sectors that support progression into, and through, work. Liveability - what Sunderland housing provider Gentoo calls the ‘art of living’ in a place – would be a critical component, and anchor institutions like NHS trusts, housing providers and local authorities would work together to create collaborative ways of investing in affordable housing and pathways into enterprise. A co-operative human capital strategy is held to account on the basis of meta-metrics like in-migration to urban centres and the throughput of local kids into meaningful local jobs. Without Co-operative leaders being bold in this space, we will continue to develop skills and employment strategies that are too abstracted from their local context, and not grounded enough in the things that make places like Oldham and Sunderland tick.

Examples:

- The Leeds City Region has set out an explicit ambition to become a NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) free city as part of its plans for future growth and reform. Supporting this goal are ambitious plans for a more joined up education, skills and in-work training offer, more targeted matching of opportunities to marginalised communities through initiatives like Talent Match and Head Start, and innovation in housing exemplified by Leeds Community Homes.
 - Sunderland has emphasised early connections between school-age kids and the city’s employers as key factor in encouraging young people to make productive choices about their education and training. One example is Work Discovery Week, an annual event in which around 1,000 young people take part in events and activities that expose them to opportunities within the city.
-

FOUNDATION 4

DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

“SOMETIMES WE NEED TO STEP OUTSIDE OF THE SERVICE LENS...”

SENIOR COUNCIL OFFICER, SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Demand management is well trodden language within local government (though less so elsewhere). It can have negative connotations if we see it as being about raising thresholds or reducing entitlements. But Co-operative Councils can – and indeed are – using the concept in a much more positive sense. Flipping the starting point for service reforms and working from the citizen up. A Co-operative Council approach to demand management signifies a shift in the default position from supply-side management to a more nuanced understanding of how to understand and re-shape the root causes of demand 9. Ethnographic and network-based insight should underpin cross-agency strategies to positively influence social behaviour, squeeze out fragmentation (and attendant failure demand), and open up space to challenge and disrupt ways of working that entrench co-dependence between citizens and services. In Sunderland for example, environmental services were the starting point for this approach – pioneering a model dubbed ‘responsive local services’ that empowered front-line staff to play a role in influencing behaviour and adapting the street-scene service offer. Co-operative Councils need strong political leadership to carry this approach; with ward councillors playing a community leadership role to support positive behaviour change in their neighbourhoods.

Examples:

- The need to better understand and re-shape demand is driving a number of opportunities to reform fragmented services around better citizen insight. Two recent London examples include Brent’s work on innovating housing adaptations to reduce demand for adult social care services; and Ealing’s work on using behavioural insight to streamline pathways between homelessness and housing.
 - Sunderland’s community leadership programme (run between 2010 and 2014) was a leading example of local authority efforts to re-focus the energy of ward councillors towards influencing community behaviour and manage demand for local services. There have been notable recent examples of elected members playing this role in relation to the migration crisis, such as in Coventry.
-

FOUNDATION 5

SOCIAL CAPITAL STRATEGY

“SOCIAL CAPITAL IS NOT FORMED IN A VACUUM. WHAT HAPPENS IS SHAPED BY OUR EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, AND WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND US IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT FACED BY PREVIOUS GENERATIONS...”

**JULIA UNWIN, FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OF THE JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION ¹⁰.**

Structural and process reform in public services will not achieve change on its own. The root of renewal needs to be stronger social capital in communities and specific policies to reduce isolation, loneliness and the systematic marginalisation of some groups and individuals from leading productive and healthy lives. It has been well-established – notably by the U.S. academic Robert Putnam – that an eroding of positive social ties undermines the ability of people to look after themselves and others. This is everyone’s business because self-care, independence and community resilience is fundamental to the future sustainability of our health, care and welfare services. A Co-operative social capital strategy needs to be enabled by local government, led by civil society, supported by local public services and public investment, and has a key role for business and organisations such as the Post Office and banks who play a connecting role in their places. One emerging example is Oldham’s Thriving Communities plans – based on the explicit recognition that sustainable public service reform and improving social capital in communities are both interdependent and should be mutually reinforcing. There is no meaningful national narrative to support this. Indeed, welfare, education and growth policies have at times contradicted and undermined each other, making it very difficult to align incentives around community based investment in the way we describe. But in the context of devolution and Prime Minister Theresa May’s desire to see ‘something for everyone’, there is no better time for Co-operative Councils to proactive shape an approach.

Examples:

- Despite overwhelming evidence (see for example the Health Foundation’s ‘realising the value’ programme), examples of social capital building at scale are rare. Oldham’s Thriving Communities programme seeks to address this gap with concentrated investment in the means to adopt, share and scale social network based solutions across the borough’s neighbourhoods as a key building block to a more integrated model of out-of-hospital care.
 - The Ignite project in Coventry is led by Coventry Law Centre and Grapevine, working with Coventry City Council and WM Housing Group. It is a collaborative asset-based initiative designed to support future demand for public services through innovation in early help and prevention within communities.
-



SECTION 4

CONCLUSION

In an era when many people in local government are questioning the sector's future sustainability, Co-operative Councils should lead from the front, being brave and creative about a new enabling and collaborative role for the local public sector and building a new, more productive relationship with local people. And in turbulent political times, Co-operative Councils should showcase progressive government on the ground. They should be guided by political principles but pragmatic in practice, and focused on those achieving change for and with those people in the community who are facing the biggest challenges. This is relevant across the political divide; clearly resonant with the new Government's proposals for a rebooted industrial policy.

"CHANGE IS IN THE AIR. AND WHEN PEOPLE DEMAND CHANGE, IT IS THE JOB OF POLITICIANS TO RESPOND. BUT IT IS ALSO THE JOB OF ALL THOSE IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE AND POWER – POLITICIANS, BUSINESS LEADERS AND OTHERS – TO UNDERSTAND THE DRIVERS OF THAT DEMAND TOO."

PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY, NOVEMBER 2016 ¹¹.

The only way that local leaders can really transform places in this context is to see their role as players collaborating within a broader system of local partners: public sector, citizens, and other organisations that can help - including the third sector and business. Great organisational leadership is already critical but not enough, as collaborative place-based approaches to health and care (Sustainability and Transformation Plans), urban governance (devolution and combined authorities), and local services become part of the public management mainstream.

Political leaders will need to manage the interdependencies between the five strategic foundations, and weave them together as part of a narrative for place that can be supported by others. This will, in turn, need to be reinforced by a set of 'system behaviours' that can absolutely be supported by the co-operative council ethos. But beyond that, each local area will need to ensure it has a clear account of the social and economic changes that are being sought.

"WHEN WE ENGAGE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WE NEED TO BE ASKING: WHAT IS (THIS PLACE) GOING TO BE LIKE IN FUTURE, AND HOW MIGHT WE NEED TO CHANGE TO LIVE UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS?"

INTERVIEWEE, EDUCATION SECTOR LEADER

Co-operative Council has provided a useful narrative for signalling a new approach over the first five years, and it has helped carry Co-operative Councils through a challenging period by providing some organising principles and the basis for testing innovative new ways of working through a range of projects. The next period will need to be different, based on embedding co-operative values and principles into a deeper account of how we create positive change in our communities through collaborative systems and places.

It will require Co-operative Councils to have a clear social and economic vision for place, an account of the role of public services and public investment and new collaborative relationships with other public services and citizens to achieve it.

We believe that the first five years have helped to create the platform for further development of an approach which knits together political vision and narrative with real, tangible changes in public services and a significant shift in social action. The conditions are in place to build on these foundations over the next five years, and perhaps it is in this regard that the 'co-operative difference' really lies: a knitting together of both political vision and language and a clearly articulated vision for future public services and places. This is about shifting from Co-operative Councils to Co-operative Places, and the critical factor will be the whether in five years we can evidence the 'co-operative difference' in social and economic outcomes that benefit the people who live in our communities.

FOOTNOTES

1. 'Innovation Comes from Communities' article from the British Council's Creative Economy programme, 2014 <http://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/guide/innovation-comes-communities/>
2. 'What is a Co-operative Council?' Ed Mayo's blog, 14th Feb 2013 at <https://edmayo.wordpress.com/2013/02/14/what-is-a-co-operative-council/>
3. See for example Flanders, S. et al (2016) Inclusive Growth Commission: Emerging Findings. RSA online at <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/rsa-inclusive-growth-commission-interim-report.pdf>
4. Milanovic, B. (2016) Global Inequality: a new approach for the era of globalization Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press
5. Green, A. et al (2017) 'How international cities lead inclusive growth agendas' Joseph Rowntree Foundation, online at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/how-do-cities-lead-inclusive-growth-agenda>
6. 'The Journey to Place Based Health' blog by Henry Kippin and Duncan Selbie, 17th March 2016 online at <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2016/03/17/the-journey-to-place-based-health/>
7. McInroy, N. (2016) Forging a Good Local Society: tackling poverty through a local economic reset. Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Webb Memorial Trust, online at <http://www.webbmemorialtrust.org.uk/publications/forging-a-good-local-society-tackling-poverty-through-a-local-economic-reset/>
8. Lee, N., Sissons, P. et al (2014) Cities, Growth and Poverty: a review of the evidence. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, online at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/cities-growth-poverty-full.pdf>
9. See for example Kippin, H., Randle, A. & Thevoz, S. (2015) Demand Management and Behaviour Change: a handbook for collaborative practice. Collaborate and the Leadership Centre, online at <http://collaboratei.com/wp-content/uploads/Demand-Management-Behaviour-Change-final-version.pdf>
10. 'Why we need to build social capital in cities' speech by Julia Unwin CBE, 13th April 2016 online at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/why-we-need-build-social-capital-cities>
11. PM's speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet, 14th November 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-to-the-lord-mayors-banquet-14-november-2016>

For any report queries and to find more about joining the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network contact:



CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS' INNOVATION NETWORK

Accountable Body: Oldham Council,
Oldham Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham OL1 1UL
T: 0161 770 5691
E: hello@councils.coop
W: councils.coop



COLLABORATE

Clarence Centre for Enterprise & Innovation
6 St George's Circus, London, SE1 6FE
T: +44 (0)20 7815 8297
E: enquiries@collaboratecic.com
www.collaboratecic.com