**Cooperative Councils Innovation Network: Values and Principles**

**Paper agreed by the V&P Board, 19th March 2014**

**Introduction**

The Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) is a network of local authorities committed to reforming the way we work through building an equal partnership with local people, based on the values of the International Co-operative Alliance.

Members of the CCIN believe that the unprecedented challenges facing the public sector and local communities mean that traditional models of top down governance and economic growth are no longer fit for purpose. We agree that we urgently need to create a new approach, and that the founding traditions of the co-operative movement – collective action and co-operation, empowerment and enterprise – offer a foundation for fresh and innovative solutions which can be built on to tackle the challenges of today.

Although drawing on the traditions of the past, much of this remains unchartered territory for local government, and the members of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network are committed to helping each other translate cooperative principles into solutions that work for our communities and places.

**Values of the CCIN – our values are what we believe in**

Our Network is based on the Co-operative values developed by *the International Co-operative Alliance***: “self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity… honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others”.**

**Principles which guide the way members of the CCIN put our values into action:**

* **Social partnership:** We will strengthen the co-operative partnership between citizens, communities, enterprises and Councils, based on a shared sense of responsibility for well-being and mutual benefit.
* **Democratic engagement:** Supporting the active engagement of the full range of residents in decision making and priority setting.
* **Co-production:** Developing systems that enable citizens to be equal partners in designing and commissioning public services and in determining the use of public resources.
* **Enterprise and social economy:** Promoting community-based approaches to economic development that focus on supporting the creation of jobs and businesses and providing an environment for co-operative and mutual enterprises to thrive.
* **Maximising social value:** Supporting the development of a framework and criteria for social value, which gives substance to the idea and which will give Councils the tools to ensure better local social and economic outcomes
* **Community leadership and a new role for councillors:** Exploring ways for councils to act as a platform for helping the community to contribute to local outcomes, and re-thinking the role of councillors as community connectors, brokers and leaders.
* **New models of meeting priority needs:** In exploring new ways of meeting the priority needs of our communities we will encourage models, such as cooperatives and mutuals, which give greater influence and voice to staff and users.
* **Innovation:** Embracing innovation in how we work with local communities to drive positive change
* **Learning:** We will capture and ‘expand’ the experience and learning from individual projects and approaches in order to encourage broader application of co-operative principles within the Council and across the Network.

**Principles which guide the operation of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network:**

* **Co-operation among members**: our members work together to help each other implement our values, sharing experiences and learning
* **Openness of membership**: membership is open to anyone who shares our values and is committed to putting them into action
* **Co-production of the Network’s work**: members help shape the Network’s work programme and the content of events and written products
* **Action-focused**: the network is a vehicle for helping councils translate cooperative policy and principles into practice
* **Membership-based**: the network is funded by modest membership subscriptions from its member councils
* **Non-party-political**: members share the belief that working cooperatively with communities holds the key to tackling today’s challenges.

**Membership of the Values and Principles Board**

* Representatives of the Cooperative Party
* Representative(s) of Co-ops UK
* Representatives of the CCIN
* Representatives of the TUC
* Other key stakeholders to be invited on an ad hoc basis as relevant.

**Role and Operation of the Values and Principles Board**

* The Values & Principles Board will seek to maintain coherence of the work and approach of the CCIN and its members with cooperative values and principles
* The Values & Principles Board will seek to build and promote Co-operative good practice through the LGA organised peer review process. CCIN Member Councils will be asked to request that their Co-operative Council status should be one of the criteria that is assessed in the course of the peer review process. The Board will liaise with the LGA and CCIN member councils to embed this process.
* It will have overall responsibility for Values and Principles oversight, including finalising the draft V&P statement
* The Values & Principles Board will build and maintain links between the wider Cooperative movement, including the Cooperative Party, and the CCIN
* The Values & Principles Board will seek and facilitate active debate about what those V&P look like in practice, using the insights gained from the CCIN’s work
* The Values & Principles Board will raise concerns with the [CCIN Executive Oversight Forum], if and when they arise, about any activities being developed under the CCIN banner if it is considered that they might bring into question the agreed Values and Principles as outlined above
* The Values & Principles Board will meet at least twice a year, with additional meetings as and when required and agreed