



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

CCIN innovation funding – 2018/9 Policy Labs

Would you like to collaborate with other CCIN Members (Councils, Associates and Affiliates) to find co-operative solutions to the challenges facing local government? Is there a co-operative idea that you would like to run in your local area? If yes, we want to hear from you!

As a CCIN member you can apply for up to £10,000 to deliver a Policy Lab. This could be anything from co-operative approaches to tackling food poverty to initiatives that put communities back at the heart of local decision making. We are open to all ideas, the more innovative the better!

So what do we need from you? If you have an idea, please complete the expression of interest form below, telling us about your idea for a Policy Lab. Don't be shy: we want to hear ideas from ALL our members.

Please return your completed EOI to comms@councils.coop

Expression of Interest – CCIN Funding

CCIN Member Authority: Plymouth City Council

Name of CCIN Lead Member: Chris Penberthy

Name and Job Title: Anna Peachey, Economy, Partnerships and Regeneration Mgr

1. What is your idea?

Provide details of what your proposed project is, the story of how you identified the need or opportunity for the proposal and how the money will be spent.

[The proposed project \(tentatively titled 'Co-operatives Unleashed: as seen from the grassroots'\)](#)

An enquiry into strategic Council participation in support of doubling the size of the co-operative economy before the end of the next parliament.

The project will:

- Develop a detailed case study and toolkit based on the experience of developing a strategic action plan and delivery programmes to double the size of the local co-operative economy in Plymouth – this will include a summary of national/international context and key questions to ask at each stage of the development of local thinking and solutions.
- Survey CCIN members to see what activity is currently being undertaken to develop their local co-operative economy.
- Visits to key respondents to gain greater insight into their work in order to build a case study and resource library.
- Host a webinar to discuss areas of commonality and difference in local experience and consider what these might mean for those considering how best to support local co-operative development.
- Publish our final product on the CCIN website and present at an appropriate CCIN event.

Why we think the project is needed:

- The first reason is to give a published local government response to current national thinking on doubling the size of the co-operative economy and inform the current policy debate and national thinking on the role of local government.

Recently there has been interest in doubling the size of the co-operative economy. The NEF 'Co-operatives Unleashed' report has an almost complete focus on national drivers, and almost ignores the role that Councils can play. The Co-operatives UK 'National Co-operative Development Strategy' published in 2017 sets out a landscape for growth whilst not explicitly thinking about the role local government could play.

We know that there is enormous strength in building from the grassroots, and that Councils are ideally placed to support growth from the bottom up. Councils link to people and communities and have the ability to facilitate these to come together to co-produce economic solutions to local need.

- The second reason for this project is to provide support for CCIN members in being more able to grow their local co-operative economy in ways that are appropriate for them.

In Plymouth we are strategically and systematically looking at how to double the size of our local co-operative economy. We are aware of a range of different approaches being taken by CCIN members; in developing our thinking have realised that the NEF report misses a trick that we believe that CCIN can fill in bringing local perspective; and as we have looked at the Co-ops UK development strategy we believe that CCIN can add value to their work through offering local government models and perspectives. Basically – the models and ideas we were looking for to help us develop our strategy were not necessarily easy to find in toolkit or model format.

A key driver behind the work we are doing in Plymouth is about changing the way the local economy works. But what does this look like for a Local Authority? We have started a process that has been informed by co-operatives, commissioners, procurement managers, economic development specialists, Plymouth's Growth Board and other interested parties. We have realised that it would be of benefit to CCIN members to document our journey - how did this approach come about, what could have been done differently, what is the best approach....?

How the money will be spent:

The three partners will agree an appropriate split of the £10k budget based on time contributed and out of pocket expenses incurred in delivery:

- Lead partner – project co-ordination; survey of all CCIN members; analysis of result; visits to CCIN members to explore different models (how is co-operative growth being facilitated? How it is led/co-ordinated, is it resourced, how does the Council work with co-operatives, what support agencies are involved, what are the KPIs, etc?); write up of case studies and collection of resources; hosting member webinar; preparation of materials for launch.
- Critical Friend partner – support for the lead partner in shaping, informing, reflecting on the research and conclusions; support for getting recommendations included within policy briefings to support national implementation
- Communications partner – support for the lead partner in reflecting on how key messages, lines of communication and timings are addressed; support in ensuring consistency of language/style in final product and ensuring that this is able to be uploaded onto the CCIN website.

2. Who will you work with?

A key requirement of Policy Lab Funding is that you work in partnership with other CCIN members. We recommend engaging a minimum of **three** other CCIN members (Affiliates and Associates should bid alongside Full Council members) to create a working group to support the development of your project.

The partnership:

- Lead: Plymouth City Council
- Critical Friend: Co-ops UK
- Communications: Following conversations with Nicola Huckerby, it has been agreed that this support will be given by CCIN.

The partnership will have access to Plymouth City Council's locally based Cabinet Advisory Group on Co-operative Development to sense check the work being done and identify key learning arising.

All CCIN members will be invited to participate in a survey (to inform) and a webinar (to shape) the work of the policy lab.

3. What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?

What are the outcomes you hope to achieve through this project and how will you know if your outcomes are achieved? What is your measure of success?

The output will be a report/toolkit that outlines the process of instigating and delivering growth in the local co-operative economy – this will be made available on the CCIN website - and role of local government in co-operative development

Outcomes will be

- a better informed/resourced CCIN network
- a better understanding by national policy makers of the role local government can play in doubling the size of the co-operative economy

4. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?

The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network aims to frame the debate on the future of sustainable solutions to public sector challenges. Our work will ultimately improve outcomes for communities by enabling members to develop radical innovation in policy and practice, sharing best practice and learning, and enabling innovators to chart new territory together. Please provide details of how your project will support this aim.

The work we undertake will:

- Support CCIN members in taking radical local interventions in growing their local co-operative economy
- Develop a suite of case studies for use by CCIN to demonstrate innovative local economic development actions and the impact that local government support for local co-operatives can have on local communities
- Provide the basis for the development of a specialist CCIN Economic Development Officers Network to continue to take this agenda forward after the completion of the work, should this prove to be wanted/needed

5. How does your project demonstrate the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?

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". Further details about the CCIN's Values and Principles is available [here](#). Please provide details of how your project will demonstrate the CCIN's Values and Principles.

In seeking to support a substantial growth in the local co-operative economy this policy lab will enable more local organisations within participating council areas to operate as co-operatives and help spread the knowledge and understanding of co-operative values and principles.

The work will explicitly support ICA Principles 5 and 6 through approach and outcomes.

The methodology we use and thinking being undertaken will support all of the CCIN stated Principles in a variety of ways, this can be further detailed on request.

6. How will you share your learning with the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?

How will you share your learning with other CCIN members? How will you share your learning beyond the project? This could be through producing a report, holding a workshop or presenting at the CCIN's annual showcase event.

The learning will be shared through:

- Articles/blog posts in the CCIN monthly e-newsletter
 - Production of case studies and resources for the CCIN website/publications
 - A webinar
 - A launch event
 - Opportunities during and after the process through speaking at conferences and events or to gain media coverage for the policy lab and the innovative work of CCIN
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