

# A network of UK local authorities who are driving global municipal co-operative policy

## Introduction

It is one of the most challenging periods in local government history. Public Sector funding continues to decline, and councils are having to look for innovative ways of providing services with reducing budgets.

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) was borne out of this uncertainty – a direct public sector response to delivering services differently, using the co-operative values and principles of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

## Who are we?

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network comprises 24 councils from across the UK who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.

The Network is a non-party-political active hub for co-operative policy development, innovation and advocacy which is:

- **Action-focused:** a vehicle for helping councils translate co-operative policy and principles into practice
- **Membership-based:** funded by modest membership subscriptions from its member councils

## Our Members:

Our Member Councils represent 6.2m citizens and hold an annual directly managed budget of £8.2bn.

Bassetlaw District Council  
Bristol City Council  
Cardiff Council  
London Borough of Croydon  
Glasgow City Council  
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Hull City Council  
Lambeth Council  
Liverpool City Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Newcastle City Council  
Norwich City Council  
Oldham Council  
Plymouth City Council  
Preston City Council  
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
Salford City Council  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
Southampton City Council  
South Tyneside Council  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Sunderland City Council  
Telford and Wrekin Council

- **Open to all UK councils:** members share the belief that working co-operatively with communities holds the key to tackling today's challenges
- **Part of the local government family:** the network is a Special Interest Group registered with the Local Government Association where we work to promote innovation in local government.

## The co-operative approach to public service

Few councils take the brave decision to tackle increasing austerity and challenges on their own front door step by investing to save – investing in communities and the power of people.

Co-operative Councils do just that and demonstrate this in their innovative approaches to service delivery. The co-operative business model allows people and communities to meet their needs and aspirations, offering a unique answer to contemporary problems.

We develop policy informed by real experience and practice, drawing on, influencing and framing national and international policy and political debates about the future of public services, local democracy, and communities across the country. It has huge potential for sharing its approach elsewhere in the UK and overseas. 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; replacing traditional models of top down governance and service delivery with local leadership, genuine co-operation, built on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement: collective action, co-operation, empowerment and enterprise.

## Our Associate Members:

Edinburgh (Labour & Co-op Group)  
 Gloucester (Labour Group)  
 Greater Manchester Combined Authority  
 Halewood Town Council  
 Hillingdon (Labour & Co-op Grp)  
 Newcastle-under-Lyme (Labour & Co-op Group)  
 North Hertfordshire District Council (Labour & Co-op Grp)  
 North Warwickshire (Labour Group)  
 Peterborough (Labour Group)  
 Staffordshire (Labour & Co-op Grp)  
 Woughton Community Council

## Our Affiliate Members

Branding.coop  
 BWB LLP  
 C.Co  
 Connected Space  
 Co-operative College  
 Co-operatives UK  
 Governance International  
 Locality  
 Oxygen Finance  
 PeopleToo  
 Perform Green  
 Public Service Transformation Academy  
 RedQuadrant  
 Royal Society of Arts  
 SBI/E3M  
 Sporting Assets  
 The Behaviouralist  
 Unlimited Potential

## Context

People are paying more attention to their economic decisions – looking for ethical places to work, sell, and buy goods and services.

The co-operative business model is a proven self-help model. Co-operative enterprises play a major role in driving our economy; showing resilience in tough economic times by creating jobs, adapting to social change and their continuing growth and success. The International Co-operative Alliance tells us that our Network is unique. Only the UK has a network of councils committed to embedding the co-operative Values and Principles into mainstream action for the benefit of local people.

The Network is politically driven with elected councillors chairing and forming the Executive Oversight Committee and Values and Principles Board along with representatives of our Associate and Affiliate Membership. Individuals from the national co-operative sector sit on our Values and Principles Board providing insights and expertise. The Network has a 'Policy Officer Group' who share and support each other.

## Our Supporter Members

Glyn Thomas JP FRSA

## Our work programmes

Members are invited to propose work areas that they want the CCIN to focus on.

CCIN members you can apply for up to £10,000 to deliver a Policy Lab. Policy Labs are projects delivered in partnership with other members. In 2019 we have agreed to fund four Policy Labs:

- Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food – lead: Oldham Council
- Co-operatives Unleashed: as seen from the grassroots – lead: Plymouth City Council
- Co-operative Neighbourhoods – lead: Stevenage Borough Council
- Promoting the Cities of Service model of social action to CCIN members – lead: Plymouth City Council

We are also supporting a research piece from one of our Affiliate Members - Peopletoo.

Projects that received funding in earlier years can be viewed here: <http://www.councils.coop/projects/>

## Join us

Join the CCIN to be part of a growing and influential network of councils committed to developing a new relationship with citizens. There is a growing interest, across the political spectrum, in how to share power and responsibility with citizens, support the development of community and civic life and find more cost-effective ways to create successful and resilient communities.

### By becoming a member of the Network, you will:

- access the **latest ideas** and thinking about putting Cooperative principles into practice
- position your council as an **innovator**
- help to **influence** policy thinking at national level
- share examples of projects and initiatives and **learn from others** about what works
- co-produce **tools and techniques** to support the development of cooperative approaches
- be invited to **Cooperative Conferences** around the country where you can meet and work with peers
- join an **officer network** who are leading the development of new approaches
- have access to a cadre of ambitious **political leaders** who are trying to bring change to their communities
- access a growing body of **resources** on the new CCIN website
- be part of **regional and national networks** in England, Scotland and Wales
- join the **debate** on our active social media platforms
- access our multi-supplier **Consultancy Framework** of specialist organisations to help you develop policy, implement prototypes and build capacity when you need to move quickly and flexibly
- profile your council's **achievements** nationally

## Types of Membership

### Full Membership

Any Council that can demonstrate its commitment to developing new co-operative approaches to working with their community is welcome to apply as a full member.

### Affiliate Membership

Our Affiliate Membership scheme is open to non-governmental organisations and corporations wishing to show their support and engage in the process of developing innovative Co-operative Councils.

### Associate Membership

Our Associate Membership scheme is open to the following organisations:

- Town and Parish Councils in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Groups of elected representatives engaged in local councils (Unitary, County, District and Borough) in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:
  - Minority administrations of local councils where opposition parties block membership and the administration therefore join as a political group
  - Opposition groups that will seek to become a Full Member if they take control of their local authority
- Other elected authorities:
  - The devolved administrations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
  - Local and regional government within Europe and beyond

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