



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

## COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

### Preston City Council

### Developing a co-operative network and community for Preston

The Preston Cooperative Development Network (PCDN) is working with Preston City Council and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to strengthen the cooperative economy in Preston. With funding from the Open Society Foundation and Preston City Council, the project has three objectives: develop the co-operative economy as a network of co-operatives, individuals and support institutions, including a Co-operative Education Centre and a Union-Co-op; establish 10 new worker cooperatives; and capture project learning to share with other interested cities, authorities and policy makers.

Key to the project is the contribution of external expertise. Consultants from the Mondragón co-operatives in the Basque Country will explore the potential for social entrepreneurship and partnership work with the PCDN and 1Worker1Vote from the U.S.A. will advise on union cooperatives as a model for emerging worker cooperatives.

Work is underway to deliver all three objectives. A Cooperatives Steering Group, with partners from across Preston and from Cooperatives UK, is initially raising awareness about cooperatives and the support available from the project for new cooperative businesses. From the outset there has been a focus on inclusion, driven by an advisory group representing BAME and migrant communities. Opportunities for linking into cooperative development within the criminal justice system are also being explored.

It is expected that a pipeline of projects will develop across a range of sectors. A new cooperative within the digital economy has already received support and engagement is planned with digital businesses across Lancashire to introduce platform cooperatives. Preston has linked with Kirklees Council through CCIN's Policy Prototype programme to explore local co-operative solutions for social care provision. Early discussions are also underway in the construction and transport sectors.

Activity to develop the wider cooperative economy in Preston is also progressing. A programme of visits by Mondragon begins in May 2020. The Preston Co-operative Education Centre, itself a co-op, is being designed with the Co-operative University. The learning and evaluation of the project is on-going and will feedback to the funder and the community at large.

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#### For further information contact:

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