

# A network of UK councils who are driving global public policy development using Cooperative Values & Principles

## 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?

Established in 2012, the Network was the brainchild of Steve Reed OBE, MP (now our Honorary President) who, together with Jim McMahon OBE, MP and Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE (our Chair) turned the idea into reality.

Since 2017, we have grown from 20 councils to over 75 councils and organisations 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
- **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.

## Our Members

Our Member Councils represent 8.8m citizens and hold an annual directly managed budget of £14bn.

Barking & Dagenham Council  
Bassetlaw District Council  
Birmingham City Council  
Brent Council  
Bristol City Council  
Cardiff Council  
Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Croydon Council  
Glasgow City Council  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
Hull City Council  
Kirklees Council  
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Lambeth Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Newcastle City Council  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
Oldham Council  
Oxford City Council  
Plymouth City Council  
Preston City Council  
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council  
Salford City Council  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
Southampton City Council  
South Ribble Borough Council  
South Tyneside Council  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Sunderland City Council  
Tameside Council  
Telford and Wrekin Council  
Torbay Council

# 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.

## 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 information and support each other.

## Associate Members

Billingham Town Council  
Burntwood Town Council  
Edinburgh Labour & Co-op Group  
Gloucester Labour Group  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority  
Halewood Town Council  
Hillingdon Labour & Co-op Group  
Medway Labour & Co-op Group  
Newcastle-U-Lyme Labour & Co-op Group  
North Warwickshire Labour Group  
Peterborough Labour Group  
Renfrewshire Labour Group  
Seaton Valley Community Council  
Staffordshire Labour & Co-op Group  
Winsford Town Council  
Woughton Community Council  
York Labour Group

## Affiliate Members

4OC  
Bates Wells  
The Behaviouralist  
Branding.coop  
C.Co  
The Co-operative College  
Co-operatives UK  
Development.coop  
Evenbreak  
Governance International  
Ideas Alliance  
Locality  
Marks Out Of Tenancy  
Mutual Ventures  
Oxygen Finance  
Peopletoo  
Power to Change  
Public Service Transformation Academy  
RedQuadrant  
Royal Society of Arts  
SBI/E3M  
Social Value Exchange  
Trueman Change  
Unlimited Potential  
West and West  
Workers Educational Association



## Our Projects

Each year Members are invited to propose work areas that they want the CCIN to focus on and fund. Find out more about the process here: <https://www.councils.coop/projects/>.

Funded projects have included:

**Community-Led Housing Commission** - The Housing Commission was set up by the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN), led by Croydon Council, with a practical focus to encourage local authorities to foster co-operative, community-led solutions to the housing crisis.

<https://www.councils.coop/projects/community-led-housing/>

**Cooperatives Unleashed: as seen from the Grassroots** is designed to inspire ambition and tenacity – with the people, policy, funders, projects, business ideas and training – to put wealth directly into communities.

<https://www.councils.coop/coops-unleashed/>

**Health and Social Care:** We're funding projects where members are thinking creatively about co-operative solutions to the current health and social care crisis. Projects will report back to our Annual Conference in October 2020. We're currently appointing a consultant to pull all the learning together into one major policy and resource publication the '*Co-operative Difference in Care*' report, which will be launched in Spring 2021, with interim findings reported in December 2020. <https://www.councils.coop/2020-health-and-social-care/>.

**CCIN Action Learning: Co-operation through Covid-19:** The unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on communities throughout the UK has meant that councils have had to respond in swift and innovative ways. The government's initial centralised, Whitehall driven response was insufficient in getting support to those people who needed it quickly and effectively. Local government mobilised quickly to fill that gap.

<https://www.councils.coop/eoi-action-learning-set/>

## Our Supporters

### Individuals

Andy Boys

Paul Byrne

Chrisin Marshall

Cllr Keith Martin

Cllr Thomas Mewies

Rani Moorcroft MBE

Paulo Lopez

Ben Procter

Glyn Thomas JP FRSA

### Organisations

Midcounties Co-op Gloucestershire & Swindon Coop Party Council

Resonance Ltd

# 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. <https://www.councils.coop/how-can-i-join/>

## 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
- join the **debate** on our active social media platforms
- access our multi-supplier **Dynamic Purchasing System** 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

- Local councils (Unitary, County, District and Borough) in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Combined authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners

### 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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