

EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Online Zoom call

1430 for 1500 - 1700 hours on Thursday 8 October 2020

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council (Chair)
Cllr Barbara Brownridge	Oldham Council
Cllr Peter Bradbury	Cardiff Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Clive Fraser	Croydon Council
Simon Parkinson	WEA (Advisor)
Jonathan Bland	SBI/E3M (Affiliate rep)

In Attendance:

Jonathan Downs	Oldham Council (Accountable Body)
Rob Gregory	Stevenage Borough Council – until item 8.7
Fiona Gibson	Cardiff Council – until item 8.2
Dr Cilla Ross	Co-operative College – item 8.2
James de le Vingne	Co-operatives UK – item 11
Sandra Mitchell	Sunderland City Council – from item 6
Nicola Huckerby	CCIN (minutes)

Apologies:

Cllr Paul Stewart	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Clare Penny-Evans	Newcastle City Council
Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council (Ex Officio – Chair of V&P)
Cllr Dave Jones	Staffordshire Labour Group (Associate rep)
Cllr Sue Woodward	Vice Chair of V&P

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting – online 13 July 2020

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from meeting on 13 July 2020

All matters arising are on the agenda.

4. Local Government Review

- 4.1. The Chair advised that the White Paper on Local Government Review (LGR) had been expected at the beginning of September, which then moved to October, it was now planned for the end of the calendar year, but it may move into next year.
- 4.2. A paper on the implications of LGR would be considered at a future EOC meeting if the White Paper is published.

5. Budget Report 2020/21

- 5.1. The Chair reported that our finances are very healthy as the Network continues to grow, this means we have the opportunity to invest in more Policy Labs and Prototypes this year. Item 9 lists those projects proposed so far, including one from Cllr Adam Farrell and Cllr Dennis Jones on Training for Opposition Group Members. It was suggested that we allocate funding for up to Eight Policy Labs (Max £10k) and 10 Policy Prototypes in 2021 (£1500).
- 5.2. Jonathan Downs reported that our Membership Subscriptions continued to grow with predicted income this year of £193k, and a carry forward of £63,327. We have not incurred the same level of expenditure on Events due to Covid. Expenditure has been focussed on the management of the Network, on supporting Members and investing in Projects. We would be investing in the website in 2021.
- 5.3. Simon Parkinson suggested that we should be allocating a budget for the website to cover the proposed website investments, and on behalf of Cllr Penberthy suggested:
 - 5.3.1. allocating a budget for V&P in order to 'stimulate and support the Policy Labs & Prototypes' to encourage a better level of applications.
 - 5.3.2. to define a budget for 'New Member Visits'
 - 5.3.3. that the Forecasts include inflationary increases in costs. Jonathan Downs explained that increases had been forecast but the rate of increase in new Members had out-run projections.
- 5.4. It was agreed to:
 - 5.4.1. Allocate sufficient budget to invest in the website this year so that it is 'fit for purpose' to meet the needs of a growing Network
 - 5.4.2. Allocate funding for up to Eight Policy Labs for up to £10k each (£80k) and 10 Policy Prototypes (£15k)
 - 5.4.3. That Jonathan Downs and Rob Gregory undertake another Financial Modelling exercise with regard to income forecasts for a growing Network, and an associated increase in expenditure managing a growing Network and accounting for inflation.

6. Annual Review 2019-20

- 6.1. Cllr Taylor ran through the highlights from the 2019 – 20 Annual Review, reporting that we have had a phenomenal year:
 - Membership increase by 350% over last three years
 - Launch of our Dynamic Purchasing System
 - Funding of 14 Policy Prototypes in Health & Social Care
 - 257 Case Studies on our website & bumper edition of the Case Studies Pack
 - Events including the Lib Dem Party Conference
 - Launched Co-ops Unleashed report
 - Ran a conference promoting Cities of Service model of social action
 - Launched our Induction Programme produced by the Co-operative College
 - Commissioned an Action Learning Set from Covid-19 working with the Co-operative Press
- 6.2 Cllr Taylor said that although the 2020 eConference was not on the list, our ability to deliver a Virtual Conference this year, attracting 157 delegates and holding Fringes, Workshops and keynotes has been fantastic.
- 6.3 It was agreed:
 - 6.1.1. That the Annual Review be approved, and that the presentation and report be uploaded to the website.
 - 6.1.2. That the report is professionally designed and that we have copies printed to send out with this year's Christmas Card.

7. Policy Prototype Updates 2020

- 7.1. Cllr Taylor reported that we have had updates from 11 of the 13 funded Policy Prototype Projects and are still waiting for an update from Southampton City Council, which we will continue to progress.
- 7.2. Simon Parkinson reported that V&P Board have been reviewing and scrutinising these reports at their meetings.

7.3. A 14th EOI project 'Digital Wellbeing Hub' from Plymouth had been circulated as a late report. The funding for this was agreed at the last meeting so it's EOI that needs approval.

7.4. It was agreed:

7.4.1. To note the update on the Policy Prototype update report

7.4.2. To approve the Policy Prototype report from Plymouth City Council on the "Digital Wellbeing Hub". Action: NH

8. Policy Lab Updates 2019-21

8.1. Co-operative Difference in Care – DPS appointment

Jonathan Downs explained that we had not received any bids from suppliers on the DPS to undertake this Policy Lab which was intended to bring together our Policy Prototype reports and identify co-operative innovation in health and social care. We had received feedback from one Supplier which was that the budget was insufficient.

The Oldham Procurement Team are suggesting that we might want to get feedback from other DPS Suppliers as to why they chose not to bid, so that we know whether it was requirements/clarity of the Brief and/or the size of the Budget that we need to review.

Cllr Taylor suggested that another way of doing this would be to do as Cllr Brownridge had suggested, which was for a group of Members to take another look at the Brief in order to better describe what we were seeking. This session would involve Members with personal experience in the area, Portfolio Leads and H&S Care experts. Once we have re-visited the Brief it could be that we need to do a different type of Procurement exercise where we ask suppliers to quote for the work we want done. However, if this is more than we can afford, we will need to revisit the Brief again.

It was agreed:

8.1.1 To ask DPS Suppliers why they didn't bid. Action JD.

8.1.2 To organise a Workshop for invited Members (Full, Associates & Affiliates) to review the Brief to clarify exactly what our requirements are. Action JD.

8.2. CCIN Induction Programme – Phase 2

Dr Cilla Ross joined the call and talked the EOC through the 2nd Phase of the Programme. There was more self-learning involved in this Phase compared with Phase 1, this induction was about how councils can better become a Co-operative Council and focussed on two key themes:

- Co-operative Community (or Local) Wealth Building
- Co-operative Place Making

Cllr Taylor thanked Cilla and her team for the fabulous induction Programmes that they had produced.

It was agreed:

8.3.1 We look at ways of encouraging Members to cascade the Induction Plan through their organisations, which could include incorporating completion of the Induction as part of the Learning & Training Needs for Portfolio Holders and councillors. Action; All.

8.3.2 That the Co-operative College look at Accreditation for those councillors, officers and individuals that complete the different Induction Modules. Action: College.

8.3. CCIN Action Learning Set: Co-operation through Covid-19

Rob Gregory introduced the eBook which had been launched at our eConference on 6 October and thanked everyone involved in pulling the Case Studies and content together. He explained that the Pack was very much a start in terms of the Co-operative Council response to Covid and the project had provided an opportunity for the Officer Network to collaborate.

Cllr Taylor added her thanks, as it had come together so quickly, and she particularly liked the design which had been created by the Cooperative Press.

It was agreed:

To send the link to the Secretary of State for Local Government & Communities, the Shadow Secretary of State for Local Government & Communities, the Chairman of the LGA & all LGA Group Leaders and to the Chair of the Cooperative Party. This was to show that Coop Councils are leading the way in supporting their communities. Action: NH

8.4 Beyond Asset Transfer – Mutual Ventures DPS appointment

Jonathan Downs updated the meeting on the appointment. Next steps would be to organise a meeting for Cllr Taylor and the members of V&P involved in the appointment, so that they can clarify the Brief and next steps. Action NH.

8.5 Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food – Oldham Council

Jonathan Downs reported back on progress on this project. Oldham Council had commissioned Salford University to draw together examples Co-operative Approaches to Food Security from across the Membership and beyond. The next steps were to review feedback from the V&P Board and to include some practical action steps for Members to take forward. Action: JD.

8.6 Co-operatives Unleashed – Plymouth City Council

Cllr Taylor commented that the virtual launch of the Report had been well received. She reported that there were some outstanding elements for this Policy Lab in relation to Webinars for Members and the Toolkit Launch which is planned for November to coincide with Global Enterprise Week, potentially on Social Enterprise Day, 19 November. Action: NH & Plymouth.

8.7 Co-operative Neighbourhoods – Stevenage Borough Council

Rob Gregory reported back on progress, there are four councils working together: Sunderland City Council, Stevenage Borough Council, North Herts District Council and Staffordshire Labour Group. This project is not about Covid-19, it is about Co-operative Place Shaping at a local level. All partners have agreed to resume delivery of the project.

8.8 Promoting the Cities of Service Model of Social Action Toolkit – Plymouth

Cllr Taylor reported back on the comments that had been provided by members of the Values & Principles Board which suggested that the report be more explicit about how the project fulfils the co-operative values and principles. Action: Plymouth.

8.9 Achieving Social Outcomes – Peopletoo

Cllr Taylor thanked Peopletoo for funding this Policy Lab report. South Tyneside has agreed to lead on this project on behalf of the Network, Birmingham City Council and Newcastle City Council have also agreed to participate.

Cllr Taylor also reported that with Stevenage's Social Inclusion Charter they were seeking to persuade their Auditors to take seriously the fact that the Council would be submitting their Social Outcomes Statement with their Annual Report and Accounts.

9. Policy Lab and Prototype themes for 2021

9.1. We are again seeking innovative values and principles-based approaches that contribute to co-operative development and livelihoods for both Labs and Policy Prototypes.

9.2. For Policy Labs we are proposing an 'Open Call' to all Members on the theme of 'Building Back Greener' for economic and societal Recovery along with the future of work as we head towards mass unemployment. Some of the ideas for potential Policy Labs are:

- Identifying the key barriers to developing the co-operative economy
- Connecting Coop development and enterprise agencies to councils
- Supporting the work of Mutual Aid Groups post Covid-19
- Tackling Digital Poverty and the Digital Divide to help job search
- Green Recovery, Carbon Reduction and Climate Change
- Phase 2 Action Learning project: Capturing the co-operative council 'crisis response'

- Opportunities linked to Students / Universities / Co-op Start Up (and role/impact in Cities) on an inclusive economy agenda
- Training in the Co-operative Values & Principles for Opposition Councillors

9.3 For Policy Prototypes we are asking Members to submit ideas in the area of 'Children and Young People's Services'.

9.4 It was agreed:

9.4.1 To go out to members and request Expressions of Interest for Policy Labs and Prototypes as outlined in 9.1 and 9.2 above. Action: NH

10. Key barriers to developing the cooperative economy

10.1 Cllr Taylor introduced a proposal submitted by Cllr Matthew Brown from Preston City Council following a call that Cllrs Taylor, Brown and N Huckerby had had with David Bright from the Open Society Foundation. The idea was that we bring together those Councils that are most engaged with developing the coop economy and Community Wealth Building in order to identify the barriers to developing the Cooperative Economy. We did not want to be prescriptive as to who should take part but hoped that the GMCA would wish to be involved as they have undertaken a significant Co-operative Commission.

10.2 It was agreed:

10.2.1 To undertake a call to Member Councils to ascertain interest in this work as a Potential Policy Lab, and that we report back to the next meeting. Action: NH

11. Co-operative Council Leaders Fellowship Programme

11.1 Cllr Taylor explained that James de le Vingne from Co-operatives UK had sent across a proposal for a 'Co-operative Council Leaders' Fellowship' earlier in the Summer. She commented that it was important for the Network that any Leader Development Programme involve the Co-operative College, and that any Training should be Accredited.

11.2 It was agreed that the proposal was Supported in Principle by EOC and that it would then it should be considered by the Values & Principles Board to clarify some of the issues identified by Cllr Taylor.

11.3 James de le Vingne joined the call and introduced the paper which was seeking to offer Leadership Training for Co-operative Council leaders from city councils and combined authorities in order to help them realise the potential for co-operative economies in their place. The proposal was seeking a £10k investment from CCIN which would offset any income losses that CUK and Stir to Action might incur by working on this project. It was proposed that the two organisations would work with the CCIN to create the space to develop a rigorous and structured business case which could be taken to other funding organisations to fund the development of a Fellowship Programme for Network Leaders.

11.4 James explained that Co-operatives UK and Stir to Action had been very successful in fundraising in recent years and they would want to bring that success as part of their offer. They would want to co-produce this Programme and have had an email conversation with the Co-operative College about Accreditation.

11.5 It was agreed:

10.5.1 To support the proposal in principle.

10.5.2 That the V&P Board consider the item at their next meeting and that a further report be considered at the next EOC meeting with the V&P Board views. Action: NH

12. 12a Membership report & 12b Revisiting Member Benefits

12a The membership report was presented by Nicola Huckerby. Our 33 Member Councils represent 8.8m citizens and control a budget of £14bn.

The latest membership figures for the Network are:

- Full Members – 33
- Associate Members – 17
- Affiliate Members – 27

- Supporters – 11

- 12.1 One new application had been received for Full Council Membership; this was approved:
- Birmingham City Council
- 12.2 One new application had been received for Associate Membership: this was approved:
- Polesworth Parish Council
- 12.3 One new application had been received for Affiliate Membership; this was approved:
- Value Match Ltd
- 12.4 Two new Supporter applications had been received; these were approved:
- Paul Byrne
 - Midcounties Co-operative Gloucestershire & Swindon Coop Party Council
- 12b Nicola Huckerby introduced this report. The Associate, Affiliate and Supporter membership categories had been launched in July 2017, and the benefits relating to all categories of membership had not been reviewed since then. A document had been circulated which listed a range of proposed Member Benefits and was presented for Approval.
- 12.5 **It was agreed:**
12.5.1 To adopt the list of revised Member Benefits and to upload these to the website.
Action: NH

13. CCIN Strategic Action Plan 2019/2020 – Update

- 13.1 The Chair introduced this item and proposed that progress on the 2019-20 Action Plan was approved. If there were any items which had not been sufficiently completed it was suggested that any Outstanding Actions be fed into the next Action Plan for 2021-3.
- 13.2 **It was agreed:**
13.2.1 That we organise an All Member Session in the New Year for Members to participate in the development of our 2020-1 Action Plan.
13.2.2 That the Cooperative College be asked to facilitate this as a Virtual Event and to prepare the outline Strategy.

14. 2021-22 Elections Process

- 14.1 Jonathan Downs explained that we would be inviting Members to Self-Nominate and/or nominate candidates for places on the EOC, and that nominations would close on 30 October.
- 14.2 Once the elections have closed, we will go out to Members again for vacancies on the V&P Board. The vacancies we will be recruiting to on V&P are:
- Independent Chair (Can be from a Full, Affiliate, Associate Member or from outside the Network)
 - 3 x Full Council Members
 - 3 x Associate Members
 - 2 x Affiliate Members

15. Any other urgent business

- 15.1 Cllr Taylor asked that we record our congratulations to Jim McMahon OBE, MP and Ruth Hall for their election as Co-operative Party Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair agreed to write to them both to convey our congratulations.
- 15.2 The Chair finished the meeting with a big Thank You to everyone involved in making the CCIN, the fastest growing network in Local Government. We've had a very successful Conference and an incredibly busy and productive year. Thanks, were also given to Nicola Huckerby and Jonathan Downs for supporting the Chair in her role and to all of the Members of the Executive Oversight Committee and to Cllr Chris Penberthy and the members of the Values & Principles Board.

16. Schedule of future meetings: January 2021 | March 2021 | July 2021 | October 2021

16.1 Nicola Huckerby to circulate dates.

12.10.20/NH