

VALUES & PRINCIPLES BOARD

MINUTES

1230 - 1430 hours Friday, 19 June 2020

Online – Zoom call

Present:

Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council (Chair)
Cllr Peter Curling	Hillingdon Labour & Co-operative Group
Cllr Iain Malcolm	South Tyneside Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Burntwood Town Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Ken Dalton	Halewood Town Council
Cllr Hayden Philips	North Warwickshire Labour Group
Cllr Sean Donnelly	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council – until item 10
Michael Curnow	Peopletoo
Simon Parkinson	The WEA (Vice Chair)
Nick Matthews	Co-operatives UK
Dr Cilla Ross	Co-operative College
Emma Hoddinott	Co-operative Party – until item 4.1
Jo White	Co-operative Futures

In attendance:

Lucy Davies	Plymouth City Council (Officer Lead)
Rob Gregory	Stevenage Borough Council (from item 4.2)
Nicola Huckerby	CCIN (Minutes)

Apologies:

Cllr Stephen Stanners	Seaton Valley Community Council
Cllr John Fareham	Hull City Council
Kathryn Mackridge	TUC
Rebecca Harvey	Co-operative News

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Councillor Chris Penberthy (CP) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for taking the time to join the call on what was a busy day for the cooperative sector. Had the pandemic not hit then we would have all been in Rochdale for Co-operative Congress.
- 1.2. Cllr Sean Donnelly was welcomed as the new representative for Knowsley MB Council. Cllr Hayden Philips was attending his first meeting representing North Warwickshire Labour Group. Jo White was welcomed from Cooperative Futures. Cllr Ian Malcolm (IM) welcomed Jo White to the meeting, explaining that he had been a member of the Co-operative Commission 20 years ago which recommended the establishment of Co-operative Futures.

- 1.3. Nick Matthews announced that he would be stepping down as Chair of Co-operatives UK (CUK) that day, and that he'd been asked to fulfil the role of Vice Chair, continuing his engagement with the CCIN. Nick took the opportunity to announce that CUK would be launching a Manifesto at their AGM encouraging the Government to #BuildBackBetter in a post Covid world. **Action: NM to send the 'Manifesto' to NH to circulate.**
- 1.4. Apologies had been received from Kathryn Mackridge, Cllr Stephen Stanners, Cllr John Fareham and Rebecca Harvey.

2. Minutes from meeting on 18 March.

These were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising from meeting on 18 March

- 3.1. At the last meeting a volunteer was sought as an additional Vice Chair, Cllr Sue Woodward has agreed to take on this role. This was approved.
- 3.2. **Beyond Asset Transfer – Policy Lab from Newcastle City Council**
NH introduced this item. Members of V&P had been asked by the Procurement Team at Oldham Council to agree a 'Draft Brief', delivery schedule, assessment questions, criteria for assessing bids. Once the Questions and Brief are agreed then the opportunity can be promoted on the DPS.

The Chair asked that the discussion was framed around each area:

Draft Brief

Cllr Iain Malcolm explained South Tyneside Council was an innovator in this area including the transfer of all 19 community centres and their community libraries. He suggested that the Brief include:

1. How do we maintain the momentum so that the community groups and volunteers who have stepped forward, sometimes in quite challenging circumstances, to run their community assets?
2. These are still council assets, so how do councils maintain an element of control, without being seen to be in control?
3. How do we scrutinise to ensure that community groups are doing what we think they should be doing on behalf of the community?

CP added:

4. To do a sense-check of the Case Studies that were prepared by NCC officers
5. To do a check amongst the Membership to see if there was anything new so that it was a current document.
6. To include something on 'Assets of Community Value' which is different from 'Community Asset Transfer' and whether the final report could have a reflection on the pros and cons and a suggestion of where Assets of Community Value Legislation could be improved (Localism Act) in order to support more co-operative ownership of community assets. This would help us to move the agenda forward to benefit communities even more.
7. Emma Hoddinott referenced the Coop Party's 'Love It List It' campaign and the challenge that once you have listed a community asset – how do you protect it and transfer it?

Nick Matthew reinforced the fact that South Tyneside Council are exemplars in this area, he picked up on the 'sense-check to ensure that it is not missing any legislation/best practice and is intellectually sound' we were right to commission this work but it has moved on quite a lot since we have been working on it and supported Iain's suggested questions with:

8. We should be looking at a Multi-stakeholder model in terms of the legal framework where councils retain a shareholding in the business so that they can protect the asset from any potential de-mutualisation or local failure.
9. Councils still need to maintain a budget line for community development work in order to ensure that those running the business have the necessary skills and competence to do so.

Simon Parkinson suggested that we now had an opportunity to look at all of our projects through the lens of 'societal recovery' and to tag our work with #BuildBackBetter, framing the positive impact that community assets have in terms of economic and societal recovery.

Timetable

Agreed.

Suggested Questions/assessment process:

1. Experience in this area, where have they done before – case studies, examples, credentials?
2. What methodology/approach will they use?

Task and Finish Working Group to be established:

To finalise the questions and assessment process.

Agreed: Agreed to establish a Working Group to oversee the delivery of this Policy Lab. NM, IM, EH and CP agreed to form Working Group with NH. NH to ask EH if she would like to be involved.

It was also noted that any appointment would need to be approved by the Executive Oversight Committee.

All other Matters Arising were on the Agenda.

4. Coop Sector representation on V&P

4.1. Worker cooperative representation

CP reported that after the last meeting a working group had been established comprising Dr Cilla Ross, Rebecca Harvey, Nicola Huckerby (NH) and himself to identify a representative from the Worker Coop Sector.

Dr Cilla Ross explained the process and that a shortlist was identified, and discussions were held with each. There was a critical role for worker coops in local wealth building and the network wanted to capture that in its thinking. Jo White the Executive Director of Cooperative Futures was the unanimous choice from the sector, and she had been offered and had accepted a place on V&P. **Agreed: V&P ratified the appointment of Jo White to the V&P Board.**

4.2. **Retail coop society representation**

CP introduced the idea that the cooperative retail societies were represented on the V&P Board. During the Covid-19 crisis the larger societies have stepped up to the mark, quite often ahead of other 'big name' retailers. He suggested that V&P might change its Terms of Reference to add a 6th member of the coop sector and that this come from the Retail sector. The Covid crisis had shown the very real impact that retail coops could have on very local communities. CP explained that one of the things that councils are really keen to do, is engage with others who were structurally engaging with community activity, community development and other things.

CP felt that we might seek a representative from the Cooperative Group as the largest in the sector. The Cooperative Group had a network of paid Member Pioneers covering Group stores along with their [Co-operate app](#), an online community platform, that connects people to the local and national organisations who need support, and who can offer support, during the crisis.

Cllr Sue Woodward described the very positive response from Central England Cooperative to the crisis who immediately set up a partnership with Lichfield District Council for food delivery. Member Pioneers have also been absolutely crucial in promoting that partnership and linking with the local community and mutual aid groups. Sue suggested that we might look for someone from the sector who was able to mobilise and engage with the Member Pioneer structure.

Jo White explained that all societies undertook community engagement differently. Midcounties Cooperative Society ran 'Regional Communities' which connect localities bringing together all their trading arms to work in a specific area.

Nick Matthews supported the idea that because the Co-operative Group were the largest in the sector, and they already had strong community engagement, that they might be a useful partner to have. There might be an opportunity for us to have an input in how they use their Pioneers and also suggested community projects that might benefit from their 5% + 1% Community Fund. The Group also has the [Co-operative Foundation](#) which is their Charity which was undertaking work on loneliness and modern day slavery

Dr Cilla Ross also endorsed a relationship with the Co-operative Group, recognising the work they have done on the [Co-operate app](#) and their link with community, flourishing and wellbeing.

Agreed: NH to set up a call for NM, CR, RH and CP. CP suggested that we contact other retail societies so that they were aware that we were seeking to engage with the sector.

5. **Policy Lab 2019/20 Work Programme**

- 5.1. Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food (Lead: Oldham Council) – The report will be ready for late July / early August 2020. CP reported that he was aware that the report was in Draft Form at the moment as it had been sent to the Public Health Team in Plymouth who are one of the many partners in this. The update was noted.

- 5.2. Co-operatives Unleashed – as seen from the grassroots (Lead: Plymouth City Council) – CP reported that it was planned to launch the report during Co-operatives Fortnight, details were being finalised and an invite would be sent to everyone to attend the online event. This was being organised by Plymouth City Council with technical support from the Cooperative College.

Toolkits were being developed and their plan was to launch these around Global Entrepreneurship Week (16 – 22 November) and Social Enterprise Day (19 November).

CP explained that the report would help councils with their Recovery Planning and that more Case Studies would come forward for inclusion in the Toolkit as conversations progressed. The update was noted.

- 5.3. Co-operative Neighbourhoods (Lead: Stevenage Borough Council) – the group planned to meet again at the end of summer to review. Completion likely to be Spring/ Summer 2021. The updated timescale was agreed, and the report was noted.
- 5.4. Promoting cities of service model of social action to CCIN members (Lead: Plymouth City Council) – CP reported the Toolkit would be ready for sharing with V&P and EOC ahead of launch. The update was noted.
- 5.5. Achieving Social Outcomes (Lead: Peopletoo) – Michael Curnow reported that there was going to be a re-framing of the project by identifying the output we wanted to achieve. We'd then go out to Members again to seek further engagement in the Social Value Toolkit that we want to create with the support of NH.

Cllr Iain Malcolm offered to go back to colleagues to see if councils in the North East might be interested in working collaboratively as a focus for this work. **Agreed: IM and MC to progress.**

6. Policy Prototypes 2020 - Health and Social Care – Work Programme updates

- 6.1. CP talked about the practicalities in delivering this area of the Work Programme. He explained that anyone who was an elected member would be facing an election in May 2021 and that that, coupled with the fact that there was very little activity that elected members could do this side of Christmas, the start of 2021 would be fairly hectic. It was his view that we should set a deadline of end January 2021 for Policy Prototypes to report, and that would give time for the External Researcher to work with each project and potentially deliver a couple of webinars, with the final report being launched at an event in late June 2021. CP felt that this report could also engage the wider sector so that we can learn from them, and that this piece of work could also help us do some thinking about what that might mean for national change in the sector.
- 6.2. Progress on all thirteen reports was noted. It was noted that Rochdale MBC were delivering three Cooperative Engagement Toolkit tests, two of which related to our funding:
- BAME Mental Health
 - Good Help
- 6.3 Cllr Sue Woodward felt that COVID-19 had had a massive impact on how we were delivering Health & Social Care and how we were reframing services using the learning from this crisis to help understand how we take this work forward, especially in our contributions to national policy and economic recovery.

6.4 Cllr Sean Donnelly felt that the COVID-19 crisis has helped councils & partners in to thinking more co-operatively. In Cheshire and Merseyside this has led to the bulk-purchasing of PPE for care homes and conversations about possibly moving the care home sector into a multi-stakeholder co-operative with local authorities. What was clear was that there wasn't the money in the sector and the co-operative model was a way forward, they'd also seen private sector care homes start to look at the co-operative model. He also reiterated that the sector was in absolute crisis before COVID-19 struck. There's been a massive increase in demand for Mental Health Act Assessments in Knowsley, this has meant that councils across the area were having to work co-operatively in order to share a trained workforce to respond to demand.

7. Brief for the 'Co-operative Difference in Care' report

7.1. Volunteers were sought to help prepare the Draft Brief to find a consultant from the DPS to pull this report together. The Chair suggested that an early appointment would allow us the opportunity for the successful organisation to work with the councils preparing the reports to ensure that their final document covered all of the areas we were seeking. Cllr Iain Malcolm offered support from South Tyneside.

7.2. **Agreed: NH to speak to the Strategy Officer in the Social Health Dept at South Tyneside to help pull this together, and to set up a c7.all for CP and IM to progress. Draft will be shared with V&P before advertising on the DPS. This would also need to be signed off by EOC.**

8. CCIN Code of Conduct and Complaints Process

8.1. CP reported that officers in Plymouth had prepared an initial draft Code of a Conduct and Complaints Process, which had included a review of submissions from the Co-operative College and alignment with the LGA process.

8.2. Cllr Iain Malcolm supported the Draft, stating that it was proportionate and realistic in terms of how the CCIN could react to a complaint.

8.3. Lucy Davies and Caroline Marr from Plymouth City Council were thanked for their work on this.

8.4. **Agreed: The Draft would be submitted to the EOC for comment and approval. Action: NH.**

9. CCIN Action Learning: Co-operation through Covid-19

9.1. Rob Gregory from Stevenage introduced a paper which had come from the CCIN Officer Network, that he had agreed to lead. Officers had been having regular calls to look at the Covid-19 response, and the idea was to capture some of that learning. The proposal would record what it was about being a Co-operative Council that had enabled them to respond quickly, working in partnership with other sectors and organisations in a collaborative way. It was envisaged that this work would be shared with others eg the LGA to explain what our co-operative difference was. V&P was being asked to endorse the approach and to suggest what they might like to see in terms of learning products.

9.2. In welcoming the report Cllr Sue Woodward asked whether the timetable of the report could be brought forward so that early learnings could be released in the Autumn.

9.3. Dr Cilla Ross welcomed the report and explained that she had just put in a small bid to the British Academy about how the growth of Mutual Aid networks and their self-organised nature in bringing communities together at the grassroots. She was also

- concerned about the sustainability of some of these groups. Cilla also asked if the reporting could come earlier.
- 9.4. Nick Matthews welcomed the report and said that he was very impressed with the proposal. The thing that would help give the CCIN ultimate legitimacy, continuity and solidarity is when officers believe that doing co-operative working is the norm, and that they have the confidence to go to elected members and to other officers that they work with to say that there is a co-operative solution or a co-operative response to this particular issue or case. Whilst supporting the need to share the learnings from the Covid-19 crisis at the earliest opportunity, he proposed a more in-depth piece of work:
- 9.4.1. Solidifying and strengthening the CCIN Officer Network. Giving officers the confidence, the materials, the legal framework, the accountancy know-how as well as the practical case studies. The challenge is how do you turn informal co-operation into formal co-operative structures and businesses, to build in resilience and build in strength so that we don't have to create everything from scratch every time that there is a problem.
- 9.4.2. When it comes to crisis response, local councils do not have the resources to deal with these themselves and it is communities that come forward to help, as they feel that they have a part to play. Going forward we are going to need a lot more community engagement because of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.
- 9.4.3. The kind of structures that we are going to need for the next crisis we need to start to create now, and we need to understand now which are the more resilient structures to take forward, and which ones do LA need to create frameworks around?
- 9.5. Simon Parkinson suggested that perhaps we needed a two-stage piece of work. Get the examples in asap from across the Network and then see if there are any common themes which could be pulled together into a wider piece of work or future policy lab.
- 9.6. Cllr Chris Penberthy suggested that learnings are highlighted on a dedicated part of the website. And that rather than focus on the product and format let's concentrate on key messages.
- 9.7. Nick Matthews offered to support RG and the Officer Group in the language of the Values and Principles and the philosophy behind it.
- 9.8. CP said that the proposal was fantastic, and made some additional suggestions for inclusion:
- 9.8.1. some of the partnerships that had been created between members and officers working on the ground
- 9.8.2. some of the workings between different tiers of local authority and what lessons could be learnt there
- 9.8.3. the role of Scrutiny, and all Party-support
- 9.8.4. the role of Opposition, learning from good and bad experience
- 9.8.5. examples where Emergency Powers were being used for too long
- 9.8.6. gave an example from Gloucester City Labour Group where they'd had to fight to get scrutiny resources and have had real difficulty linking up programming between the city council and the county council.
- 9.9. Cllr Peter Curling explained that his experience as an Opposition Group Leader in Hillingdon was that the Council Leader was keeping him up to date with what was going on during Covid-19 and he was being consulted on matters. All Emergency Decisions have been distributed to every Councillor. Cllr Sue Woodward concurred with this experience in Staffordshire.

- 9.10. Dr Cilla Ross added that COVID-19 is amplifying existing structural inequalities.
- 9.11. Jo White reiterated the point made by Nick Mathews that the captures the fact that communities come together in times of crisis – People Power.
- 9.12. **Agreed: The paper received unanimous support and would be submitted to EOC for endorsement and funding.**

10. CCIN Induction Programme

- 10.1. All V&P Board members had been given access to Phase 1 of the Induction Programme and had been asked to go through it as part of the ‘sense-checking’ process. Any minor changes should be sent to NH.
- 10.2. Dr Cilla Ross introduced Part 1 of the Programme which was an online toolkit and was with the Board to ensure that it meets the needs of the Network and its Values and Principles. This had been completed to schedule.
- 10.3. Part 2 of the Programme was scheduled for completion in early July, and included interviews with Kirklees, Tameside and Barking & Dagenham. A further interview with Cllr Peter Curling had been arranged to look at how you encourage Opposition Groups to share resources.
- 10.4. Cllr Penberthy said that the programme was looking fantastic and thanked Cilla and the College for the all the work that had gone into it. **Agreed: The Induction Plan would be submitted to EOC for comment and approval. Action: NH.**

11. New Member Relationships

- 11.1. NH gave an update on where we were in terms of Membership: 30 Full Members, 17 Associate Members, 25 Affiliate Members and 7 Supporters; and asked how did the Group want to manage New Member Relationships? Had we not been working in a global pandemic we may have wanted to visit some of these new Members.
- 11.2. Nick Matthews asked whether we might want to connect old and new members to act as a Sounding Board.
- 11.3. Cllr Penberthy asked whether we could connect specific Portfolio Leads or Scrutiny Leads in the same way as the Officer Network was working.
- 11.4. Cllr Sue Woodward supported NM’s point about establishing some sort of Buddy arrangement.
- 11.5. Simon Parkinson asked whether we could consider the same for Affiliate Members (item 2.4 from our Strategy and Action Plan), this was agreed.
- 11.6. **Agreed: NH to set up a call with Sue Woodward (Lead), Simon Parkinson and Michael Curnow to take this forward.**

12. 2020 Work Programme – including actions from Strategy & Action Plan

- 12.1 **Policy Lab theme for 2021** – CP suggested that we submit a proposal to EOC on Co-operative Approaches to improvements in Children’s Social Care which could be shaped by the Co-operation through Covid-19 Action Learning work. To include some of the sustainability issues to the co-operative approaches during Covid-19. Cllr Sue Woodward suggested that this include support for Mutual Aid Groups and organisations which includes funding and how do we ensure the sustainability of organisations to plan for the future.
- 12.2 **Explore the potential of using universities as economic anchors (5.1)**
NH reported that, as requested at the last meeting, she had spoken to Officer Network to see if they would like to work on this piece of work. The following responses were received:

UCLAN & Preston
University of Herts & Stevenage (Prof Mick Brooks)
University of Salford & Oldham
Co-operative University and Rochdale
Hull University and Hull
Huddersfield University and Kirklees College working with Kirklees Council

Agreed: that Dr Cilla Ross and Nick Matthews lead on this engaging with interested councils from the Officer Network. Action: NH to arrange.

13 Any Other Business

13.1 NH had received an invitation from Co-operative Care Colne Valley to participate in a Round Table on the Future of Co-operative Care. If anyone was interested in attending, please can they let her know.

14 Date & venue of next meeting

12.30 for 1300 – 1500 hours, Wednesday 9th September 2020, virtual call.

The meeting closed at 1430 hours.

22-06-20