



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### CCIN innovation funding – 2021 Policy Prototypes Children and Young People's Services

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#### **Expression of Interest – Policy Prototype CCIN Funding 2021**

**CCIN Member Organisation submitting application:** Woughton Community Council

**Name of CCIN Lead Councillor/Officer:** Steve McNay

**Partner organisations:** N/A

**Contact details (Email and phone):**

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#### **1. What is your idea?**

*Provide details of what your proposed project is, the story of how you identified the need or opportunity for the proposal and how the money will be spent.*

To undertake work to formally assess the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the services the council provides, specifically those within the Youth and Community directorate.

#### **2. Who will you work with?**

*You are not required to work with other CCIN members when applying to deliver a Policy Prototype, though you are more than welcome to!*

We will work with a recognised provider of SROI support to create and develop suitable measurement tools, with the aim of enabling this to be developed into a flexible and individualised resource that can be utilised by a variety of local councils (parish, town and community, specifically)

#### **3. What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?**

*What are the outcomes you hope to achieve through this project and how will you know if your outcomes are achieved? What is your measure of success?*

- To have a way of evidencing the social value of the work that we undertake

*Through being able to evaluate some of our existing services, we will be able to see 'success' in this*

*approach, leading to further work*

- To have a tool that can be used flexibly with a variety of services to undertake similar evaluations on an ongoing (annual?) basis

*The outcome will be to have a 'tool' that can be used on an ongoing basis – this may be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet, but is likely to be a considered, designed and created bespoke piece of software*

- To be able to use the evidence provided through this work to more effectively lobby for additional funding, either via principal authorities, central government or via grant / contracting arrangements with other organisations

*A positive outcome would be to have the principal authority see the value of the work undertaken, understand the value that this provides to both individuals but also to the wider social care / health / criminal justice / education sectors and the wider determinants of wellbeing. It appears that local councils are often seen as less capable, unable to 'prove' their value – this approach aims to adjust that thinking and provide clear, unambiguous evidence of both value and need.*

- To use the evidence provided to tailor services to provide the most effective approaches, especially when considering reduced budgets or limitations to delivery

*Using the annual evidence provided to help shape service planning, budgeting and similar would be the outcome aimed for.*

#### **4. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

*The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network aims to frame the debate on the future of sustainable solutions to public sector challenges. Our work will ultimately improve outcomes for communities by enabling members to develop radical innovation in policy and practice, sharing best practice and learning, and enabling innovators to chart new territory together. Please provide details of how your project will support this aim.*

If the project is successful in the early stages and provide evidence that further development would be of value, creation of a tool to enable ALL local councils to show the value would be an enormous benefit to the sector. It would enable councils to show how important they are, build understanding of the importance to local people, address some concerns about the financial value of the sector and show that public sector approaches have value in addition to those offered within the private sector.

This approach whilst not new, is relatively unknown within the local council arena. Following a well-received workshop at the NALC Conference in 2019, several councils have shown an interest in this type of thinking and being able to provide an accessible and easy way for others to start thinking in these terms would be hugely beneficial.

#### **5. How does your project demonstrate the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

*Our Network is based on the Co-operative values developed by the International Co-operative Alliance: "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others". Further details about the CCIN's Values and Principles are available [here](#). Please provide details of how your project will demonstrate the CCIN's Values and Principles.*

Social value sits at the heart of this approach – seeing benefits in more than simple terms and looking at human costs, human benefits and human value as part of a wider approach to how councils can support communities.

Whilst the early stage focuses primarily on youth services, the principles can cross over into a number of other areas – what value can be placed on provision of allotments (one of the duties of a local council)? How does spending money on planters bring additional social value to a community? What, other than cleaner streets, does a community litter pick bring – health? Confidence? Reduction in isolation and mental health issues? And how valued should those outcomes be?

This approach and the underlying principle of sharing the knowledge and tools to enable recreation across the piece, are very much the CCIN approaches.

#### **6. How will you share your learning with the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

We would share the knowledge learned from this through written reports, a ‘toolkit’ (although this may come later, dependent on the level of funding needed for development) and through both online and (we hope) in person sessions explaining the value and process behind SROI for the local council sector. This builds upon the joint session we were part of at the NALC Conference in 2019 where we started a conversation about SROI and received positive feedback from participants who were excited by the potential.

We would also hope that this piece of work would stimulate further discussion and exploration across both the local council sector and the wider cooperative movement, building social value and wider societal benefits into commissioning, service delivery and reporting on success – placing these principles at the heart of our collective worlds would be likely to result in far more positive ways of working and supporting our communities.