



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

### Preston City Council

## Community Wealth Building 2.0 and Cooperative Development in Preston

In February 2021 Preston City Council launched a new Community Wealth Building Strategy [CWB 2.0 Leading Resilience and Recovery in Preston](#). The creation of a more diverse and democratic economy in Preston is a key theme. Strategic priorities include promoting cooperative education and training and the conversion of businesses to worker or employee-owned ventures. Cooperative activity to address economic inclusion, including for those communities most affected by the pandemic, is another priority. Responsiveness to the climate emergency is reflected in the promotion of community energy to deliver decarbonisation and community wealth.

Ongoing projects and workstreams are supporting the delivery of these priorities. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) has funded the start-up of three worker cooperatives, including the Preston Cooperative Education Centre, with several others at a pre start-up stage in transport, language translation, community arts and to support employment for people leaving prison. Also as part of the OSF project, consultants from Mondragon and 1Worker1Vote have transferred learning from cooperative experience in the Basque Country and the US to a range of stakeholders in Preston.

Partnerships with Cooperatives UK and Stir to Action have assisted local partners, including Preston City Council and the Preston Cooperative Development Network, to develop a more strategic approach to growing the cooperative economy including a sharper focus on 'pre-technical' activity to raise awareness of – and interest in – cooperatives. A Cooperative Recovery webinar programme for community organisations from Preston's Black and minoritised communities profiled the contribution of cooperatives to community development nationally and globally. Follow up initiatives have included a project to pilot community food buying groups with funding from the Coop Group. A webinar series in partnership with UCLan's Centre for SME Development have focused on worker cooperatives and employee ownership; the growing influence of digital and platform cooperatives in the digital economy; and the role of community share offers in cooperative development. A Community Energy Group is meeting regularly to explore opportunities for cooperative development around renewables and retrofit in Preston.

Link to Report: <https://bit.ly/3keTGDP>

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