

## EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Online Zoom call  
1330 for 1400 - 1600 hours on Monday, 10 January 2022

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council (Chair)
Cllr Peter Bradbury	Cardiff Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Council
Cllr Barbara Brownridge	Oldham Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Cllr Leanne Feeley	Tameside Council
Cllr Clare Gamble	Billingham Town Council (Associate Rep)
Jonathan Bland	SBI/E3M (Affiliate rep)
Cllr Joyce McCarty	Newcastle City Council (Chair of V&P Board)

#### In Attendance:

Jonathan Downs	Oldham Council (Accountable Body)
Fiona Gibson	Cardiff Council
Simon Banks	Stevenage Borough Council (until item 7)
Nicola Huckerby	CCIN (Minutes)

#### Apologies

Cllr Paul Stewart	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Steve Darling	Torbay Council
Cllr Sue Smith	Rochdale Council

### 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Cllr Sharon Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and reflected on some of the many achievements over the last year. It had been a year of working together in co-operation. She thanked members for the part they played in achieving that and looked forward to another year of members leading the way in local government policy development.
- 1.2. Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Stewart who was on leave, and Cllr Steve Darling who was on a training course. Cllr Sue Smith had tried to join the call but lost connection.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting – online 6 October 2021

These were agreed as a correct record.

### 3. Matters Arising from meeting on 6 October

- 3.1. Co-produced training opportunities with the LGA

Nicola Huckerby reported that the Head of Leadership at the LGA was very interested in the certified training courses that we are putting together with the Co-operative College. The Co-operative College is aware of the opportunity to offer the courses to all LGA member councils.

**It was agreed to:**

- Arrange a three-way meeting for the LGA/College/CCIN to discuss next steps on:
  - format of the training – face to face online (Teams / Zoom) or eLearning (self-learning)
  - do we want the LGA to fund the training by paying the Coop College as an ‘External Associate’ to deliver the training?
  - do we want the LGA to just advertise these courses to their members?

**Action: NH to arrange a three-way meeting with the Co-operative College and the LGA to progress this.**

### **3.2. Honorary Vice Presidents of the CCIN**

To be c/f for the next meeting.

### **3.3. The Commission on the UKs Future**

Cllr Taylor gave an update on progress. The Commission has not yet gone out to Regional Forums to seek input from across the UK because of the current Covid restrictions.

**Action: Cllr Taylor to circulate the next general update when it was available.**

### **3.4. Councils struggling to pay their membership**

Cllr Taylor suggested that we needed a process to respond to councils that were having to consider stepping back from the Network because they were experiencing significant financial difficulties so that we could be supportive, co-operative, and fair. *See also item 8.6.*

### **3.5. CCIN Strategic Action Plan 2021 – 23**

Cllr Taylor reported that we’re continuing to deliver on the Strategy, however, the Theme Leads still need to meet to drive forward the activities. NH explained that the new website will identify each of the key themes and members can see progress on the actions using a ‘traffic light’ system – completed (green), in progress (amber), not started (red). The aim was that Theme Leads will report back on progress at future meetings.

### **3.6. Workshop to explore the training and development needs of Opposition Groups**

Cllr Joyce McCarty reported that V&P were recommending that the report submitted should be accepted but that we should not publish it along with other Policy Prototype reports on the website. The recommendations for training for Associate Members have been incorporated into the Certified Training Programme being led by the Co-operative College. *See also item 13.1.*

**It was agreed to accept the report.**

## **4. Budget Report and Project Planning 2021-24**

**4.1.** Jonathan Downs introduced this item. He explained that there had been a slight dip in membership income as we had lost one of our higher paying larger councils.

**4.2.** Following a recommendation of the Constitutional Review Group there had been an increase in the budget allocated to ‘member support’. Cllr Taylor and Cllr McCarty explained that effective and responsive Network Support was central to producing high quality collateral and promotion for the Network and its members, and the additional budget reflected this.

**4.3.** £75k had been set aside for Policy Labs and Prototypes in this financial year.

The update was noted.

## 5. CCIN Constitutional Principles

- 5.1. Cllr Taylor explained that the review of the CCIN Constitution had been completed, with a view to it being ratified at the AGM in February. Simon Banks from Hertfordshire County Council introduced the Draft document which set out to review and codify how the Network wants to make its decisions, how its membership was structured, the governance arrangements including the elections process.
- 5.2. The need to regularly review the Constitution had also been built into the document.
- 5.3. It was agreed to recommend the revised Constitution to the Membership at the next AGM.

## 6. New members of V&P Board

- 6.1. Cllr McCarty gave an update on membership of the V&P Board. She reported that Cllr Rae Evans (Telford & Wrekin Council) had been elected to the vacancy on the V&P Board following the decision by Cllr Sharon Thompson (Birmingham) to stand down.
- 6.2. Gus Della-Porter from Bates Wells had been selected as the Affiliate Member Vice Chair. There was still an Affiliate Member vacancy on the Board.
- 6.3. Paul Bell National Officer, Local Government, Police & Justice Section, UNISON had agreed to take up the role as Union representative on the Board. This is a role that had previously been filled by the TUC. Paul was also at Councillor at Lewisham.

## 7. Membership report

- 7.1. The membership report was presented by NH. There are now 112 Members and Supporters of the Network: 33 Member Councils representing 9m citizens and controlling a budget of £14bn.

The latest membership figures are:

Full Members – 33  
Associate Members – 22  
Affiliate Members – 38  
Supporters – 19

- 7.2. One new Full application had been received; this was approved:
  - Stroud District Council
- 7.3. One new Associate Member applications had been received; this was approved:
  - Great Dawley Town Council
- 7.4. Two new Affiliate Members applications had been received; these were approved:
  - POhWER
  - Wales Cooperative Centre
- 7.5. Two new Supporter applications had been received; these were approved:
  - Chris Bain – Individual
  - Cllr Richard Eason – Individual

- 7.6. Cllr Taylor reiterated that she felt we should develop a process where councils that had had financial restrictions placed upon them, could continue to be part of the Network for up to a 12-month period at no cost. This co-operative approach would offer councils the opportunity to work with colleagues from across the Network at a time when they needed it most and would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Once agreed, this 'exceptions financial issues policy' should be included in the Constitution. It was agreed to review this at the next meeting.

Action: Jonathan Downs.

- 8.7 The Chair agreed to speak to the Leader of Croydon Council following the lifting of the Section 114 notice to see how warm they are to continuing their engagement with the CCIN. It was agreed to review this at the next meeting.

Action: Chair

## 8. Event Planning 2022

- 8.1. NH introduced the report and explained the process for booking events giving an overview of the focus events we support each year. Approval had already been agreed for attendance at the:

- LGA Conference & Exhibition in Harrogate – 28-30 June (Exhibition)
- Labour Party Conference in Liverpool – 24-29 September (Exhibition)
- Labour Local Government Conference in Coventry – 3-4 February (Fringe)

- 8.2. Cllr Taylor asked that we seek to attend the NALC Conference again this year.

Action: NH to progress.

- 8.3. Cllr Peter Bradbury suggested attendance at the Welsh LGA Conference this year.

Action: NH to follow-up.

- 8.4. Another area for consideration was sponsorship opportunities.

NH explained that Since 2016 we have sponsored the 'Co-op of the Year Awards' organised by Co-operatives UK, and since 2019, we have sponsored the 'Co-operative Council of the Year Award'. It was proposed that we seek to sponsor an additional award for 2022, the 'CCIN Co-operator of the Year Award', and to recommend that we increase the level of the sponsorship to Co-operatives UK, who organise these Awards on our behalf, from £1500 to £3000.

JD confirmed that budget was available for this.

This was agreed.

Action: NH to liaise with Co-operatives UK about creating an additional Award.

- 8.5. NH explained that we have received a proposal to support Stir to Action's 'New Economy Festival' 12 – 14 July – Selgars Mill, Tiverton as second-level sponsors. The cost would be £2,500 for which we will receive ten tickets and an exhibition stand. Travel, subsistence, and accommodation costs would be met by member councils. Officers from Hull, Oxford, Liverpool, Preston, Royal Borough of Greenwich, and Cheshire West and Chester have expressed an interest in attending/finding out more.

Cllr Taylor expressed an interest for a representative from Stevenage to attend.

JD confirmed that budget was available for this.

This was agreed.

Action: NH to liaise with Stir to Action and promote bookings.

## 9. Application process for Funded Projects 22/23

- 9.1. The Chair explained that in previous years we have announced the themes for the funded projects at the Annual Conference. As JD had reported £75k has been allocated again this year, it was agreed to allocate: £60k to Policy Labs and £15k to Prototypes.
- 9.2. J Downs gave an overview of some of the ideas that had been discussed at the Officer Network over the last few months:
- Data sharing with 3rd sector orgs to improve policy delivery
  - A joint project looking at the Indices of Multiple Deprivation as 9 of the top 30 councils in the IMD are CCIN members
  - We'd suggested last year that Billingham, Preston, and South Ribble be encouraged to submit a policy lab to follow-up on their policy prototypes regarding young people's services.
  - Covid recovery and crisis recovery to re-engage hard to reach communities.

Cllr Taylor suggested that there might also be something around the 'Levelling-up White Paper' which was to be published imminently.

**Action: J Downs to circulate suggestions to EOC for members to add any suggestions.**

## 10. Policy Lab 2019 FOR APPROVAL:

NH shared the Risk Schedule for the funded projects which included status updates on all policy lab and prototype projects.

### 10.1. Co-operative approaches to Sustainable Food

J Downs introduced the report which had been led by Oldham Council and originally conceived in 2019. Covid had impacted on being able to progress the report as fast as they would have liked. Over the last year the team at Oldham have had the opportunity to consider earlier comments from the V&P Board and to review the report taking the time to ensure that any Member Case Studies were reflected in the report. It also highlights best practice for sustainable food systems outside our membership across the UK and internationally.

Oldham accepted that this report was a little more academic than had been originally envisaged and they are therefore going to conduct a follow-up piece of work, putting the recommendations of the report into practice. To do this they are in the process of appointing a delivery partner from the DPS with a view to working with some of their grass roots organisations and producing a follow-up report in eighteen months, which will provide the network with some of the practical learning.

It was agreed: to accept the report from Oldham Council and to agree their proposal to undertake a further piece of work, at no cost to the Network, and to report back by May 2023. This would give members some practical learning on this important topic.

Agreed: To publish the submitted report, on the CCIN website, and to receive an update on progress in September 2022.

**Action: JH and NH.**

## 11. Policy Lab Updates 2021 – FOR APPROVAL

NH explained that the reports on: 'Co-operative Approaches to reaching net zero' and 'Understanding the Digital Divide' had been circulated before Christmas but could not be

approved as only two responses were received hence bringing them forward for this meeting. The Chair asked that if members were happy to approve reports and had 'no comments', that they should respond accordingly.

When considering both reports V&P had suggested investing in the design so that the final products would sit alongside our other published reports with a standardised look and feel. Agreed: To seek quotes for the design of both reports.

Action: NH

#### **11.1. Co-operative Approaches to reaching net zero – Kirklees Council**

Cllr Shabir Pandor introduced the report that had been led by Kirklees Council and involved eleven councils from across the Network.

Agreed: To approve the report and to launch it at the Annual Conference on 15 February.

#### **11.2. Understanding the Digital Divide – Cheshire West & Chester Council**

Cllr Louise Gittins introduced the report that had been led by Cheshire West & Chester Council and involved eight councils from across the Network. The big learning point from an officer perspective was working with colleagues from other councils which had been an enjoyable experience. The report illustrated the lack of access to data for councils and partners, the report includes a Toolkit for other councils to use, and a Learning kit for residents to learn how to improve their digital skills.

Cllr Gittins also reported that she was involved in a piece of work with Transport for the North looking at those who are socially excluded from transport and where there was an overlap with those that were digitally excluded.

Agreed: To approve the report and to launch it at the Annual Conference on 15 February.

#### **11.3. Co-operative Difference in Care**

Cllr Taylor introduced the draft of this report which is the largest funded project we have undertaken to date. She asked all members to read the report and confirm whether they were happy with it before it was designed up ready for launch at the Annual Conference on 16 February.

This report needed to stand alongside our other published reports and required more breadth and depth to highlight the cooperative difference in care from the policy prototypes that we had funded.

Action: All to feedback comments on this draft to NH.

## **12. Policy Lab Updates 2021**

### **12.1. Certified Training Programme with the Co-operative College**

NH introduced this update report. At the October meeting several questions were asked regarding the scope and content of this policy lab and the College has responded to those questions. We now have a budget breakdown for the cost of delivering this work which incorporates an allocation of 50 free places for Member Councils. The cost for additional places was £20 per person.

### **12.2. Before signing off the budget it was agreed that we would want to:**

- be clear on the financial model proposed by the College and understand their investment in the project.
- understand the potential uptake of each course, now we know that participation will be charged (above the initial 50 free places).
- build in an evaluation clause to review the courses after a year of operation and perhaps explore an income share which could be reinvested in the project.
- allocate resources to encourage councils to promote the training to their officers and members, perhaps through Co-operative Champions.
- aim for a post-election launch.

Action: NH to arrange a meeting with the Co-operative College to discuss the financial modelling of the project before the 3-way call with the LGA.

### 13. Policy Prototype Update 2021

#### 13.1. SafeSpace – Preston City Council

Cllr Joyce McCarty introduced the report which had been considered by the V&P Board and was recommended for approval.

The report was approved.

Action: NH to upload to the website and share in the newsletter.

### 14. Any Other Urgent Business

Cllr Taylor reported that Rob Gregory had been awarded a Distinction for his MBA based on the work of the Network. This was a fabulous achievement, and everyone expressed their congratulations.

### 15. Schedule of future meetings:

NH agreed to send out a Doodlepoll to set meeting dates in March, July and October 2022.

NH – 07-02-22