



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**1130 – 1330 hours on Wednesday, 23 November 2022**

### MINUTES

#### **Present:**

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage  
Cllr Peter Bradbury  
Cllr Shabir Pandor  
Cllr Clare Gamble  
Jonathan Bland  
Cllr Paul Stewart

Stevenage Borough Council (Chair)  
Cardiff Council (Vice Chair)  
Kirklees City Council (from item 6)  
Billingham Town Council (Associate Rep)  
SBI/E3M (Affiliate Rep)  
Sunderland City Council (Remotely for items 5.2 - 6)

#### **In Attendance:**

Jonathan Downs  
Fiona Gibson  
Nicola Huckerby

Oldham Council (Accountable Body)  
Cardiff Council  
CCIN (Minutes)

#### **Apologies:**

Cllr Louise Gittins  
Cllr Steve Darling  
Cllr Barbara Brownridge  
Cllr Sue Smith

Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Torbay Council  
Oldham Council (Accountable Body)  
Rochdale Borough Council

#### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

- 1.1. Baroness Taylor welcomed everyone to our first in-person meeting since Covid and her last meeting as Chair.
- 1.2. Apologies were noted.

#### **2. Statement from Baroness Taylor**

- 2.1. Baroness Taylor read out a Statement explaining that she was stepping down as Chair of the CCIN and Leader of Stevenage Borough Council after accepting the role as a working Peer in the House of Lords. [The Statement can be read here.](#)
- 2.2. Baroness Taylor thanked Nicola Huckerby for her commitment to managing and growing the Network and to Jonathan Downs for his work ensuring that the Network's finances were overseen appropriately.

#### **3. Any Other Urgent Business**

- 3.1. None.

#### 4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were agreed upon as a correct record.

#### 5. Matters Arising from previous meetings

##### 5.1. Honorary Vice Presidents of the CCIN

- Baroness Taylor confirmed that she had spoken to Lord Roy Kennedy and Baroness Glenys Thornton, who were delighted to accept roles as Honorary Vice Presidents of the CCIN.

**Agreed:** to arrange an event at the House of Lords to confirm the appointments.

**Action:** NH.

- EOC asked Baroness Taylor if she would accept the role of an Honorary Vice President of the CCIN in recognition of her co-founding status and the significant role she has played in developing the Network in the last five years. Baroness Taylor gratefully accepted the appointment.

**Agreed:** to announce the appointment of Baroness Taylor as an Honorary Vice President of the CCIN at the Annual Conference on 24 November.

##### 5.2 Commission on the Future of the UK

Baroness Taylor explained that Gordon Brown's final report was imminent. It was expected to propose the biggest-ever transfer of political power out of Westminster and into the UK's towns, cities, and nations. The commission had been set up by Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer two years ago with a remit to deliver 'real and lasting political and economic devolution'.

You can read the full report here: <https://labour.org.uk/page/a-new-britain/>. (Launched 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022).

##### 5.2. Budget processes and independent scrutiny

JD reported that the first independent scrutiny report is scheduled for January / February. The Budget report was approved.

##### 5.3. Exceptional Financial Issues Policy

JD explained that this would be part of our Audit process and would remain an item for discussion at the next meeting.

The Policy would include:

- Identifying a quick and easy mechanism to allow the Network to make payments promptly.
- Providing NH with a means to make payments, which could be a pre-paid credit card, rather than incurring these costs and claiming them back through Oldham's procurement process, which took a minimum of 28 days.
- Agreement on how we would respond to those councils who were not paying their membership fees as a result of a financial notice eg Section 114, and for how long they should be able to access member benefits.

**Action:** J Downs is to report back to the next meeting.

##### 5.4. Election arrangements

JD explained the process for electing the new Executive Oversight Committee and that the closing date for nominations was 25 November. If more nominations were received than

there were places for Full Member Councils, we would ballot council leaders until we had a clear winner. Associate and Affiliate Members had one place each on the EOC; again, if more nominations were received than places, we would ballot those respective groups until we had a clear winner. Once the new Board had been elected, nominations would be sought for places on the Values and Principles Board.

## **6. Online decisions since the last meeting**

### **6.1. New Full Members approved since the last meeting:**

- Hackney Council
- Newham Council
- Trafford Council

### **6.2. New Associate Members approved since the last meeting:**

- Midcounties Gloucestershire & Swindon Coop Party Council
- Stoke Labour Group

### **6.3. New Affiliate Members approved**

- Cooperative & Mutual Solutions
- eCulture Solutions
- Sunbelt Rentals

### **6.4. Policy Lab Proposal –Co-operative Development Toolkit for Councils**

- The Network had agreed to match-fund this project for £20k; the other funding partner was Power to Change, which had now signed off on the budget. Thanks to Kirklees Council, who had offered to lead on this project. NH reported that the other delivery partners were: Co-operative Futures, Co-operatives UK, Innovation Cooperative Ltd, Oldham Council, Oxford City Council, Power to Change, South Ribble Borough Council, Stevenage Borough Council, Sunderland City Council.

## **7. Budget Report**

### **7.1. Jonathan Downs introduced this item. He explained that the budget position was very similar to before and that £75,000 had again been allocated to Policy Lab and Prototype funding. The Network remained solvent, and the budget continued to increase as the Network grew thanks to NH.**

**Agreed:** to accept the budget report.

### **7.2. Baroness Taylor raised the issue of Network support and the fact that the Network was continuing to grow apace. The Network technically cannot employ staff but instead uses the DPS to contract operational services. It was acknowledged that there was an adequate budget to provide additional support. Baroness Taylor wanted to ensure that her successor took on the challenge of bringing in additional resources to work with NH.**

**Action:** J Downs agreed to meet with the new Chair as soon as they were appointed.

## **8. New Member Applications**

Two new Affiliate Member Applications had been received; these were approved:

- [Urban Agriculture Consortium](#)
- Shropshire Council Green Group

## **9. Policy Labs**

### **9.1. Achieving Social Outcomes – Peopletoo**

NH explained that Affiliate Members Peopletoo received approval to deliver this report in 2019 on behalf of the Network and had agreed to fund it. V&P Board has now approved the final report.

**Agreed:** to approve the report and seek to launch it in the Spring.

**Action:** NH to liaise with Peopletoo regarding a launch involving the new chair.

## 9.2. **Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food**

This Policy Lab had also been approved in 2019. A written report was submitted in January 2022. Oldham Council had accepted that the final output was a little more academic than originally envisaged and had agreed to appoint a delivery partner to produce a follow-up report with some practical learning.

JH reported that Oldham Council had commissioned Stir to Action from the DPS to undertake this further work which was looking at how the council was working with grassroots organisations that were involved in food, food growing and distribution to see if they could help them scale the work they were doing, share best practices and even formalise their structure into cooperatives.

Oldham Council had agreed to report back by Summer 2023 and to share the learning at the 2023 Annual Conference.

**Agreed:** to note the update.

## 9.3. **2022 Policy Lab Projects update**

NH gave a verbal update on the progress of the projects that had been approved at the June meeting. Values and Principles Board had approved the budgets and work programmes for each of the Policy Lab Projects and delivery was now underway. Those projects were:

- Arts and Culture for Social Cohesion – led by North Herts Council
- Democratising Policy Solutions – led by Rochdale Borough Council
- Study Visit to Mondragon - led by CCIN. Cllr Clare Gamble gave a verbal report on the Mondragon Study Visit.

## 10. **Annual Conference arrangements**

10.1. Nicola Huckerby ran through the programme for the Conference and the AGM. The AGM would start at 9am and the Conference at 10am. Everyone was encouraged to be in attendance so that we were quorate. The presentation at the AGM included latest membership statistics.

10.2. Baroness Taylor thanked NH for the wide and varied programme.

10.3. Members watched the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video – and there was unanimous support for the production and content. Baroness Taylor thanked all those involved.

## 11. **2023 Meetings**

**Agreed:** To discuss future meeting dates with the new Chair and Board.

**To note:** A meeting will take place w/b 13 March to review and approve applications for Policy Lab and Prototype funding for 2023.

The meeting finished at 1300 hours.

NH – 22/12/22