**Awareness Raising**

Much of the responsibility for this lies with the co-operative sector, individual co-operatives, and support organisations and think tanks that work with them. Councils have a role in amplifying messages and ensuring that they are delivered internally to officers and members who can benefit from better understanding.

1. **Audiences**

The audiences for awareness raising of the value of co-operative working are wide. We suggest that communication methods should be tailored for various stakeholders including:

* Council officers.
* Would be co-operatives including start-ups, existing private businesses – particularly family businesses – and existing voluntary and community sector and social enterprise businesses.
* Professional service providers.
* Co-operative businesses.
* Business education providers.
* The general public – particularly consumers, potential members and users of existing and potential cooperative services.

1. **Calendar**

There are some key points in the calendar for awareness raising.

* **January/ July - Co-op of the Year awards**

Encourage your local co-ops to apply and publicise their nominations. Nominations open in January.

* **June - Co-ops Fortnight**

Every Year, across the UK co-operatives work together to celebrate, show the power of co-operation and promote co-ops. The fortnight runs from the last week in June to the first week in July and ends with International Day of Co-operatives. <https://www.uk.coop/fortnight>

Place-based programmes of events can be run with partner organisations across locality, both on the ground and online, through social media.

A programme might include; running a workshop about Employee Ownership, a celebratory breakfast to highlight cooperatives in your area, attending large events for the public and having resources to engage in conversation to raise awareness, partnering with other agencies for events.

* **October - CCIN Annual Conference**

A multi-day conference that will help equip council officers with a better understanding of what co-operative business is about and how the sector can expect to grow in the coming years.

<https://www.councils.coop/events/>

* **November - Social Enterprise Day**

Social Enterprise Day is run every year as part of Global Entrepreneurship week in November.

<https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/?s=Enterprise+Day>

In some cities, this is an opportunity to host a week-long Festival to celebrate social enterprises.

* **Local Annual Business Awards**

Across the UK, local business awards increasingly include categories for community support and social responsibility providing a good opportunity to publicise nominations of your local co-ops.