



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Online Zoom call

1400 - 1600 hours on Wednesday, 4th October 2023

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West & Chester Council (Chair)
Cllr Paul Cassidy	Inverclyde Council
Cllr Anthony Okereke	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Cathy Scott	Kirklees Council
Cllr Barbara Brownridge	Oldham Council (Accountable Body)
Cllr Kelly Middleton	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Sarah Doyle	Liverpool City Council (V&P Chair)
Cllr Clare Gamble	Billingham Town Council (Associate Rep)
Jonathan Bland	SBI/E3M (Affiliate Rep)

In Attendance:

Fiona Gibson	Cardiff Council (representing Cllr Peter Bradbury)
Helen Peverley	Sunderland City Council
Helen Sharp	Ideas Alliance (item 12)
Nicola Huckerby	CCIN (Minutes)

Apologies:

Cllr Graeme Miller	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Peter Bradbury	Cardiff Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Sue Smith	Rochdale Borough Council
Jonathan Downs	Oldham Council (Accountable Body)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Cllr Gittins welcomed everyone to the meeting. A particular welcome was extended to Cllrs Cathy Scott and Kelly Middleton who were attending their first meeting.
- 1.2. It was noted that Fiona Gibson was representing Cllr Peter Bradbury – Cardiff Council.
- 1.3. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 27 June 2023

These were agreed upon as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from the previous meeting

3.1. EOC vacancies

Cllr Cathy Scott – Leader of Kirklees and Cllr Kelly Middleton – Cabinet member for Healthy, safer and stronger communities and partnerships - Telford & Wrekin had been appointed to vacancies on the Committee.

3.2. Members who have completed the CCIN Training

NH reported that despite requesting it twice since the last meeting, she still had no access to the up-to-date data on which members had completed the first [two Training Programmes \(the Induction and Key Themes for Cooperative Councils\)](#), but would try again. It was noted that the development of a certified CCIN training programme was on this agenda.

3.3. Officer session on using the DPS

NH reported that this would be arranged once Oldham Council had appointed their new Procurement Lead.

Action: NH and Jonathan Downs.

4. Finance and Budget Update

4.1 Budget 2023-4

As Jonathan Downs was not present, the Chair introduced this item. It was noted that this was a budget for the year and not the year-end accounts. The Chair asked whether EOC wanted to increase the budget for Policy Labs and Prototypes as membership income had increased, and the balance grown.

Cllr Sarah Doyle felt that we should be reinvesting our reserves to support our Cooperative Difference and Values & Principles.

Jonathan Bland asked whether the Network might want to explore other areas of expenditure.

Agreed: to consider other investment areas as part of the Strategy Planning discussions on 17th October.

Action: All.

4.2 Budget Update

The Chair introduced an update from Jonathan Downs, which explained that most Affiliate and Associate Members were not invoiced for 2022/3, totalling £13,000 of lost income. This was due to several factors, including staffing, miscommunication and processes no longer being fit for purpose. To ensure the CCIN did not lose this income, Oldham has agreed to surrender its payment as Accountable Body in 2023/4, totalling £12,474. The remaining £1,926 would be paid back through their 2024/25 membership fees.

To ensure that this did not happen again Oldham Council has put in place a number of measures.

Agreed: As membership income was nearing £300,000 a year, the Chair suggested it was time for EOC to have greater budget oversight and that we should consider establishing a Finance and General Purposes Group, which would support Jonathan Downs and the team at Oldham Council. This was agreed.

Action: Chair and NH will establish the group, which could include finance portfolio holders and finance leads from across the wider network.

NH reported that 'Membership Fees received/outstanding' would be a standing item on future EOC agendas. Oldham Council has introduced a new invoicing process which involved invoicing for all membership fees by the end of the calendar year. PO Numbers for invoices for 2023/4 are being requested. Invoices will be sent out with a copy of the Annual Report, with a set number of weeks to pay.

CLlr Clare Gamble asked whether NH had been given access to a credit card to pay for accommodation and exhibition materials, etc, rather than having to invoice Oldham Council after that expenditure had been incurred. CG and KM suggested that a pre-paid payment card might also work where NH could pay from the card and then invoice to replenish the card, so funds were always available.

In response to a question by CG, NH reported that in the last 6.5 years, she had paid more than £60k of expenses on behalf of the CCIN, which she had to claim back because she did not have access to a credit card. She said the swiftness of payment had improved in recent months from 4-5 weeks to c.8 days.

Agreed: The Finance and General Purposes Group should also investigate ways of improving a payment system so that NH does not have to settle invoices on behalf of the CCIN and then claim the monies back.

Action: F&GP Group.

5. Annual Review 2022–23

The Chair reported that the Annual Review had been approved online and was now printed. The link was sent out in the October newsletter and will be sent out with the AGM papers ten days before the AGM. Hard copies will also be available at the Annual Conference in Sunderland and the Labour Party Conference the coming weekend.

<https://www.councils.coop/publication/ccin-annual-review-2022-2023/>

6. Feedback from V&P Board meeting 20 September

CLlr Sarah Doyle gave feedback on behalf of the Board. The Board had considered a number of Policy Labs at their meeting. It was agreed to take comments on those reports as the next agenda items.

The chair amended the agenda to consider the Policy Labs next.

7. Cooperative Approaches to Sustainable Food (Oldham 2019)

V&P had considered this report at its June meeting.

V&P had recommended at its June meeting that this Policy Lab report (currently two standalone documents) be collated into one designed document and that the content aligned with our Values and Principles before publication and launch. This would be submitted to the V&P Board for final sign-off.

Agreed: To approve the report on the condition that the recommendation from the V&P Board was met.

8. Tackling the Barriers to Building a Co-op Economy (Oldham Council - 2021)

V&P had recommended at its September meeting that the authors review this Policy Lab report to align its content with our Values and Principles and that it was designed as a final

report before publication and launch.

Agreed: To approve the report on the condition that the recommendation from the V&P Board was met and to launch it at the November 2023 Conference.

9. Arts & Culture for Social Cohesion (North Herts District Council - 2022)

Cardiff Council, North Herts Council, Oldham Council, and Stevenage Borough Council were all actively engaged in this project. The final videos were of high quality, and the video which brought the Values and Principles together was really good. As well as a set of five videos, the Policy Lab was supported by a cover report highlighting the Values and Principles of the project and a Toolkit for other councils interested in developing their own Networks.

Agreed: To approve this report and launch it at the November 2023 Conference.

10. Democratising Policy Solutions – (Rochdale Council – 2022)

This final report had also been well received by the V&P Board. It looked at how communities could be meaningfully involved in decisions that involved them. It also explained a lot of the terminology that is sometimes over-used in this area. This report would be launched at a conference in Berlin later in the month.

Agreed: To approve this report and launch it at the November 2023 Conference.

11. Membership Update

11.1 N Huckerby gave an update on the latest Membership numbers:

- Full Members – 47
- Associate Members – 24
- Affiliate Members – 51
- Supporters – 23

11.2 The 47 Full Councils represent 12.35m citizens and control a budget of £21.4bn. In addition, we have eleven Parish, Town and Community Councils whose populations and budgets are 334k and £10.88m, respectively.

11.3 Since the last meeting there have been eight new Full Member applications, five new Associate Member applications, six new Affiliate Member Applications and a Supporter Application.

Agreed: to welcome Darlington Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Hounslow Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Lewes District Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Manchester City Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Plymouth City Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Swansea Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Swindon Borough Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Warrington Borough Council as a new Full Member

Agreed: to welcome Llanelli Town Council as a new Associate Member

Agreed: to welcome Loggerheads Parish Council as a new Associate Member

Agreed: to welcome South Swindon Parish Council as a new Associate Member

Agreed: to welcome South Tamworth Labour & Coop Group as a new Associate Member

Agreed: to welcome Crystalisr Cooperative Society Ltd as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome Midcounties Cooperative Ltd as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome Plinth as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome TechResort as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome Two Generations CIC as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome Monika Chauhan Jones as a Supporter

12. Strategy & Action Plan 2024-6

12.1 NH introduced the item. The CCIN had commissioned the Ideas Alliance, one of our Affiliate Members, to support the Network to review its work so far and develop a collaborative forward-facing strategy for the future.

12.2 Helen Sharp joined the call. She explained that the Ideas Alliance were delighted to help the CCIN create a strategy for the CCIN because it would be cooperative and collaborative.

Actions to date in seeking to develop the main strategic objectives for the strategy are:

- Met with the Chairs and Vice Chairs to agree on the scope and content of the assignment.
- Undertook a series of 1 to 1 calls with members from across the network in August and September 2023
- Planned a 'Look Back, Move Forward' online workshop for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Governance on 13 October 2023
- All Member's views would be sought via a Survey sent via MailChimp – the questions for the Survey were considered and approved.

Agreed: The survey questions were approved.

12.3 The next steps required decisions on what we wanted to prioritise as an organisation and, therefore, where resources should best be used. This was also a time for member councils to consider how they were a 'cooperative council', to look at what they are now doing differently, and to refresh their commitment to the values and principles. How the CCIN supported this process would also need to be reflected in the new strategy.

12.4 There was also a discussion about what the final document looked like, ie what form it would take, and how it would be managed and reported on. All members were asked to consider what it might look like.

Agreed: The format of the final Strategy should be an agenda item at the meeting on 13 October session.

Action: All.

13. Planning for CCIN Annual Conference 2023

NH shared the proposed agenda for the AGM and the Conference Programme on 2 November.

To date, there have been 206 bookings for the three elements of the event: the Tour and Welcome Reception on the 1 Nov and the AGM and Conference on the 2 of Nov.

Agreed: to launch the Policy Labs during the AGM rather than as a Plenary Session.

Agreed: to run a Plenary Session on a 'Cooperative Councils Manifesto for the GE' and to make this as interactive as possible, perhaps using Mentimeter or Slido. Cllr Sarah Doyle would lead this session, Jonathan Bland offered his support.

Agreed: to cancel the EOC meeting scheduled for the morning of 1 November.

Helen Peverley asked that Cllr Graeme Miller be invited to speak in the Plenary session on the Manifesto.

HP asked that she be given the delegate final numbers ASAP as she was going on leave from 10-30 October.

Cllr Cathy Scott left the meeting.

14. Development of a certified CCIN online training programme (Co-operative College - 2021)

The Chair reported that members of the Governance and the Officer Network had worked through the draft training modules prepared by the College, and after considerable discussion and deliberation, the Values & Principles Board felt that the final training modules did not meet the brief.

Agreed: to withdraw the modules from our training offer, to ask the College for a copy of all the content that had been produced, once received to pay the remainder Policy Lab funding of £5,000 to the College.

15. Schedule of Future Meetings

17 October - Birmingham – Strategy Session

21 or 22 February – Joint meeting of EOC and V&P to consider Policy Lab & Prototype Bids

Suggested EOC dates:

5 March

3 or 4 June

9 or 10 September

The meeting finished at 1600 hours.