VALUES & PRINCIPLES BOARD
Online meeting

Meeting 1400-1600 hours on Thursday, 5 December 2024
<u>MINUTES</u>

Present:

Cllr Mili Patel	Brent Council (Chair)
Cllr Alistair Willoughby	North Herts District Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Lisa Denson	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Cllr Sam Pallis	Hackney Council – From item 7.
Cllr Rudi Schmidt	Lewisham Council
Cllr Dave Griffiths	South Swindon Parish Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Dave Grocott	Kidsgrove Labour Group
Cllr Peter Curling	Hillingdon Labour Group
Claire Ward	Anthony Collins LLP (Vice Chair)
Jonathan Bland	Social Business International
Jo Hannon	Your Coop Business Solutions
Jo White	Co-operative Futures
Rebecca Harvey	Co-operative News
Liz McIvor	Cooperative Heritage Trust
Richard McCready	Co-operative Party
Paul Bell	Unison – From item 7
Cheryl Barrott	Co-operatives UK

In attendance:

Nicola Huckerby	Operations Lead - CCIN (Minutes)
Morgan Jones	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Simon Grove-White	Consultant / CCIN
Connell Hopkins	Trafford Council
Helen Chicot	Rochdale Council
Karen Barclay	Inverclyde Council

Apologies:

Cllr David Darkin	Llanelli Town Council
Cllr Michael Osborne	North Warwickshire Labour Group

1. **Welcome, introductions, apologies** – Chair
1.1 Cllr Mili Patel welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first for the new Board.
1.2 All members introduced themselves and new members were welcomed.
1.3 The Chair reported that since the last meeting, exhibition stands at the Liberal Democratic and Labour Party Annual Conferences have been successful. The Coop Development Toolkit was pre-launched at the Coop Party's Cooperative Change Event, and we successfully launched the Toolkit

and AI Policy Labs at the LGA Conference. The new Members' Pack and the Review of the Year were distributed at the Labour Party and LGA Conferences.

1.4   Apologies were noted.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting – 12 September 2024** – These were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**
3.1   Cooperative Approaches to Sustainable Food (Oldham – 2019)
At the last meeting, it was agreed that a small subgroup should be established to work with Jonathan Downs at Oldham Council to decide on the final format before publication. That subgroup comprised Jo White, Rebecca Harvey and NH Jonathan Downs had also confirmed that he was redrafting the forward and would submit it for final sign-off before Christmas.
Coop Press had offered to quote for designing this report.
Agreed: to note the update.
Action: NH to chase the meeting.
3.2   Tackling Barriers to Developing the Coop Economy (Oldham – 2021)
Jonathan Downs has submitted an update: "We are working with Co-op Press to develop the final report to launch at the CCIN Annual Conference in February."
Agreed: to note the update.

4. **Confirmation of Vice Chairs**
4.1   Associate Members – Cllr Dave Griffiths was confirmed as the new Vice Chair for Associate Members.
4.2   Affiliate Members - Claire Ward was confirmed as the new Vice Chair for Affiliate Members. Needs.

5. **New Governance induction**
NH asked whether any members had questions after viewing the New Governance Induction presentation. There were none.

6. **Member Engagement updates**
6.1   Associate Member Engagement – Cllr Dave Griffiths reported that he would seek updates from Affiliate Members before the next meeting.
6.2   Affiliate Member Engagement – Claire Ward reported that she would seek updates from Affiliate Members before the next meeting.

Cllr Paul Bell arrived.
Cllr Sam Pallis arrived.

7. **Policy Lab and Prototype Process and CCIN Values and Principles**
NH gave an overview of the process for funding Policy Labs and Prototypes. The Budget allocated is £60k for the larger Policy Labs, with £15k for Policy Prototypes. To date the CCIN has funded £400k of projects all of these are recorded on the Project Tracker. Policy Labs should be delivered within two years, and Policy Prototypes should be delivered within one year.

Key dates for seeking bids for the next round of funding are:
- 6 December - announce the timetable in the Newsletter
- 20 Jan – V&P Board to discuss report on process/reviewing/outputs and engagement, which can be included in the contracts for the new projects
- 13 Feb – Launch at the Annual Conference
- 13 March – closing date for Bids
- 19 or 20 March - joint meeting of EOC/V&P to decide which Bids to support
- 21-28 March – Bidders are asked to respond to any further questions raised by the Governance
- w/b 7 April – sign-off of successful bids by EOC

- 28 April – contracts awarded

NH gave an overview of the CCIN Statement of Values and Principles and how all our funded projects and case studies align with these Principles, which is demonstrated by a set of icons.

8. **Funded Project Tracker**

8.1 **Update**
The Chair explained the importance of the Tracker, which is used to provide an overview of the progress of all funded projects. A condition of CCIN funding is that councils submit a written report for each V&P Board to assess progress. In 2024, an online template was produced to facilitate this process, where project leads are asked to provide general information on progress for the Board providing an opportunity to highlight any challenges they face in meeting the delivery timetable. Policy Labs should be delivered in two years, and Policy Prototypes should be delivered in 12 months.

Once a project has been completed, the Board will receive a presentation on the report and have the opportunity to make any comments. Once V&P is confident that the report illustrates the cooperative difference in the learning and showcases how a cooperative council delivers services differently from a non-cooperative council, the report is submitted to the Executive Oversight Committee for approval.

At its September meeting, the Board had requested presentations on several projects as it had not received any written updates.

NH explained that it had been difficult to encourage some Project Leads to provide updates on progress. The priority had to be to encourage projects to deliver within the agreed funding timetable; otherwise, the list of projects in delivery would only increase and potentially become unmanageable once the next funding round had been approved.

8.2 **Project Sponsors**
The Chair reminded members that it is their responsibility to decide whether sufficient progress is being made on the projects that are being funded.

Project sponsors, who would act as supporters for the project and intermediaries for the board, had been introduced earlier in the year, so meetings were free of presentations other than those required for final updates. Volunteers were requested to acted as Project Sponsors.
Action: All Members

9. **Funded projects that have asked to withdraw**
9.1 **Empowering residents within housing estates to adopt sustainable behaviours – (2024 - Westminster Council)**
NH explained that Westminster City Council had submitted a request to withdraw this Policy Prototype project. It had become clear that the project's scope and content were greater than those of a policy prototype. They had explored alternative options to achieve a smaller set of the original objectives with the £2k policy prototype funding but found that this was not feasible and that it would not deliver the benefits they were looking for to share with the Network.
Agreed: To accept Westminster's decision to withdraw and encourage them to submit a Policy Lab Bid on this subject in the future.
Action: NH will confirm with Westminster and inform Oldham as the Accountable Body.

10. **Policy Lab Updates**
10.1 **Social Value Toolkit for Councils (CCIN – 2023)**

Simon Grove-White outlined progress on the rproject, with a view to presenting the final report at the Annual Conference on 13 February.

There was a general discussion about who could be approached to speak at the launch of the Toolkit at the Annual Conference.

One of the next steps identified was to consider how the learning from the Toolkit could be used to develop options for a replacement to the current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which is due to run until the end of March 2025. In order introduce a replacement process we would need to undertake a review of the current DPS with a view to providing support to members on how to enter into collaborate processes with suppliers that delivered the social value they were seeking.

Cllr Sam Pallis welcomed the report on cooperative commissioning and developing a legal framework. He suggested that an Officer Network be established to specifically look at social value to share best practice and ideas in this area.

Jonathan Bland spoke in favour of the report which had an opportunity to provide real strategic leadership for the CCIN. He suggested a follow-on project about supporting the implementation of some of the actions within it.

Agreed: S Grove-White to share the final report with V&P at its January meeting.
Update: Approved.

10.2   **Taking a Cooperative approach to tackling health inequalities – (2024 - Westminster City Council)**
It was noted that no real progress has been made on this project but that a new officer team was working on delivery.
Agreed: the Westminster present their update to the next meeting.

10.3   **Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls – (Trafford Council – 2023)**
Connell Hopkins-Tonge gave a presentation on the progress of the project.
The Chair asked that the report demonstrates how the CCIN will support the Govt's pledge to half violence against women and girls. She also asked that it reflected on any actions that took place during the 16 Days of Activism.
Update: Approved.

10.4   **Being Cooperative: Towards a model of brave and inclusive governance in local government (Rochdale - 2024)**
Helen Chicot gave a presentation on the project's progress and submitted the Budget for sign-off. It was noted that the Budget had been produced through a participatory budgeting process by all stakeholders, which was welcomed.
Action: NH to share the Draft Brand Guidelines with Helen Chicot for application on any design aspects of the project.
Agreed: To accept the Budget breakdown as submitted.
Action: NH to agree with Helen a plan to print any materials.

11.   **Final Policy Prototype Reports - for Approval**
11.1   **Cooperative Culture Making in Rochdale - (Rochdale Council – 2023)**
Agreed: The final report was approved for recommendation to EOC.

11.2   **Turning Strategic Plans into Art (Inverclyde Council – 2023)**
Agreed: The final report was approved for recommendation to EOC.

12.   **Policy Prototypes Updates – requesting contract extension**
12.1   **Improving accessibility (Lewisham 2024)** – Policy Prototype
NH explained that Lewisham Council had requested an extension to deliver this project until March 2026. The Bid was approved in April 2024 for completion within a year. The reasons given were that they did not have the staffing in place, and new project parameters had come to light with the 'Love Clean Streets' App, which meant the scope of the original proposal would need to be altered.

Agreed: to refuse the request to restart the project in April 2025 and to withdraw the funding offer. A future bid would be welcomed.

13. **Policy Prototypes Updates – to note progress –**
13.1   **Fairer Help (Hackney - 2024)**
    The project would be completed in January 2025.
    Update: Noted.
    Agreed: Cllr Rudi Schmidt agreed to be Project Sponsor for this project.

13.2   **Employability and Skills Project (Brent – 2024)**
    Update: Noted.

13.3   **Empowering Communities through Civic Crowdfunding (Cheshire West & Chester – 2024)**
    Update: Noted.

13.4   **Engaging & empowering the residents of Woolwich Common Estate – (2023 - Royal Borough of Greenwich)**
    Update: Noted. However, it is still unclear about how the CCIN funding has been used.

14. **Reviewing the Policy Lab approach**
Morgan Jones (Cheshire West and Chester Council) was invited to the meeting as he had picked up an area on the strategy to review the network's approach to Policy Labs and Policy Prototypes in the current Strategy and Action Plan.

Morgan reported that over the last few months, he had contacted Officer Leads asking about their experience in the process, which projects they had engaged in and any lessons they wanted to share from leading on a project. He also wanted to determine whether new members had referred to any published projects since joining.

The Officer Call on 7 January would include a broader discussion and there would be a Workshop at the Annual Conference to engage more members. Recommendations on improving the process would be considered for this year's round of funded projects.

Claire Ward thanked Morgan for pulling this together, and commented that the most significant improvement we could make to the process was around legacy and ensuring that the investments we made in these projects made a difference six to twelve months after publication.

Jo White welcomed the initiative and asked that the views of elected members also be sought.

NH added that as part of this review, which could include the need for additional resources, we should also be looking at how the learning from these funded projects should be shared with the Government and other organisations.

Agreed: If anyone has any further comments for improving the funded project process, please send these to Morgan.

15. **Any Urgent Business** – there was none.

16. **Future meetings**
16.1   It was agreed to hold a further meeting of the Board in the 3rd week of January.
16.2   The Annual Conference will be held in Woolwich on 12 - 13 February.
16.3   A Joint meeting with EOC would occur on 19 or 20 March to receive proposals on Policy projects.

The Chair thanked Morgan Jones, Simon Grove-White, Connell Hopkins-Tonge, Helen Chicot and Karen Barclay for their attendance.

The meeting finished at 1610 hours.

03.01.25 – NH