



Cooperative Councils'

Innovation Network

VALUES & PRINCIPLES BOARD

Online meeting

Meeting 1400-1600 hours on Monday, 20 January 2025

MINUTES

Present:

CLlr Mili Patel
CLlr Alistair Willoughby
CLlr Lisa Denson
CLlr Sam Pallis
CLlr Dave Griffiths
CLlr Peter Curling
CLlr Mike Osborne
Claire Ward
Jonathan Bland
Rebecca Harvey
Liz McIvor
Gareth Dowling
Cheryl Barrott

Brent Council (Chair) (Until item 8)
North Herts District Council (Vice Chair)
Cheshire West & Chester Council
Hackney Council
South Swindon Parish Council (Vice Chair)
Hillingdon Labour Group
North Warwickshire Labour Group (Until item 7.2)
Anthony Collins LLP (Vice Chair)
Social Business International
Co-operative News (Until item 7.2)
Cooperative Heritage Trust
Co-operative Party
Co-operatives UK (From item 8)

In attendance:

Nicola Huckerby
Morgan Jones
Jonathan Downs
Simon Grove-White
Dina Patel
Richard Cressey

Operations Lead - CCIN (Minutes)
Cheshire West & Chester Council
Oldham Council (Until item 7.2)
Consultant (Item 7.2)
Royal Borough of Greenwich (Item 7.3)
Westminster City Council (Item 9.1)

Apologies:

CLlr Rudi Schmidt
CLlr Dave Grocott
CLlr David Darkin
Jo Hannon
Jo White
Paul Bell

Lewisham Council
Kidsgrove Labour Group
Llanelli Town Council
Your Coop Business Solutions
Co-operative Futures
Unison

1. **Welcome, introductions, apologies** – Chair
- 1.1 The meeting started as quorate with just 11 of 19 members present.
- 1.2 CLlr Mili Patel welcomed Gareth Dowling, who represents the Cooperative Party, to his first meeting. CLlr Michael Osborne was also welcomed to his first meeting.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting – 5 December 2024** – These were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 **Cooperative Approaches to Sustainable Food (Oldham – 2019)**

Jonathan Downs reminded members that it had been agreed at their September 2024 meeting that a small subgroup should be established to work with him on the final format before publication. That subgroup comprised Jo White, Rebecca Harvey and NH. Jonathan re-confirmed that he was redrafting the forward and would submit it for final sign-off although he had not met the original pre-Christmas deadline.

Agreed: to note the update.

Action: Jonathan Downs will organise a meeting with the sub-group.

4. **Member Engagement updates**

4.1. Associate Member Engagement – Cllr Dave Griffiths reported that he had reached out to Associate Members through the two WhatsApp Groups and that there was no update.

4.2. Affiliate Member Engagement – Claire Ward also reported that she had reached out through their WhatsApp Group, but there was no update.

5. **Reviewing the Policy Lab approach**

5.1 Morgan Jones thanked Cllr Mili Patel and Claire Ward for supporting this item since the last meeting. MJ went through the findings so far. The plan was to run a workshop at the annual conference in Greenwich, allowing a wider group of members to participate in the review before making decisions on the next funding round in mid-March.

6. **Funded Project Tracker**

NH gave an overview of the Tracker, which provided a snapshot of progress on all funded projects.

6.1 **Project Sponsors**

NH reported that since the last meeting there had been no additional offers to act as Sponsors for any other funded projects. Those already in place were:

Claire Ward: Social Value Toolkit

Cllr Rudy Schmidt: Fairer Help – Hackney Council

Claire Ward reminded members that the responsibilities were not onerous, but it was a way for individual members to get more involved in a project and support the Lead in delivering within the agreed timescale.

Cllr Dave Griffiths agreed to sponsor: Taking a Co-operative approach to tackling health inequalities - Westminster City Council

7. **Final Policy Lab Reports**

Cllr Mili Patel explained that two reports were being presented to today's meeting with a view to launching them at the AGM on 13 February.

7.1 **Tackling Barriers to Developing a Coop Economy (Oldham – 2021)**

Jonathan Downs introduced the report, which had been produced with the support of Anthony Collins LLP. Many cooperatives operate mainly as islands within an otherwise competitive and largely profit-driven economy, where their influence is marginal.

The term 'Cooperative Economy' denotes something different from the mainstream economy. It is where people and organisations work together in a way that is guided by some shared values and principles which challenge the traditional competitive and financially driven approach. But it has to exist within the mainstream economy and over time to influence it.

The ultimate aim is the happiness and well-being of all, not the private benefit of some. More specifically, it means people and organisations conducting their affairs differently, with everybody in mind, including future generations. Seeking to register lots of new cooperatives has (crudely) been the approach of recent years; it hasn't worked. The desired outcome needs a different approach.

Agreed: To add Oldham Council's logo to the report.

Agreed: thanks were extended to Coop News for the design of the final report.

7.2 **Social Value Toolkit for Councils (Oxford City Council/CCIN – 2023)**

Simon Grove-White introduced the draft report, which sought to reframe Social Value as a value-led judgement rather than a transactional accounting system.

Part 1 looks at how we got to this present situation and advises on best practice under competitive conditions.

Part 2 looks at a more transformative relational understanding of how value is created and highlights examples of how councils are already applying these Principles to build purpose-led collaborations

Part 3 starts to explore what we can do about this now, to make these approaches mainstream.

Action: Cllr Patel welcomed the report but felt that it was overly long in its present format and that it would need to be made more accessible if members were to access it.

SG-W responded by saying that alongside the publication of the report, there would be a slide deck (20 slides max), which would be the Practitioner Guide, and then the longer report would be available for those interested in the theory.

Cllr Mike Osborne left the meeting.

Rebecca Harvey left the meeting.

Action: Cllr Sam Pallis asked that the Case Studies demonstrated how councils had made social value work from an economic perspective.

Action: To introduce a one-page Executive Summary to the report.

Action: Jonathan Bland commented that the Working Group had discussed the need for an Executive Summary, which would include a set of Actions.

They had also questioned whether we should be launching the report at the Annual Conference when the Cabinet Office is due to announce the National Procurement Policy Statement by the end of February.

The report needed to be 'owned' by a Council that would champion the report and encourage other councils to see what they could do within their own discretion.

Cllr Mili Patel left the meeting, which was no longer quorate. Cllr Alistair Willoughby chaired the meeting.

Agreed: SG-W agreed to make the requested amendments by 27 February, enabling the EOC to consider the full report at their meeting on 28 January before launching it in Greenwich on 13 February at the AGM.

Cheryl Barrott arrived. The meeting was quorate.

8. **Final Policy Prototype Reports**

8.1 **Engaging & empowering the residents of Woolwich Common Estate – (2023 - Royal Borough of Greenwich)**

Dina Patel attended the meeting, explaining that their project had been completed in early 2024 but their final report was with councillors to sign off.

Agreed: submit the report for virtual sign-off before the next meeting.

9. **Policy Lab Presentations**

9.1 **Taking a Cooperative Approach to Tackling Health Inequalities – (2024 - Westminster City Council)**

Richard Cressey updated on progress. They had convened a meeting involving those councils that had declared an interest in this project: Kidsgrove Town Council, Manchester City Council, Swindon Borough Council, Stevenage Borough Council and the London Borough of Brent. They were then organising a Change Maker session on 17th March for those partners.

Agreed: To note the update.

10. **Policy Lab Updates**

10.1 **Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls – (2023 - Trafford Council)**

Agreed: To note the update.

10.2 **Being Cooperative: Towards a model of brave and inclusive governance in local government - (2024 - Rochdale Council)**

Agreed: To note the update.

11. **Policy Prototype Updates**

11.1 **Employability and Skills Project (Brent – 2024)**

Agreed: To note the update.

11.2 **Empowering Communities through Civic Crowdfunding (Cheshire West & Chester – 2024)**

Agreed: To note the update.

11.3 **Fairer Help (Hackney - 2024)**

Agreed: To note the update.

12. **Any Other Business**

12.1 NH gave an update on the programme for the Annual Conference, explained the ticket allocations and encouraged people to book.

13. **Future meetings**

The joint meeting with EOC will take place on 19 March to receive proposals on Policy projects for 2025.

The meeting closed at 3.37pm.

18.03.25 - NH