



# Cooperative Councils'

## Innovation Network

### VALUES & PRINCIPLES BOARD

online meeting

Meeting 1400 - 1600 hours on Wednesday, 17 September 2025

### MINUTES

#### **Present:**

CLlr Mili Patel  
CLlr Dave Griffiths  
CLlr Dave Grocott  
CLlr Sam Pallis  
CLlr Rudi Schmidt  
Claire Ward  
Rebecca Harvey  
Gareth Dowling  
Jonathan Bland

Brent Council (Chair)  
South Swindon Parish Council (Vice Chair)  
Kingsgrove Labour Group  
Hackney Council  
Lewisham Council  
Anthony Collins LLP (Vice Chair)  
Co-operative News (From item 5 until item 16.1)  
Co-operative Party  
Social Business International (until item 16)

#### **In attendance:**

Nicola Huckerby  
Pete Vallance  
Catherine Ford  
Morgan Jones

Chief Executive - CCIN  
Community Innovation Specialist – CCIN (Minutes) (Until item 15.2)  
Westminster City Council (until item 6)  
Cheshire West & Chester Council (from item 16)

#### **Apologies:**

CLlr Lisa Denson  
Liz McIvor  
CLlr Alistair Willoughby  
CLlr David Darkin  
Cheryl Barrott  
Paul Bell

Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Cooperative Heritage Trust  
North Herts District Council (Vice Chair)  
Llanelli Town Council  
Co-operatives UK  
Unison

#### **Absent:**

CLlr Mike Osborne

North Warwickshire Labour Group

1. **Welcome, introductions, apologies** – Chair
- 1.1 By the time the Chair had finished this item, the meeting was quorate with just 9 of 17 members present.
- 1.2 CLlr Mili Patel noted three vacancies on the Values & Principles Board.  
CLlr Dave Griffiths confirmed that he intended to stand down at the end of this meeting, allowing CCIN to broker in a new Board Member at this point rather than waiting until May 2026. The number of vacancies on the Values & Principles Board will increase to four, which will be addressed in the upcoming Elections to fill the three existing vacancies.

Agreed: To run an election to fill the four vacancies.

Action: NH

2. **Minutes of the last meeting – 26 June 2025** – These were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 NH reported that the sessions for those leading on tasks in each of the Thematic groups had still to be arranged.

Action: PV to arrange these sessions.

3.2 VAWG report – amendments and Swindon session

The Chair recognised the successful online launch of this project on 11 September 2025.

NH confirmed that the only outstanding previous Action is to include the findings of the Swindon Session in the Final Report and to submit the final video of the workshop sessions for uploading to the website

Noted: The Project Lead has been asked to facilitate supplying the Report's Case Studies in CCIN Case Study format for inclusion on to the Case Study database.

Action: PV to follow-up with Swindon.

4. **Being Cooperative: Towards a model of brave and inclusive governance in local government (Cooperative Governance) Policy Lab** – (Rochdale 2023/24)

No report was received, and no one attended the meeting.

It was noted that Rochdale Council had submitted no update report on this project since January. The Board agreed to raise this issue with Rochdale Council before deciding whether to withdraw the offer of funding.

Action: NH.

5. **Taking a Co-operative approach to tackling health inequalities Policy Lab** – (Westminster 2023/24)

5.1 Because Westminster had failed to submit an update to the June meeting, they had been asked to present at this meeting.

Catherine Ford provided a verbal update at the meeting. CF explained that staffing levels had affected the progress of the Project. A dedicated officer had now been appointed to support this Project, and she was confident she could meet the delivery deadline of Spring 2026. Cllr Dave Griffiths confirmed that he had had limited engagement with the Project so far in his role as project sponsor.

Action: The update was noted.

6. **Funded Project Tracker Update**

NH gave an overview of the Tracker. Claire Ward commended NH for the current Tracker Update; it was good to see completion for historic Projects. Cllr Sam Pallis questioned whether there were any common themes from the Projects that were withdrawn. NH took the meeting through each project withdrawal; it was felt that each had its own reason and, in some cases, CCIN had pulled support for some projects due to a lack of progress on the project.

6.1 **Project Sponsor** confirmed for:

- Being Co-operative: Towards a model of brave and inclusive governance in local government - Claire Ward / Gareth Dowling both volunteered to take on this role. (TBC subject to further Update provided by Rochdale as to the future of this Project.)

- Sustaining Local Leadership and Place-Based Innovation\*: There was no volunteer from this meeting. In the absence of a sponsor for this project, Cllr Patel agreed that she would check in with Place team at Brent as part of future engagement.

There have been various levels of engagement between existing Sponsors and Projects. Claire Ward highlighted positive engagement in her role as Sponsor to Treating Care Experience as a protected characteristic.

6.1.1 Action: PV to broker in relationship between Sponsor and Project Lead via email.

\* NB subsequent to the Values & Principles Board Meeting, Lisa Denson has offered to be sponsor to 'Sustaining Local Leadership and Place-Based Innovation' Project Lab.

7. **Empowering Communities through Civic Crowdfunding (CWAC 2023-24)**  
A webpage had now been created for this Policy Prototype: [www.councils.coop/crowdfunding](http://www.councils.coop/crowdfunding) to showcase the toolkit. Members felt that the format on the webpage was a good example for others to use as low-cost impactful best practice. PV informed the Board that Morgan Jones would be in attendance from 3.30pm.  
**Action:** CWAC to approve the final version of the web page.
8. **Cooperative Approaches to Post-16 Transition (Manchester City Council 2024 /25) – Policy Lab.**  
**Agreed:** to note the update report.  
**Action:** Send an Agreement to Manchester City Council, allowing them to invoice for 50% of the project funding.  
**Agreed:** To ask the Sponsor to update for the December meeting.
9. **Treating Care Experience as a protected characteristic (Swindon Borough Council 2024/25) – Policy Lab**  
Claire Ward highlighted a strong relationship between the Project Lead and herself as Project Sponsor.  
**Agreed:** to note the update report. CW gave a verbal update on progress. Several in-person sessions were being arranged for CCIN members to attend.  
**Action:** Send an Agreement to Swindon Borough Council, allowing them to invoice for 50% of the project funding.  
**Agreed:** To ask the Sponsor to update for the December meeting.
10. **Faith, Young People & Resilience: Understanding the Past, Strengthening Cohesion, and Preparing for the Future (GMCA 2024/5)**  
**Agreed:** to note the update report.  
**Action:** Send an Agreement to Greater Manchester Combined Authority, allowing them to invoice for 50% of the project funding.  
**Agreed:** To ask the Sponsor to update for the December meeting.
11. **Sustaining Local Leadership and Place-Based Innovation (Stevenage Borough Council/Brent Council (2024/5)**  
**Agreed:** to note the update report.  
**Action:** Send an Agreement to Stevenage Borough Council allowing them to invoice for 50% of the project funding.  
**Agreed:** To ask the Sponsor to update for the December meeting.
12. **Fairer Help (Hackney – 2023-4)**  
**Agreed:** to note the update report.
13. **Greenwich Co-operative Care Compact and Workers Network (Greenwich – 2024-25) - Prototype**  
**Agreed:** to note the update report.
14. **Policy Lab and Prototype Review**  
PV gave an update on the outstanding items in the Review which had not been
- 14.1 **Funding Agreement for each Policy Project (item 3.6) - NH** thanked colleagues at Anthony Collins who had helped guide the development of a draft funding agreement. The Accountable Body had now approved this.  
**Agreed:** to send it to councils leading Policy Lab projects asking them to sign and return.  
**Action:** NH
- 14.2 **More clearly set out the role of CCIN Values & Principles in the process (item 3.3) - Rebecca Harvey** confirmed that there is further work to be done on this short-term action.  
**Action:** RH to complete this Action by the end of October 2025.
- 14.3 **Develop a simple ‘post-project review’ (item 4.1) - PV** informed the Board that MJ has committed to taking the ‘post-project review’ form to the next Officer Network meeting for feedback.

Agreed: Agenda item for the next Officer Network meeting and to report back to December V&P Board  
Action: PV

- 14.4 **Model Communications Plan (item 14.4)** PV explained that whilst MJ was assigned to this Action, there is the potential for the V&P Board to choose a good example of a Communications Plan from the last round of Applications.

Agreed: PV to circulate Communications Plans from the previous Policy Lab round and Members to give feedback as to which one they would like to include as a "Model Communications Plan".

Action: PV/All

- 14.5 **Case Studies from Councils on any work influenced by a public project (item 5.3)** – NH reiterated the importance of councils submitting case studies based on work they were doing have learnt lessons from other case studies or policy labs.

- 14.6 **Ask the bidders in their application to describe the legacy their work will create (LM)** – item 5.4

- 14.7 **Volunteers required to lead on Medium Term actions in preparation for the 2025/26 Round of Project funding**

- 14.8 **Ask the bidders in their application to describe the Legacy their work will create (item 5.4)**

PV reported that following a conversation with Liz McIvor that the bidding process has been updated to include the legacy of a project. Members felt that Legacy was important to ensure that work which highlighted Members positive stories which could be shared with Ministers and decision makers.

Agreed: that a Task & Finish Group would be an appropriate way of moving the medium-term actions forward combined this with finalising plans for the 2025/26 Funding round. PV explained that he hoped to gather representation from EOC, V&P and Officer Network to support this. RH and Cllr Sam Pallis volunteered to support this Task & Finish group.

Action: PV to send out availability poll for proposed meeting W/C 13 October 2025.

## 15. Member Engagement updates

- 15.1 **Associate Member Engagement** – Cllr Dave Griffiths reported that he had reached out to Associate Members through the WhatsApp Group and that there was no update.

- 15.2 **Affiliate Member Engagement** – Claire Ward reported back that there was limited response from Affiliate members to the WhatsApp message she sent out, although there was a request for details of the next CCIN conference.

PW left the meeting.

NH outlined current discussions regarding this year's Annual Conference, although she would not be organising this. The proposal was to offer six different sessions, each lasting 1 to 1.5 hours over two weeks, to fulfil the strategic objective of 'deeper not wider' to encourage a broader participation of members across various service areas. Councils that had led on particular policy labs would be asked to organise a panel of speakers for an online session. The CCIN would be responsible for the technical arrangements and promotion.

Cllr Sam Pallis proposed a hybrid option and suggested using the Social Value Toolkit to host a roundtable for procurement officers. NH stated that the costs of hybrids (AV and venue) were too high given the current budget situation and the legal and structural review. EOC had already confirmed an online format. NH agreed that the Social Value Toolkit should be showcased.

Cllr Rudi Schmidt highlighted the Soil Association's Sustainable Food for Life report on school food procurement, developed in partnership with Leicester City Council, and outlined his plans to promote it. Cllr Mili Patel shared insights on contracts and procurement.

## 16. Any Urgent Business:

- 16.1 NH asked that the item on Attendance be considered. It was noted that at this point the meeting was inquorate.

A report on Member attendance at Values & Principles Board Meetings over the past year had been circulated. It highlighted the importance of attending and noted that the CCIN Constitution addresses low attendance. The report put forward several recommendations. Attendance at meetings is a key

part of Good Governance, and if attendance levels drop to the point where meetings are inquorate, this should be recorded on the Risk Register. It was noted that if Board meetings continue to be inquorate, it is uncertain whether business can be conducted effectively within the existing structure.

Agreed: To amend Section 11.2 (G) of the Constitution to state: "If a Member of V&P misses more than two meetings without a valid reason (as approved by V&P), that Member will cease to be a Representative on the V&P Board, and a replacement Representative will be sought from the eligible Full Member Councils, Affiliate Membership, or Associate Membership (as appropriate) by way of election."

Agreed: To implement the above immediately, enabling these changes to be incorporated into the review of the legal structure. Formal approval for these amendments will be sought from members at the next AGM.

Agreed: The chair will write to all V&P members to remind them of the purpose/role of EOC and V&P (see Annexe 2 of the Constitution) and their expected attendance.

Action: NH to update the Attendance grid with this meeting's attendance details.

Action: Chair to contact any Board member who has missed more than two meetings to explain the policy.

Action: PW to ask Jonathan Downs to add Governance Attendance to the Risk Register.

16.2 Thanks were extended to Cllr Dave Griffiths for his contributions during 2025 as a representative of the V&P Board. Cllr Mili Patel wished him well for the future.

16.3 Cllr Patel thanked NH for everything she was doing and hoped to see her at future meetings.

**17. Next meeting**  
December 2025 (TBC)

23.09.25 – PV/NH