



# Policy Lab

# Applications Advice

# Clinic and Launch

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Deputy Leader – Brent Council

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**People-centred councils  
driving social innovation  
putting people first**

Councils who are  
committed to finding better  
ways of working with local  
people

- Action focused
- Membership-based
- Open to all UK councils
- Part of the local govt family

Probably the  
fastest-growing  
cross party  
network in Local  
Government....

43



27



47



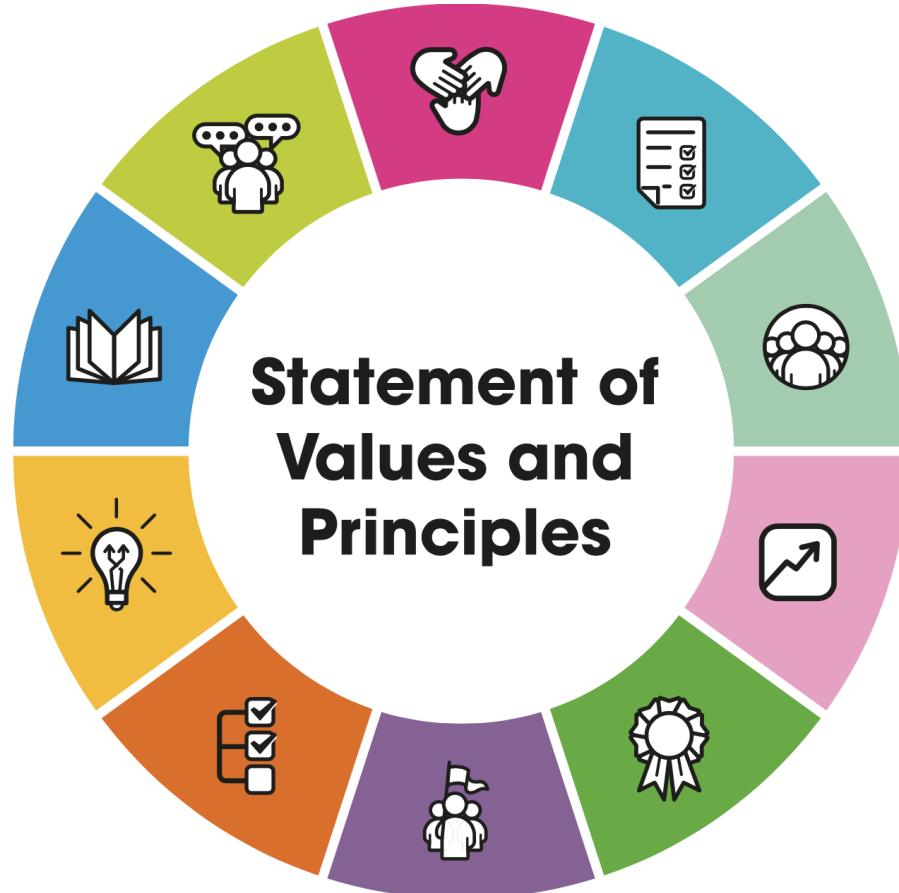
# Being a Cooperative Council

## Community Wealth Building

- Develop an Inclusive Economy Charter
- Promote progressive procurement
- Support the creation of a regional mutual / community bank by investing.
- Work with local anchor institutions to buy and recruit local
- Regulate rent and rates for local businesses in council-owned property
- Champion Local Employment schemes

## Cooperative Placemaking

- Develop a cooperative development strategy
- Establish a cooperative development network
- Commit to community engagement in local decision making including participatory budgeting
- Invest in local community production, particularly community energy
- Promote the circular economy
- Support local enterprises to convert in coops / worker coops
- Have an Asset Transfer policy to manager land and assets which support Community Land Trusts



# Case Studies

Over 600 Case Studies have been shared by our Members for your use

Search

Categories

Principles

Regions

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Right to the Streets

December 2025

Disrupting Sexual  
Exploitation

Protecting Victims  
through Ex Parte

## Arts & Culture for Social Cohesion



Community Economic Development  
Plans as a Tool for Fostering  
Co-operative Working Between  
Councils and the Community



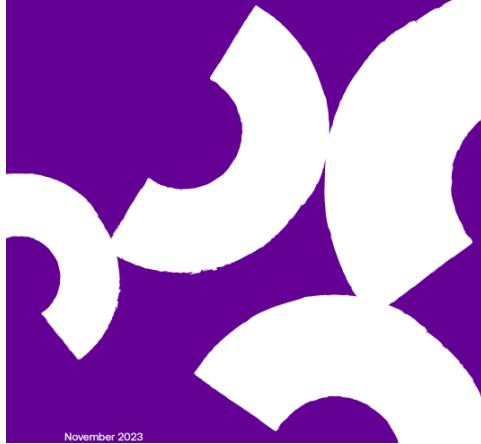
March 2022

## Growing an Inclusive Cooperative Economy



# THIS IS NOT A MANUAL ON COPRODUCTION

This is the product of a Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) policy lab on engaging communities in local democracy which took place in 2022-23



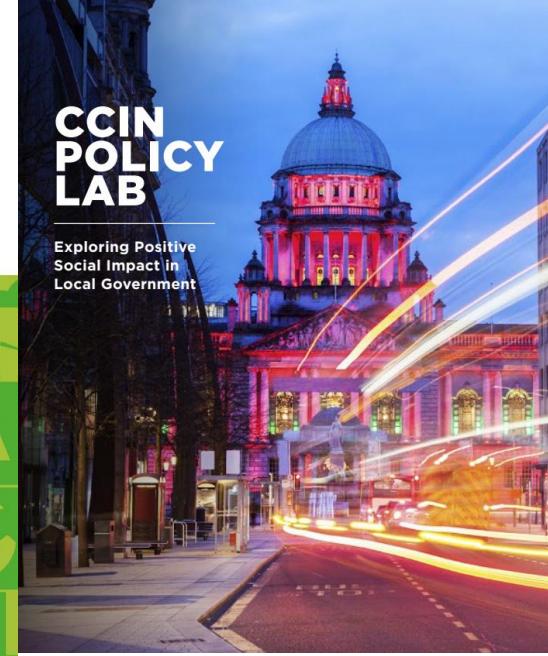
November 2023

## Co-operative Approaches to Reaching Net Zero



# CCIN POLICY LAB

Exploring Positive  
Social Impact in  
Local Government



## Beyond Asset Transfer



## Understanding the Digital Divide



## THE CO-OPERATIVE DIFFERENCE IN CARE



# Policy Labs and prototypes

- **Policy Lab** funding supports research, collaboration and implementation of cooperative initiatives that involve multiple Network members (recommended to be at least three).  
**They can last up to two years, and receive up to £20,000**
- **Policy Prototypes** are smaller projects for members who want to deliver a project in their locality on behalf of the Network. This funding is available to councils of all sizes, Opposition Groups and Minority Administrations.  
**Members will have up to twelve months to deliver a Policy Prototype. Applications will be considered for funding of up to £2,000.**



# Experiences

- Very valuable - huge benefit
- Very different experiences with different labs – both in terms of engaging with the process and the final reports
- Benefitted far more from being part of a lab, rather than reading a final report
- Useful way of getting to know some people within the network and becoming a more active network member
- Useful way to drive awareness and understanding of the Network within my council
- Involvement in a policy lab was positive but it does take capacity – it needs to help with the day job
- Example of an officer leaving a council but working freelance to lead a policy lab – has allowed a bolder approach without activities being ‘signed off’ by a council

*All responses were about Policy Labs people had been involved in delivering – there were no comments received about taking the learning from published reports*

# Key challenges

- Capacity - to lead and to contribute
- Loss of specific officers, their enthusiasm and expertise
- Impact of pre-election periods and other events on timelines
- Mismatch in ambition and delivery – initial impetus doesn't last
- Corralling effective contributions from across the Network
- Tracking or evidencing change as a result of a Policy Lab – Legacy -

# Hints and tips

- Be an active part of the network – get to know people
- Start early so that people can shape the policy lab with you
- Look to create broad involvement and include affiliate members
- Focus on a current problem that you need to deal with as part of the day job
- Think about the cooperative difference
- Think about communications and legacy from the start
- Think about what the budget can enable you to do from the start

# Application Timeline

- **10th-12th February 2026** – Launch at Annual Conference.
- **Midnight 16th March 2026** – Closing date for submissions of all Bids.
- **Week beginning 23rd March 2026** – The Executive Oversight Committee and Values & Principles Board consider all Bids. Bidders are to present their applications at this meeting.
- **30th March – 10th April 2026** – Bidders are asked to respond to any further questions from the Governance.
- **w/b 13th April 2026** – sign-off of successful bids by EOC.
- **w/b 20th April 2026** – Successful applicants will be notified, guidance issued, and contract letters dispatched.
- **w/b 15th June 2026** – Contracts awarded/work starts

# Guidance

- Written reports should be produced to ‘publication standard’ and include Joint or separate Forewords from the Leader/Cabinet Member of the Lead Council and the Chair of CCIN.
- Videos to be accompanied by an Executive Summary (which can sit alongside other CCIN reports) spotlighting the highlighted values and principles and learning points.
- A short text about the project for the CCIN newsletter with a photo.
- Speech for a conference launch of the policy lab.
- Content for a conference workshop unpacking the outcomes of the project.

# What next

- Talk to colleagues on the network
- Upload any ideas to the CCIN website
- See what ideas others have uploaded
- Declare an interest, and talk to those others who have as well
- [Application Process - Cooperative Councils Innovation Network](#)

**Declare an interest  
in a draft Policy  
Lab theme**

**Upload your  
details to the  
Spreadsheet**



# Over to Us.....

- Questions and conversation