



Policy Lab

Applications Advice Clinic and Launch

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Deputy Leader – Brent Council

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Cheshire West & Chester Council



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



Member
Cooperative Councils'
Innovation Network

27



Associate Member
Cooperative Councils'
Innovation Network

47



Affiliate Member
Cooperative Councils'
Innovation Network

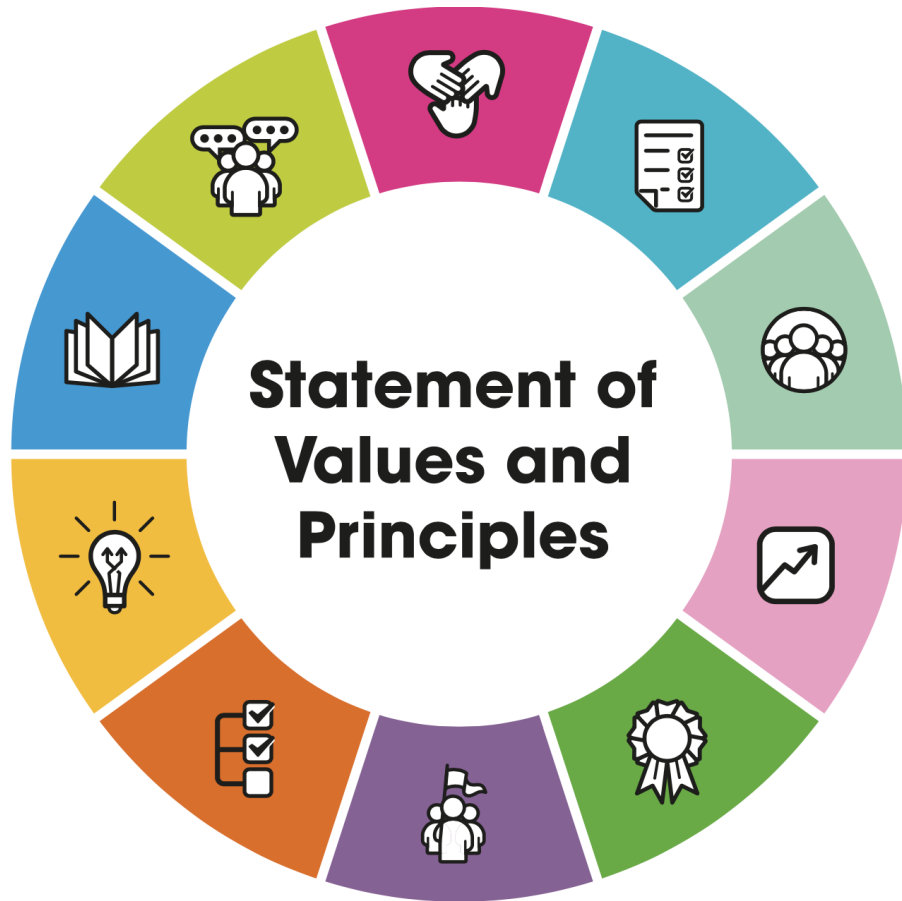
Being a Cooperative Council

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



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



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

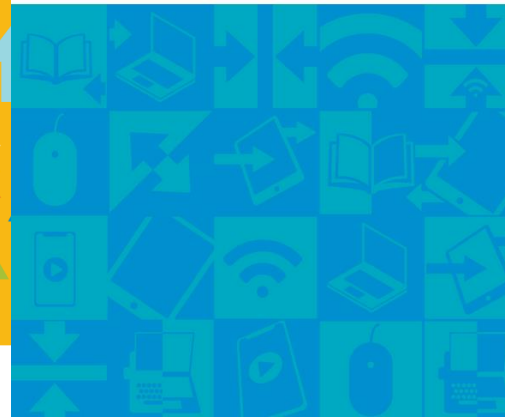


March 2022

Growing an Inclusive Cooperative Economy



Understanding the Digital Divide



THE CO-OPERATIVE DIFFERENCE IN CARE

Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network

February 2022



Beyond Asset Transfer



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.

Tackling Barriers to Building a Cooperative Economy



February 2025

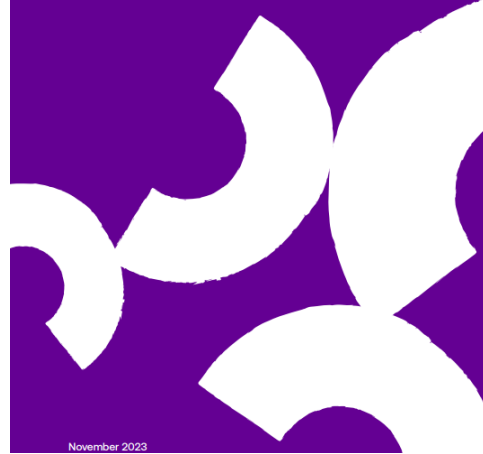


Arts & Culture for Social Cohesion



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November 2023



Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network

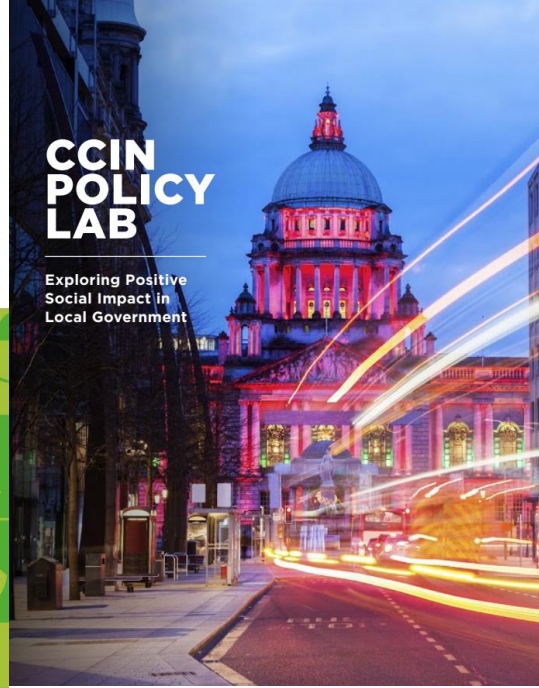
February 2022

Co-operative Approaches to Reaching Net Zero



CCIN POLICY LAB

Exploring Positive Social Impact in Local Government



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



March 2022



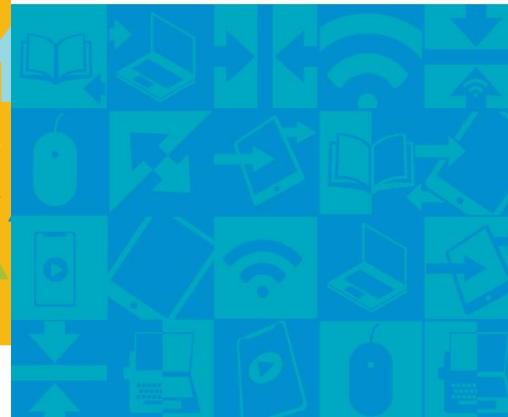
Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network November 2022

Growing an Inclusive Cooperative Economy



Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network February 2022

Understanding the Digital Divide



THE CO-OPERATIVE DIFFERENCE IN CARE

Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network

February 2022



Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network March 2021

Beyond Asset Transfer



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
- Corraling 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