



Cooperative Councils'

Innovation Network

VALUES & PRINCIPLES BOARD

Online meeting

10.00am – 12.00pm on Thursday 26 February 2026

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Mili Patel	Brent Council (Chair, Values & Principles Board)
Claire Ward	Anthony Collins LLP (Vice Chair)
Cllr Alistair Willoughby	North Herts District Council (Vice Chair) (to item 7)
Cllr Dave Grocott	Kidsgrove Labour Group (to item 7)
Gareth Dowling	Co-operative Party
Liz McIvor	Cooperative Heritage Trust
Paul Bell	Unison
David Randall	Crystalisr

In attendance:

Pete Vallance	CCIN Membership Engagement & Strategy – Lead
Joanne Blackwood	Hackney Council (for item 6)
Adrian Slatcher	Manchester City Council (for item 7)

Apologies:

Cllr David Darkin	Llanelli Town Council - (Council activities)
Gareth Nash	CMS.COOP (Personal commitment)
Cllr Lisa Denson	Cheshire West & Cheshire Council (Council activities)
Cllr Sam Pallis	Hackney Council (Council activities)
Cllr Rudi Schmidt	Lewisham Council (Council activities)
Jonathan Bland	Social Business International (Work commitment)
Anthony Turner	Manchester City Council

Absent:

Cllr Bradley Arnold	Halewood Town Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mike Osborne	North Warwickshire Labour Group
Sam Webster	Co-operatives UK
Rebecca Harvey	Co-operative News

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies – Chair

1.1 **Apologies** - The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies as recorded above.

1.2 **Attendance** - Pete Vallance confirmed he would follow up with absent members, and he also confirmed that he has received notification that Llanelli Town Council is now under independent control, and Cllr Darkin has told him that this could impact on several matters including Board representation and Membership of CCIN.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting – 10 December 2025** - Approved as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising**
 - 3.1 **Violence Against Women and Girls – (Trafford 2023/24)** –Project complete: Case studies supplied, video on CCIN website and Report has been launched.
Agreed: Final Payment for Trafford to be recommended as approved.
 - 3.2 **Being Cooperative: Towards a model of brave and inclusive governance in local government (Cooperative Governance) Policy Lab** – (Rochdale 2023/24) – PV has attempted contact but received no response prior to this meeting, next step will be to reach out to CCIN Officer Lead for an update.
Chair noted that local elections (May 2026) may disrupt several projects. Officer would be expected to continue work; engagement with political leads must happen before Purdah period starts end of March 2026.
Action: PV to escalate to CCIN Lead Officer – Rochdale for a status update.
 - 3.3 **More clearly set out the role of CCIN Values in Process** – Noted. The chair requested that the Sponsor prompt questions in the Project Sponsor role description be re-circulated.
Action: PV to circulate to V&P Board members by email.
 - 3.4 **UK Government Call for Evidence – Coop & Mutual Support** – Submission from Cllr Robbins submission. Liz McIvor raised a concern about a Rochdale example in the submission, which references the Co-operative Enterprise Hub for Young People with Co-operative College, there is a risk that this partnership will no longer be operational. PV explained that this response gave previous and recent examples, and it would be likely that researchers going through submissions would realise the activity status of examples as part of any accuracy checking.

The Co-operative College is undergoing significant restructure and will become effectively unstaffed from summer 2026, moving to have closer ties to the Co-operative Foundation. Members were informed that the College had reached out to CCIN giving notice that the CCIN Training Modules would no longer be able to be hosted in the same place.
Agreed: CCIN Colleagues to reach out to Co-operative College (CCIN Affiliate Member) for an update on Cooperative College future Strategy.
4. **Funded Project Tracker Update** – Noted.
5. **Policy Projects 2025/26**
 - 5.1 **Policy Project Advice Clinic & Launch** – Chair reported back on the positive session hosted with Morgan Jones during CCIN26 Conference. YouTube link <https://youtu.be/abjBu6z9hyM>
 - 5.2 **2026 Timeline**
Policy Project Timeline was shared and appropriate dates highlighted.
Members identified themes which they thought had strong potential:
 - Local Government Reorganisation – A balanced project which could embrace members how have been through the process and supporting those impacted.
 - Devolution & Mayoral Authorities – The progression of powers (economic development – health & social care – transport).
 - Role of Parish Councils – A role that could grow in importance with specific focus on asset transfer and delivery of local services.
 - Cooperative Housing Solutions – Especially relating to positive support from Housing Associations to smaller housing co-ops.
 - Local CCIN Networks – A low-resources, high-flexibility approach. Geographically co-located members working on similar themes could coalesce with the possibility of

linking to existing sub-regional partnerships and anchor networks, including the NHS.

There was a strong consensus of the need to ensure quality over quantity allowing for proper scrutiny and deeper engagement.

6. **Fairer Help (Hackney – 2023-4) Policy Prototype – Final Report Sign off -**

Final Report was circulated with the Meeting's papers. Joanne Blackwood, Strategic Delivery Manager and Claire Witney, Strategic Lead presented the Fairer Help prototype, which focusses on systems thinking and relational working to improve outcomes for residents living in Hackney.

Key Points

- The project operates on a "working with the willing" principle. Change has been driven by curious individuals in positions of power, including a Head of Revenues who began attending frontline tools training.
- Practical examples include improved approaches to council tax collection for families in temporary accommodation and cross-sector working between the council and the voluntary and community sector.
- A new internal Communities Group has been established, bringing together senior leaders and frontline practitioners to create space for systems thinking and experimentation.

Discussion

Members were extremely positive in the comments they gave back to Hackney colleagues; and there was a consensus that the principles identified by the Report had the opportunity to be replicated in other Authorities. Chair asked how the approach could become a toolkit for other councils working to reduce siloed systems. Claire Witney acknowledged this challenge: the approach is about a way of thinking rather than a prescriptive process, making it difficult to replicate without experiencing it. The project has strong potential for replication and asked that case study material be captured in the right format for wider CCIN use.

Agreed: Values & Principles to refer the Fairer Help Report to EOC with recommendation for Sign Off.

Action: Pete Vallance to follow up with Hackney colleagues to explore opportunity for a specific Case Study as part of the 2026 Pack.

7. **Cooperative Approaches to Post-16 Transition (Manchester City Council 2024/5) Policy Lab.**

Members noted the Q1 26 Project Update circulated with the Meeting papers.

Chair welcomed Adrian Slatcher to the meeting to give an update on behalf of Anthony Turner – Project Lead. This project remains on track, the initial phase has focused on in-person study visits to partner councils, allowing staff to step away from day-to-day operations and gain extended overviews of key Post-16 transition activities in each local authority.

The first study visit took place in Greater Manchester in November 2025, hosted over two days in Manchester and Oldham College, with presentations from GMCA, Manchester, Tameside and Oldham councils. These visits are proving valuable in understanding not only shared challenges but also the different organisational models—for example, Post-16 transition sitting within Children's Services in Manchester versus Work & Skills or Inclusive Economy teams in other councils.

The next study visit is scheduled for Plymouth over two days, with sessions planned for city centre delivery. Topics will include targeted intervention for young people with SEND/EHCP, relationship development with local FE providers, risk of NEET indicator processes, and in-year provision design. The final two study visits to Birmingham and Liverpool are scheduled post-Easter before the end of summer term. A partner organisation has been approached to support toolkit/framework development, with the intention to develop a shared view across all LA visits before proceeding. Budget remains on track with no amendments required, all partners remain engaged and contributing as intended, and a catch-up meeting has been held with Project Sponsor Paul Bell.

Chair thanked Adrian for his update and welcomed the opportunity for Project Team members to engage face to face in various settings. Paul Bell – Project Sponsor has been having positive conversations with the Project Team around the role Data plays to help inform activities, and he is looking forward to an easily replicable framework as one of the Outputs.
Action: Project Presentation to be circulated with the Minutes of this meeting.

8. **Taking a Cooperative approach to tackling health inequalities (Westminster City Council 2023/24)**

Noted: Q1 26 Project Update.

Chair gave a verbal update, positive conversations with the Project Officer is giving confidence that the project is now heading in the right direction. Various webinars and activities are being undertaken, with visible marketing for these events. The Project Officer is working with Oldham to establish the Project Lead as a supplier to be able to receive the first tranche of funding.

9. **Treating Care Experience as a protected characteristic (Swindon Borough Council 2024/25) Policy Lab**

Noted: Q1 26 Project Update

Claire Ward, Project Sponsor highlighted Call for Evidence sessions being run in Manchester and Birmingham, these events are engaging with Children & Young People, Councillors and Officers and have one-off Speakers. They follow a similar structure to the CCIN Conference Session.

(<https://youtu.be/ljultRmxCYE>).

A low take-up from Call for Evidence Questionnaire completions was highlighted, there is a need to get good engagement as this information will help inform what Councils are doing post-Motion approval

Action: PV to recirculate the Questionnaire to CCIN Officer Leads and Leaders of Full Member Councils encouraging each Local Authority to supply evidence to this project. Details will also be posted on the EOC & V&P WhatsApp Groups.

10. **Faith, Young People & Resilience: Understanding the Past, Strengthening Cohesion, and Preparing for the Future Policy Lab (GMCA 2024/5) - Cllr Patel & Cllr Bell**

Noted: Q1 26 Project Update.

Project Sponsors met the Project before Christmas 2025 and had a good update session, with additional funding secured by GMCA to undertake work in neighbouring areas this project will become a larger piece of work than first planned.

11. **Sustaining Local Leadership and Place-Based Innovation (Stevenage Borough Council/Brent Council (2024/5) Policy Lab**

Noted: Q1 26 Project Update. Project Sponsor was not in attendance, no further update supplied.

12. **Greenwich Co-operative Care Compact and Workers Network (Greenwich – 2024-25) –**

Noted: Q1 26 Project Update.

This project still has positive momentum; Project Sponsor is in regular dialogue with the Project and will be attending an event in Greenwich later in March 2026.

13. **Member Engagement updates**

13.1. **Associate Member Engagement**

It was noted that the Values & Principles Board is one associate member short. An expression of interest has been received from Joe Joseph, South West Cooperative Party Branch Chair.

Action: PV to open Elections Process formally and run an election if more than one candidate comes forward.

Agreed: Board approval to be undertaken by email.

13.2. **Affiliate Member Engagement**

Claire Ward reported she had sent a message to members that morning and received positive feedback, but nothing specific to raise.

- 13.3 **CCIN Annual General Meeting 2026** - Three decisions ratified at the recent CCIN AGM relevant to members were highlighted. Chair confirmed these were noted and properly approved
- Constitutional amendments, including Attendance Rule Change.
 - Multi-Year Membership Discount for Full Members.
 - Revised Affiliate and Associate Fee Banding

14. Call for CCIN Member Case Studies – Deadline: Friday 13 March 2026

Members were encouraged to submit for inclusion in the 2026 Case Study Pack.

Action: Case Studies to be submitted by members.

15. Any Urgent Business

None.

Next meeting

23rd March 2026 1.30pm – Joint EOC & Values & Principles Board

- Members asked that packs are sent out and individual scoring process undertaken prior to the meeting. Results and outcomes would then be discussed at the Joint-meeting.

Action: Scoring process for Policy Projects to be run as per previous year.

23rd June 2026 10.00am – Values & Principles Board Meeting.

Action: Ensure Calendar placeholder and online joining link supplied for both.

Meeting End: 11.42

PJV