



EDUCATION & TRAINING



The Royal Borough of Greenwich

Embedding Co-operation in Practice: The Royal Greenwich Co-operative Champions Initiative

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Co-operative Champions initiative originated from a recommendation in the Co-operative Commission Report: *Together for Greenwich*. This recommendation recognised the need for the council to embed a co-operative mindset across the entire authority, one in which services are co-designed with residents, communities, and partners rather than simply delivered to them.

To ensure this shift is sustainable, the report recommended setting up a network of officers with specialised knowledge of co-operative business models. These officers would serve as facilitators, assisting services in identifying where co-operative approaches could add value, boost community involvement, and improve outcomes for residents.

Building on this recommendation, a Co-operative Champions scheme has been introduced to develop internal expertise and foster a culture of shared ownership and collaborative problem-solving. Champions will be encouraged to support teams in identifying opportunities for co-operative solutions—whether through partnerships, community-led models, or enhanced resident participation. Their role is both practical and cultural: they help translate co-operative principles into everyday working practices.

The scheme was officially launched in November 2025, introduced through a series of taster sessions open to all officers across the organisation. These interactive sessions included co-operative quizzes and a summary of Royal Greenwich's extensive co-operative history, which generated strong engagement from a wide range of directorates, demonstrating enthusiasm for exploring new forms of collaboration and organisational change.

To build momentum, the council's Economic Development Team hosted a follow-up session with the Greenwich and Bexley Credit Union in January 2026. This session offered officers a real-world example of a successful local co-operative organisation. It allowed prospective Champions to deepen their understanding of how co-operative values translate into financial inclusion, community wealth building, and member-led governance. The session also helped spark practical ideas for how similar models could support other service areas.

Alongside staff development activity, as part of the communications and awareness, Champions can utilise a distinctive email banner to promote the scheme across the organisation. Added to Champions' signatures, it serves as a visual cue that invites curiosity, prompts discussion, and gently encourages more officers to join the network.



Royal Borough of Greenwich Co-op Champion email banner

The Co-operative Champions initiative is now laying the groundwork for a more collaborative, people-centred council. By equipping officers with the knowledge and confidence to identify and pursue co-operative solutions, Greenwich is encouraging a culture where services are developed in partnership with communities, resulting in stronger, more resilient outcomes for the borough.

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