



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### CCIN innovation funding – 2018/9 Policy Labs

Would you like to collaborate with other CCIN Members (Councils, Associates and Affiliates) to find co-operative solutions to the challenges facing local government? Is there a co-operative idea that you would like to run in your local area? If yes, we want to hear from you!

As a CCIN member you can apply for up to £10,000 to deliver a Policy Lab. This could be anything from co-operative approaches to tackling food poverty to initiatives that put communities back at the heart of local decision making. We are open to all ideas, the more innovative the better!

So what do we need from you? If you have an idea, please complete the expression of interest form below, telling us about your idea for a Policy Lab. Don't be shy: we want to hear ideas from ALL our members.

Please return your completed EOI to [comms@councils.coop](mailto:comms@councils.coop)

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#### Expression of Interest – CCIN Funding

**CCIN Member Authority:** Rochdale Council

**Name of CCIN Lead Member:** Co-operative College.

**Name and Job Title:** Simon Parkinson, Chief Executive at the Co-operative College, supported by Caroline Wolfenden, Head of Corporate, Policy and Performance at Rochdale Council

#### 1. What is your idea?

Provide details of what your proposed project is, the story of how you identified the need or opportunity for the proposal and how the money will be spent.

This Policy Lab is a collaboration between CCIN affiliate member Co-operative College and CCIN member Rochdale Borough Council and Salford City Council examine what “Co-operative Community Adult Education” can bring to strengthen community co-operation, engagement and resilience in Co-operative Council Innovation Network local authorities, in the context in which responsibility for community adult education has been devolved from central government and of the centenary of the Adult Education report of 1919. The research will be carried out from the new “Co-operative Enterprise Hub” in Rochdale and in the wider context of the Co-operative Heritage Action Zone project in Rochdale.

November 2019 will mark an important educational Centenary: the publication of the Ministry of Reconstruction’s Final Report on *Adult Education*. The Report set the groundwork for liberal adult education in Britain for the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and ushered in the legal requirement for Local Authorities to provide adult education ‘for the whole person and the democratic society’. Co-operative adult education figured hugely in the rationale for the investigation as RH Tawney, its main author, travelled fortnightly to Rochdale over 3 years to run his evening classes for weavers and co-operators at Toad Lane. Whilst what might be termed non-vocational adult education has largely disappeared in recent years the centenary of the Report is, we believe, a vital opportunity to reflect on the needs and possibilities for adult education in challenging times. Two important contexts are the changing nature of work including automation and precarity and the significant social, economic and political unknowns in the post-Brexit era.

Non-technical adult education contributes massively to both civil society and employability in terms of the diverse skills it develops. A Centenary Commission on Adult Education will be launched in early 2019 to explore this perspective and as so many of the origins of adult education can be found in Rochdale, the North West and in the work of the Pioneers, we would like to develop a Policy Lab to test some of the thinking about what co-operative adult education skills are needed not only for employability (though this is vital) and well-being but also for personal, professional and civic development for the individual, the family, the community and the Borough. We believe that along with the technical skills necessary to running a business or co-operative or to succeeding in work and employment, come the skills and behaviours associated with decision making, curiosity, agility, confidence, placemaking, self-responsibility, and civic and community engagement.

The Co-operative College is a partner of the Heritage Action Zone project co-financed by Historic England and led by Rochdale Borough Council. The vision for the Rochdale Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is to transform a failing, retail dominated street into a vibrant area of mixed-use development that acknowledges and celebrates heritage. The Rochdale HAZ is centred on Drake Street - the historic route from the railway station down to the Town Hall with a strong connection to the Co-operative Movement and Rochdale’s co-operative heritage.

The HAZ engagement programme aims to bring together local businesses and residents along with the wider community, in order to create a broader awareness of local heritage and provide support, opportunities and practical advice through various projects. As part of this programme, the Co-operative College and Rochdale Borough Council are developing the Co-operative Enterprise Hub on Drake Street. A Co-operative Enterprise Hub would bring the co-operative identity right to the heart of Rochdale. It would be a tribute to Rochdale’s co-operative past and a beacon of process to Rochdale’s co-operative future. In the first instance we have achieved funding for a youth project “Together Enterprise”, but there is also the ambition that the Hub will be used for adult educational services. This Policy Lab will use this space to examine community need and trial innovative “co-operative learning” in adult education.

The need for this opportunity has been identified from a lack of clear policy on how co-operative learning can impact adult education and the increased control local authorities have on adult education budgets in

their communities. Since adult education budgets have been devolved there have been on a number of recent calls to tender by CCIN members for adult education providers.

For example, Knowsley Council's recent call for its adult education budget and Plymouth City Councils call for "community learning" and "adult skills budget". However, there is no existing provision for "co-operative community education" and this project will examine how co-operative education can benefit adult education policy.

Funding will be used in two ways, to develop policy and test co-operative adult education models, focused on democratic engagement and active citizenship that is transferrable and can be applied wider than Rochdale.

Firstly, the Co-operative College will conduct "action research" with the local Rochdale community as to the existing adult education provision and how co-operative learning can improve community development, while also fulfilling established community need such as English as a foreign language, Maths, English, ICT and family learning.

Secondly, new co-operative learning will be co-produced between the Co-operative College, Rochdale Council and other member councils and the local community in Rochdale. In the first instance these "workshops" will be tested in Rochdale Townships, but then transferred to other CCCIN partner council Townships, testing transferability.

## **2. Who will you work with?**

A key requirement of Policy Lab Funding is that you work in partnership with other CCIN members. We recommend engaging a minimum of **three** other CCIN members (Affiliates and Associates should bid alongside Full Council members) to create a working group to support the development of your project.

The Project is a collaboration between Rochdale Borough Council (Full Council Member) and the Co-operative College.

This Policy Lab is proposed by the Co-operative College with the support of Rochdale Council and Salford City Council. Alison Burnett, Head of Skills and Work at Salford City Council and Caroline Wolfenden, Head of Corporate, Policy and Performance at Rochdale Council will support the policy lab by helping to facilitate session with existing community education group, class and provisions in Salford and Rochdale. This would allow us to examine co-operative community education in a City council and Borough council context.

Further, we currently have two Manchester University PhD. Students conducting placemaking research in Rochdale, Cecile Berrenger and Vivienne Evans, who would support the Co-operative College team in conducting research.

## **3. What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?**

What are the outcomes you hope to achieve through this project and how will you know if your outcomes are achieved? What is your measure of success?

The project will produce a short policy paper authored by the Co-operative College as to recommendations to the Co-operative Council Innovation Network as how Adult Education Budgets can promote co-operative learning (and subsequently community engagement) to fulfil its objectives.

Further, pilot learning exercise workshops will be completed from the Co-operative Enterprise Hub in Rochdale, generating active case studies and assessments to guide co-operative education best practice. These workshops would also be transferred to another CCIN member councils to test transferability.

Workshops and research would be documented using case studies and video (and other appropriate media) content, ensuring community voices are heard.

The research aims to give CCIN members a greater understanding of ways to engage local people in active citizenship and adult education initiatives, as well as a clearer understanding of how to make co-operative adult education work and a model for it. Adult educational needs will be identified and priorities highlighted.

Finally, findings will be shared in Rochdale by presenting our paper at the Co-operative College's Co-operative Centenary Conference to be held at Rochdale Town Hall in November 2019, in which we will show video and other media content produced during the policy lab.

#### **4. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?**

The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network aims to frame the debate on the future of sustainable solutions to public sector challenges. Our work will ultimately improve outcomes for communities by enabling members to develop radical innovation in policy and practice, sharing best practice and learning, and enabling innovators to chart new territory together. Please provide details of how your project will support this aim.

This Policy Lab will test co-operative learning methods, as well as "learning by doing" and supporting adult learners to develop skills through learning the skill necessary to set up co-operative enterprise (co-operative learning). The aim is not simply to remain sympathetic to the co-operative principles and values of the Co-operative Council Innovation Network, but to identify ways in which they can be embedded and sustained in adult education in the community.

Echoing the aims of the CCIN the project will produce recommendations for a radically forward looking, yet historically connected, co-operative learning approach to adult education – this directly addresses new "co-operative ways" of providing sustainable solutions to issues of disconnected communities, unemployment and underemployment. 2019 is the centenary, not only of the Co-operative College, but also the Education Report that revolutionised the role of education and adult education in the UK – this Policy Lab will reignite the radical vision of that 1919 policy in the modern context.

#### **5. How does your project demonstrate the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?**

Our Network is based on the Co-operative values developed by the International Co-operative Alliance: "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity... honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others". Further details about the CCIN's Values and Principles is available [here](#). Please provide details of how your project will demonstrate the CCIN's Values and Principles.

This Policy Lab is explicitly about bring co-operative education to Co-operative Council Innovation Network adult education policy. It is as much about community development as skills development and its approach is intended in co-operative principle and values.

The project will take a co-productive approach will adult learners, adopting (as well as promoting) a **democratic** process.

Co-operative learning will embed a culture of **self-help, self-responsibility and equality** amongst learners.

The project outcomes will be valuable to all CCIN members as an act of **Solidarity** to improve adult education.

Further, in the spirit of co-operation and collaboration should the expression of interest be successful the Co-operative College will work closely with Rochdale Council and other CCIN members to continue to refine the co-design of this Policy Lab.

## **6. How will you share your learning with the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

How will you share your learning with other CCIN members? How will you share your learning beyond the project? This could be through producing a report, holding a workshop or presenting at the CCIN's annual showcase event.

As mentioned above, a short report with recommendations will be produced, which can be published and made widely available on the CCIN website and the Co-operative College website. We would also be delighted to present this paper at the CCIN annual showcase event. Further, the paper would be presented at the Co-operative College Centenary Co-operative Education at Rochdale Town Hall in November 2019. This event is open to all individuals and organisations with an interest in co-operative education and is widely attended by co-operative societies, academics and established co-operators from across the international movement.

Further, workshops will produce case studies and we will capture video and other media content to support the presentation of papers at CCIN and Co-operative College events.

Paul Cocker

Fund and Partnership Development Officer

Co-operative College

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