



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

COMMUNITY



New models of meeting priority needs



Enterprise and social economy



Walking the talk

Preston City Council

The Leighton Street Cooperative

In 2019 Lancashire County Council (LCC) agreed to dispose of three traveller sites in the county including one at Leighton Street in the centre Preston, managed on its behalf by Preston City Council. The Irish Traveller community at the site had been living there for over 30 years since it was established in the late 1980s. The families were well integrated into the local area and their children attended local schools. LCC's decision created a great deal of uncertainty for the community.

With support from a local group and from Preston's Cooperative Development Network (PCDN), community representatives proposed to Preston City Council that if the Council agreed to adopt the site, a newly established Leighton Street Cooperative would take on the day-to-day management and operation of the site and all residents would be invited to join the cooperative. At Full Council on 24 February 2022 it was unanimously agreed that Preston City Council would adopt the site and on 18th May the local authorities signed a lease to this effect.

The Leighton Street Cooperative was formally established with support from the PCDN and directors have received training in their legal duties and responsibilities with a grant from the Advancing a Shared Economy in Preston programme. One of the directors is an elected representative of the residents. Preston councillors were invited to appoint an observer to the Board.

Complications arising from the escalating energy crisis during 2022 have delayed formal handover of management responsibility to the cooperative. However this has not prevented it from playing an active role in the site's operation, including by supporting residents to claim all the benefits to which they are entitled and encouraging more careful use of water on site. Rent collection is over 95% and among residents there is a growing sense that the cooperative has given them more influence over their future.



People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first

E: comms@councils.coop | T: [@CoopInnovation](https://www.coopinnovation.org) | W: [councils.coop](https://www.councils.coop)

Established working relationships between council officers and the community have benefited from the leadership provided by the cooperative. Officers and directors worked together during 2022 to apply for an external grant to undertake major improvement works on site. The bid was successful and the council will be working with the cooperative and the community during 2023 to deliver the project. This will improve the condition of the site for residents and underpin the financial sustainability of the cooperative, providing the community with much greater certainty about its future.

For further information contact:

Rachel Stringfellow

Policy Manager – Preston City Council

r.stringfellow@preston.gov.uk | 01772 903410 | www.preston.gov.uk