



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Online – Zoom meeting

Meeting 1000 – 1200 hours on Tuesday 23 July 2024

MINUTES

Present:

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| Cllr Louise Gittins | Cheshire West & Chester Council (Chair) |
| Cllr Peter Bradbury | Cardiff Council (Vice Chair) (until item 8) |
| Cllr Paul Cassidy | Inverclyde Council (until 11am and after 11.30am) |
| Cllr Barbara Brownridge | Oldham Council (Accountable Body) |
| Cllr Kelly Middleton | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Cllr Sue Smith | Rochdale Borough Council (from item 4.4) |
| Jonathan Bland | SBI/E3M (Affiliate Rep) (from item 4.4) |

In Attendance:

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| Jonathan Downs | Oldham Council (Accountable Body) |
| Nicola Huckerby | CCIN (Minutes) |
| Morgan Jones | Cheshire West & Chester Council |
| Michelle Rankin | Representing Cllr Anthony Okereke |
| Fiona Gibson | Cardiff Council |
| Cllr Mike Stubbs | Newcastle-Under-Lyme Labour Grp (Vice Chair V&P) (until item 8) |
| Claire Ward | Anthony Collins Solicitors (Vice Chair V&P) |
| Cliff Mills | Anthony Collins Solicitors (Item 4) |

Apologies:

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| Cllr Anthony Okereke | Royal Borough of Greenwich |
| Cllr Clare Besford | Billingham Town Council (Associate Rep) |
| Cllr Sarah Doyle | Liverpool City Council (Chair V&P) |

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Cllr Gittins welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that following her appointment as chair of the LGA, she needed to stand down as chair of the CCIN Executive Oversight Committee. She intended to remain involved in the Network but not chair it.
- 1.2. Since the last meeting, leadership changes have occurred at Kirklees and Sunderland, with Cllr Cathy Scott and Cllr Graeme Miller stepping down from the EOC. Thanks were recorded to both for supporting the Network over the last two years.
- 1.3. Congratulations were extended to the new Coop Council Leaders: Cllr Carole Pattison (Kirklees), Cllr Michael Mordey (Sunderland), Cllr Jacky Alty (South Ribble), Cllr Lee Carter (Telford & Wrekin) and Cllr Dennis Jones (Peterborough).
- 1.4. Apologies were noted from Cllr Clare Besford (Billingham) and Cllr Anthony Okereke (Greenwich), represented at the meeting by Michelle Rankin.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 5 March 2024

These were agreed upon as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from the previous meeting

3.1. Officer session on using the DPS

Jonathan Downs reported that Oldham had appointed a new Head of Procurement and would arrange a session for Officers, as agreed.

It was also noted that the current DPS runs until February 2025, and conversations were taking place in Oldham about renewing it.

Action: Jonathan Downs to report back.

3.2. Follow-up from Josh McAllister's session at the March meeting

The Chair briefly reviewed the discussion at the last meeting, during which it had been agreed to look at alternative models for children's social care, including fostering and those leaving care. The discussion was deferred until item 11.5.

4. Legal Constitution Options for the Network

4.1. Cllr Mike Stubbs explained that the 2023-26 Strategy had highlighted the need to review the CCIN's legal constitution, which had not been done since its inception. MS has been working with Claire Ward (Anthony Collins) to move this issue forward. At the last meeting, the Board had heard that there were seven different legal structures available, and these had been honed into two:

- A cooperative society
- A charitable incorporated organisation

4.2. As a follow-up to the last meeting, Anthony Collins Solicitors had prepared a detailed note outlining the two legal structures' key features, advantages, and disadvantages. MS commented that whatever legal status is chosen, the 'organisation' becomes the Body so that any risk from financial or legal burdens does not fall on specific individuals.

4.3. The next steps were to agree on the direction of travel with a formal proposal to be put forward at the November AGM.

4.4. Cliff Mills from ACS attended the meeting to respond to any questions.

Cllr Sue Smith and Jonathan Bland joined the meeting.

4.5. If we went down the cooperative route, points to consider:

- Who would the members of the cooperative be? MS explained that, to begin with, the Governance Document would define the cooperative membership and mirror the current constitution where Full Members, Associates and Supporters were Members, but these could be different 'classes' of membership.
- Whether the current structure of EOC, V&P, and F&GPG was fit for the purpose of the new structure.
- CM explained that the CCIN was in a good position to become a cooperative society as it was already running. What was needed was a set of Rules to fit around the current structure, which would be co-designed with a working group of current members.
- Engaging Monitoring Officers in the process of the legal restructure (Claire Ward said she also had experience in this area)
- If councils become members of the CCIN Cooperative, then this would raise awareness and understanding of how councils can be cooperative members.

4.6. **Agreed:** The subgroup would pull together a working group from across the network to explore the cooperative route further. A detailed quote for the next steps would be sought and brought back to EOC for approval.

Action: MS and CW

5. Finance and Budget Update

5.1 Budget 2023-4

Jonathan Downs reported that after the April Emergency Budget meeting, good progress had been made in securing outstanding membership fees, putting the network's Budget in a much healthier position. The projected membership fees for 2023/4 have increased from £218,924 to £231,028.

Agreed: to increase the budget available for the Annual Conference should it be required.

Action: The subgroup working on the legal constitution should undertake a SWOT analysis to consider the potential impact of becoming a cooperative society on the Budget.

5.2 Membership fees received and outstanding

Jonathan Downs presented a new quarterly report outlining membership fees received and outstanding.

The Chair welcomed the report and thanked JD for pulling it together.

6. Governance

6.1. Governance Elections Timetable

NH explained that the current terms of office for members of EOC and V&P were due to end at the AGM, but because there were many vacancies across both EOC and V&P, it was recommended that the elections be brought forward to the Autumn.

Noted: All member places (Full Council, Associate & Affiliate) on the EOC and Values & Principles Board, including the chairs, are up for election.

Agreed: Key dates are:

2nd September – Self-nominations open for EOC

13th September – Nominations close for EOC

1st October – Self-nominations open for V&P and F&GPG

10th October – Nominations close for V&P and F&GPG

6.2. Review of Terms of Reference of EOC

NH reported that the CCIN Constitution states that the Terms of Reference for EOC and V&P should be reviewed every two years.

Agreed: to review the Terms of Reference as part of the broader review of the Constitution.

7. Feedback from V&P Board meeting 13th June 2024

7.1. Claire Ward reported back on the last V&P Board meeting, which she had chaired, and gave feedback on the discussion. There were two substantive issues considered:

7.2. Approving the Budget, Work Programmes and Communications Plans for the newly approved Policy Labs.

7.3. Reviewing progress on the delivery of other Policy Labs and Prototypes.

7.4. Cllr Gittins thanked the V&P Board for all their hard work.

Cllrs Peter Bradbury and Mike Stubbs left the meeting.

8. Strategy, Objectives and Key Results Update

8.1. Morgan Jones provided feedback on the work that had been prepared by the sub-group of the Officer Group, which included 'a plan on a page' and Key results for the three focus areas: 'A **cooperative network** comprising **cooperative councils** working to promote **cooperative policy and practice** across the country'.

The EOC was asked to consider the appropriateness of the proposed strategy, including the vision, three focus areas, activities, and measures, considering the recent change in the national Government.

Agreed: to look at whether any of the actions could be cross-referenced to existing Policy Labs

Agreed: to identify areas in the King's Speech and whether these could form potential areas for policy projects in the next round. This might include a refresh of previous projects eg Asset Transfer.

Action: Officer Sub-Group

Agreed: To look at these areas as discussion items / Plenary Sessions for the Annual Conference / Cooperative Summit.

Agreed: With a decade of innovative cooperative policy development behind us, we must examine how we capture the learning to ensure it is fed into Government.

Action: To build this organisational capacity into the broader review of the Constitution.

9. Policy Labs and Prototypes 2024

9.1. Projects to approve—The Chair reported that there were no new reports to approve at this meeting.

Agreed: Once V&P has signed off on any new reports, these will be circulated for approval over the summer.

9.2. Brand Guidelines for Reports—NH reported that earlier in the year, V&P agreed that we should be providing more guidance to those leading policy reports on what we were looking for regarding the content of final project reports. We already had our Statement of Values and Principles and colour palette, but there was little in the way of a report template. In response, a set of brand guidelines to support the Colour Palette has been drafted, including a template for producing Policy Lab reports. The Guidelines are currently being pulled together by the designer at Oldham Council.

Agreed: to circulate the new Brand Guidelines as soon as they are completed.

10. Membership Update

10.1. Membership Report – N Huckerby gave an update on the latest Membership numbers:

- Full Members – 46
- Associate Members – 22
- Affiliate Members – 49
- Supporters – 24

10.2 The 47 Full Councils represent 12.1 million citizens and control a budget of £19.8 billion. In addition, we have thirteen Parish, Town, and Community Councils whose populations and budgets are 334k and £10.88m, respectively.

10.3 Since the last meeting, three Opposition Groups have taken control of their respective councils in the May 2024 elections and will transition to Full Council Members during the coming year. They are Adur District Council, Peterborough City Council and Tamworth Borough Council.

Agreed: While these councils transition during 2024/5, they will be recorded as Full Members but liable for the Associate Member fee for one year. Once they become Full Members, they can benefit from Policy funding. The budget and population figures for Adur District Council, Peterborough City Council, and Tamworth Borough Council are unavailable and therefore omitted from the totals.

10.4 NH reported that several councils have been removed from membership since the last meeting. These were the Opposition Groups that had taken control in May 2023: Edinburgh, Medway, Stoke, and York. This was because they had yet to submit their Full Member Application.

Agreed: Approach the Leaders of these Councils and offer them the same opportunity as councils that had taken control in May 2024, i.e. Record them as Full Members in 2024/5, but they are liable for the Associate Member fee. Once they become Full Members, they can benefit from Policy funding.

Action: Nicola Huckerby

10.5 Since the last meeting, there has been one new Full Member Council, one Affiliate Member Application and two Supporter applications.

Agreed: to welcome Oxfordshire County Council as a new Full Council and our first County Council

Agreed: to welcome Social adVentures as a new Affiliate Member

Agreed: to welcome Kavan Hawker as a Supporter

Agreed: to welcome Scott Montgomery as a Supporter

10.6 Welcome Pack for New Members

The draft pack had been circulated. NH explained that as part of the new Strategy, she had drafted a Welcome Pack for new Members that would replace the Word/PDF document and 'cover email' for new Members. The document included a checklist of member benefits that, it was hoped, would enable all members to maximise their membership in the network.

Agreed: EOC welcomed the new document.

Action: All - Any additional text or comments should be sent to NH by 26th July.

10.7. Why join? New videos

Approval was sought to use clips from the video produced for the 10th anniversary on the website and social media. NH explained that the cost would be around £250.

Agreed: The budget was approved.

Action: NH to speak with Jonathan Downs to confirm budget availability.

Agreed: NH will obtain a quote to produce videos featuring some of the new governance and for this work to be undertaken at the annual conference.

11. Events Update

11.1. AGM and Annual Conference 2024 inc Launch of Policy Funding 2024/5

Agreed: To approach London Councils with a Brief for hosting the 2024 CCIN Annual Conference over two consecutive days at the end of November.

Day 1: Host Programme/visits am
2pm - Conference starts
5.30 – 7pm – Welcome Reception
After 7pm – Free time

Day 2: 9am – AGM and launch of Policy Funding for 2024/5
10am – 4.30pm Conference and Workshops

Action: NH

11.2. LGA Conference – launches and meet-ups

NH reported that the rearranged dates for the LGA Conference are 22 – 24 October in Harrogate. There are potentially two launch events for the CCIN at this year's Conference:

- AI Policy Lab led by Wigan (which the LGA have expressed interest in)
- Councils' Cooperative Development Toolkit led by Kirklees

Action: NH to confirm the reception/launch details with the Chair asap

11.3. Lib Dem Conference

NH reported that, per the action taken at the last meeting, a stand has been booked for the conference, which will take place in Brighton from 14 to 17 October.

Action: NP to speak to Lib Dem Members to try and identify a volunteer to work on the exhibition stands.

11.4. Online session: New Member session 16 July – feedback

The Chair reported that several members had provided positive feedback following this session, which had attracted around 30 members.

Agreed: We will repeat the session every three months (the first meeting after the conference season) to increase engagement from existing members in the network and encourage more councillors from across the governance to chair these sessions.

11.5. Online session: children and young people

The chair introduced this item, which was a follow-up to the session with Josh McAllister at the last meeting, and asked if we wanted to deliver an online session on promoting the best practice from across the network on residential, fostering and leaving care, then we needed ideas for speakers:

- Jonathan Bland said he'd recently organised an event that included two sessions on children's services, including Transitioning from care in England and addressing placement sufficiency for looked-after children. Organisations speaking included Catch22, Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust, Sheffield City Council, Social adVentures, and GM Skyline Project.

Action: JB agreed to help with contacts for this session.

- Cllr Kelly Middleton suggested [Alex](#) Latham from the Care Leavers Covenant
- Michelle Rankin offered to speak about her experience in Greenwich - 17 organisations that had signed up for their 'Equality and Equity Charter' have declared an interest in adopting the Care Leaver Covenant.
- The Chair suggested we invite Josh McAllister MP, to speak
- NH reported that she had talked to John Copps (Mutual Ventures) about potential speakers

Agreed: to pull together a sub-group of people to help create a programme involving several network speakers and external partners for this session.

Agreed: to encourage Members to adopt 'Care Leavers' as a Protected Characteristic and sign up to the Care Leaver Covenant as one of the actions Coop Councils can take.

Action: NH will follow up and report back with a Forward Plan for online sessions for the next 6 – 9 months, identifying gaps for volunteers to chair these sessions.

11.6. Online session: Doughnut Economics

Agreed: to include this session in the Forward Plan.

12. Schedule of Future Meetings

It was agreed to set the date for the next meeting once the election of the new Governance was completed.

13. Any Other Business

- 13.1.** Cllr Gittins announced that this was the last meeting for the current EOC. She wanted to thank everyone for their commitment and hard work during her term as Chair. She would continue to support the Network and look for opportunities to incorporate some of its fantastic work into the LGA. NH gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the members.

The meeting finished at 1150 hours.