

secure and confident **communities**



In this document

Ambition for Co-operative Housing	5	provision/profit motive	7	Local co-operative procurement	10
Co-operative Housing Tenure	5	Social Care 'market'	8	Local asset transfer	11
Community-led Housing	5	Personal Assistants within social care	8	Local asset transfer/asset lock	11
Land use	6	Social Care procurement	8	Localism Act 2011 powers	11
Finance for Co-operative Housing	6	Support for mutuals within social care procurement	8	Community assets/'Right to try'	11
Co-operative housing expansion	6	Right to request	9	Youth Offending Teams	12
Best value consideration for land	6	Foundation Trust Hospitals	9	Participatory budgeting within Police Forces	12
Tenant Management Organisations	7	Foundation Trusts and community engagement	9	Crime and Disorder Act 1998	12
Stock transfer	7	Hospital Trusts	9	Neighbourhood policing	12
Landlord co-operative	7	Foundation Trust governance	10	Co-production of crime prevention strategies	13
Health and social care provision/ co-operative values	7	Co-operative Councils	10	StreetWatch	13
Health and social care		Local Public Services	10		
		Local tender evaluations	10		

Introduction

Between 2013-14 the Co-operative Party carried out policy process which generated twelve policy papers.

These formed the basis of our 'Agenda for Britain', our platform at the last General Election, as well as our platforms for elections in Scotland, Wales, London and Local government.

The twelve full policy papers are intended to be 'living documents' which can be amended and expanded to take account of changing circumstances and environment. In advance of our 2016 Conference and in response to member feedback, the NEC produced three thematic documents which provide a summary of the Party's key policy positions in each area.

It is hoped that these summary documents will provide a useful starting point for discussion around the Party's policy, suggested changes and additions to the Party's policy platform, as well as for developing new campaigns and activity in the year ahead.



Building a Shared Economy



Creating a More Equal Society



Secure and Confident Communities

Using this document

In the run up to our 2016 Annual Conference, the NEC is keen to ensure that the Party's policy platform is examined by members, local parties and co-operatives.

Using this document, you may wish to consider:

1. What campaigns would you like to see the Co-operative Party take up in relation to the policy proposals contained in the three thematic documents?
2. What campaigning ideas and action can local parties and members engage in within their own areas in relation to the three thematic documents?
3. Are there missing policy asks in the three documents?
4. What areas of policy need to be inserted or expanded upon in the twelve original policy documents agreed at conference 2014?

You are encouraged to submit new ideas, feedback and other responses, either as an individual or as a Party by the 15th July 2016. Soon after, a report of responses will be sent back out to members in order to stimulate discussion ahead of Conference. Your responses will also be used to shape conference debate and plenary sessions at the Conference itself.

Email your submissions to policy@party.coop
or online at www.party.coop/policy2016

Policy summary

The following is a summary of current Party policy on the theme 'Secure and Confident Communities', which was agreed at 2013 and 2014 Annual Conference.

Ambition for Co-operative Housing

Britain needs a new approach to tackling this crisis of housing supply and affordability. Co-operatives can play a role in helping to increase the supply of affordable housing, while also creating employment opportunities in the construction industry and stimulating economic growth. The Government should take the concerted action that is needed for Britain to build 20,000 co-operative homes per year.

Co-operative Housing tenure

Co-operative Housing Tenure must be introduced in Law in order for more straightforward legal navigation by new schemes, as well as improved legal understanding.

Community-led Housing

In order for Co-operative housing to be more easily defended as well as reducing unintended consequences of legislation, we propose that a new legal definition of 'Community-led Housing' must be established.

Land use

We propose that a new national presumption should be established in favour of change of land use being granted where land value uplift is to be captured for the benefit of the community. This will be an incentive to free-up more land for co-operative and community owned housing development.

Finance for Co-operative Housing

As advocated within the 'New Foundations' model of co-operative housing, Government should work with the Co-operative Movement to develop a financial intermediary to raise and manage institutional investments in co-operative and mutual housing.

Co-operative housing expansion

The Homes and Communities Agency should work with existing housing co-operatives that would be interested in using their assets to develop new homes. This has the potential to enable the growth of housing co-operatives particularly on smaller sites which are currently not being developed quickly enough.

Best value consideration for land

We propose the Treasury green book valuation guidance should be amended in line with recommendations from RICS Land and Society Commission Report ensuring that 'best value' considerations in disposing of all publicly owned land take account of long term social and financial benefits.

Tenant Management Organisations

Encouragement should be given to ensure that Tenant Management Organisations are constituted as co-operatives as evidence shows they provide an enhanced service and delivery real added social value.

Stock transfer

The Government should ensure that where local authorities do hold ballots on stock transfer, residents have the option of voting for a community led transfer.

Landlord co-operative

Rogue landlords and estate agent fees for lettings continue to disadvantage those seeking rented accommodation. There should be a ban on unfair estate agent fees and work developed to create a landlords co-operative which helps manage and market properties outside of the private sector.

Co-operative values in health and social care

The integration of health and social care requires the development of systems built on co-operative values and principles – giving clinicians, frontline staff and patients the opportunity to shape services in a more co-ordinated and joined up way.

Health and social care provision/profit motive

We believe there is a need to be brave and outline an alternative vision for health and social care.

one that is built around the whole person - meeting their physical, mental and social care needs. This vision can

only occur under local care systems that truly integrate the different players in the system, delivering co-operation not competition and putting people before profit

Social Care ‘market’

We believe there is an urgent need for reform of the ‘market’ in social care – reducing profit leakage, improving the quality and accountability of care, preventing the continual downward pressure on terms and conditions for the workforce, and better aligning the values of social care with those of the NHS to support the transition to an integrated system.

Personal assistants within social care

There is a need to regulate Personal Assistants to ensure quality and standards in this service that has grown exponentially since the introduction of direct payments.

Social Care procurement

Guidance must be given to social care procuring authorities to ensure that the special features and sometimes sizes of co-operative and social enterprise delivery models are taken account of and included in procurement exercises.

Support for mutuals within social care procurement

We propose that support for social care co-ops should include financial, legal, technical and HR support. This is necessary to successfully identify an appropriate model and then go through the process of ‘spinning out’, which can be challenging and expensive. Collectively procured support and more

mentoring by other organisations who have been through the process can help reduce these costs and burdens.

Right to request

One of the early attractions of the 'right to request' programme for participants was the promise of a five year initial contract (compared to the traditional three years). Such contract lengths should be considered more widely for the not-for-profit sector in recognition of the challenges posed by more regular re-commissioning including the uncertainty it poses and the lack of investment lending that is often available to the sector.

Foundation Trust Hospitals

We propose that Monitor toughen the regulatory framework on NHS Foundation Trust hospitals to ensure that service users and staff are more engaged in decisions taken by local hospitals.

Foundation Trusts and community engagement

While Foundation Trusts have expanded in number there has been a lack of commitment to the model from some hospital managements, meaningful engagement must become a proper measured feature of their operation.

Hospital Trusts

New Foundation Hospital Trusts should be established not as a paper exercise but in conjunction with local communities and Healthwatch

Foundation Trust governance

The regulatory frameworks governing foundation trusts should be toughened and mandated to explain how they are engaging members in decision-making and ensuring that governor elections are vibrant.

Co-operative Councils

Support should be given to councils committed to supporting the growth and development of existing local co-operative and mutual enterprise, by involving service users in commissioning, design and delivery of services, promoting co-operative start-ups and developing collective action and control over local assets.

Local Public Services

The Government should legislate to ensure that public bodies are required to publish their social value priorities and weighting of contracts toward them.

Local tender evaluations

Local tender evaluations should be required to include whether a bidder is transparent about its tax arrangements, meets FairTax Mark standards, pays the Living Wage and meets appropriate standards on apprenticeships.

Local co-operative procurement

New EU rules will acknowledge the benefits of co-operative and social enterprise procurement. The Government should ensure that contracting authorities reserve some contracts for not-for-profit enterprises and provide strong and clear guidance on the types of co-operative, mutual and social

enterprise models covered to ensure they deliver the social value intended and do not allow for privatisations via the back door.

Local asset transfer

Where local assets are transferred it is vital that they remain in the interests of the community being served. Therefore they must be democratically accountable to a widely defined group with open membership.

Local asset transfer/asset lock

Locally transferred assets must come alongside an asset lock which can guard against dissolution and ensure that resources can only be transferred to other organisations with a similar commitment to serving the community.

Localism Act 2011 powers

Whilst the Act contains important localism powers the regulation and timetables can still be hard to local communities to organise within. Reform is therefore required to ensure that communities have as much support as possible and time possible to make use of existing powers.

Community assets/ 'Right to try'

Existing rights under the Localism Act should be strengthened to give community groups a first right of refusal to purchase listed assets, and a 'right to try' when local authorities decide to externalise services

Youth Offending Teams

The success of Youth Offending Teams – a co-operative initiative in the justice system – has shown that many people who were drawn into crime in the past didn't need to become career criminals provided they are offered better alternatives at an early stage. We recommend a similar integrated approach to those in the 18-25 age group who are going through the transition to independence and adult life.

Participatory budgeting within Police Forces

Police forces should establish 'participatory budgeting units' in order to ensure greater involvement of local communities in allocating local police resources.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The success of the Act should be built upon in order to improve local accountability by ensuring that local government have involvement in the appointment of local police commanders.

Neighbourhood policing

Lower tier of government should be given power to set priorities for neighbourhood policing, local policing of volume crime and anti-social behaviour and should retain a proportion of the police precept ring fenced for the commissioning of police and crime priorities.

Co-production of crime prevention strategies

Since 2011, elected Police and Crime Commissioners have worked in co-operation with local government, the police, communities and other bodies to cut crime. New crime prevention strategies should learn from this best practice and should be co-produced.

Street Watch

The Government should provide funding for the establishment of a street watch scheme in every lower-tier local authority in the UK.

Email your submissions to policy@party.coop
or online at www.party.coop/policy2016

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