

a co-operative agenda **for Scotland 2016**

Introduction by Kezia Dugdale MSP



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A message from the Chair

Cathy Peattie, Chair, Scottish Co-operative Party



Co-operation is an idea whose time has come again. The last few years have taught us that there is a need for a different way of organising the economy. In this document the Scottish Co-operative Party sets out a number of ways in which our economy can become more responsive to the needs of people.

As we go into this election we are delighted to have Scottish Co-operative Party candidates standing for election across the length and breadth of Scotland from the Highlands and Islands to the Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. We look forward to the election of a strong team of co-operators who will champion the cause of co-operation in the Scottish Parliament.

We are proud that, for the first time as we enter a Scottish election campaign, the Leader of the Scottish Labour Party will be a Co-operative Party MSP, Kezia Dugdale. In her time in the Scottish Parliament Kezia has demonstrated a real commitment to putting co-operative values and principles into action. This was demonstrated in her Debtbusters campaign against so-called legal loansharks. Kezia made the case for greater support for credit unions and that is one of our key policies.

One of the achievements of the Scottish Co-operative and Scottish Labour-led Scottish Executive was the creation of Co-operative Development Scotland. Co-operative Development Scotland has been a great success but its remit and resources are limited. We think that the time has come to carry out a review of the remit and resources of Co-operative Development Scotland. For example, it is not allowed to promote co-operative housing. We believe that this is an area which should be promoted. There have been welcome moves to allow co-operative and mutual ownership of land and community assets but it is not part of remit of Co-operative Development Scotland to promote this.

Public transport services should be just that services – too often they are run in the interests of shareholders and not the public. This is why we promoted our People's ScotRail campaign along with ASLEF and SERA Scotland. It was just plain wrong for the Scottish Government to let the franchise for ScotRail when they knew that they would soon have additional powers which would have allowed for a People's ScotRail. Rest assured the Scottish Co-operative Party MSPs will always seek to use all the powers of the Scottish Parliament to promote a fairer, better and more co-operative Scotland.

Likewise, we believe that bus services should serve the interests of the public and this is why we support plans for a not-for-profit People's Bus Service. It is wrong that big business can cherry-pick profitable routes and then look for subsidies for socially necessary routes. There are not-for-profit models operating in the British Isles and we should look to bring these models to Scotland.

The Scottish Co-operative Party is proud to be the voice of consumers and the co-operative movement within the Scottish Labour movement. We are pleased to see that there is a very strong co-operative thread running through the Scottish Labour Party's policy offer for this election.

We look forward to the election of a number of Scottish Co-operative Party MSPs in May who will work hard to promote our agenda in the Scottish Parliament. With their help we will continue to campaign for the creation of a fairer, better and more co-operative Scotland.

Cathy Peattie

Chair
Scottish Co-operative Party

Introduction

Kezia Dugdale MSP, Leader, Scottish Labour



As a Scottish Co-operative Party MSP and the Leader of the Scottish Labour Party I am delighted to write the foreword to 'A Co-operative Agenda for Scotland'. Co-operative and mutual values and policy proposals have helped shape my work in politics and I know that the ideas in this document will influence our approach in the next Parliament.

The Scottish Co-operative Party and wider co-operative movement have always pointed the way to new and alternative ways to develop services and business. I am proud that the Scottish Co-operative Party has made a strong contribution to Scottish Labour's policy process. In this document the Scottish Co-operative Party sets out a range of important areas for action.

My debtbusters campaign was an example of co-operative principles and solutions in action. Financial exclusion and the withering effect of pay day loans affect too many in our communities. It was the co-operative and mutual sector which held the answer. This was not a theoretical debate, rather it was about finding real solutions to only too real problems.

My support for credit unions is clear and I am proud to be a member of Capital Credit Union which does such great work in the Lothians. I was also very happy to sign up to ABCUL's recent call to make Scotland a Credit Union Nation. We need to look for more ways to promote credit unions and I support trying to find ways to encourage young people to save in credit unions with ideas. For example the 'Starter for 10' promoted by Glasgow City Council gives £10 to First Year pupils to save in their local credit union. My battle against pay-day lenders convinced me that we need to find ways to ensure that credit unions are found on High Street in the same way pay-day lenders are.

One of my priorities is creating a safe, affordable and warm home for everyone whether they are in the private rented sector, a social tenant or looking to buy for the first time. In the next term of the Scottish Parliament we will build at least 60,000 affordable homes with at least 45,000 of these being affordable homes including social rent. It is my ambition that housing co-operatives deliver a significant number of those new socially rented homes. We must fully explore new ways in which the Scottish Government can more effectively give support to the Co-operative housing sector. There is also scope for housing co-operatives in other sectors of the housing market, such as student housing and these could be developed further. Students in Edinburgh are already running a student housing co-operative and we should look at ways of promoting that further across Scotland.

Our focus is not limited to new homes and new co-operative housing support, the standard and efficiency of the existing stock must be improved. We will bring in a Warm Homes Act to tackle fuel poverty and improve standards. Mutual energy bulk buying schemes offer important examples ways to fight fuel poverty. We must learn from the example of energy co-operatives like Edinburgh Solar Co-operative and Harlaw Hydro and look at ways of empowering communities to generate their own power and tackle fuel poverty.

The lack of Scottish Government support for co-operatives and housing co-operatives in particular must be tackled – indeed it would form part of a review of the powers and resources of Co-operative Development Scotland.

Co-operative Development Scotland is a major achievement of the previous Co-operative and Labour-led Scottish Executive. The time has come to have a review of how well it has worked and whether it has sufficient resources to fulfil its remit. It is wrong that housing is an area which Co-operative Development Scotland is currently excluded from. We need a strong champion for housing co-operatives.

The Scottish Government has promoted legislation such as the Community Empowerment and Land Reform which allows for the promotion of mutual ownership of community facilities and land, however there is no support to promote the mutual model in these contexts – this must change.

Scotland will benefit from a real powerhouse organisation in the form of Co-operative Development Scotland that builds on its achievements and legacy to promote co-operatives in every sector of the Scottish economy. This organisation would be backed by a minister with a cross-cutting remit and responsibility for promoting co-operatives and mutuals in all aspects of the work of the Scottish Government. We must hardwire co-operation across Scotland.

Too often transport services don't live up to their name – they are not services for people but instead are run in the interests of shareholders rather than the public. This is why we would look at the Scottish Co-operative Party and ASLEF's campaign for a People's ScotRail. I was disappointed when the Scottish Government pushed through the new franchise for ScotRail rather than wait for the transfer of powers through the Scotland Bill. This would have allowed a People's ScotRail – a not-for-profit rail service run in the interests of the travelling public and the staff. You can rest assured that I will look to use all the powers of the Scottish Parliament to deliver services that are run in the interests of the Scottish people. Likewise, we would look to promote not-for-profit bus services especially in the case of market-failure. It is wrong for large bus companies to cherry-pick profitable services and at the same time abandon socially necessary routes, then tender for subsidised contracts on these services. We need to look for ways to provide People's Bus services.

One of the major successes of the co-operative movement in Scotland in recent years has been both Glasgow and Edinburgh City Councils becoming Co-operative Councils. This is a different way of doing things. As my friend Andrew Burns, the leader of City of Edinburgh Council, says it is about 'Doing things with people rather than to people.' This is my approach to politics. I want to empower people. I want more councils to consider becoming Co-operative Councils, and I look forward to campaigning next year for more Co-operative Councils.

Co-operation is at the heart of my approach to politics. As such, I will also ensure that the role of the co-operative movement in the wider Labour family is recognised and that co-operative and mutual policy options are always on the table in policy discussions.

A Fairer, Better, More Co-operative Scotland

The Scottish Co-operative Party, working with members and the wider Scottish co-operative movement, have developed a vision for a future Scotland which places co-operative values at its heart. The following is a summary of the key policy recommendations and practical solutions that the Party will be campaigning for through the upcoming Holyrood elections and beyond.

Growing a Co-operative Scotland

- 1 We believe in giving power to the people. The people need to exercise real democracy in the economy and no longer be ruled by market forces beyond our control.
- 2 We will review the work of Co-operative Development Scotland to ensure that it effectively promotes the whole co-operative sector in a much stronger way, and that it has the resources to do this. This review would be wide-ranging. Consideration should be given to appointing a minister with a cross-cutting remit to promote co-operatives across government.
- 3 We will look to provide incentives for people to start a business. Local business strategies should support smaller business and a greater diversity of business models including self-employment, employee-ownership and other co-operative models. Support for a range of co-operative models and social enterprises should be encouraged.
- 4 Employee ownership and co-operatives should be facilitated, supported and encouraged in partnership with trade unions. We will extend the role of Co-operative Development Scotland and promote the co-operative council model where councils can consider developing local employee, consumer and secondary co-operatives to deliver services.
- 5 We will press for amendments to planning legislation to favour genuinely community-owned co-operatives.

- 6 We should encourage the creation of local marketing co-operatives by local businesses to better promote and protect our high streets and district shopping centres and ensure that they have the resources required.
- 7 We will promote connectivity through a broadband strategy to ensure full internet coverage across all areas of Scotland. We will develop IT co-operatives as a means of overcoming digital exclusion and empowering local people.
- 8 We will ensure that education and training around the co-operative model is available at all levels from school to university, building on the work of Co-operative Education Trust Scotland, and that all economic development agencies are open to developing co-operatives and have the practical knowledge and resources to do so.
- 9 We will support a mutually-owned rail operator, delivering a People's ScotRail. This would develop a service run in the interests of passengers and staff and not in the interests of shareholders.
- 10 Too often our vital bus routes are being cut, leaving isolated communities more cut off from important family, work and social links. Our bus services are a critical driver of economic growth and activity. Increasingly Local Authorities struggle to ensure that they are able to provide the service which their communities require. The power within the bus industry is heavily tilted in favour of a small number of large operators. These operators can cherry pick the profitable routes whilst leaving the socially necessary routes alone. In order to arrest the decline in services, falling passenger numbers and raising fares, there is a need to look at this industry in a new way. Co-operative and Social Enterprises successfully operate services across the country – running metropolitan services to socially necessary education and social care networks.
- 11 These operations run in true partnership with commissioning authorities, reinvest profits back in to the services and infrastructure and often are employee led. These models of bus service delivery require support and promotion by the Scottish Government to ensure that procuring authorities are aware of the options available to them. The Scottish Government should work with the Co-operative and social enterprise movements to ensure a task force is created to drive forward the advancement of these public transport models. In addition to the taskforce consideration should be given to whether new procurement regulations should be extended to ensure that Local Authorities have a duty to consider source services from these sectors when delivering bus services.
- 12 We will look at ways of developing co-operative models for lifeline ferry and air services. People in remote and island communities should be given more of a say in the services which they rely upon.

- 13 We strongly support community-owned energy. Local government and communities should be encouraged to develop energy buying deals which use co-operative models. We support plans for community co-operatively-owned energy producers. We would encourage local government and others to look at the examples from Edinburgh of local hydro-electric schemes and also photo-voltaic co-operatives on public and other buildings. We also think that there should be consideration for communal and district heating systems. We believe that the planning and taxation system should look favourably upon schemes which are genuinely community or co-operatively owned.

Caring Co-operatively for Scotland

- 14 We must build a NHS fit for the 21st century, which is able to meet the demands of an ageing population and be able to support all people of Scotland at any stage in life. We will look at ways of strengthening the openness and transparency of NHS governance.
- 15 In terms of social care we believe that social care services could be provided via co-operatives. There is scope for the promotion of workers' co-operatives in social care. This would empower the workforce and give them greater control over their lives. We also believe that people with long-term care issues could be encouraged to set-up co-operatives to meet their care needs.
- 16 We will promote energy co-operatives in local areas to provide cost-effective energy-efficiency actions as well as local micro-renewable generation and by bulk-buying to reduce the cost of fuel. This will go some way to combatting fuel poverty.

A Prosperous Co-operative Scotland

- 17 The Scottish Co-operative Party strongly believes in empowering communities, we think that the promotion of co-operatives and community ownership does that. We agree that public services should be user centred and directed, not driven by profits or price. We are very clear that co-operative and mutual policy solutions provide one way of delivering that. We believe that if we are serious about services being user centred and directed, there needs to be a large increase in the number of services which are delivered co-operatively. As a result of this, we support the efforts of Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils in promoting the Co-operative Council model. We think that more councils should look at this model of service delivery and work with their staff, trade unions and citizens to find more co-operative ways of working.
- 18 The SNP Government's centralising agenda is hurting communities across Scotland. We believe that co-operatives provide a means of empowering local communities

and combating the centralisation of services by the Scottish Government. Co-operative models can empower people in their communities and influence the decisions which impact on their lives.

- 19 Local councils should have the power to limit the number of fixed odds betting terminals, betting shops and payday lenders on our high streets. We will look for ways to further promote credit unions, including providing assistance for credit unions to be prominently located in our communities. We will promote local initiatives to encourage young people to join credit unions and ensure that financial literacy is included in all levels in schools. We will develop and promote campaigns to encourage credit unions.
- 20 We believe in supporting our town centres. Local marketing co-operatives can play an important role in reinvigorating our town centres by pulling the resources of the local shops and the local community to promote their area.
- 21 We recognise the important role that co-operatives play in our rural and farming communities and believe that the co-operative model has much more to offer in our rural communities.
- 22 Previous Co-operative and Labour-led Scottish Executives were at the forefront of ground-breaking land reform legislation which has led to radical change in our communities; we aim to build upon this and tackle inequalities in both urban and rural communities. Mutual and co-operative models should play a key role in the land reform agenda.
- 23 We support the promotion of local produce and the greater use of locally sourced food, including supporting food co-operatives which can make a real difference to Scotland's communities.
- 24 The Scottish Government should review its support for community ownership and community empowerment and consider as part of our proposed review whether Co-operative Development Scotland should provide that support and whether it is adequately resourced to provide such support.
- 25 We will support and encourage the employee co-ownership model of working, which helps distribute wealth to employees and encourages long service.
- 26 We will promote housing co-operatives, and ensure that the co-operative model is included in any discussion of registered social landlords. We will also look to promote housing co-operatives in other sectors of the market, for example student housing co-operatives. As part of our review of Co-operative Development Scotland we will review support for housing co-operatives.

Achieving a Co-operative Scotland

- 27 We believe that there is a very strong case for a co-operative approach to education. This approach seeks to include pupils, students, parents and carers, teachers and other staff in the organisation of the learning experience.
- 28 We believe that the education system in Scotland should introduce pupils to the co-operative model, and believe that it should be taught at all levels from primary school up to postgraduate level at university. We also believe that the Scottish Government should provide support for the production and promotion of materials which will facilitate the teaching about co-operatives.
- 29 Childcare is essential for many parents and carers, there is a need to develop more flexible and responsive childcare which meets the needs of modern families. We will promote co-operative and mutual models of wrap-around childcare, which empowers parents and carers and allows them the ability to ensure that their needs are met.
- 30 We believe that cultural policy is important to Scotland's future and that Scotland's culture belongs to all the people of Scotland. Major cultural institutions should be accountable to the people who finance them, mostly the public. Boards of cultural trusts and quangos should look for ways to include service users and/or workers on their boards. These organisations should act in a way that takes the interests of workers and of service users or customers into account.
- 31 We recognise that co-operatives can play a key role in arts and culture. For example, by forming secondary marketing co-operatives for all the cultural bodies in a particular location. Artists may also form their own co-operative in order to secure work. There is a very strong case for a secondary co-operative to deliver back-office services for groups of cultural organisations in a particular location or sectors.
- 32 We support fan ownership in football and other sporting clubs. The Scottish Government should support Supporters' Direct Scotland to promote co-operative ownership of sports clubs. Genuinely community owned sports clubs should also receive tax breaks.

the scottish co-operative party

politics for people

The Scottish Co-operative Party is part of a global co-operative movement that includes over one billion people around the world. The United Nations estimated in 1994 that the livelihood of nearly 3 billion people, or half of the world's population, was made secure by co-operative enterprise. These enterprises continue to play significant economic and social roles in their communities.

We work with the Labour Party to influence its policies towards more co-operative solutions through our 25 Labour and Co-operative MPs, 15 Peers, 4 MSPs, 9 AMs and hundreds of local councillors.

**To contact or to join the Co-operative Party in Scotland,
email scotland@party.coop or go to party.coop/join**



the co-operative party

Yes I'm in -
I'd like to become a member
of the Co-operative Party

Name:

Email:

Address:

Postcode

Phone:

Date of Birth:

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

I declare myself a Co-operator, and agree to accept the programme, policy and constitution of the Co-operative Party, national and local. I will do all in my power to promote the policy of the Party as declared from time to time. I am not a member of any political Party other than Labour or SDLP. I am a member of a recognised co-operative as determined by the NEC.

Signature:

I am a member of these co-ops:

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Address:

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Service User's Number:

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