

# making scotland's councils co-operative

the scottish co-operative party



years of pioneering the future  
1917-2017

# foreword

I am proud to be a Scottish Co-operative Party MSP as our party celebrates its centenary. A lot has changed over the last 100 years, but the values and principles of co-operation are still as relevant as ever.

I am delighted to see in this document a number of ways in which Scottish councils can put these values into action. I will be campaigning with colleagues across Scotland to secure the election of Scottish Labour and Co-operative Party candidates in every corner of our country.

Over the past five years, our two biggest cities - Glasgow and Edinburgh - have been Co-operative Councils. This has put the values of co-operation at the heart of politics in our greatest cities. I have seen at first-hand the change this has brought about, from supporting the Edinburgh Solar Co-operative to helping to develop Bala Sports and their Fairtrade footballs used in the Homeless World Cup in Glasgow last summer.

Fundamentally, being a Co-operative Council is about empowering people.

It is, as my friend Councillor Andrew Burns, says, 'about doing things with people not to people.' That is an approach which also sums up my approach to politics, and I would like to thank Andrew for his years of service to the people of our capital city.

There are a wide range of policies outlined in this document which could transform local government in Scotland. Scottish Labour and Co-operative Party candidates will continue to find local solutions to local problems in the face of the centralising tendencies of the Scottish Government.

My Debtbusters campaign was motivated by hearing about people being exploited by pay-day lenders and loan sharks. I recognised that people could help to solve the problem by joining together in financial co-operatives, otherwise known as credit unions. This document promises more support for credit unions.

I support the Scottish Co-operative Party's People's Bus campaign. It is important that local people have a greater say over bus services. It is a scandal that the highly-subsidised





bus industry is allowed to cherry-pick profitable routes. This often leaves the poor and the elderly isolated. There is no point in a pensioners' bus pass if there are no bus services. Across Scotland I want councils to have more power over public transport and I want to see a bus service which is run in the interests of passengers and workers - not solely in the interests of shareholders.

Everyone must pay their fair share and that includes businesses. I want to see our councils use their economic power to ensure that businesses pay their way. I am delighted to see the Scottish Co-operative Party champion the Fair Tax Mark.

The Co-operative Party is the only political party to have received the Fair Tax Mark; this certifies they have paid the appropriate taxes in the appropriate jurisdiction. We should ensure that businesses that want public contracts are making the appropriate contribution to our society by paying their taxes.

A wide range of co-operative organisations already have the Fair

Tax mark such as the Co-operative Group. Scottish-based organisations such as Scotmid Co-operative and SSE also have the Fair Tax Mark. It should be our aim for Scotland's councils to have the Fair Tax Mark.

I want power to be given to the people. Power should not all be in Westminster and neither should it all be in Holyrood. Devolution should not stop in our City Chambers and town halls - I want to empower the people of Scotland. I want to give people a real say in how their councils work.

People across Scotland are crying out for change and I believe that by supporting Scottish Co-operative Party candidates and Scottish Co-operative Party policies we can deliver a different way of doing politics – the change that people want. **Giving power to the people.**



**Kezia Dugdale**  
**MSP**

Leader,  
Scottish Labour



# introduction



**Cathy  
Peattie**

Chair, Scottish  
Co-operative  
Party

As the Co-operative Party celebrates its centenary year we are keen to promote the value and principles of co-operation which inspired the Fenwick Weavers, the Rochdale Pioneers and Mary Barbour amongst others and make them relevant for 2017. Our principles are as relevant today as they were in 1917.

At this election, we are seeking to elect as many co-operators as possible to Scotland's councils. We want to do this because we believe that they will make a difference to their local communities. Co-operative Party councillors will empower local people by listening to them and making sure that council services are responsive to the needs of local people.

We are putting forward a wide range of co-operative ideas in this election. Fundamentally, our approach is about doing things with people rather than to people. We reject the centralising approach of the Scottish Government and think that decisions should be made as locally as possible.


In this document, we are keen to promote co-operative councils as we believe that this is an important way to deliver our values and principles. We think that councils across Scotland should be looking to promote co-operatives as a way of promoting economic development and empowerment.

Our campaign for People's Buses across Scotland is hugely important. Our councils subsidise profitable private companies operating bus services. It is important that we give local people more of a say over bus services in their area. There is no point in our pensioners having a free bus pass if there are no buses near their house for them to use. We want to give councils and local people more of a say over local bus services.

Local government can use its economic power as a force for good. Local government should follow the lead of co-ops like Scotmid and the Co-operative Group, as well as the Co-operative Party and sign up to the Fair Tax Mark. No public money should go to organisations which do not pay their way on this country.

We will have candidates across the length and breadth of this country making the case for co-operative policies and making a real difference in their communities and in council chambers.





## **The Co-operative Ideal places collective benefit above personal gain.**

It is based on mutual responsibility and emphasises sustainable development. The Co-operative Party promotes co-operative principles, mutual models of governance and the success of co-operatives.

The Scottish Co-operative Party believes in creating a Fairer, Better, More Co-operative Scotland. We know that our councillors across Scotland are already doing just that.

Please note that the paragraphs are numbered for ease of reference and the numbers do not represent a priority.

- 1 | The Scottish Co-operative Party strongly believes that all councils should look to become 'Co-operative Councils' and join the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network.
- 2 | Councils should operate in a co-operative manner, which where possible promotes formal co-operative structures, but which also seeks to empower local people. Fundamentally this can be summed up in the phrase, 'doing things with people, rather than to people'.
- 3 | 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 then there needs to be a large increase in the number of services which are delivered co-operatively. Because 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
- 4 | Councils should sign-up to the Fair Tax Mark to promote tax transparency, and tender processes should be altered to ensure that contractors are paying the appropriate rate of tax in this country.
- 5 | 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.
- 6 | 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 the range of co-operative models and social enterprises should be encouraged.

- 7** | We support a Land Value Tax as a means of funding Scottish Local Government in the future. Land Value Taxation has the ability to radically change the way in which we raise public revenue by means of an annual charge on the rental value of land. It would replace council tax and national non-domestic rates with a land value tax. Local Authorities in parts of Australia, New Zealand and North America have all adopted local forms of land value taxation. This is likely to not only improve economic stability but also stimulate investment in more productive elements of the UK economy over the medium to long term.
- 8** | Councils should examine the size and extent of the Co-operative and Mutual sector of the economy in their area and its potential for growth; and make recommendations for practical action for the authority to implement.
- 9** | Procurement procedures should make it easy for co-operatives to tender for council contracts. Councils should report on their level of involvement with the co-operative and mutual sector. Procurement should consider issues other than price, for example looking at the location of contractors and their business practices.
- 10** | Employee ownership and co-operatives should be facilitated, supported, and encouraged in partnership with trade unions. Economic Development advisers should be able to promote the co-operative model to those aiming to set up a business. The Co-operative Council model where councils can consider developing local employee, consumer and secondary co-operatives to create jobs should be promoted.
- 11** | We will promote amendments to planning legislation to favour genuinely community-owned co-operatives.
- 12** | 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.



- 13** | 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.
- 14** | We will ensure that education and training around the co-operative model is available at all levels of school, we would also encourage education and training around the co-operative model in Further and Higher Education. This would build on the work of Co-operative Education Trust Scotland. We would ensure that all economic development agencies are open to developing co-operatives and have the practical knowledge and resources to do so.
- 15** | 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 can 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. 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.
- 16** | 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.

- 17** | 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.
- 18** | We will look at the ways in which local government can support the mutual provision of rail services.
- 19** | We will look for ways in which the co-operative or communal ownership of bicycles can be promoted.
- 20** | There should be tax and planning advantages for any renewable energy scheme which can demonstrate genuine community involvement through co-operatives.
- 21** | We strongly support community-owned energy. Local government and communities should be encouraged to develop energy buying deals which should 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 system should look favourably upon schemes which are genuinely community or co-operatively owned.
- 22** | We will look at ways of empowering service users and staff by creating service-user led co-operatives and worker co-operatives in the health and social care sectors.
- 23** | In terms of social care, we believe that some 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.

- 24** | The move towards Integrated Joint Boards in the provision of social care needs to be accompanied by more transparency. There needs to be clear democratic control over social care and a clear means of making representations about any issues that come up.
- 25** | 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.
- 26** | Strategically, this could be by making sure that local credit union development is a priority for the council's community and economic development work. Practically, this would involve working with credit unions to develop ways that credit unions are able to have a customer-facing presence in councils' front offices, libraries, schools, housing offices and community centres, that they benefit from council bill payment and cash collection and handling facilities, and feature in council publications and communications with residents and tenants.
- 27** | To promote credit unions councils should offer employee payroll deduction and encouraging other local employers to do the same. They should explore the potential of the council making a deposit in a credit union account for each secondary school age pupil, as Glasgow City Council have done – and ways of incentivising council and social housing tenants to take up credit union membership and save regularly.
- 28** | Councils should support local credit unions to access high visibility shop front premises at peppercorn rents.
- 29** | 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.



- 30** | 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.
- 31** | 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.
- 32** | When councils have surplus buildings or land which they intend to sell, consideration should be given to retaining these as a community resource through co-operative structures.
- 33** | We support the promotion of local produce and the greater use of locally sourced food, including supporting food co-operatives which we recognise can make a real difference to Scotland's communities.
- 34** | We will support and encourage the employee co-ownership model of working which helps distribute wealth to employees and encourages long service.
- 35** | 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. We call on the Scottish Government to offer more support for housing co-operatives.
- 36** | We believe that there is a very strong case for a co-operative approach to education. An approach that seeks to include pupils, students, parents and carers, teachers and other staff in the organisation of the learning experience.

- 37** | 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.
- 38** | We believe that the governance of our education system should be open and transparent and have clear democratic controls. Any move towards a regional education board must be accompanied by a clear understanding of how democratic control is exercised.
- 39** | 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.
- 40** | 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. There is also a very strong case for a secondary co-operative to deliver back-office services for groups of cultural organisations in a particular location.
- 41** | 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. Other examples are of artists forming their own co-operative to secure work.
- 42** | 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 receive tax breaks. Councils should support sports clubs, in all sports and at all levels which are clearly owned and run in the interests of the local community.



## Community Shares Offer 2015

Portpatrick Harbour Community Benefit Society is issuing a share offer and wants your support. By purchasing Community shares you can participate in supporting our community to save and secure the future of Portpatrick's Harbour

Visit one of our information points to find out more;

The Putting Green   Smugglers Cove   Crown Hotel   Harbour House Hotel  
Beachcomber   The Port Pantry   Harbour Fish Bar

Alternatively you can find out more information and register your interest at

facebook

portpatrickharbourcommunitybenefitsociety

[www.portpatrickharbour.org](http://www.portpatrickharbour.org)

twitter  
portpatrick







# politics for people

✉ [info@party.coop](mailto:info@party.coop)

  [coopparty](#)

[www.party.coop](http://www.party.coop)



Co-operative Party Limited is a registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registered no. 30027R.