



co-operative
party
local



Ideas for your local election manifesto

For more information, case studies and downloadable resources, visit www.party.coop/local/toolkit or contact Local Government officer Emma Hoddinott at local@party.coop and [@coopartylocal](https://twitter.com/coopartylocal)

1. Build a fairer local economy

Community Wealth Building is a whole-area approach to local economic development, focused on ensuring that wealth created in the community stays there. A good first step is to work with local anchor institutions (including your own council) on their procurement policies, ensuring as much of their spending power as possible benefits local people and is channelled through co-operatives and social businesses.

2. Protect community assets

Whether it's a much-loved community centre, a post office or a pub, if it's owned by the people who use it, it can't be sold off to the highest bidder. Using the Localism Act, councils can help communities take control, and ensure there are no community asset deserts – places where there are no assets or resources within a reasonable distance of their communities.

3. Put food poverty at the top of the agenda

Despite being the sixth richest country on Earth, 8 million people in the UK struggle to put food on the table. Councils have a leadership role in tackling hunger and promoting the wider concept of food justice, from tackling holiday hunger and supporting local foodbanks, to promoting community growing projects and co-operative allotments.

4. Lead the fight against corporate tax avoidance

Billions are missing from our public purse because some companies choose to avoid tax. Not only does this mean less money for vital public services, but also that local businesses can't compete because it is not a level playing field. Promoting the Fair Tax Mark is one way to empower consumers to shop with those who pay their share.

5. **Ensure safer workers and safer communities**

Every day more than 250 retail workers face violence and abuse, just for doing their jobs. Councils can work with trade unions and police and crime commissioners to draw attention to the issue, as well as ensuring that community safety and policing plans prioritise tackling violence against shop workers, recognising the impact it has on individuals and the wider community.

Councils can also lead a co-operative approach to community safety by working across the public sector to ensure joined-up, preventative services; working with communities and the third sector in a meaningful way; and involving businesses to create safer towns and communities.

6. **Establish a private tenants' association to give private renters a voice**

By the end of 2021 almost one in four households will be private renters. Too often this means poor-quality homes, insecure tenancies and rising rents. Councils can play a key role in bringing renters together to support one other and to campaign for better conditions. These associations also provide a valuable sounding board for constructively shaping future council policy.

7. **Support new co-operative and community-led housing**

Co-operatives can play a role in helping to increase the supply of affordable housing in your community. These community-led projects create employment opportunities for local people in the construction industry and stimulate economic growth.

8. **Support and invest in community energy schemes**

Community energy enables people to come together to control where their energy comes from, contribute to a sustainable future, generate local benefit for their neighbourhood, and create jobs and training opportunities for local people. By coming together locally, councils and residents can explore ways to reduce, purchase, manage and generate energy.

9. **Promote and develop credit unions as an affordable alternative to payday lenders and commercial banks**

1.7 million people lack access to a bank account. Without access to mainstream finance, a broken washing machine or new school uniform can be enough to push hard squeezed families over the edge. Credit unions are financial co-operatives, owned by members that offer fairer financial services for their members. Councils can assist credit unions to reach into communities and ensure access to basic finance.

10. **Give service users a voice in the decisions that affect them**

The old top-down models are broken. The Co-operative Party believes that it is time for decisions to be made closer to the people affected by them. Councils can change the way they work with service users so they work together, for example in social care, that means replacing a broken and unaccountable market with one in which care recipients, care workers and their families are in the driving seat.

11. **Take a stand against Modern Slavery in your area**

Modern Slavery is happening under our noses in nail bars, car washes, farms, factories and restaurants. Make sure your council is one of the 90+ councils which have signed our Charter Against Modern Slavery. If your council has already signed, make sure you report on progress annually, and consider producing your own transparency statement as a next step.

12. **End transport inequality by promoting community transport and not-for-profit bus operators**

For communities missed off the map by commercial providers, community transport and services such as dial-a-ride can be a lifeline. Access to transport ensures people have an affordable way to travel to school, work, and the shops, and can access other vital services, tackling social and economic exclusion.