**‘The Future Co-operative Economy’**

 **Consultation Questions – Policy Process 2025**

**Introduction**

Our policy platform sets the agenda for our party and its representatives, and puts forward our programme for Parliament. In the tradition of co-operation, our policy process is member-led and this is your opportunity to shape the ideas we’ll take to all levels of Government.

This year, the policy consultation will focus on developing ideas for a future co-operative economy. To thrive in the coming decades, the co-operative movement must ensure it takes advantage of new opportunities created as a result of innovation and technological change. The co-operative model can help to harness new technology for common benefit – establishing democratic models which work for workers and consumers. Platform technology co-operatives are already emerging and this consultation will look to generate policy proposals which boost this development.

The co-operative model can ensure a changing world of work meets the needs and aspirations of people - providing security, equity and accountability. Co-operative models can help freelancers, the self-employed and agency workers to achieve better pay, conditions and flexibility. This consultation will investigate how these models can become more common place in the UK economy.

This consultation will enable members and local party branches to submit their views on what the future co-operative economy should look like. Members can provide their thoughts on where the co-operative sector should look to grow; how it can adapt to challenges and innovation for the future.

Members are invited to share their views and ideas through our consultation, running until **Friday 13th June**.

**How to get involved**

There are a number of ways to get involved – you could attend your local party meeting to discuss the topics and share your collective views or submit your individual answers to us, both via the online portal.

Resources and support are available to help you convene your meetings online, and you can also learn more at one of our regional conferences happening through the year.

Your contributions will be collected and considered by the NEC’s policy sub-committee, who use your ideas and feedback to shape policy proposals. These will be brought to the Co-operative Party annual conference in the Autumn for delegates to debate and vote on.

These consultation questions are a guide for members. We do encourage you to share anything they feel is relevant to the debate and should not feel obliged to answer every single question either.

**General**

* What support mechanisms are required to ensure co-operative and mutual businesses can emerged and compete in industries where they currently have a limited presence?
* What is required to support increased innovation output by co-operative and mutual businesses?
* How can we upskill people in existing industries and the co-operative sector to be ready for new technologies?
* Please provide any further proposals for industries or technologies which the co-operative and mutual economy should look to expand into.
* What is the role of regional and local co-operative development agencies in achieving co-operative growth in new and emerging sectors?

**Media & Press**

* How can we ensure workers have the opportunity to purchase their publication when they are put up for sale or at risk of closure?
* How can co-operative models help to save local and regional newspapers?
* How would mutual models support the future of television broadcasters?
* How can we ensure co-operatives can compete in digital media and social media?

**New technologies**

* How can the UK’s governments support the development of platform co-operatives?
* What other support infrastructure is required to assist the development of new platform co-operatives? i.e. university spin-out support, R&D support, tailored business support, awareness raising
* What is needed to ensure co-operatives can adopt new technologies and expand into new markets – i.e. cybersecurity, website and software development, etc.?
* How can we ensure new tech and platform co-operatives have the start-up and patient capital available to grow and compete with other tech firms?
* How can we ensure co-operatives can adopt AI technology and help ensure its ethical development – aligning with the Government’s AI growth agenda?
* What is the role of decentralised co-operative structures in online spaces?

**Freelance & Self-employment**

* How can we ensure business support promotes the co-operative model to freelancers, the self-employed, agency workers and sole traders?
* How can central and local government encourage the development of freelance and self-employed co-operatives?

**Creative Industries**

* How can central and local government encourage creative industry workers to adopt co-operative business models?
* How can we enable the development of freelance co-ops for creative industry workers?
* How can co-operative and community owned models help music and entertainment venues to survive and thrive?

**Scotland**

* What is the role of Co-operative Development Scotland and other agencies in targeting co-operative growth in emerging industries & technologies? What support do they need to provide to achieve growth?
* How can the Scottish Government support the expansion of co-operatives in creative industries?
* How can the Scottish Government enable greater innovation by co-operatives?
* What is the role of the Scottish National Investment Bank in supporting co-operative innovation and platform co-operatives?

**Wales**

* What is the role of Cwmpas in targeting co-operative growth in emerging industries? What support do they need to provide to achieve growth?
* How can the Welsh Government incentivise the development of co-operative models for the self-employed, freelancers and agency workers?
* How can the Welsh Government support co-operative media development – particularly for publications under threat of closure?
* What is the role of the Welsh Development Bank in supporting co-operative innovation and platform co-operatives?

**Northern Ireland**

* What’s is the role of Northern Ireland Executive’s business support services in supporting co-operative growth in emerging technologies and creative industries?
* How can Invest NI facilitate access to capital for start-up co-operatives and mutuals to expand into new markets?
* What is the role of Northern Ireland’s higher and further education institutions in promoting co-operative and mutual growth in new and emerging industries?