



**Co-operative Party**

# **Northern Irish Local Government Consultation Questions**

## **Policy Process 2026**

### **Introduction**

Our policy platform sets the agenda for our party and its representatives at every level of government. Reflecting co-operative values and principles, our policy process is member-led and this is your opportunity to have your say on our future policy objectives.

This year, the policy consultation will focus on expanding our policy offering for co-operative councils and councillors. The Co-operative Party has recently reached historic highs and currently boasts over 1,400 councillors across the UK, which is approximately a quarter of elected Labour councillors. This provides the opportunity to put co-operative values, principles and policies into action in communities across the country. Labour and Co-operative councillors have helped to pioneer community energy development, support the creation of new co-operatives, take action against modern slavery and undertaken many more actions to benefit their residents. This consultation will seek to learn from councillors and members on how we can take this local government work forward – so that co-operation can benefit every community. Whether you're a sitting councillor, a council candidate or a party member we want to hear from you.

Local authorities in the devolved nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have partially different powers and structure, so please do tailor your submission to your national setting. There are specific questions for each of the devolved nations below.

The consultation will also review our policies for Metro Mayors and combined authorities. The Co-operative Party currently has 7 Metro Mayors – representing many of the biggest urban areas in England – including Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and the West Midlands. Following the changes introduced by the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill, Metro Mayors will receive additional powers over skills and training, transport, housing and more. This means Metro Mayors will be more important than ever to delivering co-operative policies and solutions across the nation. We want to hear from you on how empowered Metro Mayors and Combined Authorities can make a real difference to building co-operation.

Members are invited to share their views and ideas through our consultation, running until **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July**.

### **Northern Irish Local Government Consultation Questions**



## Co-operative Development

- What resources or support would help you to encourage co-operative growth in your local council area?
- How can councils ensure local authority procurement supports local co-operatives and mutuals?
- What training would help councillors and council officers more effectively support local co-operative development?
- How can councils be encouraged to make co-operative growth a core part of local economic development? What would encourage councils to work more closely with partners (i.e. universities, colleges, etc.) on this agenda?

## Community Ownership

- What can councils do to promote more community ownership across Northern Ireland?
- How can Northern Irish councils help expand community ownership of local amenities and public spaces?
- What changes to council policies can enable them to more effectively support the development of community-owned assets?
- How can we ensure councils prioritise community ownership for local assets and institutions at risk of closure? I.e. libraries, leisure centres, etc.

## Community Energy

- How can councillors serve as convenors for local residents interested in community energy?
- How can councils make the most of the Local Power Plan and other public funding programmes to develop new community energy capacity?
- What can councils do to act as anchors for local community energy projects? i.e. providing public land for renewable energy installations, etc.
- What do councils need from GB Energy in order to deliver a new generation of community energy owners in Northern Ireland through the Local Power Plan?
- What type of support or training would be most effective for helping councils to support community energy development?
- How can councils ensure their procurement and energy purchasing helps to support the development of community energy projects?



## Mutual Financial Services

- What can councils do to support local credit unions and mutual financial services across Northern Ireland?
- What can councils do to encourage the growth of local credit union and building society membership in their local area?
- How can credit unions and building societies play a role in delivering economic growth in Northern Ireland?
- How can councils work with mutual financial providers to improve financial inclusion and personal financial security for residents?

## Co-op & Community Housing

- How can planning be reformed to support community-led housing development throughout Northern Ireland?
- How can councils make it easier to develop housing co-ops and community led housing? What policies would make it easier to develop new housing in Northern Ireland?

## Embedding Co-operative Values

- How can councils establish a more co-operative way of working with local communities and partner organisations?
- How can councils develop a more co-operative way of working with other local authorities and other public sector institutions (i.e. NHS Trusts, universities, etc.)?
- How can Northern Irish councils help to promote community cohesion through co-operative values and principles?

## Procurement & Tax

- How can councillors encourage an increase in procurement from co-operative providers?
- What more can councils do to encourage their local business community and third sector organisations to pay and sign-up to fair tax status?

## Food Justice

- What is needed to support councils to reduce local food insecurity?
- How can co-operatives help to reduce local food poverty in Northern Ireland?

## Community Transport



## **Co-operative Party**

- What would help ensure the sustainability of local community transport services in urban, rural and remote Northern Ireland?

### **Childcare & Youth Services**

- What is needed to facilitate local council development of co-operative childcare and children's services?
- How can councils encourage the development of co-operative or community-owned youth services in Northern Ireland?

### **Safer & Stronger High Streets**

- What local activity could councillors undertake to help reduce instances of retail crime?
- How can community-owned initiatives become a more integral part of council-led regeneration initiatives?

### **Arts, Culture & Sports**

- What can Northern Irish councils do to support co-operative and community-led organisations in the arts?
- How can councils safeguard music and arts venues through community-ownership across Northern Ireland?
- How can councils promote community owned sports clubs and sporting facilities?