

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG Name:	Co-operative Councils Innovation Network
Lead Member:	Sharon Taylor, Leader of Stevenage Council and Chair of the CCIN
Lead Officer:	Jonathan Downs, Principal Policy Officer, Oldham Council

Aim

The Cooperative Councils Innovation Network is a collaboration between local authorities who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.

Our work recognises the need to define a new model for local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities.

This means a new role for local authorities that replaces traditional models of top down governance and service delivery with local leadership, genuine co-operation, and a new approach built on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement: collective action, co-operation, empowerment and enterprise. We provide a national voice for cooperative councils, informed by real experience and practice, with the aim of drawing on, influencing and framing national policy and political debates about the future of public services, local democracy, and communities across the country.

Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken

The CCIN work programme is split into larger projects (called Policy Labs) and smaller projects (called Policy Prototypes). Policy Labs are bigger collaborative pieces of work that CCIN members will work on together, while Policy Prototypes are smaller projects that are delivered by individual members on behalf of the network. Over the past twelve months the following Policy Prototypes and Policy Labs have been delivered:

Policy Prototypes:

1. **Welcoming and helping refugees and asylum seekers** – Cardiff Council: With the refugee crisis likely to continue, many people in Britain want to make a difference and to contribute towards a positive response, but at present do not know the best and easiest way to get involved in supporting these vulnerable people. As well as providing formal training courses, Cardiff have mobilised volunteers and local communities to come together to support refugees and asylum seekers in providing a range of additional cultural learning opportunities and community activities.
2. **Closing the education attainment gap** – City of Edinburgh Council: In partnership with CCIN Councils Edinburgh have researched, identified and shared good practice from out of school care provision across Councils. Through

identifying best practice, they have worked with the parent-led, out of school care organisations, to develop a network of support for homework opportunities within breakfast club and afterschool settings.

3. **Mental Health Day** – Telford and Wrekin Council: Through collaboration with Telford Crisis Network, Telford and Wrekin organised a Mental Health Day in April 2016. The purpose of the event was to provide a joined up approach to improve support for service users across the borough.

Policy Labs:

1. **Beyond Asset Transfer** – Newcastle City Council: For some organisations, asset transfer has opened up new and exciting opportunities, whilst others have considered the option, but have decided not to pursue asset transfer due to governance and / or financial capacity. To continue to develop the concept of cooperative asset transfer, Newcastle has conducted a study into how successful organisations have been, post asset transfer. This project will enable Network Members to strengthen their support and practice around this important agenda. It will also help to define asset transfer policy in a cooperative context.
2. **Housing Commission** – Croydon Council: Symptoms of housing stress are increasingly apparent. Affordability is a major problem with rising house prices and 4 private rents, mortgages and the deposits required to secure them out of reach of families on average salaries, landlord repossessions are currently the biggest driver of homelessness, and rough sleeping is increasing in our cities. Croydon have establish a Housing Commission to examine how local councils can best work with their local communities, house builders, land owners, funders and other partners to provide the new homes we desperately need.
3. **From Co-operative Councils' to Co-operative Places** – Oldham and Sunderland Council: From Co-operative Councils to Co-operative Places is the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network's (CCIN) latest report which sets out a strong statement of intent about the future direction of the co-operative council approach. It is increasingly time for councils to be catalysts of place, working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities in what can feel like an increasingly fragmenting and unpredictable political backdrop.