

**CO-OPERATIVES UK**

**EMPOWERING →**  
**CO-OPERATION**



Communicating our strategy 2022–2024



# **INTRODUCTION**

As the voice of the UK's co-operative movement, we empower and support co-operative enterprise with specialised knowledge and expertise, to grow the co-operative economy and create a fairer society.

From football clubs and farms, to convenience stores and pubs, there are more than 7,000 co-operatives in the UK, each owned and controlled by their members and based on a set of shared principles and values.

By promoting shared wealth through member ownership, we are committed to enable anyone in the UK to form, or join, thriving and sustainable co-ops.



## AIM

**BY INSPIRING EVERYONE TO BE A MEMBER OF A CO-OP, AND EVERY CO-OP TO BE ONE OF OUR MEMBERS, WE WILL HELP CREATE A FAIRER SOCIETY TOGETHER.**

# OBJECTIVES

1. To build a strong, sustainable and diverse UK co-operative movement that positions co-operatives as a better way to do business and transform people's lives.
2. To promote and embed the values and principles of co-operation across UK enterprise and communities.

**EMPOWERING  
CO-OPERATION**



# **THEMES**

## **EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE**

We inspire and support the next generation of co-operation to help secure a sustainable future for the movement and society.

## **ENABLE TECH AND DIGITAL**

We innovate and disrupt just like our pioneers. By embracing and promoting the power of technology and the digital experience, we share knowledge, data, and expertise for the good of our members and society.

## **LEAD A NEW ERA OF CO-OPERATION**

We facilitate and empower greater co-operation between co-ops to help grow a stronger, more connected, and sustainable co-operative movement.

## **EMBED THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

We act as a beacon of co-operation in everything we do, to grow the movement by supporting best practice in the principles and values of co-operation.

## **INSPIRE COMMUNITIES**

We reach the right people with the right messages and the support they need.

# **THEMES**

## **EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE**

We inspire and support the next generation of co-operation to help secure a sustainable future for the movement and society.

Young people are the future of the movement and the values of Generation Z chime with the co-operative values. Young people today are facing an uncertain future where climate anxiety and job insecurity are major factors in their lives. The co-operative movement offers them hope and solutions to transform and enable a fairer future for everyone.

We have a real opportunity to raise awareness of co-ops in young people by aligning our social change campaigning activity with issues like climate change that young people care about.

Co-operatives UK will provide a welcoming and enabling environment for young people to engage in our co-operative as members, as staff and as board members and actively recruit young people in our organisation including the development of apprenticeships.

This will commence with a national youth conference on co-operation to assess the challenges and opportunities facing our young people in the context of co-operation.

We will amplify and if necessary, develop youth co-operative networks, youth-led co-op initiatives and federal members of Co-operatives UK aimed at engaging young people. The conference will inform a young co-op or co-operators' membership package, working with co-operative youth initiatives and our partners to raise awareness of and engagement with co-operatives.

# THEMES

## ENABLE TECH AND DIGITAL

We innovate and disrupt just like our pioneers. By embracing and promoting the power of technology and the digital experience, we share knowledge, data, and expertise for the good of our members and society.

We are in a pivotal decade for mankind, on the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution. A series of technological advancements are converging together that will significantly impact the way we live, work and consume.

This presents opportunities for the co-operative movement to enable transformative solutions through disruptive technology. We will continue to invest in the development and growth of the platform co-operative market to deliver this.

We will work with our members and partners to enable public policy support for changes in legislation and the practice of data ownership, ethical tech and coding, where relevant. We will support standards for co-operative tech solutions working with expert tech co-ops.

In addition, this revolution presents a challenge for the digital capacity of Co-operatives UK, which we will address to accelerate future growth and improve service delivery. In the first instance, we will deliver more for our members through effective internal systems and efficiency. Investing in digital will enable Co-operatives UK to be efficient and high performing, analysing data to deepen our understanding of the co-op movement and our members to have greater impact in delivering our aims.

Once this initial work is complete, we can use digital tools to give members more opportunities to have their voices heard, developing tech capability to enable democratic ownership and control of Co-operatives UK and our member services. Finally, we will explore the digital needs of our members and scope any tech and digital products that could be scalable and sellable.

# **THEMES**

## **LEAD A NEW ERA OF CO-OPERATION**

We facilitate and empower greater co-operation between co-ops to help grow a stronger, more connected, and sustainable co-operative movement.

We will lead a ‘new era of co-operation’, with closer working between all co-operative infrastructure bodies, our federal members and our members. We will work with the Co-operative College, The Co-operative Heritage Trust, Co-op Press and Co-op Party in the first instance to map and differentiate our membership offers, and where appropriate develop joint offers to provide value for all our members.

This will include brokering opportunities for volunteering, mentoring and coaching with our members and co-operative infrastructure bodies, matching up expertise and opportunities.

We will actively seek, negotiate and promote affinity deals and member offers to embed more co-operation amongst co-operatives as a key benefit of Co-operatives UK membership. Using this model, we will develop best practice co-operative expertise in our current in house advisers, and work with consultants and other co-operative organisations to develop a network of expertise.

We will build effective cross-party support for co-operatives, building partnerships to amplify our lobbying activity. We will utilise Holyoake House and develop the International Working Group to tell our story locally, nationally and internationally maintaining Co-operatives UK’s position as a global expert in co-operation.



# **THEMES**

## **EMBED THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

We act as a beacon of co-operation in everything we do, to grow the movement by supporting best practice in the principles and values of co-operation.

We will set new values-led standards and categories for membership of Co-operatives UK and push the bar for all co-ops to deliver authentically on the values and principles of co-operation. We will develop a non-voting membership that allows organisations that do not meet the co-op identity to constitute as a co-operative, but do meet our values to engage with our member services.

We will strengthen our position as the co-operative experts and authoritative voice for co-ops through delivering trustworthy and quality advice, best practice, standards and codes of conduct, so all potential and existing co-operatives can access advice that meets their needs. This will be delivered by in-house experts, a network of co-operative consultants that we will nurture and grow, and by working with other co-operatives to become a beacon of excellent co-operative practice.

In doing this we will promote a range of standards and measures that embed the values and principles, ensure co-operative excellence and articulate the co-operative difference, demonstrating why people should choose co-operatives.

We proactively seek diversity and embed ‘member voice’ in our culture, through our AGM, board elections, member interest groups and Co-op Congress to grow a sustainable and inclusive membership that reflects a diverse and thriving UK co-operative movement.

Recognising our consumer society members’ support and the changing landscape we operate in, we will deliver bespoke membership engagement that is meaningful to each society. We will also develop packages of support that can easily be adapted to different sectors of our membership especially worker co-ops.

Ultimately, we will ensure the co-operative business model is forward-looking and relevant by securing policy wins that meet the common needs and aspirations of key constituencies of our members, creating the right environment for co-ops to form and thrive.

# THEMES

## INSPIRE COMMUNITIES

We reach the right people with the right messages and the support they need.

Co-operatives UK has developed some excellent community-based offers across the past decade, and we will now consolidate our offer to focus on where we are most effective and most needed. In 2022 we will scope, tender and complete a communities' audit to understand where we have influence and what different co-operative development opportunities exist across the UK. We will be looking to work closely with our members and amplify the work of our federal members.

We will continue to develop business support programmes (such as The Hive), tech accelerators (such as Unfound) and market development (Ownership Hub, Empowering Places) working with partners to reach diverse and relevant communities with clear and effective support. We will create and support co-op champions, ambassadors and business advisors who understand and spread the word about co-operatives, working with them to develop and deliver our business development services.

We will embed the principles of co-operation through consolidation and development of our community shares offer, supporting the growth of an inclusive and diverse community shares market across the UK so that people can own the assets and services that matter to them.

We will carry out the first UK census into co-operative membership to better understand the movement and the co-op member so that we can ensure our messages are relevant and clear.

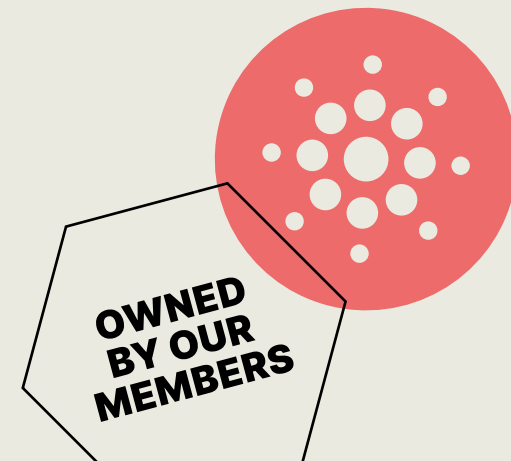
We continuously raise awareness of the co-operative business model and the impact it creates through the distribution of power and wealth, for all relevant stakeholders and communities. We will speak with a strong and meaningful voice to reach the UK public, media, government, local and devolved powers, the business community, our members and co-operatives across the UK.

## **VISION**

**TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD  
THROUGH CO-OPERATION.**

## **MISSION**

**TO EMPOWER AND GROW THE UK'S  
CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY BY BEING  
THE VOICE OF CO-OPERATION AND  
MEMBER OWNERSHIP.**



# CO-OPERATIVES UK

The background features a large, stylized gear with a sun-like center, composed of interlocking gears of various sizes. The entire graphic is rendered in a light, textured red color against a solid dark red background.

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