

County Council: 17 March 2026

Agenda Item No. 8(b) – Motion from Councillor Alex Bulat

Proposed by Councillor I Manning Seconded by Councillor

Additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough

This Council notes:

- the United Nations ~~has~~ designated 2025 as the International Year of Co-operatives in recognition of the economic and social impact of member-owned enterprises underpinned by shared ownership, democratic governance and mutual benefit.
- the work of the International Co-operative Alliance in supporting around three million co-operatives worldwide, celebrates the contribution of UK co-operative retail societies to local communities and national economic life, contributing an estimated £179.2 billion to the UK economy; and recognises the importance of efforts to grow and strengthen the UK co-operative sector in order to build a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy.

This Council welcomes that:

- the co-operative model provides a sustainable way of providing local government services that empower residents, service users and employees, giving them a fair share and an equal say.
- **the co-operative model is widely used across the European Union, particularly through Cooperatives Europe (<https://coopseurope.coop/>) and this aligns with Cambridgeshire County Council's positive view of European Integration.**
- **co-operative models include a diverse range of setups, including but not limited to: mutuals, employee ownership and share ownership. The fundamental principle is of supporting workplace democracy.**
- local **district** councils up and down the country have already put these values into practice in a number of ways, for example developing the co-operative sector, resident and employee-owned companies and co-operative schools and colleges.
- the Council's Procurement and Commercial Strategy does recognise that alternatives including communities is considered at the start of procurement planning,
- there is an opportunity to "choose co-operative" when considering the future of local services, giving residents and communities more of a say in their area, although to date it has not selected this option.

- **a Community Asset Transfer Policy was adopted by the Assets and Procurement Committee on 11th March 2026.**

This Council resolves to:

- reinforce the need for commissioners and contract owners to consider and evidence consideration of incorporating alternatives, and make it clearer in the Procurement Strategy signed off by Executive Directors that it should include co-operative values and principles when planning services and in its engagement with local Co-operatives, social enterprises, credit unions local and residents. It is accepted this may not be practical in all cases but officers should evidence they have considered this option.
- **continue, through the Assets and Procurement Committee to scrutinise the cooperative principles already present in the Council's policies and procedures, such as the use of the Match My Project platform, including asking officers to note where cooperative values and social value were considered.**
- **continue, through the Assets and Procurement Committee, to scrutinise the Council's engagement with the co-operative and mutual sector in Cambridgeshire and in doing so look to make further recommendations for its potential growth.**
- ~~request that officers consider how to improve engagement with local co-operatives, for example through stakeholder events and engage with the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN).~~
- **Consider membership of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) and bring a report with recommendations to the Asset and Procurement Committee.**
- request officers to explore in developing the planned Community Asset Transfer Policy, the setting up of a community asset transfer fund, so that local communities can own and protect their own assets, although recognising funding for this would need to be identified as part of that consideration.
- ~~using existing procurement resources undertake a pilot audit of a small sample of contractors and suppliers, possibly around the adults and children's care provider market, on how many meet the FairTax Mark standards, pay the Living Wage and continue with and expand our social value and ethical procurement policies and meet appropriate standards on apprenticeships. If this pilot identifies savings or improvements in practice that warrant a more detailed look then a paper be brought back to Assets and Procurement Committee to explore how a full roll out of this approach could be funded, including the potential for self-financing from the audits themselves.~~
- **write to a small, representative sample of our suppliers in the children's care provider market and ask them:**
  - o **if they comply with the Fair Tax Mark standard (<https://taxindex.net/>) and then ask that organisation to corroborate this information;**

- **If they pay the living wage;**
  - **If they have any policies around workforce diversity;**
  - **Bring a short summary report back to the Children and Young People's committee with the responses.**
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- **continue to protect residents by always working hard to connect residents to jobs and opportunities, and through support on help to work schemes and on tackling poverty and the crisis of the cost of living increases.**
  
  - ask that through the Strategy, Resources and Performance and Asset and Procurement Spokes meetings ~~this is discussed to look at what more the Council could do~~ **in this area.**

[The Monitoring Officer advises that the motion relates to a matter for the Council to determine and that the motion is therefore in order as drafted]