

**Report to** Cabinet  
13 February 2013  
**Report of** Executive head of strategy, people and democracy  
**Subject** Co-operative council

**Item**

**16**

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### **Purpose**

To consider becoming a co-operative council.

### **Recommendation**

- a) To become a member of the Co-operative Councils Network
- b) To explore how co-operative approaches and policies can be further developed as part of the ongoing work to reshape the council, in line with the council's blueprint, through the transformation programme.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority Value for money services

### **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

**Ward/s:** All wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Arthur – Leader of the Council

### **Contact officers**

Russell O'Keefe, Executive head of strategy, people and democracy 01603 212908

Rachael Metson, Partnerships manager 01603 212926

### **Background documents**

None

# Report

## Background

1. Throughout local government councils have been looking very closely at what they do and how they do it. The significant financial challenges facing local government has resulted in many council's reviewing their current models of service provision and developing new and different approaches to meeting the needs of their citizens.
2. As part of this work a number of council's have been working to become co-operative councils through the application of co-operative principles. In July 2011 a number of these councils established the Co-operative Councils Network to share best practice and learning in the application of co-operative principles and approaches.
3. Being a co-operative council has been defined simply as one that is working together with its residents, partners and other local organisations to collectively deliver the best it can with the combined resources they have.
4. It has also been stated the "essence of a cooperative council is that services are delivered in cooperation with communities, as close as possible to their needs and aspirations, and with the maximum degree of community ownership."
5. However, each of the council's taking forward a model based on co-operative principles is developing their own specific approaches that will work for their own area, reflecting the different nature of their organisations and the communities they serve.

## Alignment with the council's blueprint and existing approaches

6. In July 2012 Cabinet agreed a new council blueprint (operating model) following a comprehensive process of development and engagement including a peer review.
7. The blueprint is a guide for how the council designs services and structures to deliver the vision and priorities within its Corporate Plan 2012-2015 in a way that proactively addresses the financial pressures and changing policy and legislative environment it faces.
8. It acts as a 'working aide' for those who will be re-designing services and structures for the Council and, therefore, drives and guides the council's ongoing transformation programme.
9. The blueprint sets out key principles across four key areas of the council's operating model:
  - a) Customers
  - b) Organisational design
  - c) People
  - d) Locations

10. The principles within the council's blueprint align very closely with the co-operative council approach. In fact the key overriding theme within the council's blueprint is to be a collaborative council that works effectively with its citizens and partners from all sectors to maximise the impact of its limited resources in the City.
11. Similarly, a range of specific co-operative type approaches are included within the blueprint such as the importance of establishing effective collaborative partnerships, encouraging citizens to be self reliant and self serve wherever possible and using information from citizens to drive service design supported by effective engagement including utilising methods like co-creation.
12. The council already carries out a range of activities and approaches that fit closely with the co-operative council model. A few examples are set out below:
  - a) Establishment of a range of collaborative partnerships, shared services and joint ventures to make the best use of resources to meet priorities.
  - b) Use of collective purchasing approaches and a collective switching scheme for energy provision.
  - c) Operation of a neighbourhood model and a range of community engagement activities to guide service provision and prioritisation such as neighbourhood walkabouts and support to community groups.
  - d) Effective involvement of tenants in the design, delivery and performance of the council's housing service through the tenant involvement framework involving a range of approaches including tenant inspectors.
  - e) Comprehensive engagement of citizens, partners, Unison and employees in the work to reshape the council and meet the council's savings targets through the transformation programme.
  - f) Use of a commissioning framework which provides revenue and capital grants to voluntary organisations and community groups to address local issues.
13. Given the alignment of the council's blueprint and current approaches with the co-operative council model it is recommended that the council formally joins the Co-operative Councils Network so as to be able to benefit from the shared learning provided from the other councils who are pursuing similar directions.
14. It is also recommend that the council explores how co-operative approaches and policies can be further developed as part of the ongoing work to reshape the council, in line with the council's blueprint, through the transformation programme.

## Integrated impact assessment



**NORWICH**  
City Council

### Report author to complete

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Committee date:</b>	13 February 2013
<b>Head of service:</b>	Russell O'Keefe
<b>Report subject:</b>	Co-operative council
<b>Date assessed:</b>	February 2013
<b>Description:</b>	To consider becoming a co-operative council.

	Impact			
<b>Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Recommendations from impact assessment</b>
<b>Positive</b>
<b>Negative</b>
<b>Neutral</b>
<b>Issues</b>