

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 8

REPORT for meeting to be held on 21 September 2017

The co-operative agenda in local government

Summary:

This background report, written collaboratively between officers and the cooperatives lead member, summarises a definition and the background to this topic and work currently being progressed to allow an initial discussion by the committee about areas they may wish to focus on in more detail and to come up with any initial suggestions.

Conclusions:

A report which informs the committee of the current work/case studies of co-operatives throughout the country and how/what city council may be able to implement; what cooperatives currently exist and operate in the district area. To understand how the co-operative and social enterprise sector could contribute to council strategy.

Recommendation:

To agree areas for further review and to consider identifying a suitable time for an all members briefing/workshop about co-operatives. To consider what resources exist locally that could be deployed.

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Background:

1. The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise".

Cooperatives include:

- businesses owned and controlled by the people who use their products and services (a consumer cooperative)
 - organisations owned and controlled by the people who work there (worker cooperatives)
 - organisations owned and controlled by the people who live in the accommodation (housing cooperatives)
 - multi-stakeholder cooperatives whose owner members are workers, recipients or purchasers of services and members of the local communities – eg Care Cooperatives
 - Procurement cooperatives where the cooperative purchases on behalf of its owner members thereby exercising greater buying power – eg agricultural cooperatives
 - second- and third-tier cooperatives whose owner members are other cooperatives
2. All cooperatives are owned and controlled by their members rather than by external share-holders, members decide strategy for the cooperative and any profits – surplus – is divided between members at regular intervals on the basis of their participation with the cooperative. All bona-fide cooperatives must sign up to Cooperative values and principles:
 - **Open membership** – anyone who fits the criteria for the cooperative is eligible to join
 - **Democracy** – decisions are made on the basis of one member one vote
 - **Autonomy** – a cooperative is self-governing
 - **Equity** – each member makes a financial contribution
 - **Equality** – all members are equal regardless of the stake that they hold

- **Education** – members ensure that education in relevant areas is provided
- **Cooperation** – cooperatives support other cooperatives
- **Care for the community** – benefitting society and the environment

Quick facts:

Co-operatives contribute £36 billion a year to the UK economy

13.6 million people own the UK's co-operatives

Colman's Mustard seeds come from a UK co-operative - and there are many more examples of associations between big brands and co-ops

Source: <https://www.uk.coop/about/what-co-operative>

3. In September 2015 the scrutiny committee discussed cooperative innovations and solutions for how Norwich might benefit. The following recommendations were made to cabinet:
 - That representation be made and consideration given to asking that both the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) to include co-operative business representation;
 - That the LEP be approached to support use of development funds to support co-operatives within the Norwich economy;
 - That when considering the broader transformation process and meeting the required savings targets consideration be given to how to actively support co-operative service or asset provision with particular examples around pubs and energy supply;
 - To consider how the existing grants and commissioning process could support co-operatives and community interest company models as well as the current voluntary sector grant models;
4. Although these recommendations have not been taken forward formally by cabinet, the council's role in championing co-operatives to external stakeholders (such as those mentioned in the recommendation) could be discussed alongside the future item on 'Co-operatives fortnight' recommended by council in June 2015.
5. Transformation programme officers have engaged with other councils

in the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network (CCIN) around specific projects, in order to learn lessons from good practice examples, though this has not so far involved either pubs or energy supply.

6. In terms of energy supply, the council has run a number of projects which have increased the use of renewables or reduced energy demand that are "collective" or group/bulk purchase in nature, but are not strictly based on co-operative models. Officers maintain a watching brief on innovations in the market, such as community energy projects, and actively consider how these could be applied in Norwich to achieve corporate priorities and operating model.
7. The commissioning process for grant awards has been revised subsequent to this recommendation to ensure that this is not restricted to traditional 'charity' and voluntary sector organisations, but also reflects the breadth of social enterprise and co-operative models.
8. The scrutiny committee included the cooperative item on their 2017 - 2018 work programme to identify existing cooperatives in the district area, and understand how other local councils have introduced cooperatives throughout the country.
9. Case studies of local government co-operatives throughout the country:
(Source: <http://www.councils.coop/case-studies/>)

9.1 Community Asset Transfer Programme – South Tyneside Council

South Tyneside Council is the midst of a major programme of community asset transfer which is empowering communities and charity groups to take over the running of local public assets.

Local authorities across the country have faced difficult decisions and have been challenged to find effective and efficient solutions to the continued delivery of valued local services. Proactively embracing the values and models of a Cooperative Council, South Tyneside has taken steps to prioritise community partnership initiatives and cooperative models of working, including developing a new Cabinet Portfolio for the Voluntary Sector, Partnerships, and Cooperatives. (Report Appendix 1)

9.2 Community creates a new garden for Bragbury End – Stevenage Borough Council

In 2016 Bragbury End Residents' Association told us of a strip of land and that they would like to take over to create a community garden. The council had no other plans for the land and were pleased to accept the residents' offer to take care of it.

Green-fingered volunteers of all ages planted raised beds and bushes at the garden and have mulberry, walnut, pear and cherry trees as well as flowers and shrubs. They have created a thriving display for all residents to enjoy and used it to join in with our celebrations to mark the town's 70th anniversary.

(Report Appendix 2)

9.3 The local community budget scheme – Stevenage Borough Council

The Local Community Budget scheme was launched by Stevenage Borough Council in 2011 to help community groups and organisations to develop an idea, support an existing initiative or deliver a local priority. Stevenage Borough Council Councillors each have a budget of £2,500 and the Youth Mayor a budget of £3,300: a total of £100,800 to be allocated to support initiatives across the borough.

(Report Appendix 3)

10. Members may also wish to consider how the 5 foundations of the Co-operative Councils' Network 'collaborative place' approach are relevant to Norwich. The report can be found at http://www.councils.coop/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Co-operative-Councils_Places-Report_Collaborate-and-Oldham-Council.pdf

11. What cooperatives currently exist and operate in the district area?

A search was conducted on the UK Cooperatives website to show some of the cooperatives which currently exist and operate within the local district area, this is shown on the map on page six, and a list of the cooperatives on the map is on page seven.

A more extensive search to find any cooperatives which may be missing from the map and list below can be conducted at this address: <https://www.uk.coop/directory>

Location

Keywords

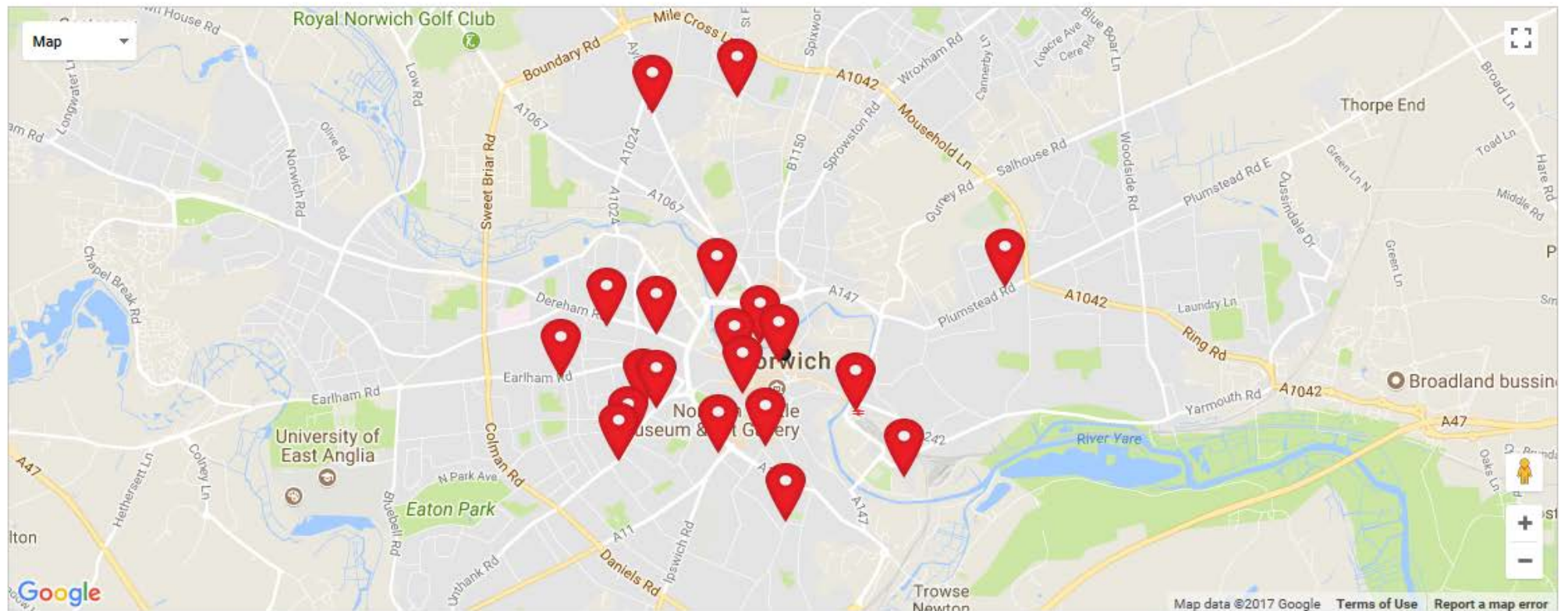
Category

- Any -

Apply

Showing 20 of 131 results within 20 miles

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 next › last »



(Source: [https://www.uk.coop/directory?loc\[distance\]=20&loc\[unit\]=3959&loc\[origin\]=Norwich&keys=&cat=All](https://www.uk.coop/directory?loc[distance]=20&loc[unit]=3959&loc[origin]=Norwich&keys=&cat=All))

Shown on the map:

Norwich Credit Union Boardman House Redwell Street, Norwich	Banana Link 42-58 St George Street, Norwich
Norwich Farmshare (formerly Norwich Community Agriculture) 135-137 King Street, Norwich	Wherry Dragon Credit Union City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich
Norfolk Country Markets Evelyn Suffield House 45 All Saints Green, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Foodstore 4 Station Approach, Norwich
George Bush Funeral Service 93 Oak Street, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Funeral Service St Stephens Square, Norwich
East of England Co-operative Foodstore 58-62 Dereham Road, Norwich	Norfolk CDS 50 Unthank Road, Norwich
Willow Housing Co-operative 26 Grosvenor Road, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Foodstore 110 Hall Road, Norwich
Norwich Community Solar 11 Kerrison Road, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Foodstore 95 Unthank Road, Norwich
The Canaries Trust 8 St Phillips Road, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Foodstore 154 Unthank Road
The Co-operative Food Earlham Road, Norwich	The Co-operative Food – Norwich – Plumstead 169 Plumstead Road, Norwich
East of England Co-operative Foodstore 3 Woodgrove Parade Catton Groove Road, Norwich	East of England Co-operative Foodstore 321 Aylsham Road Mile Cross, Norwich



ASSET TRANSFER

South Tyneside Council

South Tyneside Community Asset Transfer

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Councillors and officers are determined to ensure that, in the face of immense financial and efficiency challenges, much-loved South Tyneside community spaces and services are not simply closed, dismantled and sold off to the highest bidder. Instead, the Council has worked to ensure these resources are retained within the community and used as a vehicle to grow community capacity and engagement.

This year has seen an acceleration of the cooperative agenda, with 12 formerly Council-run community associations currently being supported to draw up business plans and begin the process of being transferred directly into the hands of the local people who use them.

The process is being managed with care, with a focus on ensuring that community management is both financially sustainable and empowering and worthwhile to the individuals involved.

Business delivery plans, drawn up with Council support, identify new opportunities for commercial initiatives and routes to accessing new sources of charitable funding, with the aim of ensuring future financial independence and sustainability.

South Tyneside Council has long recognised the value of cooperating with community partners and service users to deliver services effectively. The current community asset transfer programme goes further, empowering communities with these assets, and equipping them with the skills and support needed for them to manage and set priorities for the delivery of their own spaces and activities.

For further information contact:

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Housing

Stevenage Borough Council

Community creates a new garden for Bragbury End

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Green-fingered volunteers of all ages planted raised beds and bushes at the garden and have mulberry, walnut, pear and cherry trees as well as flowers and shrubs. They have created a thriving display for all residents to enjoy and used it to join in with our celebrations to mark the town's 70th anniversary.

The Bragbury End Community Garden volunteers meet on Saturday mornings for gardening sessions, and also regularly hold social events there.

For further information contact:

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Community Budget

Stevenage Borough Council

The Local Community Budget Scheme

The Local Community Budget scheme was launched by Stevenage Borough Council in 2011 to help community groups and organisations to develop an idea, support an existing initiative or deliver a local priority.

Stevenage Borough Council Councillors each have a budget of £2,500 and the Youth Mayor a budget of £3,300: a total of £100,800 to be allocated to support initiatives across the borough.

Some examples of our community using this funding are below:

- Anti-Litter campaign as part of SET youth parliament project**
 The Thomas Alleyne Academy needed some more litter pickers and hoops for their anti-litter and school ecology campaign. It was part of a wider youth parliament project and campaign in Stevenage through the work of Stevenage Education Trust. Our Councillors awarded the Academy with the funding it needed to carry out this project.
- Road Safety Project for under-fives in the Stevenage North Children's Centre area**
 Stevenage North Group Children's Centre created a road safety initiative for families with under-fives in the area. Working with local schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, childminders and toddler groups they needed funding to run some events to teach under-fives and their families about road safety. The project would provide every child at the events with a hi-vis arm band to wear, making the children much more visible in the dusk or dark and reducing the risk of them being involved in an accident. The Children's Centre created a fun environment for the children to play in while learning about road safety with role play areas with road safety equipment such as traffic lights and zebra crossings.
- Oak Church Stevenage Pop Up Cafe**
 The pop up café is an initiative by Oak Church Stevenage, a local church with a specific heart for young people.

The vision for the term-time café is to use it as a place to engage with young people who spend their time in King Georges' playing fields after school. The young people who have used it so far have had some very positive things to say about it:

'It's a great chance to hang out with people who are friendly and approachable' - Georgia, 17

'There is a great diversity that hang out in here and the guys just come and hang out and show us respect' - Mo, 18

- **Community Spirit Project**

The Community Spirit project was organised and run by volunteer Committee Members of St Hilda's Church, with support from volunteers of other organisations. A range of activities were on offer including family entertainment, a flower festival, street theatre and street dance with food and refreshments on offer in the Church grounds. The event brought together local community organisations, charities, neighbourhood shops, schools and local churches and helped to raise awareness of what's available locally.

- **70th celebration of Stevenage New Town (2016/17)**

In 2016 Stevenage celebrated its 70th anniversary as the first New Town in the country. To mark the occasion a funding pot was created specifically to support local groups to organise their own events and projects to celebrate the contribution they have made to the local community over the years. The groups who took part in the celebrations are below and we are incredibly proud of the difference they have made to their local areas and to local residents.

- South Stevenage Flower Club
- Friends of Hampson Park
- Fairview Road Residents' Association
- Stevenage Arts Society
- Dance Motion
- Symonds Green Community Association
- Bragbury End Residents' Group
- The Bragbury Centre
- Age Concern
- Douglas Drive Senior Citizens' Association

For further information contact:

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