

## Co-operatives UK Board of Directors

# Update on Key Decisions

February 2019

The Board of Directors of Co-operatives UK met for the first time this year on 6 February. The meeting focused upon monitoring performance against the 2018 Key Performance Indicators and providing strategic direction to our funded programmes of work. A summary of discussions at the board meeting can be found below.



Ed Mayo  
Secretary General

### Operational Performance

The Board monitored outcomes against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2018 which help to demonstrate how the organisation has delivered on its mission to grow the co-operative economy through action to promote, develop and unite co-operative enterprise. These results are included in full as an appendix to this report and will be provided to all members as part of our Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Directors congratulated the team on its achievements in 2018; acknowledging that we are a growing membership organisation, with a growing income, highly rated for our events and services with a proven track record as a voice for our members. Since 2014, we have stressed income diversification as a strategy challenge and in 2018, we made good steps forward on this, around advice and funded work in particular.

2019 priorities reflect some of the areas where we were not able to meet our targets; the Board discussed how we can become a member led organisation building closer relationships with all of our members and how we can have an even greater impact on the growth and health of the co-operative movement. Our operational plans document more detail on the milestones for the year and include action to build on operational effectiveness and deliver increased value for our members.

The Board discussed one significant piece of work for this year which focuses on collaboration with infrastructure organisations that provide support and services across the entire co-operative movement: our sister organisations. We are working with the Co-operative Press, Co-operative College and Co-operative Heritage Trust to look for opportunities for increased co-operation in terms of how we operate, how people access us and how we ensure the best value for members by working collaboratively where that makes us more efficient and effective. The Board confirmed the direction of this work and plans to engage with co-operatives that are members of all four organisations to widen input into these discussions over the coming months.

## **Strategic approach to funded work**

The Board discussed the strategic direction of our funded work as we build on our strong track record in securing external funding to deliver a suite of innovative and mission aligned projects. Directors welcomed the successes we have seen with income from externally funded project work increasing by 14% in 2018 and net contribution to Co-operatives UK from these projects increasing by 40% over the same period.

We will continue to bring in funding where it enables us to deliver added value for our members directly and indirectly in line with our mission and three key themes:

**1: Place-based economic development** – this area recognises the role co-operatives can play in generating local economic benefit within and across places.

**2: Co-operative development** – activities that seek to support co-operatives to start and grow.

**3: Community shares** – promoting good practice and raising awareness of this unique form of withdrawable share capital that actively supports community and co-operative enterprise.

The Board discussed continuing work with colleagues, members and partners to secure funding to support the proliferation co-op start-ups and growth of existing co-ops in line with the targets of the National Co-operative Development Strategy. Delivering on this requires us to continue to be the steward of that Strategy; to secure and manage large scale national programmes; and to be leaders within the co-op development ecosystem. The Board committed its ongoing strategic input in navigating the complexities of doing this with members confidently, sensitively and effectively.

## **Our governance**

Directors confirmed the programme of activity underway aimed at ensuring our Board is performing at its best and is supported by effective governance processes. Our director peer appraisals and skills matrix work, overseen by RemCo, continues to ensure that the Board has the skills, experience and diversity of thought that it needs to deliver its role.

This is complemented by planned work to encourage and enable increased member democratic participation and dynamic member engagement; only by providing a voice for our members we can continue to meet their needs. Directors noted forthcoming elections to the Worker Co-op Council and to the Board for the Co-operative Development Body seat and three seats appointed by The Co-op Group's National Members Council.

The Board agreed that we will begin a comprehensive review of our Rulebook with the aim of seeking member support for an updated constitutional document at the Annual General Meeting in 2020.

## **Our impact**

Directors discussed the outcomes from the recent dinner for leaders of UK customer-owned business which we organised and was hosted by Nationwide Building Society with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury in attendance. The Board was encouraged to hear feedback from discussions at the dinner which will feed into actions to research opportunities for the customer-owned sector to increase its profile and share learnings, including at a follow-up event.

The Board noted our input into the proposed strategic plan for the International Co-operative Alliance and supported a proposal to develop a resolution to its General Assembly around accounting for co-operatives that has emerged from work by the Co-operative Performance Committee, one of our Member Groups.

The Board discussed plans to engage in international events over 2019 and welcomed news that the CECOP (the worker co-op network) General Assembly will be held in Manchester.

# 2018... Key Performance Indicators

Co-operatives UK  
is working to...

Promote

Develop

Unite

2% increase in the proportion of our income not from retail society subscriptions

Baseline: 46%  
Target: 48%  
Outcome: 58%



7% increase in member participation in campaigning activity

Baseline: 422  
Target: 452  
Outcome: 488



20% increase in members accessing advisory services

Baseline: 133  
Target: 160  
Outcome: 267



6% increase in our membership

Baseline: 750  
Target: 795  
Outcome: 812



5% increase in members participating in our governance

Baseline: 140  
Target: 147  
Outcome: 93



6% increase in member rating of our campaigning work

Baseline: 3.2/5  
Target: 3.33/5  
Outcome: 3.36/5



11% increase in income from advisory services and projects

Baseline: £624,000  
Target: £692,640  
Outcome: £705,866



6% increase in the number of non-member co-ops we are in communication with

Baseline: 1,772  
Target: 1,878  
Outcome: 1,940



19% increase in staff agreeing that we have effective internal systems

Baseline: 2017 average: 51%  
Target: 70%  
Outcome: 87%  
(67% year average)



Working with our members, we have a track record of influencing public policy to benefit co-ops

Outcome: Complete



We have developed advice services to enable a UK expansion of student housing co-ops

Outcome: Complete



88% members renew their membership

Baseline: 3-yr average: 84%  
Target: 88%  
Outcome: 85%



## Our National Co-operative Development Strategy Targets:

6% increase in the number of co-op start-ups and conversions (Baseline: 222 Target: 235) Outcome: 191



Year on year increases in the number of members in UK co-ops (Baseline: 12,633,000\*) Outcome: 13,150,000

