

# Information for candidates for Co-operatives UK's Worker Co-operative Council

This guidance provides an introduction to the Worker Co-operative Council and Co-operatives UK; an overview of the role; and what you should expect as a member of the Council.

## Introduction

Co-operatives UK is the network for Britain's thousands of co-operatives. Our mission is to grow the co-operative economy and alongside our members we work to promote, develop and unite co-operatives across all sectors, from major high street retailers and large agricultural businesses to community owned pubs and credit unions. We connect businesses that give people more control over the things that matter to them.

Our work is crucial to the ongoing success of a sector worth £36bn. We fight against damaging legislation that places co-operatives at an unfair disadvantage; campaign to increase awareness among the public and decision-makers; provide specialist governance advice to help members run their business more effectively; and organise a range of national and local events. To achieve all this requires input from a range of bodies, including the Worker Co-operative Council.

The Council is a representative body within Co-operatives UK, elected by and from worker co-op members. The Council nominates two of its members on to the Board of Co-operatives UK. There are seven places on the Council with members standing for two years. This year (2019) there are four places available.

The Council has three main purposes:

- To act as the focal point for all forms of worker co-op and employee trust owned members of Co-operatives UK and to facilitate networking and information sharing
- To be the sounding board for issues and how they affect such members, and assist in the development of Co-operatives UK policy in these areas
- To assist and advise Co-operatives UK's team in recruiting and engaging these businesses, and designing programmes and services that meet their needs

## **Why you should consider standing for election**

- Being on the Council is an excellent opportunity for your co-op to raise its profile and network with other worker co-ops and the wider movement
- It provides an insight into the work of Co-operatives UK and an opportunity to directly influence activity in support of worker co-ops.
- For the individual, it is great opportunity to increase your knowledge and experience of worker co-ops and the wider movement

## **Experience and skills**

Like any effective board or committee the Council should be made up of individuals with a diverse range of skills and experience that complement each other. Whether you have been working in a worker co-op for years or are fairly new you will have something to offer, provided you have a real interest in worker co-operation and helping Co-operatives UK develop the sector.

## **What is involved?**

- The Council usually meets four times each year. Attendance in person is preferred but allowances can be made to attend via phone or video conference
- All new council members will be expected to undertake an induction with Co-operatives UK staff
- Members are expected to read papers and reports sent out prior to meetings and respond to all correspondence
- Additional involvement may include representing Co-operatives UK at events, promoting membership of Co-operatives UK and more generally acting as an advocate for the co-op movement
- If you decide to stand for election you should be prepared to offer at least four days a year to Co-operatives UK

## **Confidentiality**

Council members are in a position of trust and may be given information by Co-operatives UK not for public circulation.

## **Term of Office**

Council members are elected for a two year term of office.

## **Expenses**

Co-operatives UK cover the cost of reasonable out of pocket expenses plus a contribution to loss of earnings. Details of the expenses policy will be provided during the induction process.

## **More information**

For further information, including the opportunity to speak to a current member of the Council and/or an officer of Co-operatives UK, please contact:

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