

## Key issues and positions for 2017



Issue	Description	Position
Inclusive economy (general)	Government has made a strategic political commitment to creating an 'inclusive economy that works for everyone'. Sometimes it will make specific announcements or do specific things in this regard. At other times it will be a theme that runs through their work. It is also a lens with which we can critique government policy and other developments with a political economic dimension.	<p>A genuinely inclusive economy shares ownership and control and gives people the means to meet their needs and aspirations. Co-ops in all their forms already demonstrate how this can be done. An inclusive economy agenda that doesn't recognise and back co-ops won't bring about the changes we need.</p> <p>Policy for an inclusive economy must at least in part be predicated on an understanding that outcomes for inequality, opportunity, productivity and social cohesion are influenced by the distribution of ownership and control in our economy and society.</p> <p>Co-ops must mark government's homework on the inclusive economy agenda.</p>
Businesses and their stakeholders	Government is keen to reform aspects of UK business, especially corporate governance, with a specific focus on improving the way businesses relate to key stakeholders such as workers and customers.	This has to be part of building a genuinely inclusive economy that works for everyone. While it's a good thing for government policy to encourage businesses to have better regard for and even empower stakeholders like workers and customers, if its serious about change it needs to support and champion co-ops as well – after all this is an existing grassroots movement of businesses giving workers, communities etc. ownership and control without the need for top-down legislation or regulation.
Employee ownership	Government may well develop fresh policy in this area as part of its Inclusive Economy agenda. It has already scrapped Employee Shareholding Status on the basis that it gives tax breaks to high earners.	<p>We want to see employee ownership policy which creates a more inclusive economy, with a particular focus on giving working people more ownership and control of their livelihoods. Crucially we need co-operative forms of employee ownership which bring democratic collective control and a fair share of long term success.</p> <p>We oppose tax breaks for small numbers of elite employees (CSOP, EMI) and think scarce public resources would be better spent supporting the creation of new worker co-ops and employee buyouts.</p>
Self-employment, gig economy, precarious work	This is a hot political and socio-economic topic for 2017. Government is reviewing policy, every party has its lines, and the media and public are interested. There are also continuous developments in the economy itself – from Uber court judgements to new disruptive platforms.	Many forms of work, and the lives of working people, are becoming more precarious. People need to come together through economic solidarity/community to gain power and increase resilience. There are many examples of co-op solutions here which we need to develop and champion. Governments have a role to support and champion too.
UK productivity	This will continue to be a vexing economic and political issue in 2017. Government's Industrial	By sharing ownership and control and responsibilities and rewards, worker co-ops can be extremely productive across a range of economic sectors. They can be great in

<p>conundrum</p>	<p>Strategy has it as a key focus and it will make announcements related to this throughout the year. Productivity can also become a story around the time of economic announcements and forecasts. Key think tanks like IFS, IPPR, IEA regularly raise the issue.</p>	<p>sectors deemed key for productivity such as tech, but can also unlock the harder to reach productivity gains in sectors with traditionally lower skills and pay. Co-ops for the self-employed can also give these workers opportunities to be more efficient, enhance their skills, capture value and ultimately increase productivity in areas where it is, again, hard to achieve.</p>
<p>Inequality</p>	<p>Inequality in income, wealth, opportunity, quality of life, health outcomes etc. will be continue to be an issue in 2017, especially as government tries to provide tangible policies for people of low and middle incomes.</p>	<p>By sharing ownership and control and putting members' needs first co-ops give people the power to improve a range of outcomes: decisions made in the common good, more equal pay, fairer share of profits, opportunities for personal development. Workers and communities can generate and crucially control more wealth. Co-ops also build social capital and increase resilience.</p>
<p>Business succession/ closure/ offshoring</p>	<p>Business succession crisis may become a story at some point in 2017. Government is already interested in stopping a trend in companies that reach a certain scale being bought by overseas capital and then offshored. We may also see high profile cases of divestment from the UK with job losses and business/plant closure, especially if the prospect for trade deals grows gloomier.</p>	<p>Co-operative buyouts could offer a viable succession solution in many cases. They can keep jobs, skills, profits and social capital in communities. Co-op models, where workers or communities get collective ownership and control based on pragmatic solidarity, are needed. But this needs firm government and crucially non-governmental support, including clear well understood and incentivised buyout routes, properly capitalised public-private buyout investment funds and local community-public-private partnerships.</p>
<p>Local economic development and 'left behind' communities</p>	<p>There will be intensified focus on 'left behind' communities and how they can develop economically. Traditional strategies for local economic development are increasingly questioned and criticised. Debates about what should replace EU structural funds will focus minds.</p>	<p>We need strategies focused on people and place, led by and focused on the needs and capacities of communities. We need communities to create and crucially keep more wealth locally. Co-ops are an essential ingredient here.</p> <p>Our CED work has lessons for central and local governments, as well as for communities themselves. Community co-ops and community shares provide excellent examples of community-led regeneration and economic development, from rural villages to post-industrial inner cities to coastal towns.</p>
<p>Social care in crisis</p>	<p>This will be an intensifying national drama in 2017 as immediate funding shortfalls result in service failures, scandals and the withdrawal of private providers from the market. Knock-on consequences for the NHS and its finances will intensify too. Governments across the UK, central</p>	<p>Decent care is about people, relationships and community, and co-ops are a great way to organise activities and resources around these pillars. Co-op approaches to care and wellbeing have the potential to make the system safer, effective and efficient, by improving standards but also crucially by enabling people to be healthier and happier in their homes and communities. This is about more than care - it's about the good life. We are involved in exploring and piloting co-op approaches. Local governments and</p>

	and local, will be under pressure to do something about it.	local health systems can do a lot to help us. Co-ops can't solve the funding crisis; though they can help us spend money and allocate resources in better ways.
Global warming and the energy transition	Despite economic crises, political instability, Brexit, a failing care system etc. global warming is still happening and our energy transition is very much a work in progress.	<p>We can't take our eye off global warming and our energy transition is not happening nearly fast enough. While for political reasons governments have demoted renewables and energy efficiency, there are still millions of Britons eager and willing to take direct action. Community-led action in generation, storage, efficiency and behavioural change continues apace and governments national and local should do all they can to enable this further.</p> <p>Meanwhile co-op businesses of all kinds are demonstrating the way towards an environmentally more sustainable economy and need to be supported and championed.</p>
Brexit	This will continue as the dominant issue. Article 50 will be triggered before the end of March, the Great Repeal Bill will be brought before Parliament and trade negotiations will begin in earnest.	<p>We have three broad principles with which we approach Brexit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite the Brexit workload for government, our basic policy needs must still be met</li> <li>• Co-ops should not be put in a disproportionately worse position by the Brexit process</li> <li>• The potential for co-ops to give people control and build a better economy should be harnessed</li> </ul>