



## Co-operative Glasgow Good Practice Summary

### Challenge

Like many EU cities, Glasgow faced many problems brought about by budget cuts, changing demographics and increasingly complex service needs. Despite years of effort focused in particular on helping people on long-term benefits and improving health inequality, progress had not been fast enough. Glasgow recognised that removing this economic drag on the city demanded a different approach. It set out to find new ways of reaching those most in need and doing more with limited funds.

### Response

Glasgow had some experience of working in a co-operative way, so that rather than simply delivering services it worked with enterprises and communities to co-create services designed around citizens' lives and needs. Co-operatives are not new, however Glasgow was convinced that wider adoption of the co-operative approach was the best way to achieve both better services and better value.

### Timeframe, Dates and Important Milestones

In its 2012-2017 Strategic Plan, Glasgow City Council (GCC) set out its commitment to becoming a Co-operative Council and city, outlining the need for a more 'integrated economy with diverse business opportunities, including social enterprises' to help drive forward economic growth. The 'Co-operative Glasgow' Framework was approved by the Executive Committee in May 2013. It identified four themes, or commitments, that work would be developed around:

- Co-operative values and co-operation: adhering to the International Co-operative Alliance statement of identity and values (self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity);
- Co-production and community led commissioning: working with individuals and communities rather than for them;

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- Community assets: transferring management and control of community properties to community or third sector groups; and
- Co-operative service delivery: helping communities and employees to establish a co-operative business model to deliver existing council services.

These commitments are now Glasgow City Council policy, ensuring that the Council assists with the growth of the co-operative business sector within the city and to devolving power to the citizens of Glasgow.

**The Co-operative Development Unit** was fully developed and operational in 2013 to drive this initiative forward. The aims and objectives of the Co-operative Development Unit are to promote co-operatives and other social enterprise models in the city and work to making Glasgow a Co-operative City.



*Co-operative Development Unit*

**A Co-operative Glasgow Business Development Fund** was established in October 2013. Over the financial years from 2013 to 2017, funding totalling £825,200 has been awarded to 56 co-operatives or social enterprises, which has helped to support 45 existing city co-operatives and establish 11 new co-operative start-ups.

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**Co-operative Champions** - The Council set up a Strategic Development group in November 2014 with representatives from every part of the Council which meets on a 6 weekly basis. The group's remit includes identifying potential co-operative service delivery opportunities and communicating

The Co-operative Development Unit liaises with the Co-operative Champions to develop and support new ways of working with residents and communities, embedding the internationally recognised Co-operative values in our service delivery and service development. The Co-operative principles are self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity and these are reflected in our 'Co-operative Glasgow' branding.

## Results and Achievements

Co-operative Glasgow has achieved a lot since its inception. Its success is testament to the approach of the Co-operative Development Unit and the political support it has received since the outset.

Key results from Co-operative Glasgow thus far include:

- Grants amounting to £825,200 to 56 new and existing Co-operatives and Social Enterprises in the city;
- The creation of 75 FTE jobs or volunteer posts and a further 250 employment of volunteering positions safeguarded;
- Business Development Grants have levered in an additional £2,045,878;
- The significant support to the Credit Union sector has secured wealth in communities;
- Early reports from the external evaluation show that there has been significant increase in community engagement, improved partnership working and an increase in the access to responsible credit for local communities.

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## And For the Future...?

Embedded within Glasgow's Economic Strategy 2016-2023, Co-operative Glasgow will continue to grow and look to new ways of effectively promoting its values and the work of the Co-operative Development Unit.

Hopefully, Glasgow can utilise its experience in developing this initiative to share practice, knowledge and expertise to other EU cities. It is a useful tool to help cities harness the power of communities and redesign services in an effective, democratic way.

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