



## Policy Paper 02/2026

### **Pride in Place (PiP) – and the vital role of Co-operative & Community Education**

As advocates for co-operative education and grassroots participation in urban renewal, we welcome the government's Pride in Place (PiP) strategy and its radical shift toward direct funding for co-operatives and mutuals. Drawing on your leadership, we urge you to integrate the International Co-operative Alliance Fifth Principle (Education, Training, and Information) when implementing PiP in your locality.

We see this as essential to this programme in that it provides residents and future co-operators, with the practical skills, knowledge, and confidence required to genuinely manage the substantial funding for the long term. In addition, it will explicitly support the programme's aims for Neighbourhood Boards to transition into formal community-led legal entities, by Year Three.

The core reasons why this brief period is challenging are:

- **Complexity of Governance:** Establishing a new legal entity (like a Co-operative or Community Interest Company), recruiting a diverse board with a resident majority, and navigating legal compliance takes significant time and expert input. Rushing these risks flawed governance structures from the outset.
- **Meaningful Engagement:** Three months is insufficient time to undertake the deep, trust-building community engagement required to ensure all local voices are heard. A rapid startup favours existing, vocal groups and may exclude marginalised residents, undermining the programme's core aim of empowerment.
- **Capacity Building Needs:** Residents often require intensive training (co-operative education) in financial literacy, project management, and governance principles to take on these complex responsibilities effectively. This cannot be meaningfully achieved in just 12 weeks.

This operational reality highlights a critical potential gap between the programme's aspirational goals of community control and the logistical requirements of local capacity building within such a tight time scale. We hope you share our view that it makes the structured, provision of co-operative and community education essential to bridge this gap.

Bearing this educational component in mind we ask the following questions:

- A. What flexibility will be allowed in PiP delivery timelines and structures to reflect uneven community readiness, while maintaining accountability for outcomes?
- B. How will community and co-operative education be integrated as a funded component of PiP, ensuring residents and Boards have the skills and confidence to manage significant public investment and transition to legal entities by year three?

- C. How will elected representatives be supported, in time, training, and governance capacity-building to make long-term decisions in the interests of PiP-linked co-operatives and mutuals?
- D. What mechanisms will be established to enable systematic knowledge transfer, peer learning, and shared problem-solving across PiP areas?
- E. How will legal, financial, and fiduciary risks be managed and mitigated for community-led entities and their members?
- F. What independent advisory or assurance structures will support communities and intervene early where risks emerge?

We respectfully suggest that co-operative education and training will go some way to answering the questions above because they will aid each stage of the process. At the Planning & Development Stage, for example, as follows:

- Empowered Decision-Making: Co-operative education helps residents understand the principles of democratic governance and collective decision-making, ensuring that the development of the 10-year regeneration plan genuinely reflects community priorities, not just those of local authorities or influential individuals.
- Building Trust and Social Capital: Training builds trust among diverse community members by establishing clear, fair processes for collaboration, which is a foundational aim of the 'Pride in Place' strategy.
- Identifying Sustainable Interventions: Education helps community members identify interventions that foster a local social economy, such as setting up community businesses or taking ownership of local assets (pubs, shops, green spaces), ensuring plans are economically sustainable beyond the 10-year funding window.

This may be helpful <https://www.thenews.coop/putting-co-operation-at-the-heart-of-education-in-wales/>

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