



Supporting our membership

2020

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Introduction

This summary sets out the work the CCH has done for our membership over the last year.

There is clearly no doubt that 2020 has proved a difficult year. But our membership has shown how resilient it is, addressing multiple practical challenges, whilst also using their community links to be there for co-op members. The CCH salutes all the hard work that our member organisations have done to keep the spirit of co-operation alive in 2020.

The nature of this Covid year has meant that we have had to take different approaches but the focus of our work continues to fit into three categories:

- providing advice and support to our members
- enabling our members to network with each other and with us
- helping to build the infrastructure needed to develop new homes in the co-operative and community led housing sector.

Providing advice and support to our members

The year started ordinarily enough, with the CCH having just launched [guidance for our members on developing an Active Membership](#) and on policy development.

But as the pandemic started in February/March, it was evident at that time, that no one had a clear idea how housing organisations should react. There had perhaps never been a more important time for our membership to remain connected to the CCH.

The CCH jumped into action by focusing on the questions our membership needed to consider at that stage. As Government and other advice started to emerge during the pandemic, the CCH has played an important role in interpreting this advice for our members, working with Government and others to shape it to meet the needs of the co-operative housing sector, and in passing it on to our members.

The CCH has particularly advised our membership this year:

- in relation to various advice from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government related to the pandemic, covering court action, repairs, isolation issues, and other areas
- with assistance from Anthony Collins Solicitors, regarding governance and the challenges that our members with 1981 or other outdated model rules have faced regarding holding digital meetings
- about how to update to one of the CCH's suite of five sets of model rules (most notably for our Registered Provider co-op members to our 2017 model rules)
- in respect of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code
- most recently regarding forthcoming anticipated changes set out in the Government's "Charter for Social Housing Tenants" white paper
- with assistance from One Broker insurance, regarding co-ops updating their insurance coverage
- regarding the Green Homes Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

Networking

With this growing emerging agenda, we have held a series of [four digital member forums](#). These forums have been well attended and have drawn in an audience of greater diversity than had been the case pre lockdown. As well as enabling discussion in the above areas, the forums have provided an important means for co-op members from across the country to stay connected and to hear about the excellent stories of help and support co-ops have been providing to their members during this difficult time.

Sadly our 2020 conference has been a victim of the pandemic. Originally arranged for May, the conference had an exciting agenda to explore the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). The rescheduled December conference was almost fully booked when we had to reschedule again. We now look forward to celebrating release from lockdown with our membership at the [newly rescheduled dates of 21st-22nd May 2021](#). We do hope that you will be able to join us.

Member guidance

We have produced member guidance in these areas:

- [developing policies guidance](#) – launched as the year started, we produced guidance on how to develop policies for community led housing;
- [complaint handling code](#) – the Housing Ombudsman published their Complaints Handling Code in July 2020. We liaised directly with the Ombudsman, Richard Blakeway, ensuring that issues specifically relating to our sector were brought to his attention. We then published guidance on complaints, particularly aimed at ensuring that Registered Provider co-ops could comply with the requirements in the Code;
- [rules guidance](#) – we produced guidance on the five sets of rules that the CCH has produced for co-operatives and have urged our members to update their rules. This has become particularly important in the light of the 1981 version and other similarly outdated rules not enabling co-ops to hold digital meetings;

- [white paper guidance](#) – the Government produced their “A Charter for Social Housing Tenants” White Paper in November 2020 in response to post Grenfell tragedy tenant consultations. The CCH has highlighted the multiple areas that may affect our co-op and other members.

Some of the above guidance is available in the member only area of our website – but if any member organisation cannot locate it – please get in touch info@cch.coop.

Providing services

We have formally provided services to [37 co-ops and other organisations](#) over the last year. This assistance ranged from governance and policy work, to advice regarding complaints and to adoption of the new rules.

Developing community led housing

Work to progress the development of community led housing has progressed exponentially with new schemes emerging all the time – some being developed through our member organisations and some through new organisations. The CCH has:

- liaised with Government and others on community led housing generally. The work that CCH and other organisations have done has led to the Government flagging up in their recent White Paper that they intend to continue supporting the development of community-led housing and potentially some ongoing funding to support the development of schemes;
- produced a set of case studies of recent community led housing development. The case studies illustrate the breadth of different schemes being developed as well as the “art of the possible” – ie. that communities are using incredible imagination and vigour to make things happen!
- continued to develop and roll out our CIH recognised training and accreditation programme, with growing numbers of people participating in the training and becoming accredited;
- in response to requests to do so, we have set up the Community Led Housing Local Authority Group for local authority representatives who support community led housing. It is testament to the work that the

CCH and others have done that 57 local authorities have signed up to this group so far and the number continues to grow.

International work

As well as ensuring that the UK is represented on the International Co-operative Alliance Housing Sectoral Organisation, we have maintained contact with partner organisations in Europe with a view to setting up study visits for local authorities potentially next year.

Plans for next year

Building on the work from this year, we are planning the following activities for next year:

- instigate an engagement programme with CCH members, groups of CCH members and the small number of Registered Provider co-ops who are not yet CCH members;
- develop case studies of good practice in the existing co-operative housing sector to sit alongside the case studies of recent community led housing developments;
- develop member guidance on succession plans, on audit requirements in relation to the governance/viability/value for money standards, on managing service providers and contractors, and due diligence for co-op investment programmes in community shares/loanstock;
- review our Code of Governance for housing co-ops/community led housing;
- review the CCH's co-op training programme potentially with a view to producing online training materials for members;
- continue working with the Housing Ombudsman on the roll out of their Complaint Handling Code;
- engage with the Government and regulator on forthcoming changes set out in the White Paper;
- explore deregistration of Registered Provider co-ops;
- supporting changes in the local authority tenant management sector;
- potentially lead on local authority international study sessions;
- production of a community led housing options tool and web-based portal;
- provide guidance on mutual home ownership;
- explore housing sector professional development;

- follow up Government proposed planning reforms;
- review and explore CCH partnerships, particularly in the community led housing sphere;
- continue with CCH communications activities, including online member forums and the trade body awards.

We look forward to working with our members over the coming year.

CCH December 2020



CCH Annual Conference 2021

**Shaping the future – co-operative
housing in a new decade**

21-22 May 2021

Mercure Haydock Park

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