

## Board Motion – Supporting a Modern and Inclusive Co-operative Movement

### 5

Over the past year, we have seen the power of co-operation in action. People have come together in support of their community and of one another. And our Co-op – and co-operatives – have never felt more relevant and needed. Our Co-op should work with, and support, others so our shared co-operative movement is inclusive, welcoming and modern – supporting existing co-operatives as well as bringing others from all communities and backgrounds towards us and providing services they value. The co-operative movement must build on the strong foundations of the past while adapting and changing to continue to be relevant for the future. Our Co-op should play its part, along with others, in providing resources to seize the opportunity we have today. The Co-op should work with others in the movement, including those represented by Co-operatives UK and the International Co-operative Alliance, to fulfil these ambitions and to help achieve our vision of *Co-operating for a Fairer World*.

#### More information on our motion:

#### Motion 5 – Support for a Modern and Inclusive Co-operative Movement

As we face into the many challenges of today and the future, your Board believes it is timely to emphasise the central role which co-operation will play in helping us to build back better.

Our vision – Co-operating for a Fairer World – makes this explicit for our Co-op. But we also know that we are not alone. We are part of a wider Co-operative Movement. A Movement which is united by a common set of values, operating in all parts of society, in all corners of the globe, which for generations has put the needs of people first.

Our Co-op will be a voice for modern and inclusive co-operation. We need to be relevant, diverse and inclusive to new generations of co-operators addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow. This will mean adapting our ways of organising, engaging, communicating and co-operating to be really relevant and promoting the benefits of co-operation to bring the widest range of members towards us.

In the UK, we can be rightly proud of the part our ancestors played in establishing one of the first successful co-operative models in Rochdale in 1844. The genius of those Pioneers was to create an approach which was adaptable, flexible and durable, which explains why over 1 billion people belong to a co-operative.

This success is because our Movement has always embraced the need to change and develop to remain relevant, as well as embracing new generations of co-operators. The pandemic has accelerated this need – and we can be very proud of the magnificent response from our own members and colleagues, as well as those

of other co-ops and social enterprises. Indeed, the power of co-operation, which fired the thousands of mutual aid groups and other community responses to COVID-19, shows just what can be achieved when people co-operate.

But the relentless pace of change presents both challenges and opportunity. Technological change has been an ever-present factor for co-ops since our birth in the cradle of the Industrial Revolution – but the digital revolution has spawned new forms of co-operation, with digital-tech inspiring a new generation of co-operative innovators. Climate change also represents the type of challenge which can only be truly addressed by people coming together with the shared mutual interest of saving our planet for future generations. Rebuilding our society in a way which enables people from all backgrounds to achieve their potential through greater social mobility is – and always has been – a cornerstone of co-operative values and principles.

We require strong and inclusive co-ops that are prepared to innovate and lead, supported by an infrastructure which can spread the word about the power of co-operation. Our Co-op values greatly organisations such as Co-operatives UK and the Co-operative Party in helping to promote and develop co-operative solutions and we are proud to stand in solidarity with our peers within the global Co-operative Movement, brought together through the International Co-operative Alliance.

We've been actively engaged with our Members' Council on these important areas and how they can perform their key role of monitoring our affiliation with the wider movement. We'll aim to give greater clarity to this role via a mutually agreed policy – this is both a requirement of our Rules but also provides some but also provides some important guide-rails on how we all work together.