



DUBLIN CITY  
COMMUNITY CO-OP

# Strategic Plan 2018-2021

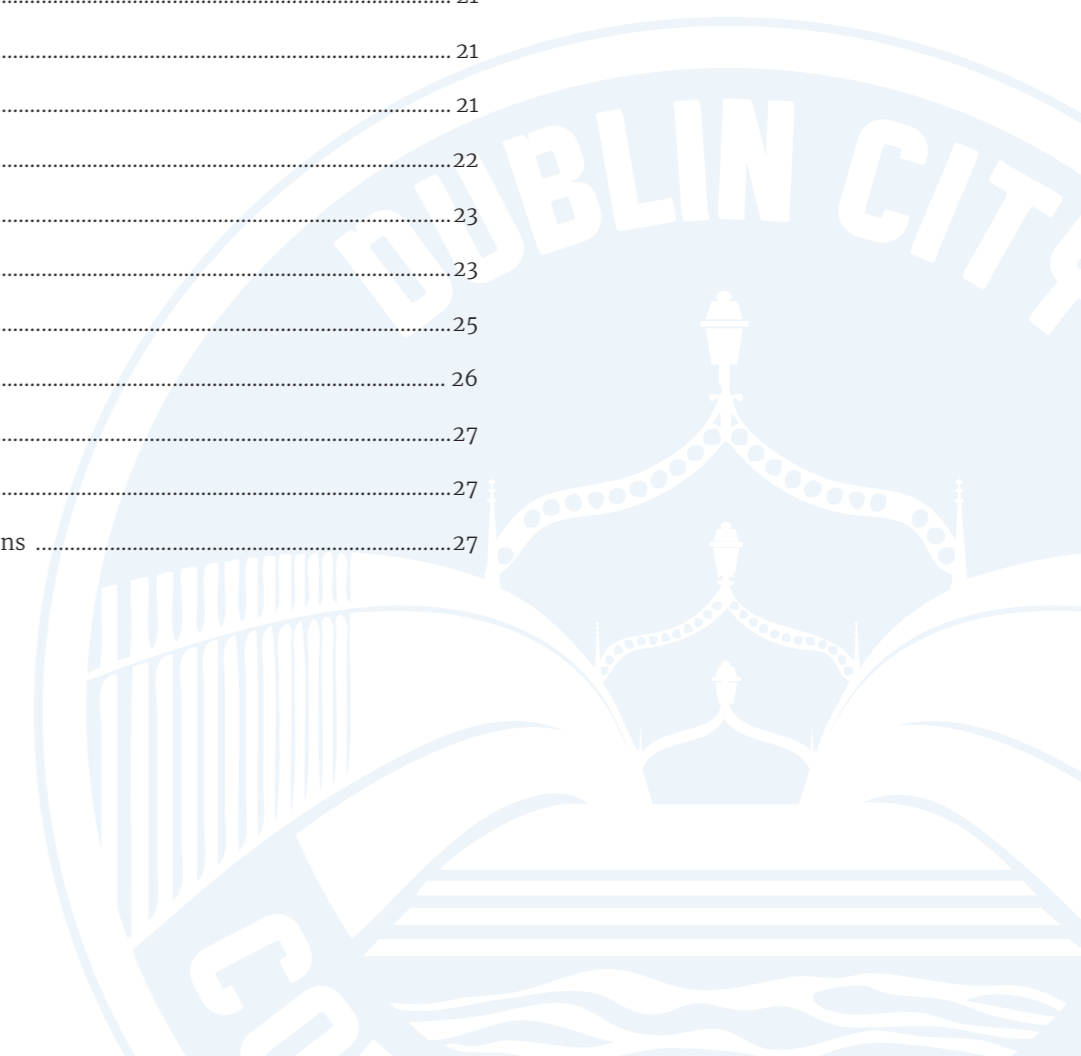




*Building Inclusive  
and Thriving  
Inner City  
Communities*

## Contents

FOREWARD BY CO-OP CHAIRPERSON .....	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
THE CONTEXT .....	5
Introduction .....	5
Vision and Mission .....	7
Principles and Values .....	7
Strategic Aims .....	9
Strategic Outcomes and Indicators .....	12
THE CO-OP .....	13
Background & History .....	13
Key Services .....	14
Milestones & Achievements .....	15
Key Developments .....	16
THE STRUCTURE .....	17
Legal & Governance .....	17
Operations & Personnel .....	18
Member Organisations .....	19
THE ENVIRONMENT .....	21
Key Policies .....	21
Communities Supported .....	21
Unique Offer of The Co-op .....	22
THE STAKEHOLDERS .....	23
Core Messages .....	23
Communications & Channels .....	25
Campaigning & Advocating .....	26
THE DELIVERY .....	27
Partnerships & Collaborations .....	27
Immediate & Intermediate Actions .....	27



# Foreword

.....  
*In developing our Strategic Plan 2018-2021 we are keeping our member organisations and the individuals and communities they serve resolutely at the heart of everything we do.*  
.....

## **DUBLIN CITY COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE, KNOWN AS ‘THE CO-OP’, IS DELIGHTED TO PRESENT OUR INAUGURAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021.**

For a number of years before 2014 Dublin’s inner city had been in the anomalous position of being the only region in Ireland to have no local development company. This had contributed to Dublin’s inner city communities becoming increasingly less visible and without a voice at a time when the country was experiencing the depths of austerity, community development funding had been slashed and quality services were most needed.

In 2014 fifteen long established and well respected inner city community development organisations who serve disadvantaged communities in all or parts of Dublin 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 & 8 began a process of discussion and dialogue with a view to strengthening cooperation, coordination, collaboration and engagement with each other. It was recognised that there is immense power when a group of people and organisations with similar interests get together to work toward the same goals.

This pioneering and innovative initiative bore fruit and on 7th November 2014 Dublin City Community Cooperative was formally established as a legal entity with all 15 organisations party to the process as its original members. Establishing this new structure as a cooperative that fully maintains the independent status and existence of its member organisations was and remains a key philosophy of the Co-op.

In 2016 we undertook an internal review and consolidation process which led to a number of mergers amongst Co-op members resulting in the current membership of thirteen organisations.

During the years 2015-2017 the Co-op received substantial public funding that enabled us to implement a comprehensive range of community development programmes. Funding was allocated via the Co-op to our member organisations and activities were implemented across the inner city. The Co-op tendered for and won the contract to implement the Government’s Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in the inner city for the years 2015-2017. In addition to SICAP funding the Co-op received a combined grant from Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2015, 2016 and 2017 for additional community services activities. It is important that funding of this magnitude and scale is continued and protected if long term inroads into social deprivation and inequality in the inner city are to be achieved.

In late 2017/early 2018 the Co-op tendered for and won the contract for the second SICAP Programme, again for the Dublin inner city area and this time covering the years 2018-2022. Funding of this nature will contribute to the Co-op’s efforts to safeguard the provision of much needed community development activities and the delivery of essential social, economic and cultural services to Dublin’s disadvantaged inner city communities.

Securing our future financial sustainability is critical to the successful implementation of the Co-op’s strategic plan. We aim to achieve this by maximising and diversifying our resources through accessing wider funding streams from government and statutory funders, trusts, foundations, collaborations, partnerships and exploring the potential for self-generating revenues.

In developing our Strategic Plan 2018-2021 we are keeping our member organisations and the individuals and communities they serve resolutely at the heart of everything we do. The title of our Strategic Plan 2018-2021, **Building Inclusive and Thriving Inner City Communities** and our Vision of **a city where locally based community development organisations work together to eliminate poverty, inequality and social exclusion** reflect the Co-op’s intentions, ambitions and aspirations for Dublin’s inner city. Underpinning all our programmes, activities and actions are a social inclusion ethos and the fundamental principles of community development, namely, collective action, empowerment, social justice, equality & anti-discrimination and participation.

The work that we are supporting in Dublin’s inner city is important not only for the well-being of our own communities but it is also essential for the well-being of the city as a whole. Flourishing inner city communities free from poverty and discrimination and with good quality local services are essential for a thriving and inclusive city. Our efforts and those of other community organisations around Ireland are also vital if the government is to achieve its national goals. For instance, they are an important input to the government achieving its official target to reduce consistent poverty amongst adults and children to 2% or less by 2020. Similarly community development initiatives such as those in the inner city are essential if Ireland is to meet its international commitments. They will be an important element in Ireland’s contribution to achieving the European Union’s target to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or exclusion by 2020 (using 2008 as baseline year) and to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the target of reducing at least by half by 2030 the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Constructively advocating and campaigning for an end to poverty and social exclusion and for social justice, equality and progressive change with and on behalf of inner city communities will be a priority for the Co-op during the four years of our strategic plan.

As an organisation committed to the elimination of poverty the Co-op wholeheartedly echoes the sentiments expressed by Nelson Mandela when he said “Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings”.

.....  
*The work that we are supporting in Dublin’s inner city is important not only for the well-being of our own communities but it is also essential for the well-being of the city as a whole*  
.....



**HUGH FRAZER**  
Chairperson



## Executive Summary

.....  
*Our existence and success in delivering the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is testament to the skills and expertise of our member organisations and staff.*  
.....

Although a relatively new organisation<sup>1</sup>, and with a legal and governance structure that is largely unfamiliar to many, Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative Society Limited (hereafter ‘The Co-op’<sup>2</sup>) has highlighted the potential for grassroots led community development to positively and sustainably impact on social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage. This we have collectively done within a context that is changing from being historically grant supported to one of more commissioned outcomes i.e. through contracted programme management without compromising our core values and principles. Our existence and success in delivering the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP<sup>3</sup>) is testament to the skills and expertise of our member organisations and staff. We are keen to build on our early successes and take a more proactive approach in pursuit of our mission and member organisations interests. To this end we have commissioned several pieces of work, of which this Strategic Plan forms a focal point for our future planning and delivery of social inclusion programmes and activities. However, unlike ‘traditional’ strategic plans, we have identified that having a more framework-led approach, rather than prescriptive targets and milestones, is a better fit in allowing us to remain more responsive to, and led by, the changing circumstances of our member organisations, and the changing needs of the local communities we collectively support. Thus, this plan has been developed through a co-production process that has sought to engage all our stakeholders (internally and externally), presenting our six strategic aims against our three principal roles:

.....  
<sup>1</sup> Legally established in November 2014.  
<sup>2</sup> The Co-op refers to ‘our’ as meaning its member organisations which it represents and the Co-op itself as a legal entity  
<sup>3</sup> SICAP <https://www.pobal.ie/Publications/Documents/SICAP%202016%20leaflet%20downloadable%20version.pdf>

- The Co-op as having a **Leadership** role, reflecting the shared vision and individual circumstances of its members.
- The Co-op as a focal point for **Community Development**, highlighting the impact and value of its members and using this to lobby for further change by policy makers and statutory funding agencies.
- The Co-op as a provider of **Organisational Development**, better sustaining itself in order to ensure a stronger offer of support in facilitating its members to not only access revenue opportunities, but also to further enhance their own capacity, social value and impact.

The plan is structured to reflect our history and current position; the changing context we operate within; ways in which we engage and communicate with different stakeholders; and how we start to approach and plan how to best secure our future – both as an entity in our own right, and as a collective of a number of local organisations who mutually share a common purpose, vision and mission. As a framework this allows us the necessary flexibility owing to a changing political and economic environment and local circumstances that we face both externally and internally. By using this approach in pursuit of our strategic aims against our roles, we will be better positioned in the future to achieve our mission as set forth in what is our inaugural strategic plan.

# The Context

## INTRODUCTION

The Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative Society Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Co-op') is a membership co-operative of 13 grassroots, Dublin inner city, community development organisations which have come together to promote sustainable communities in Dublin's inner city through the services we provide. Our members are operational in all of or parts of Dublin 1,3,7,8 as well as disadvantaged city areas in Dublin 2 and 4. As a legal entity the Co-op was formally established in November 2014. The Co-op registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority in early 2016.

The community and voluntary sector in Ireland has undergone significant change in the past decade yet it remains resilient, dynamic and woven into the very fabric of Irish society. The sector comprises over 15,000 organisations, employing over 100,000 people and involving more than 560,000 volunteers representing a diverse peoples and communities<sup>1</sup>. However, what bonds all community, voluntary and charitable organisations together is a common purpose to change people's lives for the better.

The Co-op initiated a strategic planning process in October 2016 which resulted in the drafting of this framework-led plan for approval by both our Board and member organisations, respectively. We fundamentally believe that better outcomes are achieved when people are involved and engaged in making decisions that affect their lives. Therefore, as a first step in developing our Strategic Plan we sought the input of our members, peer organisations, key external stakeholders, Government agencies, and funders plus the Co-op's own staff, chairperson and board.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Developing any plan is based on evidence of need, analysing future challenges, prioritising and measuring organisational performance en route to achieving strategic aims. Input from our members was initially sought via both SWOT<sup>2</sup> and PESTLE<sup>3</sup> analyses. This was followed by in-depth structured interviews with the Co-op's Chairperson, CEO and staff.

<sup>1</sup> The Wheel [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)

<sup>2</sup> SWOT analysis is a study undertaken by an organisation to identify its internal Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as its external Opportunities and Threats

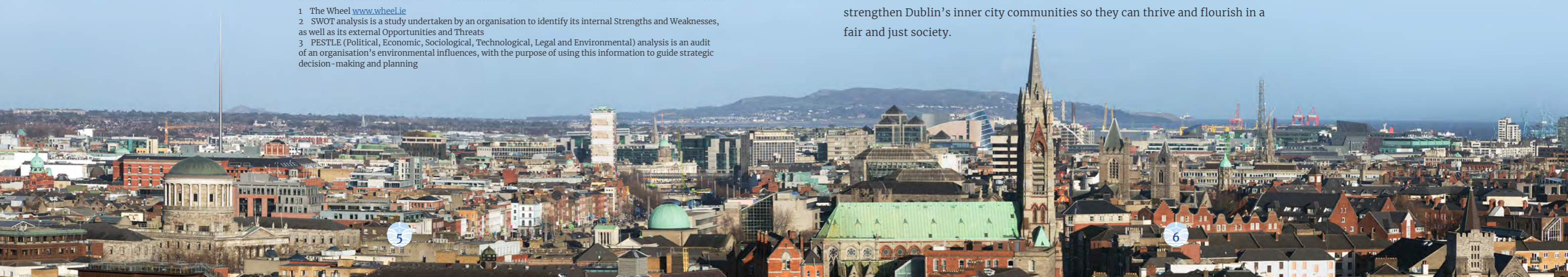
<sup>3</sup> PESTLE (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) analysis is an audit of an organisation's environmental influences, with the purpose of using this information to guide strategic decision-making and planning

A series of stakeholder engagements followed including semi-structured interviews with funders, commissioners and sector peers. An externally facilitated workshop was held in March 2017 with staff from the Co-op head office and member organisations and Co-op board members in attendance. This workshop provided an opportunity for member organisations to reflect and discuss the initial draft. Feedback from the workshop and subsequent follow-up activities were utilised in co-creating the strategic plan. Throughout 2017 a number of drafts of the strategic plan were shared with our board and member organisations' staff. Feedback was sought and incorporated into the final version. In summary, the process involved engagement and consultation with a range of key external stakeholders and internally with both our board and member organisations towards:

- Agreeing a consensus as to our **vision, mission, values and principles**, as these will underpin all future activities.
- Ensuring there is a similar consensus amongst members as to the **strategic aims, outcomes and indicators** which have been drafted based on prior external stakeholder consultations, and internal consultation, research and analysis before specific actions were developed and approved against each.
- Making best use of members' time and resources to ultimately achieve consensus through effective **consultation and engagement in our strategic planning process**.

The following framework sets out the vision, mission, values and guiding principles of the Co-op as well as our strategic aims and a broad set of indicators and actions as to how these will be pursued over the lifetime of the plan. The delivery of the plan section details specific tasks and activities which will be determined by available resources and upon agreement with member organisations by way of immediate actions (within the next year) and intermediate actions (within the next four years) linked to our strategic aims.

This Strategic Plan reflects our determination to represent our members and strengthen Dublin's inner city communities so they can thrive and flourish in a fair and just society.



.....  
*The achievement of our vision will enable our members and the communities they serve to inform, shape and influence decisions, plans and policies affecting the lives of Dublin's inner city residents so that current and future generations can live, thrive and prosper in an equal and inclusive society for all.*  
.....

## VISION

**OUR VISION IS A CITY WHERE THRIVING LOCALLY BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS WORK TOGETHER TO ELIMINATE POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.**

## MISSION

**OUR MISSION IS TO TACKLE POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ALL ITS GUISES. WE WILL DO THIS BY BUILDING AND SUSTAINING AN ORGANISATION WHICH SUPPORTS ITS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE AND THE DIVERSITY THEY REPRESENT.**

A core philosophy of the Co-op in carrying out our mission is that we operate to community development principles and ensure a social inclusion ethos forms the basis for all engagements with members, communities and stakeholders. Collective action with and on behalf of our members and the diverse communities of the inner city is fundamental to how we work. In everything we do we seek to improve the lives of people, to create an environment where they reach their full potential and to build flourishing vibrant communities to live in.

## PRINCIPLES

A set of five principles guide the Co-op's way of working with all our stakeholders:

**COLLECTIVE ACTION:** Community work is based on working with and supporting groups of people. It enables them to develop knowledge, skills and confidence, so that they can analyse and identify priority needs and issues and address these through collective action.

**EMPOWERMENT:** Community work is about the empowerment of individuals and communities, and addressing the unequal distribution of power.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE:** Community work is based on a belief that every person and every community can play an active role in creating conditions for a just and equal society where human rights are promoted and all forms of oppression and discrimination are challenged.

**EQUALITY & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION:** Community work challenges the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups by institutions and society that leads to discrimination against people based on ability, age, culture, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic group, nationality, skin colour, sexual orientation and political or religious beliefs.

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation is about the involvement of groups and individuals who experience social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination in decision making, planning and action at all levels, from the local to the global. Participation can be viewed as a continuum of

activity that can start from information sharing through capacity building and empowerment to active engagement and meaningful participation in democratic processes.

The Co-op is committed to the seven international principles of being a Co-operative<sup>1</sup>:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Co-operation among co-operatives
- Concern for community

## VALUES

We operate to community development principles and a social inclusion ethos all of which form the basis of our Values and how we conduct our work with all stakeholders. Our four values are:

### 1. PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHOS

- Empowerment
- Justice
- Social Inclusion
- Participative Democracy
- Collaboration

### 2. PROTECT AND SUSTAIN GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Built up over decades by local people for local people
- Grassroots approach
- Working with 'hard to reach/seldom heard' groups and individuals
- Strengthening communities
- Creating and sustaining 'active citizens'<sup>2</sup> i.e. people being active, engaged and involved in their communities and with the issues that affect their lives

1 International Principles of Co-operatives as agreed by the International Co-operative Alliance (1996)

2 Citizens in this context are understood to include all people living in Ireland regardless of their technical legal status

.....  
*We seek to promote and maintain a community development ethos and to protect and sustain grassroots community infrastructure*  
.....

.....

*A trusted voice on social inclusion and social justice issues. Through our collective unity we will strengthen and amplify the voice of our members and Dublin's inner city communities*

.....

### 3. CREATE SOCIETAL VALUE

- Societal Value is created when both financial and non-financial resources are applied to produce positive societal change.
- Demonstrate transparency through five dimensions: accountability, quality, responsiveness, equity and efficiency (which includes financial). The Co-op's approach is valuable because it empowers people, improves communities and benefits society.

### 4. SOLIDARITY IN SUPPORTING EACH OTHER'S WORK

- Shared history of combating poverty
- United voice of disadvantaged communities
- Combat fragmentation and competition
- Promote integrated solutions to problems
- Share information / resources / ideas

### STRATEGIC AIMS

The following six strategic aims have been developed as a result of internal and external stakeholder consultation and engagement activities including SWOT and PESTLE analyses through the lens of our members and listening to the views of external funders, commissioners and peer organisations within the wider sector. In addition, a scanning of the political and economic environment and review of the key strategies and policies that may affect the Co-op has been conducted as part of the strategic planning process.

*Note: Our strategic aims are set out below but are not listed by way of preferential order or by means of priority of one aim over another thus each aim is mutually interdependent.*

#### 1. TO ADVOCATE AND BE A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, POSITIVE SOCIETAL CHANGE AND THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Our aim is to be a trusted voice on social inclusion and social justice issues. Through our collective unity we will strengthen and amplify the voice of our members and Dublin's inner city communities. Through harnessing the knowledge and expertise of our member organisations and staff we aim to collectively contribute to, and affect, progressive change. We will constructively challenge public policy and advocate for legislative change as appropriate.

### 2. TO MAXIMISE THE SOCIAL IMPACT AND SOCIAL VALUE OF OUR WORK

Our aim is to evidence the outcomes of our work across Dublin's inner city to all our key stakeholders and report on the social value we and our members create based on agreed frameworks and measurement tools. We will at all times endeavour to be innovative in our work and seek opportunities to create and maximise the social value of what we do.

### 3. TO SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY

Our aim is to always allocate resources and funding the Co-op receives for onward distribution to members in a fair, transparent and equitable manner.

We will use the resources of the Co-op to increase the capacity, reach and impact of our member organisations both individually and collectively.

### 4. TO STRENGTHEN OUR REPUTATION AND RAISE OUR PROFILE AND VISIBILITY

Our aim is to strengthen our reputation through the quality and impact of our work and in doing so to raise the visibility and profile of the Co-op and its member organisations as pioneers, innovators and leaders within the community development sector.

### 5. TO GOVERN WITH TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY AND MAINTAIN THE TRUST OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Our aim is to work to the highest standards of governance and adhere to all Charities Regulatory Authority, legal and funder requirements and obligations. We will be fully compliant with the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary sector. We will apply our own internal governance, financial and operational rules with rigour, transparency, accuracy and robustness.

### 6. TO DEVELOP, STRENGTHEN AND GROW OUR WORK

Our aim is to secure the future sustainability of the Co-op by maximising and diversifying our resources through accessing wider funding streams from government and statutory funders, trusts, foundations, collaborations, partnerships and exploring the development of self-generating revenues.

We will ensure the Co-op has the right structure, capacity and human, technical and financial resources to deliver on these strategic objectives.

**THE OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS UPON WHICH OUR STRATEGIC AIMS WILL BE MEASURED:**

PRINCIPLE ROLE	LEADERSHIP	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
<b>STRATEGIC AIM</b>	#1 To advocate and be a catalyst for social inclusion, social justice, positive societal change and the eradication of poverty	#2 To maximise the social impact and social value of our work #3 To support our members fairly and equitably	#4 To strengthen our reputation and raise our profile and visibility #5 To govern with transparency and integrity and maintain the trust of our stakeholders #6 To develop, strengthen and grow our work
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<p>A trusted voice on social justice issues affecting Dublin's inner city communities.</p> <p>Recognised by our external stakeholders as a legitimate collective voice of our members.</p> <p>Collectively contributing to and affecting progressive change.</p> <p>Articulating the issues affecting inner city communities.</p> <p>Constructively challenging public policy and where appropriate seeking legislative change to reflect local needs and priorities.</p> <p>The Advocacy for Change Subcommittee<sup>1</sup> provides an internal mechanism for coordinating and identifying agreed Co-op positions on advocacy and campaigning.</p> <p>Active engagement and influence within the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)</p>	<p>Agreed and accepted social value and social impact measurement tools in place and operationalised.</p> <p>Enhanced credibility with key funders and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Evidencing the outcomes of our members work to all key stakeholders.</p> <p>Reporting on the social value created by our members.</p> <p>Ability to know and demonstrate what works and what doesn't work.</p> <p>Ability to incorporate lessons learned into future programming and to adapt quickly to results of social measurement tool feedback</p> <p>All programmes and activities implemented according to community development principles and a social inclusion ethos.</p> <p>A deserved reputation for developing and implementing new initiatives, pilot programmes and innovative models of community development.</p> <p>The creation and maximisation of societal value as a key factor in programme design and implementation.</p> <p>Equitable and transparent allocation of funding the Co-op receives for onward distribution to members.</p> <p>Provision of non-financial resources to members.</p> <p>The capacity, reach and impact of the member organisations, both individually and collectively, are increased as a result of Co-op membership.</p>	<p>Member organisations have trust and confidence in the Co-op's governance rules and decision-making.</p> <p>External funders, regulatory authorities and stakeholders have trust and confidence in the Co-op's governance and financial management capabilities.</p> <p>Maximise and diversify our income streams.</p> <p>Co-op members financial sustainability and overall organisational capacity enhanced and strengthened as a result of Co-op membership</p> <p>The Co-op has the right structure, capacity and human, technical and financial resources to deliver on its strategic objectives</p> <p>Organisational capacity exists to apply for and secure funding from a wide range of funders.</p> <p>The future sustainability of the Co-op is secured.</p> <p>Working collectively with our members to be pioneers, innovators and leaders within the community development sector.</p> <p>The high quality and impact of our work is measured and recognised.</p> <p>The visibility of the Co-op is raised and its profile and reputation strengthened.</p>
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<p>Co-op's membership of and contribution to local and national fora, networks and bodies.</p> <p>Co-op members and external stakeholders trust and respect the advocacy work carried out by the Co-op.</p> <p>Level of contribution and engagement by members in developing and articulating key advocacy messages.</p> <p>Responses to community consultations as agreed by all Co-op member organisations and lobbying activity with local elected representatives to influence positive changes to policies or legislation as required.</p> <p>Responses to the needs of communities rather than pre-determined targets through conducting regular community audits and consultations via our member organisations.</p> <p>The level of work and output from the Advocacy for Change Subcommittee</p> <p>Alliances, collaboration and partnerships with non-Co-op members on advocacy.</p> <p>Membership of Dublin and national ILDN committees.</p> <p>Attendance at ILDN meetings at various levels and input to ILDN policy and position papers.</p>	<p>Social impact measurement tools agreed with member organisations.</p> <p>Fit-for-purpose implementation mechanism agreed with member organisations to utilise agreed social impact and social value measurement tools.</p> <p>The degree to which the Co-op and its members implement flexible, impactful and innovative programmes and activities that address needs as identified by communities themselves.</p> <p>Number of pilot programmes, new initiatives and innovative models of community development commenced and implemented.</p> <p>Programme design criteria to explicitly include creation and maximisation of social value as key objectives.</p> <p>Members accept, approve, agree, and trust the Co-op's internal funding distribution mechanisms and criteria.</p> <p>All allocations of staffing and service support to members via the Co-op are provided fairly and on an as-needs basis.</p> <p>Evaluations and assessments of the impact of resources provided by the Co-op to members.</p>	<p>Agreement of Rules and any future changes to Co-op's governance by our members.</p> <p>Passing of internal and external financial audits.</p> <p>Strict adherence to all Charities Regulatory Authority and Registry of Friendly Societies compliance and reporting requirements.</p> <p>The Co-op and its members are fully compliant with the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary sector.</p> <p>An active Governance Subcommittee of the Board that meets a minimum of three times per year.</p> <p>The nature and diversity of our external funding sources.</p> <p>Number and scale of new funding contracts, collaboration bids, funding partnerships and self-generating revenues.</p> <p>The scale of funding and non-financial resources provided by the Co-op to members.</p> <p>Reduced reliance on and risk of single funding contracts.</p> <p>The nature and diversity of programmes and activities supported by funding routed through the Co-op.</p> <p>The number of staff employed within the Co-op and within member organisations financed by Co-op sourced funding.</p> <p>The degree to which the Co-op and its members implement flexible, impactful and innovative programmes and activities that address needs as identified by communities themselves and these programmes are recognised by key stakeholders.</p> <p>Increased online social media presence, followers, and interactions.</p> <p>Influence positive publicity and press coverage of members.</p> <p>Conduct a stakeholder survey to monitor reputation of Co-op as perceived by external stakeholders and internally by members.</p> <p>External recognition for fostering new approaches to social inclusion.</p> <p>Increased funding sources due to strengthening reputation.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Advocacy for Change subcommittee is a standing subcommittee of the Co-op board. Its membership comprises three board members and two senior staff from member organisations. It is chaired by a board member.



In summary, the Co-op has three Principal Roles under which our six Strategic Aims are located, as follows:

#### LEADERSHIP

- To advocate and be a catalyst for social inclusion, social justice, positive societal change and the eradication of poverty

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- To maximise the social impact and social value of our work
- To support our members fairly and equitably

#### ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- To strengthen our reputation and raise our profile and visibility
- To govern with transparency and integrity and maintain the trust of our stakeholders
- To develop, strengthen and grow our work

## The Co-op

#### BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The Co-op was formed in response to an opportunity for 15 local community development organisations to collectively deliver a contract under the national Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)<sup>1</sup>. This involved tendering for a large, higher value contract, which many of the Co-op members would simply not otherwise have been able to bid for alone. The tender covered the entire inner city area of Dublin while individual Co-op members worked in specific smaller geographic areas. The creation of the Co-op meant that collectively the membership covered the entire geographic area required for the tender. Similarly other tender criteria, not reached on an individual organisation basis, were achieved by the Co-op as a collective. The Co-op successfully bid for the first SICAP contract and the programme ran from 1st April 2015 to 31st December 2017. All the preparatory work, discussions and negotiations necessary to establish the Co-op as a legal entity took place during 2014 (formally registered in November 2014).

In 2016, the membership became 13 due to the merging of two members and subsuming of one member organisation's staff into the Co-op itself. All 13

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pobal.ie/Publications/Documents/SICAP%202016%20leaflet%20downloadable%20version.pdf>

member organisations, each of which is represented on the board of directors of the Co-op, have an equal voice in its running. Whilst the number of members may change in the future, members of the Co-op are organisational entities, not individuals.

Despite the traditional approach in such instances being to form a Local Development Company<sup>1</sup>, the founding organisational members of the Co-op decided to adopt a structure that would be more flexible, ensure enhanced contact and credibility within local communities and allow for more freedom in the future to engage in other activities. Critical to the decision to form a co-operative is the view that such a structure best reflects and maintains a focus on the shared purpose of members all having a community development ethos. This is reflected in the Co-op's primary purpose being to engage in social inclusion, anti-poverty and other community development activities that will enhance the sustainability of local communities where member organisations work while adopting a social inclusion ethos and operating to community development principles at all times.

#### KEY SERVICES

The key services provided by the Co-op head office relate primarily to supporting our member organisations in overseeing, administering and managing all external funder reporting compliance requirements and obligations related to funding that is routed through the Co-op. Other core services provided directly by Co-op staff include:

- Training, project support and development
- Policy development and analysis
- Information provision and funding advice
- Educational Guidance
- Advocacy
- Urban Planning and Regeneration
- Social Research
- Programme Evaluation

However, as part of our delivery we anticipate this strategic plan will allow us to expand into a range of other services of benefit to our members (both collectively and individually), and to other external stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> Of the 49 SICAP Programme Implementers across the country the Co-op is the only structure that is not a Local Development Company

.....  
*Critical to the decision to form a co-operative is the view that such a structure best reflects and maintains a focus on the shared purpose of members all having a community development ethos.*  
.....

.....  
*A core achievement to date has been the fostering of strong and beneficial working relationships between our member organisations.*  
.....

## MILESTONES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Although being a relatively new entity, and with limited wider awareness amongst external stakeholders as to co-operative structures, models and approaches, we were nonetheless awarded in late 2014 a significant publicly tendered contract to deliver SICAP in the Dublin Inner City lot area covering the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. In early 2018 the Co-op was awarded the contract for the second SICAP Programme, covering the years 2018-2022 and thereby securing the continuation of essential community development programmes across Dublin's inner city.

The Co-op also received separate funding in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 from the former Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government (from mid-2017 responsibility transferred to a new department, the Department of Rural and Community Development) and Dublin City Council for the delivery of additional community service activities across Dublin's Inner City. In addition the Co-op received funding in 2016, 2017 and 2018 from the Health Service Executive (HSE) for a partnership with a non-Co-op member organisation for activities related to community health education, support and awareness.

A core achievement to date has been the fostering of strong and beneficial working relationships between our member organisations. Whilst it is recognised that some of the operational protocols between and within the Co-op and its members are continually being developed, or might benefit from being enhanced, that the Co-op exists and has been able to successfully and collectively deliver a range of extensive programmes and activities and meet external funder compliance requirements with little development time or support, is a significant achievement in itself.

Three years into our history and over the next four years, we are seeking to be proactive in the role we can play on behalf of our member organisations, and also the wider local communities throughout Dublin's inner city. This is being pursued in a number of ways:

- i. Commissioning the development of our inaugural strategic plan.
- ii. Revising and updating the Co-op's governance, rules and membership protocols.
- iii. Commissioning a review of the mechanisms and criteria through which member organisations receive funding via the Co-op.
- iv. The establishment of an Advocacy-for-Change subcommittee which will lead on developing the Co-op's overall advocacy activities

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

We have sought to be proactive in exploring how we can support our members for their individual organisation's and collective benefit. A number of key developments in this regard include:

- i. Co-op staff leading the implementation of the **Governance Code**<sup>1</sup> – a governance code of practice for community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland – as an objective external framework that is recognised by commissioners and funders. This not only enables us to better present ourselves for relevant local opportunities, but also enhances our credibility with larger commissioners too. We are committed to becoming fully compliant with all of the principles and actions in the Governance Code for community, voluntary and charitable organisations during 2018. The five key areas under the Code include:
  - Leading our organisation
  - Exercising control over our organisation.
  - Being transparent and accountable.
  - Working effectively.
  - Behaving with integrity
- ii. A key interest amongst many member organisations has been the influencing of policy and practice implemented by external funders and policymakers. Our adopted structure allows for this to happen, and in seeking to do so appropriately, we have convened specific committees to harness and focus those members' interests and expertise to do so including for example our Advocacy for Change sub-committee.
- iii. The Co-op has become increasingly involved and active in the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)<sup>2</sup>. The Co-op CEO attends the Dublin Region and national ILDN CEO Meetings while the Co-op's Policy & Research Coordinator and Programme Monitoring Manager are members of two key national ILDN committees, Research & Evaluation and Social Inclusion respectively. Membership of and engagement with the ILDN ensures the Co-op has access to a network of experienced, well respected and long established peer organisations and allows it bring issues related to urban poverty and social exclusion to a national forum.

.....  
<sup>1</sup> The Co-op has formally registered its intention in this regard with the Governance Code Secretariat and is officially 'on the journey', and listed as such on [www.governancecode.ie](http://www.governancecode.ie).

<sup>2</sup> The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) is the representative body of Local Development Companies (LDCs) in Ireland. Its mission is to promote and support the work of its members in the areas of social inclusion and local and rural development. The membership currently stands at 48 companies and 1 co-operative with all members delivering the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and in rural contexts, the LEADER Rural Development Programme

## The Structure

### LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

The Co-op became registered as Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative Society Limited with the Registrar of Friendly Societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts (1893-2014) in November 2014, and also became a registered charity with the Charities Regulatory Authority, Registered Charity Number (RCN) 20107079, in early 2016.

Our Rules and Objects set out our legal governance framework, but also allow us freedom to supplement these with additional systems. Our key governance protocols include:

- The Board is made up of one representative from each member organisation who holds decision making powers on their behalf. In the interests of managing potential conflicts of interest, none of the representatives' receive any financial benefits and/or salaries supported by funds which are routed through the Co-op.  
The Board is headed by an independent chairperson. As a charity all Co-op board members serve in a voluntary capacity. To date, having an independent Chair with no prior or existing connection with the Co-op or any of its constituent member organisations has been well received by all and has been a key factor in the Co-op's strong governance performance. The first independent chair of the Co-op served from April 2015 to September 2017 with his successor taking up the role in October 2017 for a three year term. The independent chairperson is appointed by the sitting board.
- Equality of power within this structure regardless of relative size or contribution either financially or through other means – all member organisations have a single vote.
- The Co-op exists to address needs relating to community development, social inclusion, poverty, and similar issues, to ensure the sustainability of local communities. This creates future opportunities with regards to engaging with research and advocacy programmes that are wider in scope than just Dublin, which may open additional income generating opportunities and increased opportunities for the Co-op to influence national policies that impact on the ground in Dublin's inner city.

In addition to the Board, there is also a 'Practitioners Forum'<sup>1</sup> which meets monthly and has its focus on the delivery of activities, day to day operations and on-going relationships and working practices where they are felt to be of

<sup>1</sup> The Practitioners Forum is made up of nominated staff from each of our 13 member organisations. Many of the staff who partake in the Forum are the heads of their respective organisation. The Co-op's CEO attends the Practitioners Forum

relevance to the communities of Dublin's inner city. Whilst supplementing the strategic role and focus of the Board, the forum offers the Co-op's management team an additional resource, insight, and guidance to draw upon in ensuring the Co-op remains true to its original vision and stated purposes.

### OPERATIONS & PERSONNEL

The Co-op has a small staff team, led by a Chief Executive Officer. One staff member is seconded to a peer (non-member) organisation for specific work related to community health education. The Co-op team is augmented through various contracts for services such as finance and programme monitoring and evaluation to bring specific skills into the organisation. In doing its work, the Co-op also engages with, and relies upon the skills and expertise of the people within its member organisations.



As noted above the Co-op is chaired independently by a person from outside of the organisation with no links or affiliation to the members. The chairperson provides oversight of the Co-op's board which governs the organisation from a fiduciary and strategic perspective. The full board is made up of the independent chairperson and one representative from each of the 13 member organisations. The CEO reports to both the Chairperson and Board, respectively. Currently, three standing sub-committees of the Board have been established, namely, Governance, Finance & Audit and Advocacy-for-Change all of which comprise a number of nominated board members. The Governance and Advocacy for Change sub-committees have both board members and practitioners amongst their membership but retain a majority of board members. The Practitioners Forum comprises nominated staff (non-board members) from each of our 13 members who convene to primarily discuss, coordinate and review operations and contractual delivery affairs.

## MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The following organisations comprise the Co-op's membership:

- An Siol Community Development Project
- Community After Schools Project (CASPr)
- Daughters of Charity Community Services
- Inner City Enterprise (ICE)
- Inner City Organisations Network (ICON)
- Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS)
- Nascadh Community Development Project
- North Wall Community Development Project
- North West Inner City Network (NWICN)
- New Communities Partnership (NCP)
- Robert Emmet Community Development Project
- South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA)
- South West Inner City Network (SWICN)

The work of each member organisation is highlighted on page 20.

### NORTH WEST INNER CITY NETWORK

NWICN is a member-based community organisation comprised of community and voluntary organisations located in the north-west inner city. It conducts door-to-door consultations on a quarterly basis to identify the issues faced by residents living in the local authority flat complexes to ascertain the issues that they are encountering. The NWICN provides a range of supports to member groups, such as men's groups. It provides a range of educational and training programmes for all age groups.

### DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY COMMUNITY SERVICES

DoCCS are a community based organisation providing a range of educational, training and social care services for children, young people and adults in Dublin's North West Inner City area. They strengthen communities by encouraging individuals and families most marginalised to reach their full potential. DoCCS at times carries out work in certain parts of the North East inner city.

### COMMUNITY AFTER SCHOOLS PROJECT

CASPr combines the delivery of after-school, homework-club and crèche activities for children with the provision of education and training for parents. The project aims to solve child poverty issues within the north inner city. The theme of the CASPr's work is to counter educational disadvantage in order to support children to remain in school, and adults to enter or re-enter training and employment, particularly those who have left school early, including long-term unemployed adults, lone parents and people recovering from addiction problems.

### AN SIOL CDP

An Siol CDP delivers services and provides support to meet the needs of the residents of North West Inner City. For over 25 years it has been providing homework clubs, one to one tuition, early literacy supports and educational supports to children with special educational needs; meals and mini bus service, activities and a friendship service to senior citizens; advocacy for local residents and supports to tenants and residents groups; a free and confidential Welfare to Work Information Service.

### INNER CITY ORGANISATIONS NETWORK

ICON is a forum of community and voluntary organisations and individuals living and working in the north-east inner city. ICON seeks to ensure the community has an active role in local developments and access to support, training, education and employment. The broad functions of ICON include campaigning and lobbying around issues identified within the community; encouraging local policy-making through debate and discussion forums; promoting a partnership approach and providing a catalyst to initiate relevant service responses.

### NASCADH CDP

NASCADH organises a number of inter-generational activities, delivers a range of accredited/non-accredited educational and training programmes for all age groups and health initiatives. It offers an over 55s club for both women and men. It played a lead role in initiating a men's shed and a community garden. It also offers a number of activation programmes to enhance East Wall residents' employability

### NORTH WALL CDP

NWCDP assists residents to collectively address issues facing their community. The project delivers a number of accredited training and educational programmes aimed at enhancing participants' employability. The project also runs a number of personal development programmes as well as a community crèche for over 80 children.

### ROBERT EMMET CDP

RECDP is most identified with Oliver Bond flat complex, but also works with people from surrounding flat complexes and people living in Watergate House (families going through the asylum process). The core of the work is building close relationships with around 20 families identified in the community as having the greatest needs through an after-school project. Children attend on a daily basis for approximately five years, facilitating the building of strong relationships with other family members, while improving educational outcomes for the children. The project also has a senior citizens' programme, environmental programme, heritage programme, youth programme and also delivers informal and introductory training in these areas.

### LOURDES YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

LYCS is a community development organisation which provides accredited and non-accredited training, educational and social programmes for local children, young people and adults each week in the north-east inner city. It operates the following programmes of work: childcare, youth work, Community Training Centre for early school leavers, adult education, development education and employment.

### SOUTH INNER CITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

SICCDA assists residents in the Liberties area to participate in locally based social and cultural events, voter participation programmes and a range of educational and training programmes (which it delivers). It works with residents to access a range of services. SICCDA also signposts individuals to participate in formal education.

### SOUTH WEST INNER CITY NETWORK

SWICN delivers a range of accredited and non-accredited IT and other educational programmes for young people and adults. It provides conversational English language classes for migrants. The organisation also delivers a digital film-making course for adults. SWICN also supports residents to collectively address issues and meet needs in their communities.

### INNER CITY ENTERPRISE

ICE is a not-for-profit organisation established to advise and assist unemployed people in Dublin's inner city to set up their own businesses and create their own employment. ICE provides a range of supports to individuals who are members of disadvantaged target groups to establish their own businesses. ICE also supports community groups to establish social enterprises.

### NEW COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

NCP is a migrant-led organisation which supports groups and individuals in the area of social inclusion and empowerment, assisting them to increase their capacity to meet their needs through the provision of training and mentoring support. NCP delivers a number of specific services such as Citizenship Application Support Service, Migrant Family Support Service, English Homework Support Service, English classes for adults, active citizenship training, the provision and support in maintaining an office space for migrant-led organisations. The partnership provides a range of specific employment access supports tailored to the needs of new community members, such as lifelong learning related activities, CV preparation, career guidance and signposting services. NCP also has a close working relationship with State agencies to support the engagement of new communities in local and national decision making policies and forums.

NORTH WEST

NORTH EAST

SOUTH WEST

CITY WIDE (INCLUDING SOUTH EAST)

## The Environment

### KEY POLICIES

Within the wider environment that the Co-op operates within, there are strategic opportunities being created through a number of key strategies, plans and policies at local and national level. These include:

- Creating a Brighter Future – An Outline Plan for the Social and Economic Regeneration of Dublin’s North East Inner City, Kieran Mulvey Report, February 2016.<sup>1</sup>
- Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan – A six-year (2016–2021) Dublin City Council strategy setting out 12 high-level goals for the lifetime of the plan.<sup>2</sup>
- Our Communities – A Policy Framework for Local and Community Development in Ireland (Department of Rural and Community Development).<sup>3</sup>
- Reimagining Dublin One – A Planning Framework with the purpose of empowering communities to improve their environment through an open, collaborative and systematic approach.<sup>4</sup>
- National Policy for Social Enterprise (forthcoming).<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with the purpose of this strategic plan to serve as a framework for the Co-op, the actions contained within our delivery plan will be reviewed against any changes to the above and emerging strategies or policies in the future. All will be reviewed on a regular basis within the context of this strategic plan, to ensure that the Co-op remains relevant and best placed to respond to any arising opportunities on behalf of its member organisations. All formal responses by the Co-op to policy consultations will also contribute to the communications activities with different stakeholder groups so as to enable the Co-op to present a credible campaigning and advocacy role in the future.

### COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED

Broad socio-economic statistics and profiling of communities in the inner city can often mask local areas of significant social deprivation and need. Further, they also do not convey the lived experiences of the most disadvantaged in Dublin’s inner city communities, which is crucial in being able to develop and pursue our community development approach.

1 <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26859/1/MulveyReport.pdf>  
2 [http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Community/DublinCityLocalCommunityDevelopmentCommittee/Documents/Dublin%20City%20LECP%202016%20-%202021\\_Web%20version.pdf](http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Community/DublinCityLocalCommunityDevelopmentCommittee/Documents/Dublin%20City%20LECP%202016%20-%202021_Web%20version.pdf)  
3 [http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/our\\_communities\\_-\\_national\\_forum\\_november\\_2016\\_-\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/our_communities_-_national_forum_november_2016_-_summary_report.pdf)  
4 <http://www.wereadublincity.ie/reimagine-dublin-one/project-overview>  
5 <http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/longawaited-social-enterprise-strategy-on-way-35331262.html>

Through our member organisations based and working specifically within these communities we are acutely aware of the impact of such disadvantage, and able to remain resolutely committed to working towards a more inclusive society not just in the inner city but across Dublin City and Ireland. Therefore, we intend to remain well placed to capture these needs and issues in informing wider policy. In influencing policy in this way, we will be able to help direct resources into these communities, achieve greater impact and so better generate support for our member organisations.

The routes through which we support these communities via our member organisations are through the management of the SICAP 2018–2022 programme contract along with other funding streams. In addition, we will serve to act as a dissemination mechanism for small local discretionary grants that various bodies wish to see used for local activities. The Co-op will also continue to position itself as a reliable, credible and effective ‘preferred partner’ for Dublin City Council as it seeks to implement a wide range of programmes and activities across the inner city.

### UNIQUE OFFER OF THE CO-OP

In being able to differentiate the Co-op from other organisations and to present a clear benefit to external funders and commissioners, we are recognised as having particular proven expertise in engaging with ‘hard to reach/seldom heard’ groups such as:

- Disadvantaged communities
- Lone parents
- Homeless persons
- Immigrant communities
- Vulnerable families living in the private rented sector and in social housing
- People with mental health issues
- Unemployed adults (including long-term unemployed)
- People recovering from addiction problems
- Disadvantaged ethnic groups such as the Traveller and Roma communities
- Disadvantaged children requiring educational support

The way in which we and our member organisations recognise and engage with the characteristics and local circumstances of these hard to reach/seldom heard groups follow our shared principles and values as articulated in this strategy. Retaining our committed focus on community development is a

.....  
*We are recognised  
as having particular  
proven expertise in  
engaging with ‘hard  
to reach/seldom  
heard’ groups*  
.....

further point of our differentiation and our unique offer. Combined with our member organisations' proven ability to successfully and positively engage with local 'hard to reach/seldom heard' communities, these make up our offer in pursuing contracts and funding in relation to social inclusion. In turn, the success of securing these resources on behalf of our member organisations means that we better retain and enhance our relationships with them, and so creates a 'virtuous circle' of representation and advocacy for and on behalf of various local communities.

## The Stakeholders

### CORE MESSAGES

The Co-op will engage with a range of stakeholders in pursuing our mission and strategic aims. Whilst all of these stakeholders will share a common interest in the welfare of local communities, each grouping of them should be engaged according to their respective priorities and individual interests. The table below summarises the key messages from and about us that we will seek to convey for consistency with each group through our various engagements with them.

Having such an agreed set of core messages for each stakeholder group serves to:

- iv. Help achieve a consistent voice and to raise the profile and visibility of the Co-op
- v. Amplify the voices of our members and their communities with policymakers and commissioners
- vi. Enhance engagement and co-operation between local organisations by facilitating sharing of proven practices and approaches
- vii. Attract and disseminate funding to address locally identified issues through investing in existing local services and activities.

The detail within these messages shall also seek to draw upon and reference the evidence of our impact through the reporting framework we shall be enacting as part of our strategic aims.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	KEY MESSAGES
<b>INTERNAL – BOARD &amp; CHAIRPERSON</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Governing with integrity &amp; trust</li> <li>● Leading and Advocating on Social Inclusion</li> <li>● Implementing the Strategic Plan successfully</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL – STAFF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employer of choice</li> <li>● Ethos of community development</li> <li>● Making a real and positive impact on people's lives</li> <li>● Valuable and rewarding work</li> <li>● Respect for staff with a focus on training and development</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL – MEMBER ORGANISATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mutual support and solidarity</li> <li>● Securing support to empower local communities</li> <li>● Strength in unity</li> <li>● Fairness and Equity in allocating resources</li> <li>● A real voice within the Co-op</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – FUNDING AND COMMISSIONING BODIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proven delivery expertise &amp; capacity</li> <li>● Creating societal value</li> <li>● Operating with integrity, transparency and accountability</li> <li>● Programme design must be flexible and reflect local needs</li> <li>● Multi-annual funding is essential</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – LOCAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trusted provider of support</li> <li>● Genuine advocate and campaigner</li> <li>● Open door/low threshold policy</li> <li>● Change is possible if communities unite</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – MEDIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure voices of local communities not lost in wider messages or stories</li> <li>● Educate journalists on the consequences of government policies and cuts to resources</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – POLICY MAKERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advocate for policies that address the causes of structural inequality, poverty and disadvantage</li> <li>● Advocacy to influence future programmes that will address inner city poverty and deprivation</li> <li>● Approaches that best engage and support hard to reach/seldom heard groups must be supported and resourced</li> <li>● Flexibility and innovation in programmes must be permitted, encouraged and aided.</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – OTHER DELIVERY BODIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proven delivery expertise &amp; delivery</li> <li>● Open to innovative and pioneering partnerships, collaborations, alliances and affiliations including new members</li> </ul>

## Communications & Channels

The above stakeholders will be engaged through an agreed communications protocol and plan. However, the principle routes through which each shall be engaged include:

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PRINCIPLE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION
<b>INTERNAL – BOARD &amp; CHAIRPERSON</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board self-evaluation</li> <li>● Board evaluation/appraisal of the Chairperson</li> <li>● CEO Reports &amp; Board Meetings</li> <li>● Chairperson meetings with key funders</li> <li>● Meetings of Board subcommittees</li> <li>● Chairperson/CEO meetings</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL – STAFF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appraisals</li> <li>● Line management</li> <li>● Regular meetings and ongoing feedback</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL – MEMBER ORGANISATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project delivery review meetings</li> <li>● Planning events and activities</li> <li>● Monthly Practitioners Forum</li> <li>● AGM</li> <li>● Special General Meetings</li> <li>● Board/Practitioner Meetings</li> <li>● Bilateral communications between Co-op head office and members</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – FUNDING AND COMMISSIONING BODIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Programme delivery review meetings and informal/ongoing communication and engagement</li> <li>● Bids and proposals</li> <li>● Compliance and reporting documentation</li> <li>● Annual Reports and Audits</li> <li>● Development of policy and advocacy positions</li> <li>● Advocacy and influence via ILDN</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – LOCAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Open community events, engagement, consultations and meetings</li> <li>● Regular and sustained outreach</li> <li>● Local media coverage</li> <li>● Open door policy</li> <li>● Engagement with and in local fora, coalitions, alliances and networks</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – MEDIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PR campaigns and Press Releases</li> <li>● Directly engaging and building relations with Editors/Journalists</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – POLICY MAKERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responses to consultations</li> <li>● Challenge public policy &amp; legislation</li> <li>● Ongoing engagement, dialogue and debate with key civil and public servants as well as elected public representatives</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL – OTHER DELIVERY BODIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Joint meetings with other Peers/CEOs in particular active engagement with the ILDN</li> <li>● Networking events</li> <li>● Engagement with organisations and individuals outside the immediate Co-op circle of internal membership and ILDN peer organisations</li> </ul>

Cutting across all these channels and stakeholders shall be an on-going awareness campaign which shall also utilise social media in relation to each stakeholder group. For example and subject to resource availability, Facebook and Twitter shall be used to engage local communities; LinkedIn for policy makers.

Such communications will be ‘two-way’ – as well as disseminating these key messages about ourselves, we shall also seek feedback and comment on our own activities and plans from each stakeholder group. This is not only in keeping with our own values, but ensures that we remain responsive to local needs and issues. It also builds upon and continues some of the initial consultations with different stakeholder groups undertaken previously in informing the development of this strategic plan.

### CAMPAIGNING & ADVOCATING

As referred to above, we shall also use our communication in pursuit of our aims of campaigning and advocacy on behalf of the local communities supported by our member organisations.

The focus for each such campaign and advocacy shall be developed and agreed amongst our member organisations – this is to ensure that best use can be made of our available resource to engage in this work, whilst also directly delivering various funded programmes and activities.

The Co-op’s Advocacy for Change sub-committee, whose role is advisory to the Board, will lead on this, and will seek to take both a planned and proactive approach to opportunities to influence key decision makers including:

- Elected representatives
- Public officers leading on community consultations
- Public officers responsible for reviewing legislation and devising policy

We shall also be drawing upon regular reviews of emerging and published policies of other organisations, bodies and government departments to relate the content of our advocacy and campaigns against same. In doing so, this shall strengthen our impact and influence.

## The Delivery

### PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

The Co-op does not exist as the only entity through which resources and support for local organisations are facilitated and managed in seeking to support local communities. Many other organisations already exist and operate within and across Greater Dublin including the Inner City area and communities. Whilst these organisations could be viewed as direct competitors in terms of competing for the same funding streams, we prefer to view them as our peers and potential partners. All organisations working on poverty alleviation and social exclusion across the inner city share a common aim to support and benefit the same communities, albeit through each having a slightly different 'offer' and focus. The Co-op's strategic approach of using a collaborative approach fits well with funder and commissioner preferences e.g. Dublin North East Inner City Social and Economic Regeneration Plan.

As referred to earlier in this strategy, we will seek opportunities to work collaboratively and in partnership with a range of other organisations where there is a clear mutual interest in directly supporting and impacting upon local communities. The Co-op will actively seek out alliances, whether formal or informal, that build greater unity, solidarity, engagement and co-operation amongst the many and diverse organisations in its catchment area. We are strongly of the view that broad based collective alliances that incorporate the widest representation of communities, residents and local organisations present the greatest potential for effective, long lasting and structural change to deep rooted poverty, injustice and social disadvantage.

Such opportunities shall be sought to be identified by our member organisations and staff on an on-going basis, and be proactively initiated by our CEO. Where identified, these partnerships, alliances and collaborations shall be concerned with both the delivery of future programmes of activity, and also with amplifying our advocacy and campaigning role. It is anticipated that in keeping with the intentions and vision of our founding members, such partnerships, alliances and collaborations may over time see further local organisations being invited into membership of the Co-op. In doing so, this will further strengthen our collective role and voice in supporting and empowering local communities within and across Dublin's inner city.

### IMMEDIATE & INTERMEDIATE ACTIONS

This section of the Strategic Plan outlines a series of key Immediate and Intermediate Actions which are required in order to achieve the 6 Strategic Aims of this plan. The key Actions noted below are not an exhaustive list. The Immediate (<12 months) and Intermediate Actions (>1-4 years) follow directly from the agreed Strategic Aims.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS)	FIT WITH STRATEGIC AIM(S)	INTERMEDIATE ACTIONS (ISSUES TO BUILD UPON BETWEEN 1-4 YEARS)	FIT WITH STRATEGIC AIM(S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having secured SICAP 2018-2022 funding we will begin implementing the programme to the highest possible standards and ensure all compliance and reporting systems are in place and understood by Co-op members. Innovation and 'new ideas' in programming to feature prominently.</li> </ul>	#1, #2, #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to develop our role as a leading voice for disadvantaged individuals and communities in Dublin's inner city. Our members will seek to be innovators in all aspects of their community development work.</li> </ul>	#1, #2, #4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The membership structure of the Co-op allows us to have more direct reach into and credibility with local communities. This strengthens our mandate and credibility in campaigning and advocating. We will continue to harness and develop the work of our Advocacy-for-Change sub-committee.</li> </ul>	#1, #2,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach and community involvement activities and actions will be developed further by our staff and members to ensure local issues are dealt with and programmes and activities are designed based on needs identified locally by individuals/communities</li> </ul>	#1, #2, #4, #6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a fit-for-purpose mechanism to measure and report on our social value and impact. Our aim is to evidence the outcomes of our work across Dublin's inner city and report on the social value we and our members create. This mechanism will be kept under review throughout the four year period of our strategic plan. The manner in which we report on our social value and impact will incorporate lessons learned and feedback from our members and if necessary will be amended to reflect our experiences.</li> </ul>	#2, #3, #4, #6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The diversity in our membership allows for a greater range of activities to be delivered. We will therefore explore and be receptive to inviting applications for membership from other organisations in order to maintain and grow this diversity, and further enhance, strengthen and expand the scope and breadth of our work.</li> </ul>	#1, #2, #4, #6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree and implement a mechanism for sharing and allocating resources-financial and non-financial-amongst our members following a comprehensive review carried out during 2017.</li> </ul>	#2, #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive media and social media plan to communicate our strategy, work and key advocacy messages will be developed.</li> </ul>	#1, #4, #6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will maintain an ongoing focus on our governance culture, protocols and procedures and ensure we are at all times operating to best practice governance guidelines including full compliance in 2018 with the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary sector.</li> </ul>	#4, #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will maintain constant vigilance on all governance related matters within the Co-op and amongst our membership so that we remain fully abreast and upskilled to meet the highest possible standards of corporate governance.</li> </ul>	#5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will seek to expand and diversify the financial base of the Co-op to include funding from new sources including government and statutory funders, trusts, foundations, collaborations and partnerships.</li> </ul>	#2, #3, #4, #6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our efforts to grow, diversify and expand our sources of income will continue throughout the lifetime of this strategy. In addition to seeking new funding sources from funders we will explore possibilities of developing self-generating revenue streams.</li> </ul>	#2, #6



# OUR VISION

IS A CITY WHERE THRIVING LOCALLY  
BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANISATIONS WORK TOGETHER TO  
ELIMINATE POVERTY, INEQUALITY  
AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.



Unit 1, Killarney Court,  
Buckingham Street,  
Dublin 1

☎ 01-8557015

🏠 [www.dublincitycommunitycoop.ie](http://www.dublincitycommunitycoop.ie)

✉ [info@dublincitycommunitycoop.ie](mailto:info@dublincitycommunitycoop.ie)