



Lambeth

# The Co-operative Council

Executive summary



# The Co-operative Council

A new settlement between citizens and public services

A new approach to public service delivery

## Background

A vibrant customer focused public sector is essential if we are to improve the wellbeing of citizens and maintain a strong civil society in the long term.

However, looking forward, the public sector can only continue to provide these key functions if it responds to two major issues being posed:

**Firstly**, we need to agree the future relationship between the citizen and public services. Increasingly we are recognising that the public sector cannot 'do it all' and citizens need to be part of the solution to the challenges communities face. Over the past ten years we have made some progress in rebalancing this relationship. Now, in Lambeth, we feel the time is right to go much further using co-operative values.

**Secondly**, local areas need to agree how we can deliver services, which meet local need, in a period of significantly reduced funding. In Lambeth we are committed to ensuring that any decisions we take around financial savings must be guided by a clear set of principles and values.

**The Co-operative Council - A new settlement between citizens and public services. A new approach to public service delivery (The Co-operative Council)** sets out our initial thinking on how we can deliver better public services in Lambeth whilst addressing these two key challenges head on.

## Lambeth in 2014

Lambeth has a clear vision for its future as set out in its Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and thematic plans. As a borough our vision for 2020 is to ensure Lambeth is:

“A diverse, dynamic and enterprising borough at the heart of London”

The central theme underpinning all our plans and strategies is a commitment to tackle worklessness as it is one of the primary causes of crime, poverty, poor health and poor education within the borough.

**The Co-operative Council** continues to strongly support this clear direction. However, whilst it is clear

that the strategic direction for the borough is right, we feel that it is the right time to explore our overarching approach to delivering public services across the board. We want to do this by re-examining the principles which underpin public service delivery, our culture, our governance arrangements and crucially our relationship with citizens.

**The Co-operative Council** sets out our initial thinking around a new approach to public service delivery in Lambeth and a new settlement between citizens and state which will be in place by 2014. We feel that the ideas and proposals contained within will enable the following to be realised:

- A new relationship between citizens, communities and public services where power and responsibility is shared more equally.
- Public services are there for citizens. We are their advocate, their champion, their enabler – supporting them at the most important stages of their lives, making sure their aspirations and life chances are a reality and never just a dream.
- Services are personalised at a level that makes sense, some based around the individual and family, others around the local community.
- In some areas the public sector draws back, allowing the community to take control and find their own solutions to problems.
- Communities and individuals take responsibility to help themselves and one another.
- Building on the foundation provided by the public sector a vibrant and inspirational civic society enriches the lives of our citizens, humanising and colouring our day-to-day interactions.
- Lambeth's vibrancy, its spirit of adventure, strong communities, high quality public services and belief in itself makes it a location of choice for all people of London.
- Lambeth remains ambitious. Citizens and public services see no end to improvement and continue to evolve their relationship, learning from one another and ensuring opportunities for success are always grasped.



## Our Principles

**The Co-operative Council** sets out seven proposed principles, which the council feels could provide direction for public services; as they respond to the expected significant cuts in public sector funding in future years. **The Co-operative Council** also sets out our initial thinking around how these principles could be realised by looking at the practical and cultural changes that would need to take place.

The seven key principles set out in **The Co-operative Council** are:

- **Principle 1:** The council as a strong community leader
- **Principle 2:** Providing services at the appropriate level personalised and community based
- **Principle 3:** Citizens and communities empowered to design and deliver services and play an active role in their local community
- **Principle 4:** Public services enabling residents to engage in civil society through employment opportunities
- **Principle 5:** A settlement between public services, our communities and the citizen (this is what we provide, this is what you do for yourself) underpinned by our desire for justice, fairness, and responsibility
- **Principle 6:** Taking responsibility for services – regardless of where they are accessed or which agency provides them
- **Principle 7:** Simple, joined up and easy access to services – location and transaction i.e. “one place to do it all”, “one form, one time to do it all” – providing visible value for money.

## Key Elements for Success

In order to make these principles a reality Lambeth recognises that substantial reform will be needed in the way we design and deliver services. Specifically we feel that change will be needed in the council (and other public sector agencies) organisational cultures, the skills and capacity of public sector workers and the way in which we manage and design our services.

**The Co-operative Council** sets out initial thinking as to how these changes could be achieved.

### Culture

In order for the seven principles to be realised the following values need to be embraced within the culture of local public service:

- A borough that always places citizen and customer first
- An engaged borough
- A progressive and innovative borough
- A learning borough
- A reflective borough
- A confident borough
- Clear leadership
- Valuing our most precious resource: our staff.



## Skills and capacity needed to deliver change

In order to make the scale of changes proposed, a range of cultural change projects and programmes will need to be put in place to realise our enhanced cross organisation culture. The Co-operative Council sets out a range of ideas as to how public services in Lambeth could bring this borough-wide culture to life. Key elements include:

- Training programmes for staff
- Role-modelling programmes where new organisational cultures and new ways of working are promoted by managers and frontline staff
- Mentoring programmes to develop staff
- Action learning evaluation of new ways of delivering services
- Work shadowing
- Implementing new management processes which will change the ways we plan services
- Provision of forums to encourage new thinking and service innovation
- Staff award and feedback schemes to encourage staff to adopt best practices
- Greater sharing of staff between organisations
- Implementing new approaches to facilities and asset management.



## Governance, tools and processes for change

Implicit in the delivery of this new unifying culture of public services are a series of structural reforms which will assist in breaking down the barriers to a local public sector working as one, for the benefit of all citizens. These reforms will focus on:

**Renewed, accountable and strengthened governance arrangements:** Two options are put forward within the paper.

### Option 1

#### A single public service organisation:

This option proposes the creation of a single public body responsible for all existing public services delivered in Lambeth. This would include services delivered by the council alongside services like local policing, health services (including primary care), housing, transport and adult education. A single public service organisation would demonstrate who is responsible for public services and would simplify access. In addition efficiencies of scale and resourcing would be generated through combining staff, assets and procurement processes. Building on the existing structures of the council there would be direct political leadership and accountability for decision-making.

### Option 2 (preferred option)

#### A step change in local commissioning:

This option looks at strengthening joint commissioning for the borough. Under this model a single senior management team of all local agencies would take decisions on how services should be provided in the local area (this group could also include members of the private and voluntary sectors as appropriate). The commissioning process would also explicitly involve local political leadership through the council's Cabinet thus ensuring direct and clear political accountability for all strategic decision-making and effective scrutiny (by local councillors and residents).

#### A broad approach to shared services:

**The Co-operative Council** believes that Lambeth should move to what is called “**a single transaction model of shared customer services**”. In effect, this means putting in place data sharing and shared customer services to allow residents to access a wide range of service interactions at one time through a medium of their choice. We believe that this will make services easier to access, increase customer satisfaction and lead to financial savings across public services as avoidable contacts are reduced.

### A step change in analysis and assessment:

Both the proposed new model for public service delivery and our proposed new relationship with citizens requires:

- Greater openness in how resources are allocated
- Increased public accountability for decision making, especially as the financial situation restricts the resources public services have available
- Greater trust in public services to respond to community needs
- A broader and more complete analysis of need in order to better allocate reducing levels of resources in the difficult financial climate.

To support this, **The Co-operative Council** proposes the creation of an enhanced research and intelligence function to support strategic commissioning and service delivery. Creating this function would create greater independence in the analysis; free managers to focus on high quality service delivery and support for frontline staff; and generate cost savings in research and policy teams across organisations, effectively establishing this as a shared service.



### Formalising The Co-operative Council –

**A Contract for Place:** In addition to an agreed set of principles (underpinning public service delivery) and changes to the way public services are managed, Lambeth is clear that our new Co-operative Council approach will only achieve its full potential if a new relationship is agreed between the borough and central government. We believe this new approach should be underpinned by a Contract for Place.



Developing a Contract for Place would enable the local area to agree the freedoms and changes needed to deliver services that better meet local need. The contract would therefore provide:

- An agreed understanding of how a specific groups of public services would change, along with a rationale as to why this would lead to better outcomes and/or more efficient public services
- An agreement with central government and local public sector providers on the scale of financial savings that these changes in public services would enable
- An agreed set of financial and legislative freedoms for the local area with central government – based on:
  - The expected timescales for delivering these savings and clarity around how these saving will be shared
  - An agreed small amount of pump priming funding from central government to support local areas commence service transformation work.

### Next steps

Whilst Lambeth Council supports the ideas set out in **The Co-operative Council** it recognises that these proposals are merely a starting point. The Co-operative Council Citizens Commission will consider these ideas and deliberate on them further using formal commission sessions, qualitative community engagement, quantitative research, action learning, social media and written submissions.

The Co-operative Council Citizens Commission will produce a final report for Lambeth by late 2010, which reflects an agreed consensus for the borough.

**What do you think of our proposals to become a co-operative council? Email us at [cooperativecouncil@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:cooperativecouncil@lambeth.gov.uk) to get involved or to submit your ideas or evidence.**

**Co-operative Council Commission**  
**Room 113A**  
**Town Hall**  
**Brixton Hill**  
**London SW2 1RW**

**Phone** 0207 926 1000

**Email** [cooperativecouncil@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:cooperativecouncil@lambeth.gov.uk)

**Website** [www.lambeth.gov.uk/cooperativecouncil](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/cooperativecouncil)

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é favor telefonar para 0845 300 0328

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এই তথ্য অন্য কোনো ভাষায় আপনার প্রয়োজন  
হলে অনুগ্রহ করে ফোন করুন 0845 300 0328

#### **Twi**

Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo  
mu a fre 0845 300 0328

#### **Yoruba**

Tí ẹ ba fẹ ìmoràn yíí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjò,  
ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 0845 300 0328

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