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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 September 2025</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/23/25/RB/MR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712923</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Co-operative Councils Innovation Network</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to request approval of continued membership of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network.
- 1.3 The Network contains members from across the UK and promotes the transformation of communities through community action, community engagement and civic empowerment.
- 1.4 At the 20 September 2022 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee it was agreed that the Council should apply to become a member of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network for an initial period of 3 years.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee
- Agrees to continue membership of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network until 2027.

**Morna Rae**  
**Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 At the 20 September 2022 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee it was agreed that the Council should apply to become a member of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (the Network), for an initial period of 3 years. This application was approved in October, and all councillors advised on 2 November. The Committee's approval of Network membership in September 2022 required officers to bring back annual reports highlighting the benefits which have arisen during the period of membership. These updates have been provided to Committee.
- 3.2 The Network, established in 2012, is a non-party-political active hub for co-operative policy development, innovation and advocacy. The Network states that member councils are committed to reforming the way they work by building an equal partnership with local people based on the values and principles of the International Cooperative Alliance. In particular, the Network promotes the transformation of communities through community action, community engagement and civic empowerment. More information on the Network can be found on its website: <https://www.councils.coop/about-us>
- 3.3 In addition, at its meeting on 1 December 2022, the Council approved Cllr Cassidy's appointment to the Network's Executive Oversight Committee.
- 3.4 All members of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network benefit from the following:
- Access for Elected Members and officers to a wide network of local authorities who share a common purpose;
  - Access to the Network's on-line resources, including case studies, <https://www.councils.coop/case-studies/>
  - The potential to bid for funding to work on a case study, alone or in conjunction with other members;
  - Access to conferences and training events to meet peers from other members;
  - The ability to access a framework of specialist suppliers established by the Network for its members; and
  - The opportunity to raise the Council's profile nationally across the UK.
- 3.5 The Council has taken advantage of these benefits in a variety of ways, including the following:
- Promotion of Inverclyde through the inclusion of Inverclyde Council case studies in the annual Network publications;
  - Cllr Cassidy's involvement in the Network's Executive Oversight Committee, and attendance at the Network's annual conferences, there being no fee for this given the Council's membership; and
  - A successful application by the Council to be a "Policy Prototype", receiving £2,000 funding from the Network, along with advice and experience from other areas. This has enabled development of graphically designed versions of the Council Plan and Partnership Plan, to make these documents more accessible and to stimulate engagement. These have been used at a variety of events including Clyde Conversations and employee workshops. The equipment purchased will also support future graphic design work within the Council.
- 3.6 There has been limited involvement by officers at the Network officers meetings due to capacity limitations. While officers have accessed the resources on practice underway in other local authorities there has not yet been an opportunity to implement these within Inverclyde. Contact have been made with other local authorities who are working on similar issues. The Network plans to change its approach to meeting agendas by having more focused thematic sessions. This may mean that officers find it easier to take part in shorter and more relevant meetings going forward.

- 3.7 In addition to the “Policy Prototype” funding that the Council has taken advantage of the Network also supports “Policy Labs”. Policy Labs are bigger collaborative pieces of work that CCIN members will work on together (involving a minimum of four member organisations). Applications will be considered for funding of up to £20,000, dependent on their scale and ambition. If CCIN membership continued there is potential for a future Inverclyde Council application to take advantage of this funding.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to continue membership of the Co-operative Councils’ Innovation Network until 2027.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

## 5.2 Finance

### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Non pay inflation contingency		October 2025	£5400		The Network has indicated that it has no plans to increase its membership fee levels.

### **5.3 Legal/Risk**

Not applicable.

### **5.4 Human Resources**

Not applicable.

### **5.5 Strategic**

The reports relates to the Council Plan themes of “Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable” and “High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.”

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 Not applicable

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 The 22 September 2002 report on Inverclyde Council joining the network is available at item 14 at <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2487>