

Principle FIVE

P5

Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre

March 2026

A new retail consumer co-op has been launched this month after the merger of Chelmsford Star, Midcounties and Central England co-ops.

Debbie Robinson is the Chief Executive Officer and Elaine Dean, Society President



Read about it in the Co-operative News

<https://www.thenews.coop/ourcoop-launches-after-merger-of-uk-consumer-societies/>





Sheffield & Ecclesall Co-op department store – The Arcade c. 1965



Brightside & Carbrook City Stores 1929 - 1940

The pictures above remind us of the times when the Co-op played a big part in the life of Sheffield and other cities throughout the UK. The Principle 5 library and archive has many photographs and records, and the stories of co-operatives throughout Yorkshire and further afield. Members are always welcome to visit the Centre and get to know more about these intriguing stories. Contact Steve: steve@sheffield.coop

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From Co-operative News September 2025

Views sought on draft changes to the Statement on the Cooperative identity

Co-operators worldwide are invited to share their views on proposed changes to the Statement on the Cooperative Identity. The changes proposed by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Cooperative Identity Advisory Group (CIAG) form part of a second statement draft to which ICA members and other co-operators can respond by 31 October. An earlier draft statement was shared ahead of the 2024 General Assembly in New Delhi, India, where ICA members were able to provide feedback on the suggestions.

The second draft addresses the key issues raised in New Delhi and an accompanying set of questions that CIAG is inviting co-operators to consider as they review it. While it does not suggest removing or adding any co-operative principles, the second draft includes changes related to the formulation of the values and principles, with the main aim of convening the meaning more clearly and modernising the language. For example, the draft suggests saying that “Cooperatives are founded on” rather than “based on”, the values of “mutual self-help, personal responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity”, rather

than “self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity”, as stated in the current statement.

Another suggested change is the specific mention within **Principle One** – voluntary and open membership – that co-operatives are “open without discrimination of any kind to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership”. CIAG says “This succinct formulation avoids adding to the list of prohibited grounds as societal values change. It leaves out no constituency that has suffered from discrimination.”

The draft also proposes changes to **Principle 2**, democratic member control, to specify that members “have a vote and a voice in the affairs of the co-operative”, while currently it says they just “actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions”. Furthermore, while the existing principle says that “Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership”, the draft suggests using the more inclusive “persons.”

The language around **Principle 3** – member economic participation – is also modified in the draft statement to better capture the idea of member participation, which, says CIAG, many consultation participants wanted to see.

A slight change to the wording is proposed for **Principle 4** – autonomy and independence – with co-operatives defined as “independent organisations controlled by their members”, rather than “autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members”. Other changes are also proposed to improve the wording of the principle.

Meanwhile, a new version of **Principle Six** – co-operation among co-operatives – seeks to better capture the benefits of doing business with other co-operatives by explaining that “Co-

operatives serve their members and strengthen the co-operative movement when they use the services of other co-operatives and work together through local, national, regional and international structures to meet their common goals and advance their aspirations for the movement.”

The draft also suggests renaming **Principle 7** – concern for community, which it views as a weak title; it suggests “community engagement”. According to CIAG, the formulation of Principle 7 was among the most debated issues through the consultation. To address some of the issue raised, the draft suggests the following new description for the principle: “Through responsible business practices and policies supported by their members, cooperatives work for the wellbeing of the communities in which they operate and a peaceful, just and environmentally sustainable future for all.”

CIAG will use the feedback received, to release additional discussion drafts over the coming year. ICA members, regional and sectoral organisations and thematic committees are also invited to submit feedback on the draft.

Those wishing to share their views can do so via the discussion forum on the ICA website or by emailing:

consultations@ica.coop

CIAG is also asking ICA members to promote the identity site within the networks and on social media; encourage members to discussion on the proposed changes and share their feedback; and consider organising webinars or seminars to facilitate dialogue on the proposals.

Co-operative News SEPTEMBER 2025

*It seems that the recommendation is to keep Principle 5 as it is.

Members are always welcome to visit Principle 5 library.

We look forward to seeing you.

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