

For general release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Scrutiny and Overview Committee</b> <b>30 October 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Co-operation and Social Enterprise in Croydon</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Emma Lindsell – Director of Economic Growth</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed – Economy &amp; Jobs</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Emma Lindsell – Director of Economic Growth</b>

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item was requested by the Chairman of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To review the council's progress and commitment to in implementing the Cooperative Council's principles. In addition it will explore examples of community led and focused organisations that are supported or have been set up by the council. Finally the report will briefly examine the activities of two other councils as examples of good practice.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This document has been produced to support the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to investigate the performance of the council as a 'Cooperative Council'.
- 1.2 Cooperative, mutual and social enterprises contribute significantly to the UK economy. Croydon's economic picture is similar to the national one. There is thriving social enterprise sector, supported by the council in many ways.
- 1.3 Croydon is a Cooperative Council. These are councils who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community. This is a new role for the council, which replaces the traditional top-down governance with decision-making structures based on local leadership and the ideas and actions of an empowered community.
- 1.4 In becoming a Cooperative Council, Croydon committed to 10 principles (Appendix 1). These principles cover areas ranging from shared decision making around commissioning and planning, to delivering social value through our

procurement strategies, to encouraging the delivery of public services through cooperatives and mutuals.

- 1.5 The themes and intentions of the principles are found throughout council policy, strategy and activity. For example it is integral to Croydon's Community Strategy and to maximising the Social Value gained from the council's purchasing power.
- 1.6 In terms of service delivery and ownership, cooperative councils believe in public ownership first and then cooperative models (such as cooperatives, mutual and social enterprises) as an alternative to privatisation. Croydon has two Credit Unions (member cooperatives) providing ethical savings and lending to residents. (see section 2.4.5) Also, in 2014 the council set up Octavo, a mutual, to provide schools services as an alternative to making large scale redundancies and contracting a private provider (see section 2.4.4). The council has also dedicated resources to supporting social enterprises, such as Cooperatives, CiCs and other businesses focused on providing social benefit.
- 1.7 Other councils have implemented the cooperative council principles in different ways. For example Preston City Council's approach to community wealth building and Glasgow City Council's Co-operative Development Unit.
- 1.8 Croydon Council has an ongoing commitment to empowering the local community in decision making and policy development. Further strategies will be implemented in the next 5 years to enhance the ability of the community to take ownership of assets and funding. In addition the council will support the future growth in the number and range of social enterprise, cooperative and mutuals.

## **Corporate Policy/Policy Context**

### **2. Co-operation and Social Enterprise in Croydon**

#### **2.1 Economic Landscape**

- 2.1.1 Social enterprises are an important part of the national and local economy, providing innovative, community-based solutions to environmental and social issues. Their managers and workforce are more representative of the general population than non-social enterprises. According to the most recent figures from the government<sup>1</sup>, the Social Enterprise sector now accounts for 9% of the small business population, employing 1.44 million people. Social Enterprise UK estimates the startup rate is three times that of mainstream SMEs. Social Enterprises can be set up in a number of organisational models, which include CiCs, Mutuals and Cooperatives.
- 2.1.2 There are more than 7,000 independent co-operatives across the UK, working in all parts of the economy. Together they contribute £36.1 billion to the British economy. (Co-operatives UK).

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/644266/MarketTrends2017report\\_final\\_sept2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644266/MarketTrends2017report_final_sept2017.pdf)

## 2.2 A Cooperative Council

- 2.2.1 Cooperative Councils aim to build a partnership of equals with the local community, based on a shared aims and expected outcomes. Working together communities, councillors, large public sector partners and the council can create local jobs, tackle inequality and keep wealth circulating in the local economy. Cooperative Councils look at ways to empower their local community and help them find answers to local problems. Answers which may include things such as transfer of assets to the community, devolving of budgets and participatory budgeting.
- 2.2.2 In becoming a Cooperative Council, the council has signed up to principles outlined by the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (appendix 1). These principles cover areas ranging from shared decision making around commissioning and planning, to maximising social value through our procurement strategies, to encouraging the delivery of public services through cooperatives and mutuals.

## 2.3 The Implementation of the 10 Principles

- 2.3.1 Social partnership, democratic involvement and involving residents in the co-design of services are the first three principles. In Croydon's Community Strategy 2016-21 the council has prioritised involving the borough's residents, local groups and community organisations in decision making, and the involvement of social enterprises in service delivery. This has been evident in many areas of council work.
- 2.3.2 'Get Involved' is a website created by the council to engage residents in decision making. The activities and events it promotes are intended to involve them in the co-design of services. This is where consultations and surveys are launched and the results are published. For example the council are currently seeking opinions on the Evening and Night Time Economy and will consult on the strategy when it is developed as a result. Also, currently on the web site are consultations on changes to school admissions policies and the development of new football facilities at Purley Way Playing Fields and Ashburton Playing Fields.  
(<https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/KMS/news.aspx?LoggingIn=tempVar&strTab=Home>)
- 2.3.3 The support provided to *We Love SE25* is another example of the council engaging the community in decision-making. Their strap line 'Taking control of our own destiny' is a perfect example of the cooperative principles in practice. As a result of a small initial grant from the council, officer and councillor involvement, a huge range of people in the South Norwood area have been engaged in deciding how resources should be used for the benefit of the local area. A Community Development Plan has been written and *We Love SE25* is formally representing the community and helping the council to further devolve decision-making. The group has extensive plans for the redevelopment of South Norwood which are being implemented in partnership with the council. In addition they are planning a publicity campaign to highlight the strengths of the area to the local community to encourage the use of local facilities and businesses. It is intended that there will be many groups developing local plans

across Croydon with the help and support of local Councilors and council officers.

- 2.3.4 Croydon Council is fully implementing the Cooperative Council principle around providing an environment for social enterprise to thrive. The borough's 2040 vision sets out the aim to become 'An Enterprising Borough'. Part of this is the strategic aim to support the local business community and third sector to develop a thriving local economy.
- 2.3.5 Croydon is nationally recognised as an area of good practice in relation to supporting social enterprise. In 2014 Croydon became the first London Borough to win *Social Enterprise Place* status.
- 2.3.6 The council provides local community businesses with an extensive support package. Social enterprises face similar problems to other small businesses in Croydon, such as difficulty in raising start-up capital and finding cheap office space. They also often have skills deficits in areas such as business planning, finance and the management of staff and volunteers. However, due to the social or environmental nature of their offer, social enterprises have additional challenges, such as higher costs and a reliance on public sector funding (60% of social enterprises reported having the public sector as a client as opposed to 43% of SMEs). Therefore they are more vulnerable to cuts in public sector funding and rising rents and business rates.
- 2.3.7 In order to support these enterprises Croydon Council and its partners provide an extensive range of support in the form of:
- Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund – offering loans to early start up and growth companies that cannot find capital in the private sector.
  - *Discretionary rate relief* – given on a case by case basis.
  - Advice and guidance from officers and partners.
  - Support for writing bids.
  - The Social Enterprise Network – with 60 regular attendees; open to any social enterprise which wants to start, develop or grow.
  - Social Saturday (13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018) – A market place for social enterprises.
  - SEEK project- established to support people who are unemployed or economically inactive to set up new social enterprises and to gain the skills to move towards and into other employment opportunities.
  - SE Assist - a programme of support provided for the 3 years in partnership with Legal & General, Charities Aid Foundation and Coast 2 Capital.
- 2.3.8 Croydon has been held forth as a good example of a council that maximises the social value gained from its contracts. Value Croydon, launched in 2015, is our approach to delivering social value and supporting the local market to access

tender and sub-contracting opportunities with the Council and its contractor partners. We aim to ensure that the Council uses its purchasing power and contractual relationships effectively to maximise the social, economic, and environmental benefits achieved from all its commercial activity. Tenders and offers of support are promoted on the Value Croydon web site (<http://valuecroydon.com/>).

2.3.9 The council is committed to 9 commissioning principles outlined in its Commissioning Framework; one of the principles directly relates to the Cooperative Councils principle of co-production that the council is putting into practice ([https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Commissioning\\_framework.pdf](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Commissioning_framework.pdf)).

“We will engage in open and honest dialogue with our communities about how and why we commission and be transparent with our processes, involving citizens, customers and service users in planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating our services.”

2.3.10 We work with our contactors and wider partners to maximise the social value offered for local people – with a strong focus on local job creation, economic growth, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability:

- We require our providers to pay the London Living Wage (LLW) - Of 56 Tier 1 contracts with a total annual value of £325m, 42 (75%) pay LLW; Of the 25% that don't pay LLW, some are long term contracts commissioned before we became a LLW employer; but we are negotiating to include this requirement.
- We require contractors to buy local:
  - We promote and open up business and supply chain opportunities for small local businesses, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
  - Break down contracts if appropriate into smaller elements to allow smaller local firms, social enterprises and charities to bid.
- We require contractors to provide relevant social value and support them with council services to deliver them:
  - Willmot Dixon funds the Construction Academy in New Addington which will enable local young people to take up job opportunities created by the major regeneration work in central Croydon. They do this with the support of Croydon Works, the council's employment brokerage service.
  - Conway is offering apprenticeships and employing locals in all new jobs, again using Croydon Works. They are also being supported with the aim of buying local - we are helping them with information on Croydon companies.

2.3.11 Croydon's Commissioning Strategy commits to 'establishing a level playing field and minimising barriers for charities and social enterprises to enter into competition to run services'. 'Meet the Buyer' Events are held on a regular basis involving council contracts and the NHS. Further events are planned to broaden the range of anchor institutions and contract holders involved.

2.3.12 In order to create and maintain community wealth the council has introduced the *Croydon Good Employer Charter (GEC)*, which sets out practical ways by which Croydon businesses can contribute to creating a strong local economy. It encourages local businesses to:

- Pay Fair – pay the London Living Wage
- Employ Croydon – employ local using Croydon Works to offer jobs, apprenticeships and work placements to local people (500 have secured employment already).
- Buy Croydon – support the local economy by offering local supply chain opportunities – the Council will help firms find Croydon suppliers
- Be Better – implement best practice in fairness, equality and sustainability.

So far there are 40 accredited Good Employers and 47 organisations seeking accreditation. As part of planning obligations under s106, the council is asking developers to sign up as a Good Employer as part of commitment to the community; contractors also commit to the GEC.

2.3.13 Through Community Asset Transfers the council has transferred the running of several assets into the community. For example Stanley Halls in South Norwood is now being run by The Stanley People's Initiative. This is a group of residents from SE25 and the local area, who are now running Stanley Halls as a place of entertainment, arts, enterprise and learning for the community. Now a registered charity (number 1155680), The Stanley People's Initiative has a 35 year lease from Croydon Council; because they have a long term lease and charitable status the group can bid for grants and funding to upgrade the Halls and improve the services offered to the community.

## **2.4 Cooperatives, mutual and social enterprises in Croydon**

2.4.1 This section will explain what some of the main types of Social Enterprises are (Cooperative, Mutuals and CiCs) and give examples.

2.4.2 **Cooperatives:** Cooperatives are owned and run by their members. Members can be employees, customers, local residents, suppliers and/or a combination of these stakeholders. Members have an equal stake in how the business is run, including how profits are shared or reinvested. Coops intend on the whole to be run as a business and make a profit or at least cover their costs.

2.4.3 Cooperatives can take many legal forms. They can be incorporated (with limited

liability) or unincorporated. Unincorporated cooperatives can take one of four forms: they can be partnerships, Associations, Friendly Societies or Trusts. Successful co-operatives include John Lewis, Waitrose, The Cooperative Group.

2.4.4 A co-operative business is one that believes in the seven principles of co-operation.

1. Voluntary and open membership – people can join – and leave
2. Democratic member control – a co-operative is controlled by its members. Members' voices will be heard
3. Membership economic participation - any dispersed surpluses are distributed to members in proportion to their transactions/involvement with the co-operative. Members control the capital of the business
4. Autonomy and Independence – any joint venture entered into does not compromise the autonomy, independence or principles of individual members. Together, members are independent
5. Education, training and information – co-operatives promote the benefits of co-operation and educate and train their members and employees
6. Co-operation among co-operatives – co-operatives seek to serve their members by working with other co-operatives in all forms of joint trading
7. Concern for the community – co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.<sup>2</sup>

2.4.5 A credit union is a financial co-operative which provides savings, loans and a range of services to its members. It is owned and controlled by the members. Each member has one vote and volunteer directors are elected from the membership, by the membership. Credit unions are owned by the people who use their services, and not by external shareholders or investors. One person's savings get lent to another and the interest paid goes back into running the union for the benefit of the members. Credit Union members have a 'common bond', which is often where they work or/and live and/or a connection to a particular community.

2.4.2 Croydon has two Credit Unions:

- **Croydon Plus** is based at Bernard Weatherill House and works closely with the Gateway team to support residents with ethical savings and loans. This credit union was set up in 1999 to meet the saving and borrowing needs of council staff. In 2004 membership was expanded to anyone living, studying and/or working in Croydon and in 2010 to Sutton and Merton. With nearly 6000 members, Croydon Plus is a medium sized Credit Union. Membership grows through word of mouth, a small amount of advertising and referrals from Gateway and partnership organisations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>

- Set up in 1967 by Croydon's West Indian community, **Croydon Caribbean Credit Union** is based in Church Street in Croydon town centre. The union also provides a weekly service at West Thornton Community Centre. It set up in response to a community's difficulties with raising finance in the 1960s. This Credit Union is small with between seven and eight hundred members. Membership grows through word of mouth only. Until 3 years ago members had the common bond of living in Croydon and having a link with the Caribbean. However, since 2015 members have been able to live or work in Croydon and do not have to have a link with the Caribbean. The staff working in Church Street and the community centre are all volunteers recruited through the membership or with the help of the CVA. Croydon Council provides a grant to pay for the Croydon Caribbean Credit Union's offices.

2.4.3 To access lending from a credit unions clients are required to be members. In either of the two Croydon models, members need to show commitment to the union by saving before they are allowed to borrow money. However, with the support of Lloyds Banking Group Croydon Plus has been able to set up a 'Jam Jar Account' scheme this allows members immediate access to borrowing. Members in this scheme then receive support with budgeting and paying bills out of their Universal Credit, prior to general expenditure. A single officer provides this service and is the link between the credit union and Gateway Services. This officer works with residents in great need with access to credit and other emergency and long term support.

2.4.4 **Mutuals:** A mutual is a private sector company owed by its suppliers, work force and/or clients. Mutuals differ from cooperatives as the members/owners do not invest capital into the company. There are 112 public sector mutuals, created as a result of the 'spin-out' of local public services such as those in public health, hospices and leisure centre delivery.

2.4.5 Octavo, set up by Croydon Council in 2015 is a mutual owned by Croydon Council, Croydon Head Teachers Association and the staff working for Octavo. It is a not-for-profit limited company, offering a range of services to schools including Educational Psychologists, School Improvement and HR. Octavo was set up with financial support from the council, including a significant loan. Any profits made by Octavo will be reinvested into developing services and/or education research.

2.4.6 Another example of a mutual is GLL which was created in 1993 by Greenwich Council to provide its leisure centre services and is owned by its staff and society members. The majority of the board of GLL is elected by the workforce. GLL has recently signed a 20 year partnership with Croydon Council to deliver the borough's leisure contract, including gyms and parks.

2.4.7 A **Community Interest Company (CIC)** is a special type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. Unlike a charity, it does not have to have a volunteer board and can pay its directors a salary, which means that the founders can retain control as paid directors. There are over 3,100 CiCs in the UK. To set up a CIC, you need to:

- Carry out activities which fulfil a community purpose.



- Apply to Companies House and include a 'community interest statement', explaining what your business plans to do.
- Create an 'asset lock'- a legal promise stating that the company's assets will only be used for its social objectives. If the CiC is wound up its assets must be transferred to another 'asset locked' organisation. and setting limits to the money it can pay to shareholders.

2.4.8 There are many CiCs in Croydon. My OutSpace is an accredited award – winning social enterprise which set up as a CiC. It specialises in supporting women into employment and self-employment. Offering training, mentoring, access to peer to peer support groups, networking and high quality business support tailored to the needs of female entrepreneurs. My OutSpace team supports 300 families each year, last year we have created 167 jobs and 43 businesses. The council has supported My Outspace to develop its networks and to bid for grant funding.

2.4.9 Beats & Eats is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that run pop-up events & workshops with and for marginalised community groups. Initially set up after the Croydon Riots, they ran music events to create safe spaces for the community to come together. The council has commissioned Beats & Eats to provide the Sunday market and events on the pedestrianized high street in the summer.

2.4.10 Croydon Real Nappies was set up in 2002 and is a CiC based in South Norwood. Their aim is to reduce the impact of disposable nappies on the environment. They do this by providing impartial and useful information about using washable nappies to prospective and existing cloth nappy users. Providing vouchers to cover the initial cost of the cloth nappies, so that people can try using them without investing too heavily. They also do demonstrations, displays and public events by arrangement.

## **2.5 Examples of other Councils**

### **2.5.1 Preston City Council**

In 2011 Preston City Council was faced with very significant cuts in central government funding. Additionally, plans for a £700 million investment in a new shopping centre fell through. In order to improve inward investment and build community wealth they embraced the cooperative council's model. Examples of this policy put into practice include:

- The council and anchor public organisations paying the living wage and committing to buying locally.
- Setting up a Co-operative Network which supports new and existing cooperatives to grow and bid for contracts with anchor organisations
- Re-established a city-wide credit union and funded Lancashire Community Finance.
- Web site based support and sign posting for cooperatives.

- The county pension fund is investing in local assets such as a new hotel and office space.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.5.2 Glasgow City Council

In 2012 Glasgow City Council made a commitment to become a Co-operative City. This was in response to budget cuts and increasing and increasingly complex demand for services. The council established:

- A Co-operative Development Unit – set up to research into opportunities and then deliver the council’s action plan.
- A cross-council group of ‘co-operative champions’ to identify co-operative opportunities and develop links beyond the council.
- The Glasgow Business Development Fund, with a £500,000 budget to support new and existing co-operative, mutual and social enterprises. Since 2013, grants totalling £697,000 have been awarded to 34 existing cooperatives and 11 start-ups.
- Since 2012 over 1,000 long-term unemployed residents have secured jobs in infrastructure projects thanks to a new community benefit approach to purchasing
- Glasgow’s People’s Energy which gives impartial energy advice and a switching service.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Future Plans

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan commits to looking into community based models of delivery such as community land trusts and cooperative housing for delivering new homes.
- 3.2 Local business and community partnerships, such as BIDs, will be facilitated where appropriate.
- 3.3 Further ‘meet the buyer’ events will be held with anchor organisations and contract holders.
- 3.4 The council will explore whether further guidance to people who are interested in setting up a cooperative, mutual or CiC could be provided through:
  - Web pages similar to the Preston model.
  - Power to Change conference

<sup>3</sup> ‘6 Steps to build community wealth’ <http://www.councils.coop/>

<sup>4</sup> ‘6 Steps to build community wealth’ <http://www.councils.coop/> and <http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/2016AwardsCitiesinactionGlasgow.pdf>

- Co-operative Fortnight – an annual celebration of cooperatives in June/July; an education project and well publicised provision of support for people considering setting up a cooperative.

#### **4. Appendices**

*Appendix 1 – Principles of Cooperative Councils*

*Appendix 2 – London Mozart Players*

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None



### 10 Principles of Cooperative Councils

Developed by the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network and to be implemented in partnership with them.

<http://www.councils.coop/about-us/our-values-and-principles/>

1. **Social partnership:** We will strengthen the co-operative partnership between citizens, communities, enterprises and Councils, based on a shared sense of responsibility for wellbeing and mutual benefit
2. **Democratic engagement:** We will support the active engagement of the full range of residents in decision making and priority setting
3. **Co-production:** We will develop systems that enable citizens to be equal partners in designing and commissioning public services and in determining the use of public resources
4. **Enterprise and social economy:** We will promote community-based approaches to economic development that focus on supporting the creation of jobs, social enterprises and other businesses and providing an environment for co-operative and mutual enterprises to thrive
5. **Maximising social value:** We will support the development of a framework and criteria for social value, giving substance to the concept and supporting Councils with the tools to ensure better local social and economic outcomes
6. **Community leadership and a new role for councillors:** We will explore ways for councils to act as a platform for helping the community to contribute to local outcomes, and to re-think the role of councillors as community connectors, brokers and leaders
7. **New models of meeting priority needs:** In exploring new ways of meeting the priority needs of our communities we will encourage models, such as co-operatives and mutuals, which give greater influence and voice to staff and users
8. **Innovation:** We will embrace innovation in how we work with local communities to drive positive change
9. **Learning:** We will capture and 'expand' the experience and learning from individual projects and approaches in order to encourage broader application of co-operative principles within individual member Councils and across the Network
10. **Walking the talk:** As a membership organisation we will make this statement of our principles operational by:
  - **Co-operation among members:** Our members work together to help each other implement our values, sharing experiences and learning

- **Openness of membership:** Full, Associate and Affiliate Membership is open to any qualifying Council, organisation or individual who shares our values and is committed to putting them into action
- **Co-production of the Network's work:** Members help shape the Network's work programme and the content of events and written products
- **Action-focused:** The network is a vehicle for helping councils translate co-operative values and principles into policy and practice
- **Membership-based:** The network is majority funded by modest membership subscriptions from its member Councils, Associates and Affiliates
- **Non-party-political:** Members share the belief that working co-operatively within and across communities holds the key to tackling today's challenges

### London Mozart Players

London Mozart Players (LMP) are a social enterprise aimed at broadening the audiences for classical music. They have received support from the council and as can be seen below contribute heavily to their local Upper Norwood community. A member of LMP will be attending scrutiny to share their experience and explain the structure of the business.

#### LMP and Croydon

In 2016, the London Mozart Players relocated their home to St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, undertaking a rich programme of initiatives within the local community. Their commitment to reaching new audiences is underlined with their highly-regarded education and community programme LMP Voyager, which sees the ensemble take world-class classical music into schools, colleges, local amateur groups and areas of the community, helping to build excellence and passion for classical music through performance and shared experience.

#### LMP Structure

In the summer of 2014, the orchestra began a new and exciting phase in its history, becoming the first professional orchestra in the UK to be managed both operationally and artistically by the players.

#### Biography

Founded in 1949 by Harry Blech, the London Mozart Players is the UK's longest established chamber orchestra. The London Mozart Players has enjoyed the patronage of HRH The Earl of Wessex since 1988.

Known for its unmistakable British roots, the orchestra has developed an outstanding reputation for adventurous, ambitious programming. From Baroque through to genre-crossing contemporary music, the London Mozart Players is constantly exploring new venues and audiences through collaborations with artists and personalities from all over the creative scene. The ensemble has enjoyed a long history of association with many of the world's finest musical personalities including Igor Stravinsky, Sir James Galway, Dame Felicity Lott, Jane Glover, Julian Lloyd Webber, Stephen Hough, Nicola Benedetti, John Suchet and Simon Callow.

Away from their commitment to live performances across the UK, the London Mozart Players also undertake an international touring schedule which has seen them give performances in the Far East, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium and Spain. A long relationship with classical label Chandos has led to a series of over 20 recordings, including works by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Clementi, Salieri and Stamitz. The orchestra featured on Naxos' release *Flowers of the Field* alongside the City of London Choir, Roderick Williams and Associate Conductor Hilary Davan Wetton, which reached No.1 in the Classical Album Charts.

The orchestra regularly performs with their Conductor Laureate Howard Shelley, as well as working closely with some of the world's eminent conductors and soloists, including Tasmin Little, Anthony Marwood, BBC Young Musician 2016 Sheku Kanneh-Mason and cellist Laura van der Heijden, the orchestra's first Young Artist in Residence.

Taken and adapted from <http://londonmozartplayers.com/>