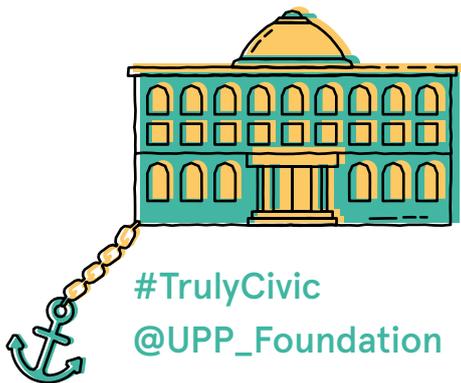




# A Guide to preparing Civic University Agreements



## With thanks

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## About the UPP Foundation

The UPP Foundation is a registered charity that offers grants to universities, charities and other higher education bodies. In recent years, as higher education has expanded, the burden of paying for a degree has shifted towards the individual.

This presents difficulties in maintaining the 'University for the Public Good', as well as ensuring there is greater equity in going to, succeeding at and benefiting from the university

experience. The UPP Foundation helps universities and the wider higher education sector overcome these challenges.

The UPP Foundation was created in 2016 by University Partnerships Programme (UPP), the UK's leading provider of on-campus residential and academic accommodation infrastructure. UPP is the sole funder of the UPP Foundation, which is an independent charity and has its grants reviewed and authorised by a Board of Trustees.

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# Foreword by by Chris Skidmore MP

Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation and Interim Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth



Since becoming Universities Minister, I have visited many universities and higher education providers around the UK. And I have seen first-hand the positive impact they have on their local areas. This includes their contribution through skills and research and, importantly, through raising aspiration and reaching out to potential students from all parts of society. I'm very grateful to the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission for all its work, both in highlighting many good examples of this and also in interrogating how universities can be helped to engage more in civic activities in the future.

approach is key to our Industrial Strategy, and the government sees universities' contribution to their local areas as being an increasingly important part of this.

The research that universities undertake can be civic in so many ways: some of this research has obvious impacts on our health and wellbeing, while some may directly support local economic growth, enabling a mutually beneficial relationship between industry and higher education.

**“The skills and ideas universities deliver to local people and businesses are absolutely vital for our government’s Industrial Strategy.”**

Universities and colleges are often one of the largest employers in a local area and, in many cases, their investment can help regenerate an entire region. The skills and ideas universities deliver to local people and businesses are absolutely vital for our government’s Industrial Strategy – to allow us to succeed in our long-term plan to boost productivity and earning power across the country. This is why a place-based

Universities can play a key role in raising aspirations. The government and the Office for Students (OfS) have high expectations in this area: we want to see higher education providers’ Access and Participation Plans having real impact, as they work with schools, colleges and other local partners to raise awareness of the benefits of higher education. In addition, the OfS provides funding for the National Collaborative Outreach

Programme (NCOP), comprising 29 consortia delivering sustained and progressive outreach in local areas.

As a government, we have always been committed to encouraging universities to make the most of their civic engagement. This can be through the funding of schemes like the Strength in Places Fund by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), as well as the OfS's Industrial Strategy and Skills Challenge Competition, which take place-based approaches to boost research, innovation and local graduate opportunities.

The importance of civic engagement can also be seen through how we measure impact, with both the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the forthcoming Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) defining the impact and activities of universities broadly – from the local to the global. And there is no reason why either Framework should be seen as a barrier to a university contributing to its local area.

While we should recognise and celebrate the contribution that universities make to our regions, it also right that, as part of creating Civic University Agreements, universities are challenged to think more about their strategic

position in their local area. So, as more universities come to consider their Agreements, I want them to think actively about how their local engagement can be aligned with national initiatives and their regulatory requirements.

I'm pleased that over fifty universities have already committed to develop Civic University Agreements. And I know it will only be through co-creation that more meaningful and ambitious Agreements will be formed. Often this will require universities working with other universities and colleges in an area to create one coherent Agreement.

I hope the guide presented in this document will help universities and their partners to form ambitious Civic University Agreements that will drive their engagement in local communities in the months and years ahead.

# Introduction

Over the course of the year-long UPP Foundation Civic University Commission, it was clear that there continued to be a significant amount of civic engagement across the higher education sector. This remains the case, up and down the United Kingdom. Every university the Commission visited and received evidence from were able to give a long list of projects that were worthy and undoubtedly contributed to a civic role.

CUAs should provide a clear strategy, rooted in a robust and shared analysis of local needs and opportunities. Co-signed by local partners, the Agreements should be a public declaration of a university's civic priorities and indicate how they will be delivered in partnership with others.

This guide has been produced to support the design and implementation of CUAs. Our

**“We believe CUAs should provide a clear strategy, rooted in a robust and shared analysis of local needs and opportunities.”**

In every institution, there are people who are passionate about civic engagement and the development of the locality.

While the Commission heard about a great deal of impressive civic activity, we almost never heard of a strategy – backed by rigorous analysis of local needs and opportunities, ambitious objectives and a clearly articulated plan that made place based civic engagement a core part of the university's mission. This finding led the Commission to recommend the creation of Civic University Agreements (CUA). In short, we believe

intention, with this guide, is to help universities self-analyse and reflect as they go through the CUA preparation process. The guide will be updated as we learn more about the process of preparing and implementing Agreements, and as the policy environment impacting on the role of universities in their place evolves. It has been informed by a consultation led for us by the University of Newcastle and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, overseen by a Working Group of policy makers and practitioners from inside and outside of universities. The consultation included interviews

with representatives from a selection of those universities committed to preparing CUAs and responses to an online survey completed by 30 institutions. This revealed a strong desire to share insights about the process of preparing CUAs and was not an area where universities saw themselves as being in competition with one another. There was strong support for self-evaluation and peer review. With these points in mind, the evidence gathered from the surveys and the deliberations of the Working Group will be made available on the UPP Foundation's website.

From this consultation, we now have a better understanding of the common issues and questions universities are grappling with. This guide is not prescriptive, rather a framework that includes some principles, issues to address and steps to follow for inspiration as you make your CUA come to life.

# Principles underpinning Civic University Agreements

These principles were set out in the statement signed by the leaders of the universities which have pledged to develop Civic University Agreements and are the basis of your CUA.

## Place

*As a place-based institution we are committed to attaching a high-priority to the economic, social, environmental, and cultural life of our local communities.*

## Public

*Our civic role will be informed by an evidence-based analysis of the needs of our place, developed collaboratively with local partners and informed by the voice of our local community.*

## Partnerships

*We will collaborate with other universities and anchor institutions and form partnerships to overcome the challenges facing our local communities.*

## Measurement and Impact

*With our partners, we will be clear about what we do and how we measure it, so we can say with confidence what we have achieved – and how we might do better in the future.*



# Preparing an Agreement

Building on the principles, this document sets out a series of emerging themes that a university should consider when preparing their CUA. These themes are derived from the Civic University Commission's evidence and report *Truly Civic: Strengthening the connection between universities and their places*, the results of the consultation and the deliberations of the Working Group. These are:

- Local public voices should be at the heart of your Agreement
- Be clear about the role of the university in the partnership
- Be clear about the geography
- Identify required resource, leadership and institutional capacity
- Recognise and manage the risks

Civic University Agreements should be more than a new articulation of existing activity. Their purpose is to improve and enhance the civic mission. As the Commission found, in every university there is an impressive list of civic activity. CUAs are therefore an opportunity to build upon the great work already being undertaken locally. Indeed, respondents to the consultation articulated three rationales for preparing CUAs:

- The turbulent political and policy environment mean CUAs are important as a tool to strategically prioritise a civic role.

- Building on what, at present, might be 'informal agreements' between institutions and stakeholders.
- A mechanism for self-assessment and peer evaluation to hold the institution to account in terms of reaching different outcomes (but not driven by metrics).

All the respondents expressed real ambition for their planned agreements. They are approaching place 'in the round' – and seeking to ensure the activity is embedded in the teaching and research functions of HEIs – and not framed as a separate, and by definition inferior, third mission.

In addition, the guide seeks to articulate the alignment with policy drivers emanating from the Office for Students (OfS), UKRI and the UK Higher Education Funding Councils (pages 18-20). Universities are also looking to maximise alignment with local, regional and national policy drivers that are shaping their partners' activity. There is a great opportunity to join up with national policy areas such as the health and well-being of local populations, local cultural vitality, social inclusion and environmental sustainability (also discussed in pages 20-22).

But these ambitions are not without some challenges:

- One challenge relates to the complexities and volatility of the policy landscape, inside and outside HE, and divergences across the



UK. Keeping up with these complexities is increasingly demanding.

- Another challenge concerns the ways in which universities will work together in particular places. In many cities, there is more than one HEI, but in some only one has signed up to create an Agreement. In other places, more than one HEI has signed up – but due to a range of factors they have decided to develop separate Agreements. If two or more universities in one city are developing their own Agreements there may be a risk that their civic role is not joined-up. The civic role of universities could overlap rather than being mutually supportive, potentially creating an extra burden for local partners. We strongly believe that universities will have a bigger civic impact by collaborating with each other effectively in an area. CUAs provide an opportunity to set out an agreed plan between universities in their place, but if joint CUAs are not possible institutions should develop mechanisms to mitigate these risks.

These and other risks will need to be managed by universities individually and collectively (discussed on page 13).

### Theme 1: Local public voice should be at the heart of your agreement

At the time of the launch of the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission, focus groups and a poll in ten cities were conducted to gain a

deeper understand of the public's views on the universities in their cities. While the general picture was positive, there were stark differences between ABC1 people and C2DE people, with the wealthier population having a more positive view of their local universities. The results also saw major differences between places. In large metropolitan cities that are succeeding economically the view was generally more positive towards universities than in places which were smaller or economically depressed. The public also had clear views on the responsibilities of universities locally, with 'the impact the university ought to have on local pupils' and 'ensuring that ideas and discoveries have local impact' coming out strongly.

The Commission concluded that the 'public test' was key to being able to identify as a civic university. It asked:

- Can people talk about 'our university' with pride and awareness?
- Is civic activity aligned to public wants?
- Are the views of local people reflected in either the formal governance or informal and communications structures and strategies of the university, including with regards to the progress against the goals of the Civic University Agreement?

There are important lessons from the public opinion work conducted by the Commission. This suggests that a similar exercise could inform

the development of your CUA. Other factors to consider include the following:

- Broadly speaking there are four stakeholder groups that need to be engaged from the start of the consultation and co-creation stage: staff; students; the public and the other civic organisations (this list is not exhaustive but for example, NHS, Local Government, employers, civil society, LEPs, FE and Schools) in your place.
- Universities tend to be successful at engaging empowered people locally but can find it more difficult to engage with lower socio-economic groups, people who have engaged in fewer educational opportunities and those from disadvantaged places. For your CUA to be transformative, seeking understanding and acting on the views of disadvantaged and disempowered people is important.
- The Agreement should be more about the university doing ‘with’ people, rather than ‘to’ people.
- The Agreement should be able to embrace different types and levels of partnerships (networking > collaboration > integration).
- Identify the key assets and strengths of partners to find common ground and facilitate workable synergies.
- Working with schools, other local universities and colleges to develop a local education system that meets the needs of all ages and supports progression and lifelong learning.
- This process may be an opportunity to improve relationships with civic partners, but we recognise that the identity of the right partners with which to co-create and co-sign the Agreement will be different in different places.

## Themes 2: Be clear about the role of the university in the partnership

The university is often one of the largest and most dominant institutions in its place. This strength, harnessed correctly, can be used for significant good. But it is also worth reflecting on the power dynamics of local partnerships and how to foster successful collaborations with organisations that do not have the resources or agency of a university (particularly relevant for partnerships with civil society, small businesses and grassroots bodies). Building trust is important and challenging. The Lankelly Chase Foundation has developed 9 behaviours that help systems function better for people facing severe and multiple disadvantage. These behaviours are focused on ‘perspective’, ‘power’ and ‘participation’ and are worth considering when reflecting on the role of the university in local partnerships.<sup>1</sup>

More specifically our interviewees identified the following points about the place of the university in the partnership:

- The university as a broker, intermediary or ‘critical friend’ – not necessarily as the central actor of the Agreement – moving away from a purely university centred approach.

<sup>1</sup> <https://lankellychase.org.uk/reflections-on-trust-and-systems-change/>.

## Themes 3: Be clear about the geography

During the Commission’s evidence sessions, all expert witnesses were asked ‘how would you describe a civic university to someone on the bus?’ Every single witness related their answer to the local community. This evidence underlines the fact that ‘Place’ is the defining feature of a civic university. However, geographical boundaries are not always easy to define. Unlike many public bodies universities do not operate within a defined geography. A key question the CUC report asked was, what population is the university serving? How local, and how diverse (including in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation)? The consultation exercise found that there can be two broadly different approaches to how institutions are conceptualising the geographies of their agreements:

- **Soft boundaries:** An open and flexible approach based on retaining a local focus but not wanting to limit or exclude activity based on an identifying hard delineation around civic engagements.
- **Hard boundaries:** This is much more of a ‘laying out our territory’ approach based on

having a clearly defined geography. This is often linked to the geographies of existing partners and institutional/governance structures (e.g. Local enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Combined Authorities).

When deciding the geographies of the agreements other factors to reflect upon are:

- Address possible tensions between maintaining a global/international image while at the same time engaging locally. Local/global isn't an either/or but needs to be balanced appropriately.
- Think regionally – it might be appropriate for your CUA to focus on your immediate place, but there may be towns or rural areas in your region where you are the nearest university and where you can make a tangible impact.

#### Theme 4: Identify required resource, leadership and institutional capacity

Universities are entering a challenging external environment. At this stage we are unclear of the impact of the government's review into post-18 education and funding, and the potential impact of Brexit. These factors, coupled with rising costs such as pensions, lead us to believe that resources are likely to be constrained. This environment makes CUAs even more important as they are a tool to strategically prioritise your civic role.

As you prepare your agreement there are two broadly different, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, approaches in terms of structuring and resourcing civic engagement that have been adopted by universities:

- **Formal:** Central units with a recognised institutional role and systemic approach in terms of process and capacity building.
- **Informal:** Decentralised, which spread civic engagement throughout units/departments 'get everyone involved', letting it happen naturally and which might make it more embedded and sustainable.

When determining the resources you need for preparing and implementing your agreement, we suggest considering the following:

- How your institution incentivises strategic civic engagement through the annual budget round, staff performance management and engagement with the Students' Union.
- How to link up 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to civic engagement. Academics may have individual connections with the local community, but this might not be recognised or align with wider institutional priorities. This suggests a need to provide support around how to develop more structured civic engagement processes. This implies the need to invest in catalysing culture change throughout the university, normalising the importance of civic engagement as part of university life, enhancing the civic activism that is already occurring and maximising the outcomes. This can involve permission for staff to engage in activities which do not immediately impact on performance metrics.

#### Theme 5: Recognising and managing risks

As with any new strategic engagement initiative, poorly designed and executed CUAs could pose risks to institutional reputations and the civic university movement as a whole. The consultation exercise identified a series of risks to manage as you prepare and implement your agreement:

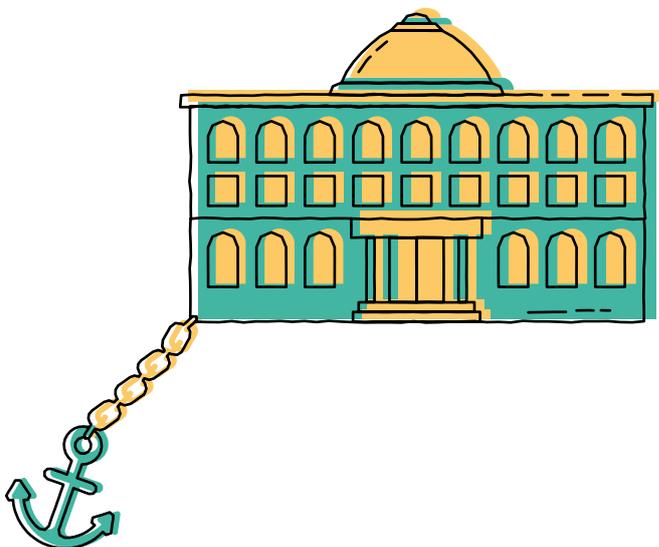
- How to keep the momentum, relationships and institutional knowledge when people move on.
- Managing the relationships with and expectations of stakeholders and partners (conflicting time scales, priorities, accountabilities).
- Lack of clarity around time-scales: the agreement, action plans, and annual reviews.
- Defining the added value of civic agreements so that they are not just relabelling existing activity.
- Learning from best practice elsewhere but also failures – why they did not work and how to avoid similar scenarios.

# Steps towards creating a CUA

How Civic University Agreements are developed will vary from place to place. In some cases, HEIs might initiate the process, and work with partners to explore how such an agreement might add value locally. In others, existing partnership frameworks and plans might already be in place or in development, in which case the Agreement would be a university contribution to this broader endeavour. The core principle is that Civic University Agreements should be jointly owned and valued.

Before embarking on the process, informal conversation and discussion is vital to establish what might work best in your context.

Whatever the approach, there will be a series of activities and steps to ensure that the Agreement is fit for purpose. The table below lists the steps that universities and their partners might expect to work through, while recognising that individual universities are at different stages of the CUA journey (this is not a prescription but an example of the process for developing a CUA – we anticipate that this will need to be revised and adapted to fit within the context of your place). However, whatever the process you adopt there should be a clear time horizon and at each stage, universities and their partners should evaluate progress.





|                         | Scoping   |   |  |  |  | Delivery  |   |   | Resourcing   |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Challenge area          | 1. Consultation and co-creation   | 2. Data and intelligence gathering  | 3. Agreeing focus  | 4. Striking agreements   |  | 5. Delivering outcomes  | 6. Evaluation and learning  | 7. Governance and risk  | 8. Resourcing the process  |
| Critical considerations | How can you ensure that key local stakeholders 'buy in' to the process? How can you avoid imposing solutions, and ensure you are responding to local needs?   | What is useful evidence and data to inform the process? How can this be most efficiently captured?  | What are realistic and credible goals for these agreements? How many areas of activity should they encompass? At what geographical scale? Over what timescale?   | What makes an effective agreement that enables but doesn't constrain, and which allows flexibility to cope with rapid change?  |  | How will the CUA translate into practical activity that realises public benefit?  | How might the impact of CUA's be tracked and evaluated?   | How is accountability best exercised in arrangements of this nature? What risks need to be identified and managed?  | Capacity: what resources and capabilities are needed to deliver the process effectively?   |
| Comments                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key stakeholders and work openly and iteratively to develop your approach with them.</li> <li>Beware of 'tokenistic' consultation.</li> <li>Consider using independent and neutral arbiters to support this process. Also consider the possibility of using a range of expert user-centred methods (e.g. co-design, community listening and public opinion techniques etc.).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capturing high quality data and analysis should underpin the whole process, for example in England using the statutory Local Needs Assessment protocol.</li> <li>There are existing national data sets which could be shared and used consistently across the network.</li> <li>There is a great opportunity for HEIs to compare and share their approaches even if they are preparing separate CUAs for the same area.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While CUAs should cover place-based development in the round, universities may want to consider focussing on specific themes.</li> <li>Wider national outcome frameworks might be shared across the local network to help guide activity, so it aligns with wider policy priorities (e.g. bridging the productivity gap between places).</li> <li>Be clear about the period to which the CUA applies – e.g. 5 or 10 years.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements need to have 'flex' built in, given that local circumstances can change rapidly, and national priorities can change. However, a long-term commitment is also critical if the potential of the process is to be realised.</li> <li>Agreements might be underpinned by a set of high-level principles, with delivery plans agreed for different thematic areas.</li> </ul> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This should be considered at the start of the process.</li> <li>Specify in the agreement how it will be translated into action.</li> <li>The CUAs should result in universities beginning to share their decision making with other HEIs and partners and to co-commission activity and re-direct investment. What practical steps are included in the Agreement to ensure this happens?</li> <li>What are your intended outcomes of the CUA? How and when are you going to achieve this?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This should be considered at the start of the process.</li> <li>A 'theory of change' approach to identify the context, assumptions, goals and intended outcomes from agreements can be helpful in some instances.</li> <li>Ensure learning and reflection are designed into the process.</li> <li>Linked to step 2, consider the data and information will you need to evaluate your activities. Do you have the required expertise/resource to deliver it?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build robust governance arrangements which dovetail with and don't duplicate existing arrangements.</li> <li>Establish how CUA activity intersects with the responsibilities of governing boards.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The steps outlined above demonstrate that the process of creating CUAs will require significant resource and capability.</li> <li>The expertise to manage each of these steps is not always on tap.</li> <li>Identify the expertise and resource in the CUA.</li> </ul> |

# Synergies with evolving higher education, research and other policies

In preparing your Civic University Agreement it is worth exploring, where applicable, the synergies with national policy priorities to ensure your institution and local community capitalises on the available opportunities. It also worth reflecting on the national policy environment to ensure the CUA can mutually support your institutional response to regulatory requirements.

Our consultation has helped us map some of the key policy links for the agreements, which we summarise below. We plan to do more work to map these policy links in the future, and to work

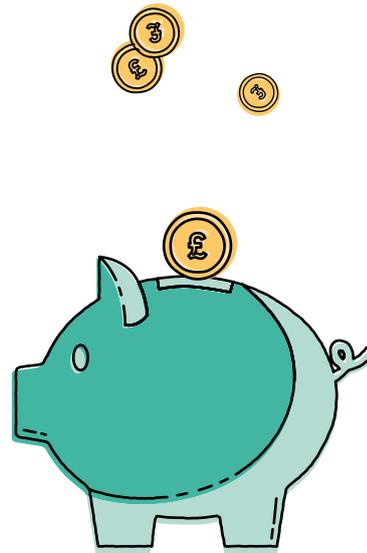
with policy colleagues in Higher Education and other policy domains to provide a framework that maximises the potential synergy.

*\*A separate document has been published by the Office for Students for the UPP Foundation Civic University Conference. This is a statement by Chris Millward, Director of Fair Access and Participation, exploring synergies between Civic University Agreements and OfS access and participation regulation and funding. In addition to the below, it is worth considering the OfS statement in full.*

## HE Policy links

### Access and participation

- HEI **Access and Participation plans** contribute to their civic mission. There is an expectation that they will focus on people and places who are under-represented in higher education, and target those most in need. By including these activities in both civic university agreements and in access and participation plans, universities will be able to ensure their accountability locally and nationally is mutually supportive.
- In Scotland access policy is driven by the aspiration that by 2030 school leavers from the most deprived areas will be as likely to go to university as those from the least deprived areas. The Scottish Funding Council **Outcome Agreements** with each university define how universities will make progress toward this in their regional and national context.
- In Wales HEI **Fee and Access Plans** are used to support under-represented groups and improve equality of opportunity. As part of this work institutions can also use the plans to explain how fee income is used to engage within communities across Wales.



- There is an expectation that HEIs approach access and participation in a **collaborative way**, for instance through the National Collaborative Outreach Programme in England where a consortia approach is encouraged. In the OfS guidance to partnerships for the next two years of their work, they have encouraged partnerships 'to consider how the outreach hubs link to the Civic University Agreement'. This is elaborated in a separate document from the OfS.

### Teaching and Learning

- **Skills and employability** is another key area to which civic agreements can contribute. It is estimated that 60 – 70% of graduates are taking jobs in their home regions, so opportunities for progression into skilled employment for two-thirds of all graduates depends on demand for graduate skills in their local regions. The civic university agreements could be a vehicle for sharing the learning from these activities, scaling it up in other towns and cities across the UK. Skills Development Scotland's work on Industry and Regional Skills Assessments may provide a starting point for Scottish HEIs.
- Students make a major contribution to **knowledge exchange**. In England the OfS is working with Research England to develop a typology which makes explicit student engagement in knowledge exchange activities (KE-S). Universities who have signed civic university agreements could take a leading role through KE-S activities, which naturally bridge teaching and research.
- **The Teaching Excellence Framework** assesses excellence in teaching at universities to ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study. Provider submissions offer an opportunity to highlight their commitment to the Civic Agreement process, and to demonstrate a strategic approach to local and regional skills needs.

## Research and Innovation

- In Wales, HEFCW is providing targeted funding to enhance universities' **civic mission**. In England, the **Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)** consultation includes 7 perspectives, several of which are highly relevant to Civic University Agreements, including one focused on Local Growth and Regeneration and another on Public and Community Engagement. Research England's HEIF, and Scotland's UIF, funding frames knowledge exchange in a similarly broad way. CUAs will provide an excellent platform to develop long term strategies to deliver against these expectations. The **Research Excellence Framework (REF)** administered UK wide by the HE is funding bodies, and UKRI's long standing commitment to 'excellence with impact' is seeing increasing expectations on HEIs to contribute social and economic impact through their research. The most recent guidance on REF 2021 provides examples of a range of areas of impact, all of which can be addressed through Civic University Agreements.
- The **Strength in Places** Fund managed by UK Research & Innovation is now in the development phase of Wave 1. A Call for further collaborative projects for Wave 2 has been issued recently. Local partnerships across England are now developing Local Industrial Strategies to align with the national Industrial Strategy. CUAs can highlight in Local Industrial Strategies the role of citizens as co-producers of knowledge, the contribution of work-based learning, and graduates to the performance of SMEs and productivity improvement.

## Other policy links

The consultation has revealed that several HEIs are actively linking their Agreements to external policy drivers, locally, regionally and nationally, for instance in health, culture or economic development.

A number of national outcome frameworks exist across the UK, and we think more mapping work could usefully be done to maximise the synergy with these. Examples include:

## Health and wellbeing

- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In order to create a more sustainable Wales, public bodies, like HEFCW must work towards seven Well-being Goals and enact the five Ways of Working. Universities are not subject to the Act; however, all are contributing in a variety of ways. It has identified a set of national indicators and has required the establishment of Public Service Boards. The Boards are expected to assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their area before setting objectives to maximise their local contribution.
- **NHS England's Long-Term plan** identifies a host of areas which overlap with CUAs, including an increasing focus on more integrated local services to address population health, system-wide workforce development, and innovation in the use of data and digital technology. There is great scope for alignment between local NHS plans and Civic University Agreements. Local hospitals are starting to develop a place-making agenda and increasingly see themselves as anchor institutions. This involved looking at population health, how they employ local people, support for local supply chains, how to address the demands for services, better use of their vast estate, environmental sustainability and closer working with universities in places, drawing on the US experience of 'Eds and Meds'. CUAs can help drive this forward.

## Culture

- The recent **Cultural Cities Enquiry** considered how we can radically increase the ability of our cities to use culture to drive inclusive growth across the UK. The report identified the value of culture to civic life. A key recommendation was that cities should establish '**Cultural City Compacts**' to provide strategic cross-sectoral local leadership, drawing together partners from city government, culture, business, higher education and LEPs.
- **Arts Council England** is currently consulting on its new 10-year strategy. It outlines broad outcomes they want to achieve – but emphasise strongly that these can only be realised through partnership working: *We will seek out partners who share our vision and who want to work with us to strengthen creative and cultural opportunities in cities, towns and villages across the country. These partners will come from across local government and from The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, from further and higher education and schools, and from inside and outside the cultural sector.*
- More specifically the strategy seeks to focus the Council more on people's individual creativity than has been the case in the past. In terms of place it seeks to invest in cultural infrastructure that creates the conditions for people's creativity to be inspired and fostered – building thriving cultural communities.

## Local Economic Development

- **Local Industrial Strategies** are an important area for collaboration. These have already been published in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester. Other Combined Authorities and LEPs are in the process of consulting and producing similar documents.
- The current Government has committed to creating a **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** to replace the regeneration funding local areas currently receive from the EU. There is no doubt that this funding will require evidence of aligned local and regional strategies and strong partnership bids: The Civic University Agreements will provide a vital platform for developing such bids.
- There are excellent examples of HEIs working closely with **local policy makers** to align activity with local plans and priorities across a range of domains, including health and social care, green space, children and young people, digital, culture and sports and tourism. Mapping these local priorities is a vital first step in developing agreements.
- In Scotland, Civic Agreements provide concrete ways for universities to demonstrate their contribution to the key government priority of **Inclusive Growth**. It also provides opportunities to respond to the Scottish Government's **Place Principle** in partnership with other bodies, such as through **Community Planning Partnerships**.
- Future **Research Wales Innovation Fund** strategies will need to align with HEFCW's 'Vision for Research and Innovation' with a requirement to include specific reference to Civic Engagement activities. Institutions with Civic University Agreements in place will be well placed to evidence their engagement in this area.

### Local government and the leadership of place

- While a decade of reductions in national government funding has impacted on the provision of local services and Council's strategic policy capacity, local authorities provide democratically accountable leadership of place. This should be considered and recognised by universities in the way they engage with their local communities. The democratic leadership position, combined with the challenging fiscal environment, has led councils to engage with the complexities that underpin local economies and communities. This has encouraged partnership working with anchor institutions, businesses and civic actors as demonstrated by place-specific responses to local industrial strategy, sustainable development and devolution. Within this context Civic University Agreements offer an opportunity to further develop local collaboration between universities, councils and others and provide a framework to develop a shared understanding of the challenges facing an area and what each institution can bring to the table to make a real difference.

# Conclusion

Some universities have existed for centuries. Some are not even 30 years old. But regardless of age, many have grown up with a strong civic spirit and the civic role remains a key priority for all. At this time of change in the sector, and in light of national policy challenges and opportunities, the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission concluded that universities should build upon this civic heritage and focus on how they can create civic institutions in the 21st Century. In that vein, Civic University Agreements will enhance your efforts to be a #TrulyCivic institution. They will ensure 'place', 'public' and 'partnerships' are at the heart of your civic strategy.

This guide is an attempt to support you on your CUA journey. As a new (albeit based on similar schemes in the UK and overseas) initiative we are all undertaking the first steps, so this guide is a live document which we anticipate will be updated as experiences mature. We'd hugely appreciate your feedback on this guide – please email [upp-foundation@upp-ltd.com](mailto:upp-foundation@upp-ltd.com).

