national
co-ordinating centre
for public engagement

Building an Engaged Future for UK Higher Education

Full Report from the Engaged Futures Consultation

December 2014
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INTRODUCTION: THINKING FOR THE FUTURE

The UK Higher Education (HE) sector has changed dramatically over the last decade. More than ever, universities have to think and plan for the future in the face of uncertainty over longer term public funding; expanding markets and increased competition for students and research income; rapidly changing approaches to knowledge and innovation; and the opportunity and threat of new technology to place-based learning and research.

It has thus been an exciting time to embark on a consultation about the future of higher education and the role of public engagement (PE) in shaping that future, as universities shift their horizons to rethink their social purpose, core activities, and modus operandi in the face of a rapidly changing global, national and local economic context.

Over the last decade, public engagement has been gaining momentum. Universities no longer want to be seen as or behave as 'ivory towers'. Universities of the twenty-first century are outward looking institutions, which actively seek interaction, debate and collaboration, to help shape and contribute to a thriving economy, society and democracy. A key question for the consultation was therefore to understand, if these trends continue, where might this take an Engaged University of the future? And what do the public and organisations keen to partner with universities want from an Engaged University?

BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) is an organisation committed to supporting and embedding high quality public engagement in universities throughout the UK. In February 2013, the NCCPE launched a consultation to explore the future of the Engaged University in 2025. The consultation sought to stimulate debate, create new visions for the future and explore how universities might need to change to bring these visions to life. The process drew upon the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders within and outside the HE sector and sought to reveal and understand the contexts and trends shaping the sector and engagement practices, and people's aspirations for the future.

The consultation asked stakeholders:

- What might an Engaged University of the future be like?

- What are the key changes / forces of change that may affect its engagement models?

- How can we build upon existing practices within and outside the HE sector to strengthen our partnerships with other organisations and affect change?

- What can we do to ensure that universities remain relevant and engaged with society?

- How has discussion about engagement changed over the last few years, and how might this change in the light of challenges we currently face within the HE sector and society as a whole?

This report synthesises key findings from a consultation based on empirical research (12 workshops and 30 in depth interviews) with representatives from over 40 UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), nine major funding bodies, and over 60 partner organisations. A summary report is also available which synthesises the key findings from the consultation here **www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/engaged-futures**.

THE ENGAGED FUTURES TEAM

The Engaged Futures team was made up of Caroline Wilson (independent researcher), Daniel Start (independent facilitator), Sophie Duncan and Paul Manners (NCCPE). Helen Featherstone (University of Exeter), Mary Schwartz, Emma Agusita and Abigail Tweed (NCCPE Associates) also contributed to the work through hosting workshops and/ or conducting interviews.

As we launched Engaged Futures we worked with the Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) at the University of Brighton who were exploring the future for community university partnership work in Brighton. Their study explored the characteristics of the future of community university partnership working. Their study aimed to build a vision of community university engagement in 2023 that is rooted in the practicalities of working in partnership on a daily basis. The main inputs were a literature review of future scenarios and methods for collaborative visioning of possible futures, research interviews and a symposium. These findings were then used to inform a creative writing exercise. You can find a link to this report in Appendix 2.

UNIVERSITY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is a term that is widely used in a variety of sectors, from arts and heritage to science policy and local government. In 2008 and 2009 the NCCPE consulted widely across the HE sector and research community to synthesise their views of what public engagement means to them, to inform our definition.

Our consultation told us that it was important to be inclusive and not to try to narrow the definition down too far. Other types of engagement – for instance 'civic' or 'community' engagement – were seen to be part of the same family. What they all have in common is describing an aspiration to better connect the work of universities and research institutes with society. We have developed this definition:

Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

Public engagement describes a range of approaches that universities or research institutes can take to involve the public with their work. We have found it helpful to categorise these motivations into three broad, if often overlapping, purposes that engagement can serve:

- **Informing**: Inspiring, informing and educating the public, and making the work of higher education more accessible

- **Consulting**: Actively listening to the public's views, concerns and insights

- **Collaborating**: Working in partnership with the public to solve problems together, drawing on each other's expertise

We have included a further reading section in Appendix 2. This provides references for key documents cited in the report, details of the key initiatives and agencies referenced within it, and also some suggestions for further reading.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on our empirical research, we have identified several challenges shaping the context for university public engagement:

- There is much debate over the future of higher education in the UK. However **public engagement** is **rarely** an explicit focus for discussion, despite strong support for engagement activities from funders, university staff and the public.

- The Witty Review (2013) and subsequent policy interventions have encouraged and incentivised 'knowledge transfer' to businesses. However the **third mission** of universities (beyond teaching and research) is currently being defined almost exclusively in economic terms with the emphasis squarely on universities' roles as wealth creators. Policy discussions about the third mission of universities do not balance their **social** and **economic** role.

- There are significant opportunities to **raise the policy profile** of engagement activities beyond 'knowledge transfer' to business: to reflect the innovative and exciting ways in which universities are collaborating with the **public, students, museums, local authorities, national charities, think tanks, artists, and many others across all fields of the economy and society.**

Our empirical work shows universities from across the UK have embraced **public engagement** as a vehicle to address current challenges, which include: to achieve **excellence and impact in research and teaching**; respond to **greater public scrutiny** of the ways in which universities can and should serve the public good; **increased competition for students and research income**; the need to develop and communicate **distinctiveness** in a competitive marketplace; **widening participation**; and concerns for the **employability of graduates**.

1.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: KEY FINDINGS

Based on our empirical research with over 200 people working within and in partnership with universities we found:

- **Optimism** and enthusiasm for the future of engagement: that considerable **progress** has been made over the last ten years to **embed high quality engagement** within HEIs, as evidenced by:

  - The growing number of **innovative, collaborative** projects involving HE staff, students, and partner organisations across the arts, sciences, business, social sciences and humanities.

  - The growing number of institutions and **senior management committed to engagement** as a **strategic priority** and defining characteristic of their institution: accompanied by structures to recognise, support, and reward high quality engagement work and **collaborative partnerships**.

  - The demand for and development of more **meaningful,** sustained relationships between HEIs and their **partners**.

  - **A supportive funding environment**: the inclusion of Impact Case Studies in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE)); the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research (Research Councils UK (RCUK)); innovative funding initiatives such as the NCCPE and the Beacons for Public Engagement (RCUK, Higher Education Funding Councils and Wellcome Trust); the Catalysts for Public Engagement with Research Project (RCUK, 2011); the Connected Communities Project (Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)); and Engaging Science (Wellcome Trust).

- Despite the unfavourable economic climate and budget cuts, most profoundly affecting community partners' capacity to engage with universities, people thought a **culture of engagement** is beginning to take hold and is strengthening, as evidenced by:

  - The number of people **committed to building Engaged Futures**, with the skills, knowledge, values and confidence to support innovative projects and partnerships.

  - The evolution and strengthening of **collaborative relationships** with partner organisations.

  - **Maturing structures and debates**. For example, many questioned whether evangelism is still necessary, that there is no longer a need to convince people engagement matters: can those committed to Engaged Futures now focus on *how to engage* rather than *why we engage?*

1.2 BUILDING ENGAGED FUTURES: LINKING TRENDS TO VALUES

Based on our analysis of empirical data on contexts and trends, we identified six overarching factors supporting the ongoing expansion of public engagement in UK universities:

- **Market-based incentives** for universities to distinguish themselves as 'engaged universities' in a crowded and competitive market for students and research income.

- **Bureaucratic controls**: academics are increasingly expected to demonstrate the social and economic impact of their research, for instance through the REF.

- A steadily consolidating policy focus from all major parties on **greater societal interaction** by universities and researchers, for instance through public engagement with science and knowledge exchange.

- Greater **scrutiny** of universities and other publically funded institutions and pressure to increase **transparency** and **accountability**.

- A shift away from single authoritative experts, towards more **pluralistic forms of evidence** and growing recognition of the significance of **situated knowledge**.

- The re-emergence of **civic universities**, as engines of regional growth and development that contribute to the local community, business and civil society.

These overarching trends demonstrate there are many **compelling drivers** for universities to continue to expand public engagement work. However these trends provide few safeguards for the delivery of **high quality engagement**: as a mechanism through which the interests of the public (business, charities, local government, students, the general public, tax payers) shape the outlook, values, and activities of universities. For universities to engage with the public in a way that delivers **social** and **economic benefits** for society, it is important to **dig deeper**, to understand the **rationales** motivating a culture of openness, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Using the framework developed by Fiorino (1989) and subsequent work by Stirling (2008), we analysed these trends in terms of three imperatives for engagement:

- **Instrumental** imperatives: we engage because it makes decisions more legitimate, that engagement supports the incumbent interests of academics and universities.

- **Substantive** imperatives: we engage because non-experts see problems, issues and solutions that experts miss. Participation increases the quality of academic work and the functioning of universities.

- **Normative** imperatives: we engage because democratic ideals call for maximum participation, which counter the power of incumbent interests and allow those who are affected by decisions to have influence.

Many of the people we spoke to support a **normative view** of engagement work, not only because **it is the right thing to do**, but because a normative rationale for engagement work takes universities into **new and dynamic places**: that universities are not only more accountable to the public, but also **integral** and **integrated** within a vibrant **democracy, economy and society**. As such this consultation sought to understand what those collaborating with universities, as community partners, want from an Engaged University, and what those responsible for delivering engagement activities (senior managers, academics, public engagement specialists and funders) aspire to achieve through their engagement activities.

1.3 ASPIRATIONS OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The NCCPE has actively supported **community partners** to develop more **productive** and **mutually beneficial** relationships with universities. The consultation helped to make explicit such partners' various aspirations and motivations to engage with universities:

- For universities to **recognise** and **value** the **expertise** of people outside academia: as **co-applicants** in funding bids; as **co-producers** of knowledge; as **contributors** to curriculum development; and **supporters** of student volunteering and learning placements.

- For universities to **add value** to partner organisations, to develop relationships of **mutual benefit** that are not always or wholly focused on research (for instance, providing access to people, or utilising university resources and spaces for learning).

- For universities to have a stronger connection with their localities by being **open** and **accessible places** where people from different backgrounds can meet, exchange ideas, and build relationships and **collaborate** in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

- For universities to offer opportunities for partners to **reflect critically** on their work or to provide **evaluation** of partner services in order to **credibly demonstrate** their value.

- For universities to reflect the voices and knowledge of **marginalised communities** to ensure research provides wider benefits for larger sections of society.

- For partner organisations involved in collaborative work with universities to be **adequately funded** to support this engagement.

1.4 SHARED VISIONS FOR AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

The consultation was an opportunity for people working inside and outside the HE sector to think 'outside the box', to articulate **visions** for the future of an Engaged University, beyond the structures which currently contain and constrain the flow of knowledge, expertise, resources and people into and out of the HE sector. Our consultees shared many visions of the future 'Engaged University'. We have synthesised these into five themes which capture the centres of gravity around which these visions cohered:

Theme 1: Space and place

Universities are seen and behave as a physical and intellectual resource for society, exemplified in how they integrate with their localities and share space and place.

Theme 2: Digital media and open data

Knowledge is open and accessible to the public. Universities collectively and individually prioritise initiatives to support open data and digital engagement with HEIs.

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Theme 3: Engaged research

Universities conduct research in ways that are open, transparent, accountable, inclusive, collaborative and purposeful. Their research helps to solve key societal challenges and feeds curiosity and learning in society.

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Theme 4: Engaged learning

Universities bring learning to life in settings outside the university, by investing in life-long learning and by unlocking the potential of students to learn in collaboration with community organisations, building value for both.

Theme 5: People and partnerships

The movement of people inside and outside the university and mutuality in partnerships enables universities and their partners to innovate for the benefit of the economy and society.

This 'visioning' work revealed that, for an Engaged University to flourish, profound structural changes to the HE landscape would be necessary, such that:

- The public and partner organisations have greater input to determine the **types of projects** funded by universities and the nature of engagements with the public.

- **Peer-reviewed journal** articles are **not** the principal or exclusive measure of academic success (as materials read by a small community of interested academics).

- High quality **engagement work** is **valued** and **rewarded** by universities and peers.

- The knowledge generated by researchers is more available and accessible to the public and other relevant practitioners.

- Applied research and participatory methodologies are more **highly valued,** as is the knowledge and expertise of communities outside the university.

- Universities foster **life-long learning** and develop the critical skills and tools required by the public to conduct rigorous and relevant research to improve their lives.

- The public have a sense of ownership and **pride in their local university** as a result of having engaged with it.

- Universities are institutions which the public hold in **high regard** as exemplars of ethical behaviour and practice.

- Universities nurture **students** to become **'world-ready graduates'** equipped with knowledge and expertise to contribute to society as citizens, employees and future leaders.

1.5 DEFINING QUALITIES OF AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

Our consultees identified a range of **current drivers** and **trends** which make it in the interest of universities to engage. These included, for instance, meeting funding requirements like impact assessment in the REF, and strengthening market position and institutional reputation.

However, such bureaucratic and market-based drivers are **not sufficient safeguards** to deliver high quality engagement work that is of benefit to other publics (community partners, businesses, students, the public, patients) and universities.

Based on the analysis of people's visions, we have identified three essential qualities of an Engaged University. These qualities encapsulate the challenges to build outward-looking universities for the twenty-first century:

- **Porous:** an Engaged University supports the two-way flow of information, people and resources across permeable boundaries which integrate and connect universities physically, digitally and intellectually to society.

- **Dynamic:** an Engaged University takes risks to do things differently. It acts to bring about change, functions as a catalyst for debate and dialogue, and is expert in facilitating and mobilising change through learning and research.

- **Values-led:** an Engaged University is principled. It seeks to listen and learn from society, and work in collaboration with other organisations to address key societal challenges. The values of engagement are embedded throughout the institution: openness, mutuality and respect for others.

1.6 HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This report provides evidence of collective understandings of the trends, rationales and values underpinning the expansion of high quality engagement work in HE across the UK.

This report:

- Explores how current trends can be harnessed to shape the delivery of high quality engagement.

- Highlights ideas and innovations shaping engaged practices now and in the future.

- Seeks to stimulate debate about the risk and rewards of engagement work.

Our synthesis has identified some concrete and positive visions of the future. The people we consulted were genuinely optimistic about why and how such a future might be built, and clear-sighted about some of the challenges in getting there. But – like all good conversations – the consultation raised new questions, or left some issues unresolved. We touch on these in the conclusion.

However you chose to use the report, we hope you find it a useful stimulus for change. We welcome your comments and feedback.

We are extremely grateful to all those who gave up their time and shared their opinions for Engaged Futures, while accepting responsibility for the limitations of this report. You can find the names of our consultees and contributors in Appendix 3.

2. THE ENGAGED FUTURES CONSULTATION: APPROACH

This part of the report provides further details about who we talked to and the ways in which we conducted the research.

The consultation began with a planning event held in London in February 2013. The event was attended by a wide range of stakeholders, representing diverse organisations seeking to work more purposefully with universities, alongside staff and students of universities involved in engagement activities. We presented a draft methodology, and invited feedback on the approach and priorities stakeholders wanted the consultation to address. The discussion helped to shape our thinking and awareness of key issues and risks to consider in running the consultation and in writing this final report. Some of the key ideas people wanted the consultation to address are summarised below:

- To provide a picture of what is going on in the sector at the moment

- The values of good partnership working

- Evidence to convince a more sceptical audience about engagement

- A clear sense of direction

- Simple messages about how the public and communities perceive an Engaged University

- Ideal types of an Engaged University

- Material to keep the conversation going

- Arguments why engagement will be important in 2025

We hope the report goes some way to address these ideas. In response to feedback, we changed our approach and decided not to examine engagement through a sectoral lens: for example in social justice, environment, cultural heritage, and business. It was suggested a sectoral approach may restrict our understanding of cross-cutting themes and result in a consultation which was more HE-centric. Instead, we decided to invite people with a wide range of interests to take part in the consultation, to explore both general and sector-specific trends in engagement practices. We were also advised to take a diverse sample of participants, and in particular to work closely with community partners to understand what they want to achieve from working with universities (see section 2.2 for more detail about who we involved).

a) Workshops

Over the course of the year, we ran 12 workshops, attended by over 180 people: four in London; one in Manchester; one in Birmingham; three in Bristol (including a session at Engage 2013) and three in the South West. The majority of workshops were facilitated by Daniel Start, recorded by Caroline Wilson, with input and support from Sophie Duncan and Paul Manners (NCCPE). We are also grateful to Helen Featherstone (University of Exeter) and Mary Schwartz, who facilitated and recorded 3 additional workshops in the South West. At each workshop we invited participants to:

- Bring along a photo/metaphor that represented their vision for an Engaged University of the future

- Discuss the trends and contexts affecting the HE sector and public engagement

- Generate preferred visions for an Engaged University of the future

- Reflect upon the drivers and challenges facing engagement now and in the future

The structure and content of the workshops evolved over time as new insights and common themes emerged. In the first three workshops, in Birmingham, London and Bristol, participants were guided through a meditative visioning exercise, which temporarily suspended the present and transported participants into the future. In the current economic climate, futures methodology was a particularly useful tool to lift many out of pessimism about the present, to shift thinking beyond present and pressing concerns about the recession and cuts. We asked participants to write postcards from the future to describe what they had seen, heard, thought and felt while visiting the Engaged University in 2025. These individual visions were interrogated as a group, to understand the actions and resources people thought were necessary to bring these visions to life. As the research progressed and clear and consistent themes emerged, we collated the ideas into nine different visions of the future, which were presented and refined at five subsequent workshops.

People approached the visioning exercise and questions about the future in different ways. A minority thought about the future in terms of prediction. For some, this seemed like an impossible task: throughout history people have consistently failed to accurately predict the future. Others shared their predictions with confidence, based on the extrapolation of current trends. For the majority, the visioning exercise produced **preferred** visions of the future. Many enjoyed being idealistic: sharing what they wanted to see happen and how this might come about. Others, sometimes briefly, visited more dystopian scenarios in which universities had become more reliant on corporate funding, and technology threatened personal interactions and face-to-face contact. On the whole people were optimistic about the power of engagement to shape a bright future for HEIs, their partners, and civil society.

b) In depth interviews

In addition to the workshops, we invited people with expertise in leading, developing or analysing public engagement to take part in an hour-long in depth telephone interview (n=30). This enabled us to develop a deeper understanding of people's personal journeys into engagement, hopes and challenges for the future, often rooted in personal experiences and passions, their academic heritage, previous roles and current responsibilities. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed and analysed by Caroline Wilson. We would also like to thank Emma Agusita, Abigail Tweed and Mary Schwartz for conducting ten of the interviews with participants in the South West and Wales.

c) Sense making workshop

At the conclusion of the consultation, we held a sense making workshop in London in October 2013. We invited a group of key opinion leaders from inside and outside of HE to read, digest and respond to our preliminary findings. We are extremely grateful for the comments and guidance from this workshop, which has helped develop the thinking and approach in this report. In particular, we took on board the need to emphasise the tensions in the work,

to segment our findings by stakeholder group, to think about the audience for this report, and NCCPE's role as advocates for Engaged Futures.

We invited a wide range of stakeholders affecting change inside and outside academia: **funders, community partners, public engagement specialists and academics**. Many of the people we spoke to work at the increasingly blurred boundary between universities and the world beyond, with the skills, creativity and commitment to bring people together to listen, learn, innovate and work with knowledge in new and exciting ways. The sample primarily includes people committed to Engaged Futures. While opinions varied considerably about the purpose and scope for engagement work, the group shared the fundamental belief that universities are an important resource which can be tapped to achieve wider social and economic goals.

For the NCCPE, an important starting point for high quality engagement is collaboration: for universities to work in partnership with other organisations to develop projects, ways of working, and relationships of **mutual benefit**. The NCCPE has supported the development of the UK Community Partner Network, a network of community partner organisations keen to develop their work with universities.

In total we spoke to 214 people, 64 of whom represented civil society organisations, many of whom work for small community-based organisations. Others included in the sample as '**community partners**' were employees of national charities, royal societies, museums, think tanks, artists and freelancers, involved in ongoing collaborations with universities. The second most numerous group had **public engagement related roles** in universities, and a variety of job titles to reflect the scope and approach for engagement in different universities, for example: head of community partnerships; impact and knowledge transfer officer; knowledge exchange manager; external relations manager; volunteering manager; champion for public engagement with research; strategic partnership manager; schools outreach officer. Although we spoke to many people with an interest in engaged learning, student volunteering and placements, we did not talk to many students, but intend to follow this up in future research. 'HE other' refers to people working for trans-university organisations. Chart 1 provides a more detailed breakdown of the sample.

Chart 1: Consultation participants by role
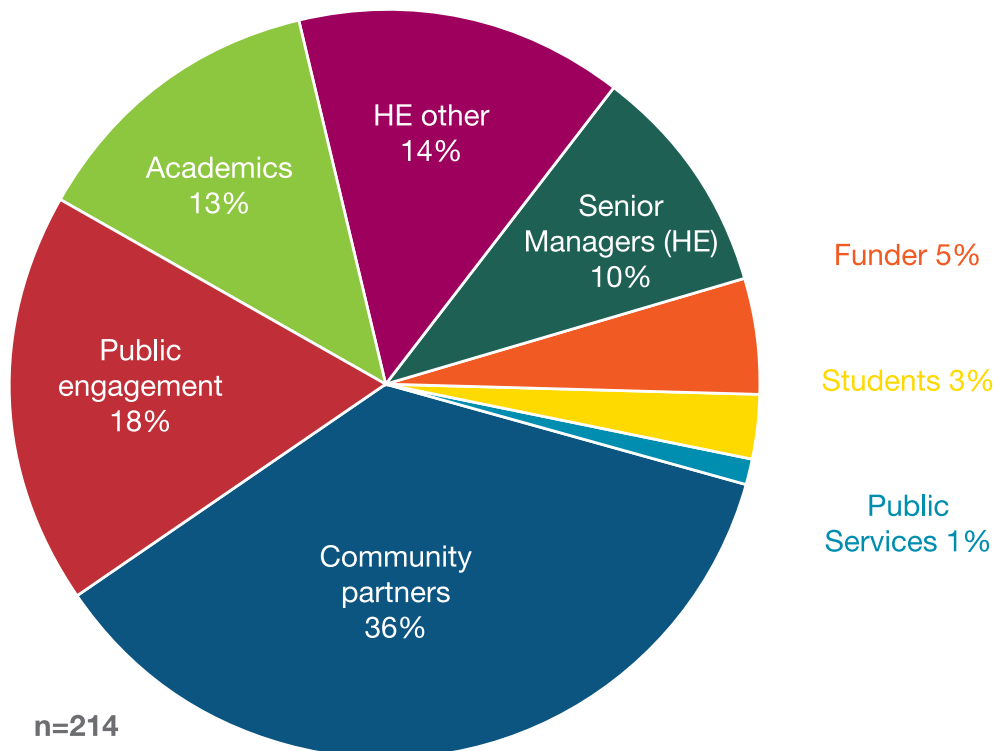
This project was truly national, regional and local in its scope with representatives from 50 universities: from Scotland (5); London and South East (15); the North East and North West (10); the South and South West (9); Midlands (5); Wales (2) and Northern Ireland (1); and representatives from universities in Canada, Netherlands and Spain (3). The sample included people from the Russell Group and post-1992 universities, and included some from the Beacons[1] and the Catalysts for Public Engagement[2].Representatives from institutions with varying levels of support and emphasis on engaged activities took part. We also spoke to representatives from eleven different funding councils, in the arts, humanities, and science. Chart 2 demonstrates the range of sectoral interests of the group: those with an interest in arts, culture and heritage were the largest group; followed by those with interests social justice and health; and thirdly, those with a particular interest in education and skills, which includes interests in life-long learning, student volunteering, literacy, schools and community-based work. A list of all those who contributed to the process is provided in Appendix 3.

Chart 2: Consultation participants by sector/ interest

Of the 213 people involved in the consultation, 109 had roles that were not specific to one sector/ interest – but covered a broad range. The other 104 were aligned to the following sectors/ interests.
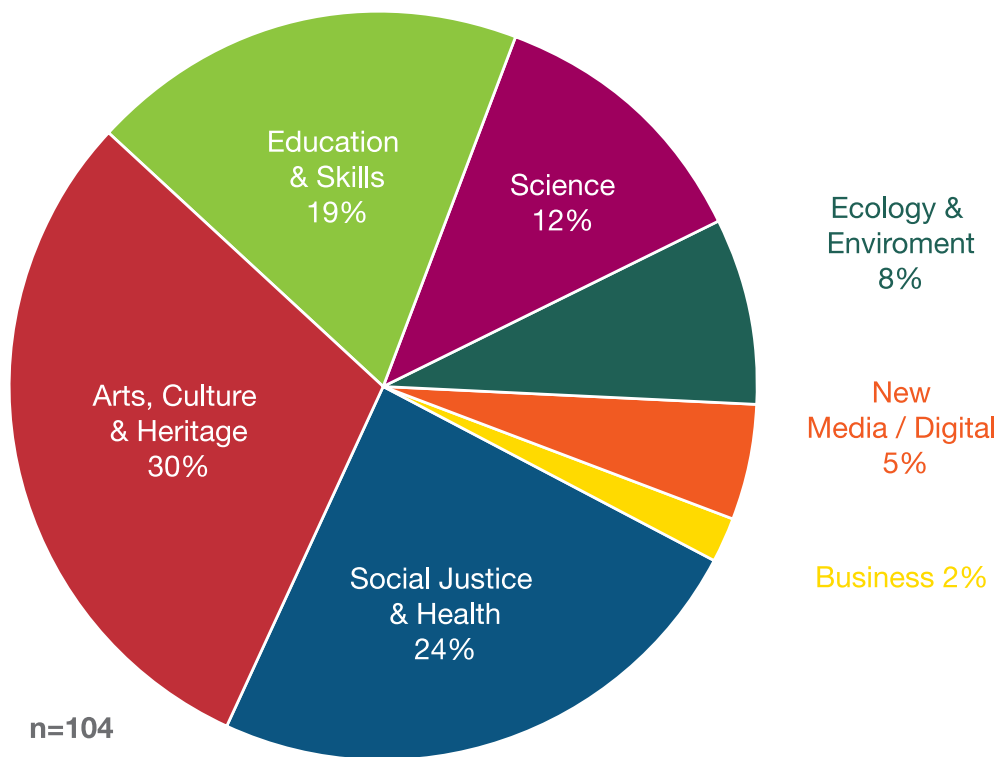
1. The Beacons were university-based collaborative centres, funded to accelerate work to support, recognise, reward and build capacity for public engagement. You can find more information in the Further Reading section in Appendix 2.
2. The Catalysts for Public Engagement with Research were funded by RCUK to build on the work of the Beacons and develop effective support for public engagement with research. You can find more information in the Further Reading section in Appendix 2.

3. EXPLORING THE FINDINGS

In the next section, we explore what people see as the **overarching trends shaping engagement work** and the HE sector, and the micro-trends shaping the diverse set of practices, now termed as 'engagement.'

In the second section, we relate these trends to the visions people developed for an Engaged University of the future. We discuss **the defining characteristics** of an Engaged University: the values, commitment and ideals that our consultees told us were necessary conditions for engagement. We also present **five themes** which recurred in people's visions of the future, identifying the 'centres of gravity' around which people imagined and described the relationship between universities and society.

We discuss **porosity**: this was a particularly resonant concept for our consultees, describing an aspiration for the 'walls' of the university to become more permeable, and for there to be an increasingly fluid boundary between universities and society, allowing knowledge and expertise and people to move more dynamically between them. We focus on spaces and digital media as assets of an Engaged University that can be re-structured to enhance the flow and mixing of people, information and ideas between universities and society. We also discuss the **preferred futures**, tensions and challenges for research and learning as enabled by an Engaged University.

3.1 CONTEXTS AND TRENDS

In workshops and interviews we asked people about trends and contexts affecting the HE sector and engagement in particular. Everyone acknowledged that the consultation was occurring in a context of dramatic change for HE. The key trends identified as impacting on HE are listed in the box below:

TRENDS AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION

Austerity – ongoing reductions in public funding. Uncertainty about sustained government funding for HE.

Funding squeezed for **partner organisations** (local authorities, third sector organisations).

Mixed **funding structures** for HE institutions including:

- Private funds from tuition fees
- Publically funded research

The rise of the **'impact agenda'** requiring universities to account for the social and economic benefits generated by the research.

Globalisation of HEIs with increasing numbers of international students. Elite institutions focusing on their global brand, campuses, and world-leading research.

Localisation of HEI sector. Civic role for universities becoming more important, with questions about how universities could fill void left by public funding cuts. Localism in research.

Consultees also identified a set of wider societal trends affecting both universities and their partners and collaborators, all directly impacting on the future of engagement:

Public sector institutions increasingly **scrutinised**. Service providers held to account by taxpayers/ voters, including greater interest in how universities serve the public and 'the public good'.

Transparency leading to an expectation universities will share their research with a more interested and often sceptical public.

Declining levels of public trust in other institutions (politics, banking) but higher levels of **public trust** in academia/ universities. Thus scientists/ academics/ universities viewed as neutral experts needed for their role in shaping policy.

Changing notions of **authority and expertise** – multiple voices, multiple experts, and recognition of the importance of situated knowledge.

Social media – fast, efficient mechanisms for two-way communication.

The consultation provided us with rich data about these different trends. Below, we explore six areas where participants identified particularly significant opportunities and risks for engagement:

1. **Market-based incentives for universities to distinguish themselves as 'engaged universities' in a crowded and competitive market for students and research income.**

2. **Bureaucratic controls: academics are increasingly expected to demonstrate the social and economic impact of their research, for instance through the REF.**

3. **A steadily consolidating policy focus from all major parties on greater societal interaction by universities and researchers, for instance through public engagement with science and knowledge exchange.**

4. **Greater scrutiny of universities and other publically funded institutions to increase transparency and accountability.**

5. **A shift away from single authoritative experts, towards more pluralistic forms of evidence and growing recognition of the significance of situated knowledge.**

6. **The re-emergence of civic universities, as engines of regional growth and development that contribute to the local community, business and civil society.**

We have attempted to summarise for each trend the themes and issues which recurred in the many conversations we were part of. These provide a flavour of how people are making sense of the challenges. For each, we have synthesised key opportunities and threats which we believe merit further discussion.

***1. MARKET-BASED INCENTIVES** for universities to distinguish themselves as 'engaged universities' in a crowded and competitive market for students and research income.*

The importance of the market position of universities, aggravated by new fee structures leading to greater differentiation of universities, was identified as a top level driver of engagement for **senior managers**. As universities increasingly need to be or be seen as **distinctive** in a competitive marketplace, this has opened up the scope for universities to develop unique ways of working, with engagement a possible route to differentiation:

"It's not about old or new universities, applied universities or blue sky research universities. We are only at the beginning of a period of differentiation. You may see 'our core mandate is to engage', or 'our core mandate is innovation'. It opens up the scope of presenting universities in much greater diversity. I would encourage that. Some will not engage and will present themselves as abstracted experts. That's not a problem within a much more diverse landscape." (Academic)

Some expressed cynicism that public engagement has become an exercise in good Public Relations (PR) and marketing, that 'it's now fashionable to be seen to be doing something good for society' (Community Partner). However, most people we talked to, and particularly those committed to community engagement, approach public engagement from a strong values-based proposition (further discussed in Theme 5 below: People and Partnerships).

Addressing the **employability of graduates** was also identified as a major opportunity. Consultees wanted to see more and higher quality opportunities for students to learn in community settings. They saw significant mutual benefit in this: for universities to be able to better meet the needs of graduates for rich, applied and engaged learning; and for civil society organisations and businesses to benefit from the talent and skills of the students.

Opportunities:

- Engagement is a tool which enables universities to be distinctive, to **distinguish** themselves from others. This may attract students who are looking to 'make a difference' and are attracted to universities with similar values.

- Concern for student experiences, rankings, and the employability of graduates, may encourage universities to devote more resources to improve student experiences: in volunteering, work experience, research, engaged learning etc.

- Partnership working is seen as an effective way for universities to deliver key priorities: to enhance the employability of graduates and achieve excellence in research and teaching.

Threats:

- The profit motive can significantly limit the scope of engagement. It reduces students to **consumers** rather than **active citizens**.

- If engagement work is done for **PR purposes alone**, it is less likely to deliver engagement of value. Many argued that if the main purpose of engagement is PR it ceases to be engagement at all.

- A marketised approach means universities become more business-like. In this context, activities which have less tangible, measurable economic benefit or impact may be cut back if universities are ruled by the **bottom line** and '**siloed**' accountability.

- Without subsidies, the variety of subjects offered by different institutions may fall, as institutions focus on degree courses which **lead graduates directly into employment**. The purpose of university education may be subverted if the focus on education is limited by narrow market-based incentives for students and universities.

2. BUREAUCRATIC CONTROLS: academics are increasingly expected to demonstrate the social and economic impact of their research, for instance through the REF.

Support for engagement work from funding bodies and the REF was viewed as a key influence on the expansion of engagement activities:

"The research agenda is now being **driven by the contribution your research has on society** – and getting evidence of impact involves engagement." (Funder)

While funders have supported engagement to accelerate the impact of research on society, some were cynical that the inclusion of engagement did not necessarily produce high quality engagement, that it was approached as a **'tick box'** or tokenistic exercise that was being done for the sake of **accountability**. The inclusion of 'research impact' was not necessarily conducive to producing something of value, to shape projects in a way to make a genuine difference. Some noted that academics can seek collaboration instrumentally, rather than thinking creatively about the ways in which engagement activities can **add value** to the overall project. On the positive side, people noted there is much **more communication** about projects, but **participatory research** is still a marginal activity within the broader research landscape: for example in social science, several estimated only 10 per cent of projects use participatory methodologies, leading some to question, has any significant progress been made?

"Research councils are getting better at communication and dissemination. The Impact statement is helpful but there doesn't seem to be a real grasp of how it will be very meaningful. There is a lot of rhetoric around engagement, but if you look at the number of research projects that are engaged and in what ways they engage, that's different. How many action research projects are funded compared to traditional models? Practice hasn't changed that much. They [research councils] have to look deeper: what is the research they are funding and why?" (Academic)

The establishment of public engagement departments and new funding streams to **support engagement** was also noted: for example the Beacons for Public Engagement Project (of which the NCCPE was a part), the Connected Communities programme (AHRC), the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research and the Catalysts for Public Engagement Project (RCUK), were all viewed as positive signs that public engagement is valued, being taken very seriously, and indicative that engagement has an important future within the landscape of higher education (see Appendix 2: Further reading).

Generally people felt engagement activities are being relatively well-funded by research councils, and well-supported in some, but not all institutions, and that this trend is likely to continue, although there is considerable scope to improve the quality of engagement work.

Opportunities:

- As people become more skilled and committed to deliver high quality engagement, standards are likely to increase – moving engaged practices from a 'tick box exercise' to the development of more collaborative, transformative approaches.

- To involve users/ publics much earlier on in the research process. There is a real opportunity for funders/ REF requirements to impact on culture and practice, if collaboration becomes customary much earlier in the research cycle.

- Impact assessment is a new addition to the REF, so there are opportunities to learn from this exercise about the ways in which impact and engagement can help facilitate research excellence.

Threats:

- Stagnation: that engagement work remains tokenistic, one-way communication with little benefit to society or research.

- If engagement work is of poor quality and lacks tangible benefit, or if people struggle to provide compelling evidence of its value and impact, funding is reduced or cut altogether.

Despite the 'openings' being created through the two trends explored above, the shadow of austerity and economic downturn strongly influenced the consultation. People were particularly concerned that public engagement may be seen as a **luxury** rather than a **necessity**. Many representatives of community and voluntary sector organisations were feeling particularly stretched, finding it hard to run basic services in a time of greater need, which affected their ability to work with universities which they considered time-consuming despite the potential benefits.

Several people working in public engagement in universities observed community partners and local authorities are **now demanding more from universities**, in order to minimise the impact of cuts and maximise the benefit from collaboration. Collaborations were on a practical level. For example, one university is sharing a window cleaning service with their local city council. **Austerity** was therefore sometimes something which has also **encouraged engagement** and the **sharing of resources**.

Several noted funding has also been **squeezed** in public engagement departments, in cost-cutting measures affecting most parts of the university. As a result of cuts in administrative staff and pressure to bring in research income, academic staff were **less willing** to support public events and festivals etc., and **workload pressures** meant people had re-adjusted their priorities. In some institutions, public engagement departments had a reasonably generous budget; whereas now expectations were growing that the departments should bring in their own money. This may limit the capacity for the department to support engagement across the institution, if increasing amounts of staff time is devoted to **fundraising**. At the same time, if more funding streams become available with a specific focus on engagement, public engagement departments may be expected to become more financially self-sufficient.

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3. A steadily consolidating policy focus from all major parties on GREATER SOCIETAL INTERACTION by universities and researchers, for instance through public engagement with science and knowledge exchange.

Several people with a science background traced the origin of public engagement in the UK back to government concerns about public understandings of science and the House of Lords Select Committee (2000). The report critiqued the prevailing **deficit model** and came up with the new concept "**public engagement**" to facilitate public dialogue and debate in science. In this context engagement arose out of specific concerns that investment in controversial technologies would come to nought without public understanding and support for more controversial areas of science (e.g. GM research, nuclear energy, research on animals, fracking). This agenda has matured to nurture public interest in science, to inspire and equip future generations with the skills necessary for **high-tech industry** and cutting-edge research. Several people noted there has been a **cultural shift** that science is more cool, trendy, mainstream and exciting than it has ever been – in part due to the popularity of high profile scientists such as Brian Cox,

and the engagement work of many universities.

Opportunities:

- To enhance the policy profile of public engagement, as an agenda closely allied to the strategic objective of sustainable and ethical economic growth.

- To expand the use of participatory methodologies and collaboration in scientific research, such that different academic disciplines and lay interest groups work together to enhance the relevance, quality and application of scientific research.

Threats:

- Public engagement in science is limited to more straightforward dissemination activities, limiting the value, impact and power of engagement, or reducing it to a PR exercise to 'manage' public opinion.

4. GREATER SCRUTINY OF UNIVERSITIES and other publically funded institutions to increase transparency and accountability.

The inclusion of impact assessment in the REF and the importance of engagement to funders, reflect a broader political consensus that universities should contribute more to the economy and society. This view is supported by politicians from across the political spectrum and reflects a broader shift to improve **democratic accountability** in public services: to ensure public money isn't being wasted; to show universities are doing research of value; to demonstrate that universities are outward looking and engaged.

"Politicians of whatever colour want to be able to demonstrate that research is addressing global problems and not just keeping people in jobs." (PE Specialist, HE)

Several framed the debate in more negative terms suggesting universities are **mistrusted** by the public as 'ivory towers' which are not socially or economically useful. Public engagement was therefore viewed as a response by funders and individual universities to **reverse this stereotype and transform practice**. Many thought this is a good thing, and that universities are becoming more reflexive about their purpose and practices.

Central government is also urging universities to 'source funds from the private sector' (Funder). This may have benefits for research in science, engineering, business and technology, where there

is potential to generate profit. Several mentioned the importance of ongoing state support for universities to deliver blue sky research and research for societal benefit. Others thought social research could also benefit from private funding, providing more flexibility to produce outputs beyond peer-reviewed journal articles.

Opportunities:

- To create formal structures of accountability to enable the public to have a greater say about the ways in which universities are run, the types of research that are funded, and the courses and learning opportunities for the public and students.

- To improve public access to the knowledge and resources provided to universities out of public funds (further discussed in Theme 2: Digital media and open data).

Threats:

- If universities are increasingly forced to fund research through third parties (businesses, local government, public sector or third sector organisations), research may become more limited in scope: serving more practice-based interests, eroding the important balance that needs to be struck between blue skies and more applied research and reducing the scope for universities to pursue long term intellectual agendas (further discussed in Theme 3: Engaged research).

5. A SHIFT AWAY FROM SINGLE AUTHORITATIVE EXPERTS, towards more pluralistic forms of evidence and growing recognition of the significance of situated knowledge.

Several noted that higher education is generally seen as a good thing – academics/ researchers figure as some of the most trusted people in society – but that this was not a basis for complacency.

Universities need to pay very careful attention to their relationship with society to maintain trust and build public confidence in the expertise of academics, and the contribution of universities to society.

Public engagement was discussed by some as part of a broader **cultural shift** (from the 1960s onwards) which has challenged traditional forms of **authority and expertise** in many fields of social life: in medicine, politics, banking, law, policing, international development, science, the media and academia. Public trust in institutions has fallen, often in response to scandals (most recently the banking crisis). In response to current crises (bankers, politicians, journalists, and the police), some thought academics and universities were a more highly trusted source of expertise, because of their relative autonomy, independence, values and that their work was based on scientific reasoning and evidence.

Greater public scrutiny of experts and institutions also reflects the emergence of a more educated, media savvy, interested public. Most recently this trend has been supported by the internet which has revolutionised public access to information: with new media, blogging, Twitter, user-generated content etc. increasing public debate, public dialogue and exposure to different viewpoints. The move away from single authority figures has accompanied greater recognition of lay expertise, multiple experts and situated forms of knowledge.

Local authorities, the police and museums were held up as examples of institutions which had become more responsive and more directly accountable to local community, whereas this imperative is relatively new to universities. There is now a greater expectation that universities will deliver research for the benefit of patients, the public, local communities, business etc., and that **key stakeholder groups should have a greater say in the type of research being done**: to ensure it has wider benefits for society.

However, many thought we were at the start of this journey to improve accountability to the public in higher education, and that great care needed to be taken to monitor the quality of the work, to build capacity and capability inside and outside higher education, and to be aware of unintended consequences.

Opportunities:

- For universities to become more democratically accountable to local communities and the wider public.

- To improve public access to, scrutiny and dialogue about academic research, and build capacity for people to engage and produce new, transformational knowledge.

- To encourage the public to demand more from universities.

Threats:

- Does this open up the prospect of certain more powerful groups achieving undue influence over university activity? How can this be addressed?

- Could engagement undermine the critical distance between universities and society and their freedom to pursue long term intellectual agendas?

- Do we have appropriate quality controls in place to monitor the rigour, robustness, efficiency and impact of engagement activity?

- How can we ensure that there is adequate capacity and capability inside and outside universities to deliver effective work? What might be the consequences of not addressing this?

6. THE RE-EMERGENCE OF CIVIC UNIVERSITIES, as engines of regional growth and development that contribute to the local community, business and civil society.

Austerity has increased public and political awareness of the critical role universities play in sustaining the locations where they are based: sometimes captured in the phrase 'anchor institutions' – universities, like hospitals, are recognised to have a unique, long term impact on their locations, through their sustained investment in people, facilities and infrastructure.

Some universities have expanded rapidly into **deprived areas**, to build new teaching and research facilities and student accommodation. In this context, it is important for universities to manage external relationships and work in a way that positively impacts on local communities. Others have formed closer ties with local businesses and local authorities to contribute to **civic life**: through local research and volunteering by university staff and students. Some observed universities have become engines of regional development, partly in response to the closure of local regional development agencies (RDAs). Many noted universities are making a real difference by invigorating the local economies of post-industrial areas and seaside towns.

Widening participation has meant that universities continue to be financially supported by central government in their outreach work, to recruit and retain people from disadvantaged backgrounds to study at university (under-represented groups from poor communities, ethnic minorities, people living with disabilities and carers). However, there was concern that this work was not as effective as it might be.

Globalisation was also a common theme discussed in workshops. Many noted universities, in particular Russell Group institutions, were more interested in their **international reputation and world ranking in research and teaching**. As universities look outwards to the international market for students, and new opportunities to provide education internationally, people questioned whether elite universities would **lose interest in local communities and engagement activities**. Others thought the growing number of international students may be a positive thing for engagement, as overseas students are more likely to enrol on **volunteering schemes** and enhance the learning experiences of UK-based students. There was discussion of how universities might align their local and global ambitions. As the international presence of universities strengthens, others were more optimistic that this may open up new opportunities for new collaborations and opportunities in research, learning and engagement in research to address **global challenges**.

Opportunities:

- For universities to revisit their founding principles, which often involved a strong commitment to civic engagement.

- For universities to consider carefully the impact of their procurement policies on local communities.

- Building on the significant amount of volunteering undertaken by university staff and students.

- To provide students with rich learning outside the university, increasing their understanding of civil society.

- Developing more strategic regional and local commissioning mechanisms to align university activity with local need/demand.

Threats:

- That the consideration of universities' civic role privileges the economic contribution and fails to take full account of the wider social benefits.

- That universities come to be seen as 'predatory', moving insensitively into key areas of civic life made vulnerable through austerity.

- Universities privilege global engagement over local, or fail to achieve a strategic balance between these different scales of engagement.

Implications

This analysis shows there are strong economic, political, cultural, social and financial reasons why universities may choose to engage.

As noted:

- Engagement can help universities to **distinguish themselves** from other institutions to increase student numbers and research income.

- **Partnership** working can improve student experiences and the employability of graduates.

- Engagement enables universities to become more **transparent** and **accountable** to a more interested local and national public.

While these trends encourage engagement and may be beneficial to universities, the arguments do not provide assurances that engagement activities actually deliver wider **public benefit**. Many pointed out that the logic of relatively instrumental approaches could lead to an impoverished form of engagement, closer to public relations than to genuine two-way engagement, and identified the risks to engagement posed by the marketisation and commercialisation of universities.

It was suggested that a critical question should always remain: how can engagement with universities serve the public good? There remains a significant risk that:

- Engagement will be used as 'window dressing'

- That the debate about engagement remains too 'cosy' and fails to address the considerable tensions identified above.

The discussion about trends and drivers, outlined above, inevitably focussed on the present and 'near future'. In doing so it helped to identify key opportunities and risks inherent in seeking to deepen and improve the quality of engagement between universities and wider society.

However the consultation was designed to also invite more 'blue sky' thinking, and not to be constrained by the present context. As well as reflecting on the 'here and now' participants were encouraged to look into the future and to imagine and describe how they thought 'engaged' universities could and should be operating in ten years' time.

To trigger this through the workshops and interviews, we asked people to bring along a picture or metaphor to encapsulate their visions for an Engaged University in 2025.

This section synthesises the different visions and ideas for an Engaged University which emerged. Building from one workshop to the next we began to identify common themes and values that emerged time and again, to suggest there are essential characteristics of an Engaged University: a shared set of values, behaviours and purposes to seek out and encourage dialogue and collaboration.

The most common **characteristics** that participants shared are described below:

DYNAMISM

"An Engaged University is something that spices up society. A change maker, operating in different ways. It functions as a centre for debate. Like a chilli – it's dynamic, different, surprising, with a strong impact."

OPENNESS, COLLABORATION

"Universities are in places with diverse groups of people coming together. An Engaged University has spaces that the community comes into – so people can understand each other. It's a meeting place for collaboration: local, national, and international. It's open, fun, friendly, relaxed."

INTEGRATION, FUSION

"The photos in a cook book represent integration. You need to mix ingredients well to form a dish – something different. An Engaged University creates fusion. When you mix things together in partnership you create something new and appealing."
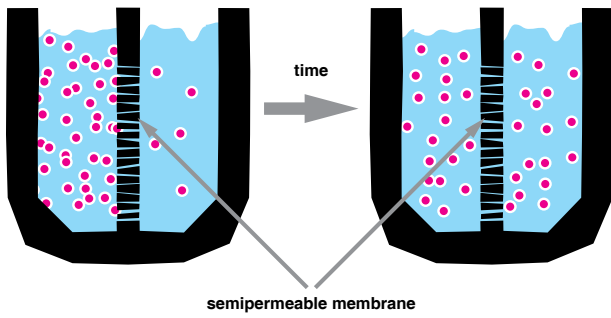
POROSITY

"The Engaged University is a cell with a semipermeable membrane. There is information coming in and out of a university, and pressure from outside. The flow depends on the osmotic pressure."

IN THE DNA, NATURAL

"The humming-bird represents the transition in public engagement from something that is impossible to something that is natural... the humming-bird's ability to fly.... Maybe PE becomes a redundant term as it is so incorporated, included."

INTERDEPENDENCE

"We need to think of universities as part of a complex ecosystem – with a complex web of connections and interactions. We need a new model of partnership which acknowledges this complexity and interdependence."

Participants' **'visions'** also tended to cohere around some common ideas. These have allowed us to construct **five themes** which capture the ideas that most consistently emerged: focal points around which engaged universities might be imagined and built:

- **Theme 1: Space and place**

- **Theme 2: Digital media and open data**

- **Theme 3: Engaged research**

- **Theme 4: Engaged learning**

- **Theme 5: People and partnerships**

In the next section we share snapshots of each of the themes, exploring for each one the underpinning assumptions and values, and the trends that participants thought were driving them. We explore the rationales that underpin them, some of the practical challenges in realising them and identify some key questions which they raise.

THEME 1: SPACE AND PLACE

ASPIRATION

Universities are seen and behave as a physical and intellectual resource for society, exemplified in how they integrate with their localities and share space and place.

WHAT COULD CHANGE

- Campuses, university buildings and estates are more accessible and welcoming to the public.
- Universities occupy shared spaces with partner organisations, and move into deprived areas to serve local communities.

RATIONALE

- **Knowledge exchange**: Universities need spaces to facilitate relationships between experts and others in more effective ways.
- **Partnership working**: high quality collaborative projects are more likely to occur if people share spaces and experiences.
- **Scientific serendipity**: creative ideas and understandings arise through interactions in different places: "You need other places, not just the lab, to do your work." (Academic)
- **Outreach**: can widening participation happen to any great effect unless universities go out into communities, schools and vice versa?
- **Breaking down boundaries:** if the work of universities is to become ever more relevant to society, it is important to reduce the physical and intellectual distance separating universities from society.

TRENDS SUPPORTING THE VISION

- Universities are now thinking of themselves as **outward looking institutions** and embarking on **new building projects** with design ethics conducive to public access, with spaces to facilitate engagement.

- **University estates** are **expanding**. Some universities are buying up cheap land in deprived areas, with a view to expansion when future development is required. Others are building student accommodation, new campuses, and new spaces in deprived areas, which at the very least require universities to think how best to **manage relationships with new neighbours**.

- Universities are moving into **old buildings and repurposing** these as more flexible spaces for collaboration with other organisations.

SOME CHALLENGES

Physical and social barriers: many community partners feel university buildings and campuses are intimidating places – in part due to the grandiose architectural design of old buildings, and the almost exclusive use of spaces by staff and students (drawn from a narrow segment of the population). Many university spaces are physically inaccessible (to people with buggies, wheelchair users) and the general public (poor signage, security barriers, no public access to open spaces e.g. for dog walkers).

- From a university perspective, key barriers to opening up buildings are **security issues, and health and safety** concerns. Several public engagement specialists expressed frustration that a simple thing like hiring out a room for a community partner event was difficult.

- **Universities need to take risks:** Projects to decentralise research and teaching, and co-locate activities with partner organisations, require universities to take risks, to source new funding streams and invest in projects with uncertain benefits and outcomes. People generally thought the culture in universities/ academia is risk averse.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are university campuses public spaces? Could they be? 'Do we need to 'force' universities to acknowledge they are public spaces?' (Community Partner)

- How important is it to **share physical space** in a networked society?

- Does the idea of an open and accessible campus need to be included in universities' strategic plans to make it happen?

- What resources should be open and accessible to the public and/ or partners?

- What are the risks and benefits of being more open and accessible to the public? Of universities moving into **shared spaces** and partners moving into university spaces?

- How can **existing infrastructure** be re-purposed to foster innovative approaches to research and learning?

- What **resources** and **revenue models** are available to support shared spaces and sustained collaborations?

ASPIRATION

Knowledge should be open and accessible to the public. Universities collectively and individually prioritise initiatives to support open data and **digital engagement** with HEIs.

WHAT COULD CHANGE

- Universities make data **open** and **accessible** to the public.

- **Digital media** is harnessed to improve public access to higher education in teaching and research, as a vehicle to promote life-long learning and generate research questions.

- Digital media strategies are informed by an **ethos of openness** and sharing, rooted in a commitment to improve democracy and nurture an educated citizenry.

RATIONALE

- **Competition in the knowledge economy:** universities are no longer the most important or influential source of high quality information (google, Wikipedia, TED talks). Innovative digital strategies are essential to help universities maintain their relevance, competitive advantage and long-term survival in the new knowledge society.

- **Moral arguments:** the public and research participants should have access to research findings, financed from public funds.

- **To strengthen democracy:** digital technologies can support democratic processes, inform decision-making, support evidence-based policies and foster public debate on key societal challenges.

- **To promote new forms of social cohesion:** universities should support the development of a networked society: using digital technologies to create new networks of interested communities.

- **To improve the quality and impact of research:** digital technology can be a cheap and effective way to improve the two-way flow of information between researchers and society and the development of an informed and educated citizenry; it can help to reach and engage with very targeted communities.

- **Outreach:** to support widening participation in higher education and flexible learning.

TRENDS SUPPORTING THE VISION

- The move to support **transparency/ open data** across all government departments. For example, each **government department** is now required to have an **open data strategy** (Open Data White Paper 2012).

- The use of **digital technologies** to deliver core course content to traditional place-based students (e.g. blackboard).

- **Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs):** online education, freely accessible on the internet, geared towards large student numbers: a threat or opportunity for conventional university education?

- **New social media**: a cheap and effective means to promote two-way dialogue in research and teaching.

- The expansion of **open publishing**.

SOME CHALLENGES

- To develop **new business models** to harness digital technologies as a cheap and effective way to widen participation in higher education and promote life-long learning.

- To overcome **incumbent interests** in the current model of academic publishing, if we want to open knowledge.

- Publications included in the REF have a small, exclusive (mainly academic) readership. **There are limited systems in place to valorise research impact achieved through digital media** such as number of website hits, google citations, Wikipedia references, Twitter followers, responses to blog pieces etc. How will this be included in the REF for the future? How might we better understand and value this approach?

- **Language**: new ways of writing and sharing knowledge are necessary to promote broader interest, readership, and the application of academic research.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Who is responsible and who is going to drive change? What is **going to drive universities** to harness digital media as a key avenue for the future of engaged work? Academics blogging, changes to the REF, the public asserting their rights to information, government legislation for open data policies?

- Does the **digital revolution** threaten or complement traditional models of place-based learning in higher education?

- Are Google or Wikipedia **competitors** in the knowledge economy? Do they threaten the future of traditional place-based universities?

- Are UK universities **falling behind** in the digital space?

- What needs to change to enable **academic publishing** to thrive in the digital sphere, and to increase openness and accessibility?

- Should the REF recognise and reward academics blogs, and other writing in non-peer review journals?

- What threats or opportunities do the activities of **commercial publishers and providers** pose?

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THEME 3: ENGAGED RESEARCH

ASPIRATION

Universities conduct research in ways that are **open, transparent, accountable, inclusive, collaborative and purposeful**. Their research helps to solve key societal challenges and feeds curiosity and learning in society.

WHAT COULD CHANGE

- The research process is more **open and democratic**: the public are regarded as key stakeholders in research undertaken in the name of the 'public good.' The research process (from funding decisions to project outputs) is opened up for non-university publics to become involved as valued stakeholders.

- There is greater investment in building the **capacity and capability** of people inside and outside HE to work collaboratively on research, for instance through investment in 'brokers' and 'boundary spanners' to facilitate the process.

- **Participatory** and **collaborative** methodologies become more embedded in the research landscape.

- More academics are committed to the principle that **knowledge** can and should be shared, applied and co-produced in partnership with interested publics.

RATIONALE

- Research findings are often published in academic journals in **esoteric language**, to answer questions **academics** judge to be of interest/ important, limiting their wider application.

- Research is consumed by a **small select group** of other experts in a specific field. This limits the wider impact of important research, and its potential to animate curiosity and learning.

- **Public involvement can improve the quality and potential impact of research**. Our consultees believed that when research questions are generated in consultation with key stakeholders based on a problem-solving approach, the resulting research can better inform practice and policy based solutions to real world problems.

TRENDS SUPPORTING THE VISION

- The inclusion of **impact case studies** in the REF – but many questioned 'does this go far enough?'

- The trend towards **multidisciplinary** and **interdisciplinary** research.

- The rise of the 'lay expert' and the recognition of the value of different forms of knowledge and expertise.

- Government policies to promote **knowledge exchange** and policies to promote technological growth.

- Greater emphasis on **public involvement in research**, particularly strong in health and medicine (e.g. Public and Patient Involvement in research (PPI), establishment of INVOLVE (NHS); funding streams for Research for Patient Benefit (National Institute for Health Research).

- Participatory research in **international development:** the acknowledgement that 'expert-led' projects often fail. This has led to a greater emphasis on participatory research – to design solutions/ interventions by communities for communities (e.g. irrigation, sanitation, public health).

- An educated **public demand** to know more about research/ evidence and to **challenge** the opinion of experts.

- **Transparency** in government and the desire to create an educated, democratic citizenry.

- A shift away from the **'deficit model'** towards more **dialogic** approaches to **public understandings of science**.

- A shift towards **evidence-based policy and practice** (e.g. in health research).

- **Demographic changes**, reducing the pool of 18-21 year olds wanting to study at undergraduate level for three years.

- Increase in the quantity of **applied research** projects and associated training and dissemination activities provided by universities to support continuing professional development.

- The increase in the number of **professional degree courses** and training offered at undergraduate level.

SOME CHALLENGES

- Better understanding the **processes and skills** involved in conducting research in an 'engaged' way.

- The **prevailing culture** within university research communities, and how this can discourage 'engaged' ways of working.

- Influencing the **research impact agenda** so that it incentivises high quality engaged research.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the **opportunities, risks and limits** to co-producing knowledge in different academic disciplines?

- What does **quality engaged research** look like? How can this be assessed?

- **What safeguards** are in place to ensure community engagement is not dominated by the research interests of universities? Or that research is 'rail-roaded' by powerful **vested interests** outside the university?

- Should specific **funding streams** be established to promote participatory research and co-produced knowledge?

- How can the **REF and impact agenda** evolve to support engaged research based on equal partnership and multiple outputs?

- How can **participatory research** manage different expectations, priorities and knowledge cultures?

- What are the **costs and benefits** of more engaged approaches to working?

- Is there a **false distinction** between theoretical and applied research? Can different thinking come out of the same project?

- Will peer-reviewed journal articles remain the key measure of **research excellence** in 2025? What other measures might be developed?

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ASPIRATION

Universities bring **learning to life** in settings outside the university, by investing in life-long learning and by unlocking the potential of students to learn in collaboration with community organisations, building value for both.

WHAT COULD CHANGE

- Universities **collaborate** with schools, businesses, charities, other public sector organisations, to support practice-based learning, student placements, volunteering and life-long learning, for personal and professional development.

- Universities **inspire** students to develop critical thinking and practical skills to enhance the 'work' and 'world-readiness' of graduates.

- Universities develop much more **flexible** types of learning to make it easier for people to combine study with other commitments.

RATIONALE

- University education has traditionally supported **abstract, theoretically-driven learning** in narrow academic disciplines. The skills developed during undergraduate study are therefore less directly relevant to the needs of economy and society.

- Student concerns with **employability** and employer concerns for the 'work-readiness' of graduates lead to the development of courses with more immersive learning opportunities to enhance the skill set of graduates.

- Employability policy has tended to focus on preparing students for business. There is a huge opportunity to build stronger collaboration with the **third sector and civil society** to better prepare students for working in these sectors.

- Universities are keen to develop new courses and partnerships to support **life-long learning** as demographic changes reduce the number of undergraduates.

- UK universities are an important national resource to promote the development of an **educated citizenry.**

TRENDS SUPPORTING THE VISION

- New consumer-provider relationships in higher education mean universities are more responsive to **student feedback** and open to student input into curriculum development.

- Employer concerns about the **'work-readiness'** of graduates.

- Societal concerns for the **'world-readiness'** of graduates and their contribution to an educated citizenry.

- Civil society organisations are experiencing very **profound cuts** in resources.

SOME CHALLENGES

- Judging the extent to which students actually want engaged and immersive learning.

- Understanding the extent to which community organisations actually benefit from student placements, and ways to most effectively broker and manage them.

- Trends that have seen falling numbers of part-time undergraduate students, following increases in tuition fees and the introduction of loans for part-time study (HEFCE, 2013).

- The fall in the number of evening classes and access courses to support life-long learning.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How can learning become more **flexible and inclusive**?

- Is **partnership working** the most important way to improve the opportunities for students to gain work and life skills?

- Is it important to distinguish between the **'work' and 'world' readiness** of graduates?

- What are the **drivers** to further improve the student learning experience?

- How can universities better serve the needs of **employers** – across all sectors of employment?

ASPIRATION

The movement of people inside and outside the university and mutuality in **partnerships** enables universities and their partners to innovate for the benefit of the economy and society.

WHAT COULD CHANGE

- High level strategic partnerships are adequately **supported and valued** over the longer-term; universities value the expertise and experience people can bring to the sector from outside the academy.

- Universities identify **strategic partnerships** to deliver innovative research, immersive learning and other mutually beneficial initiatives.

- **Community partners** and other organisations achieve more through their collaborations with universities.

- Universities **recognise and reward** different kinds of expertise, both internally and externally.

- People are encouraged to **move between** universities and partner organisations.

RATIONALE

- Universities and partner organisations have **expertise and shared interests**, which when brought together in mutual partnerships, can benefit students, staff, service-users, and other stakeholder groups, as well as the wider economy and society.

- Universities are hierarchical organisations. The **expertise of non-academics** and 'non-academic expertise' is not sufficiently utilised, valued and rewarded.

TRENDS SUPPORTING THE VISION

- Senior management in universities are becoming more **strategic and purposeful** in the ways that they identify and develop relationships with partner organisations.

- The Beacons-funded universities and other institutions increasingly recognise the **value of partnerships** to enable universities to fulfil their social, civic and economic mission.

- **Partner organisations** have become better at articulating what they want from relationships with universities. **Austerity** has encouraged organisations to pool resources and collaborate.

- **A collaborative culture** between universities has strengthened and is increasingly supported by pan-university organisations e.g. World Universities Network, London-based partnerships, the Russell Group, University Alliance, National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

- The '**research impact agenda**' incentivises universities to build purposeful research collaborations.

- The new cadre of **engagement specialists** with knowledge and experience working inside and outside academia, and dedicated roles to nurture relationships with businesses, communities and other organisations.

- Partnership work built around the development of **shared spaces**/ co-location.

- **Co-curation** of exhibitions and partnerships: an established way of working in museums and other arts and cultural institutions.

- Collaborative and engagement funding streams for **PhD students** and early career researchers.

SOME CHALLENGES

- The current **economic climate** means it is more difficult for community partners to engage, especially without financial support.

- The streamlining of partnerships and activities mean it is more difficult to sustain more **flexible informal partnerships.**

- Work with external partners is often based on interpersonal relationships or project based work, which means relationships do not necessarily **mature and develop** over the longer-term.

- Engagement work is not as highly **rewarded and recognised** compared to academic work: significant changes, in terms of culture and reward, are needed to nurture engaged work.

- Universities focus attention on collaborations with **large companies** or public sector organisations, to the detriment of community partners and small enterprises.

- University staff are under increasing pressure, so there is less willingness among staff and scope to take on any '**additional' activities.**

KEY QUESTIONS

- Does there need to be greater investment in '**brokerage'** to ensure really effective and mutually beneficial partnerships become the norm?

- What are the **main priorities** to further support the development of partnership working, in universities and partner organisations?

- Are **formalised** partnerships a threat to **more informal** collaborations?

- What systems can be put in place to make it **easier to collaborate** with universities?

- What are the **benefits and risks** associated with secondments and shared work spaces?

- How can we **resource partnerships equitably** when many community organisations are run by volunteers?

The themes in more detail

In Appendix 1 we flesh out each of the themes. For each one we explore:

- **Innovative ideas that our consultees shared with us:** What ideas did they share about how these themes might work out in practice?

- **Practical, case study examples** of where such ideas are already being developed: Many times our consultees shared with us examples of where they'd seen exciting 'future' practice in action. We offer some of these examples to flesh out the themes.

- **Preferred futures:** We also synthesise the themes, ideas or aspirations which motivated the visions. What ideas consistently emerged? How were they expressed? We have included quotes to capture the different voices.

4. CONCLUSION: BUILDING ENGAGED FUTURES

This consultation has captured many of the current challenges and aspirations of a committed group of people working to improve the relationships between universities and society. The majority of people we spoke to are committed to engagement as a mechanism to transform lives, opportunities and practices.

This report provides detailed evidence of their collective understandings of the trends, rationales and values underpinning the expansion of high quality engagement work in HEIs across the UK. We hope that the findings from the project will help to:

- **Build understanding** of how **current trends** can be harnessed to shape the delivery of high quality engagement.

- **Build understanding** and awareness of **the ideas and innovations** shaping engaged practices now and in the future.

- **Stimulate debate** about the **risk and rewards** of engagement work.

Our consultees told us that engagement work is challenging, but also rewarding, and that there is considerable optimism that, for a variety of reasons and in response to a number of societal pressures, the future for engagement is relatively secure.

From an instrumental perspective, engagement fits neatly with key strategic priorities: to widen participation and improve the employability of graduates. Funding requirements encourage engaged work to improve accountability, although many are critical that this produces a form of engagement which adds little to projects.

However many people who participated in our consultation were committed to engagement for normative reasons: that this is the right thing to do, and that engagement work can be transformative, enabling people to shape and share in the future of HE. A significant number also quoted substantive reasons: that, done well, engagement leads to better research and teaching.

We hope that the visions and values articulated so eloquently by our consultees will provide inspiration and structure to guide future work. However, the consultation also made clear that there is a huge amount still to play for, and real risks and threats to be addressed in moving towards a more deeply 'engaged' university sector. Like all good conversations, the consultation has raised new questions and left some issues unresolved. To that end, we think it is important to highlight some of the critical questions which we think need more work if we are to successfully navigate towards the kind of engaged vision that has begun to emerge through this process. We have highlighted some of these challenges below, through the voices of our collaborators. We would love to know what you think.

HOW 'POROUS' CAN UNIVERSITIES BECOME BEFORE THEY COMPROMISE THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND IDENTITY?

"It's really important to 'open up' universities – but in doing so do we risk losing the critical distance that we actually need to maintain our usefulness to society?" (PE Specialist, HE)

IS ENGAGEMENT A MEANS TO AN END OR AN END IN ITSELF?

"Engagement isn't a thing – it's the way we do things. Rather than a product or service – it's the way we do everything. It's a different way of doing things – like how we set questions together. It's fantastic once you get your head around it." (PE Specialist, HE)

"For engagement to have any value it has to lead somewhere. It is a means to an end. If that end can be achieved differently then we should not cling on to engagement."
(Funder)

SHOULD ENGAGEMENT BE MANDATORY?

"It's not a new mantra that all the universities have to buy into." (PE Specialist, HE)

"If engagement is your value, it's what you do." (Community Partner)

"There seems to be a general feeling community engagement is a good thing – but if it is not core to your mission, don't do it half-heartedly." (Funder)

IS ENGAGEMENT THE RIGHT WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT WE ASPIRE TO?

"For me, the most powerful word is collaboration. The 'collaborative university' captures the partnership element. The 'engaged university' could be quite one sided. It doesn't tell me who it is engaged with and whether they are willing partners. It assumes engagement on the part of the public – but universities have to work hard to get that. Collaboration is the name of the game." (Academic)

"It's not about imposing our own view of the world and onto the world: not about engagement for engagement's sake. It's about dialogue and building relationships with partners." (PE Specialist, HE)

"Public engagement is 'messy' and complex and sometimes it's hard to know when you have achieved it…but the will and desire to make it happen is there." (Academic)

DO WE NEED HARDER-EDGED ARGUMENTS AND EVIDENCE?

"We need to create an argument that is intellectually sound. It's not just about charity, being friendly." (Senior Manager, HE)

"It should be principled, not tender-hearted – this is what you do when you are feeling charitable or being patronising or a bit soft. The things we engage with are some of the most fundamental things that help people live effectively – community conflict, living with disabilities, environment, health – it's something that is very core to how we live rather than how we think we live – it's got to have a solidity to it." (Senior Manager, HE)

ARE WE BEING RADICAL ENOUGH?

"If the aspiration is to create a more democratically accountable research culture, then it may not be the research arena that ultimately matters. Instead we may want to create the conditions – funding structures, scholarly infrastructure and public education – that would enable individuals of all ages from historically marginalised groups to become future research leaders….

The challenge here is not to work out how the university might 'engage' with the public, but to create ways in which the myriad of excluded groups might 'become the university' themselves." (Academic)

APPENDICES

1. **The themes in more detail**

2. **Further reading**

3. **List of Contributors**

APPENDIX 1: THE THEMES IN MORE DETAIL

THEME 1: SPACE AND PLACE

What might the future look like?

The public having access to universities and universities co-locating in the community was one of the most popular and least controversial visions. Access to university facilities and a welcoming environment for engagement work is an important issue for community partners. Many universities have started sharing spaces, building or refashioning buildings to be more outward looking. Most people in universities are highly supportive of this, notwithstanding security constraints and possible increases in student numbers.

The values, social purposes and trends opened up two different visions to support the **blurring of physical boundaries** between universities and society:

- **The open and accessible university** (where public are welcomed within university spaces).
- **The dispersed and co-located university** (the university campus is smaller as more teaching and research activities take place in other spaces and new campuses open up in deprived areas/ those currently underserved by HEIs).

These two visions are outlined below.

SPACE AND PLACE VISION 1: OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE CAMPUSES

This vision was most popular with community partners and integral to the current thinking of public engagement specialists and senior management in institutions with a civic/ engaged ethos.

Innovative ideas

- Bold experiments to repurpose lecture theatres and libraries, cafes and theatres for public use.
- Campuses are accessible places to the public: community partners are offered the use of buildings for meetings. The public are welcome to visit or use university estates and facilities.
- Universities have front doors – so that community partners and others wanting to collaborate have an obvious point of contact.
- Universities maximise the use of spaces as venues for talks, workshops, demonstrations, which attract more diverse audiences.
- Businesses and shops are located on campuses, and transport links improved to encourage people to come in and engage. The look and feel of universities is more like a busy high street or village.
- Clearer signage, flexible security systems, buildings accessible to wheelchairs and buggies.
- Campuses are developed to be more family-friendly, inclusive.
- Open days are convened for the public to come into universities.

Examples mentioned by participants (open architecture, city centre campuses)

- Pontio Arts and Innovation Centre, University of Bangor
- Science Gallery, King's College London
- The Francis Crick Institute, London
- **University of Helsinki** – repurposed cafes, bookshops, workshop spaces for use by all.
- City centre campuses e.g. **Newcastle University**, **Sheffield Hallam University**
- **Harvard Business School** – business innovation courses with an incubation space on the ground floor, second floor cafes, and top floor flexible teaching space.

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
A sense of public ownership	"I'd like the university to be that broader church, not just for people who think they are educated enough to get into universities – to use its libraries, its cafes, its public spaces. We have to be much more approachable. I'd like people feeling ownership of university in the same way they might feel ownership of a local library, community centre – it exists with other public and community assets." (PE Specialist, HE)
Universities are no longer 'scary' places	"If universities are truly engaged, people won't find them scary or different. There will be no barriers. They will be a natural pathway and people will feel they are easy to approach." (Community Partner)
Universities are businesses, not social institutions	"The idea that universities will be the centre of the universe is over-blown. Universities are businesses. They are not going to give a lot away for free. I think the idea that universities are there to be social institutions, there to subsidise society is not right. Universities are businesses but they may have some loss leaders." (Funder)
Anyone can walk in off the street and be welcomed	"If you were starting again, you wouldn't want to build a building that looks like an embassy from the outside. An important starting point is, what kind of interactions do you want between students, staff and members of the public – is it even important to have a boundary to those spaces? Do you have agreements with local communities about renting rooms? In our master plan, one vision was the ground floor of every building would be publically accessible. The idea was that anyone can walk off the street and can come in and be welcomed by someone who is receptive to what they need. You should be able to come in – I'm a parent, can you help us with some work we don't know how to tackle, what research are you doing? Someone should be there to listen, to support responding to those enquiries." (PE Specialist, HE)
An outward facing institution, where people can engage with experts	"Science Gallery at Kings College London is a university space, but its outward facing. It's not a showcase for research for people to think it's brilliant. It's a space where non-experts can engage with people from Kings. It's a space that is owned and controlled by audience, but where expert voices can be heard. Universities can't have sealed permeable boundaries – we need to talk to other people." (PE Specialist, HE)

SPACE AND PLACE VISION 2: THE DISPERSED AND CO-LOCATED UNIVERSITY

This vision saw collaboration and partnership is a core mission of the university. University premises are no longer concentrated in large central buildings, but dispersed throughout the wider community, potentially structured as a 'hub and spoke' with 'satellites' or 'hermitages.' Universities share spaces and provide services, outside the traditional boundaries of the university campus – in offices, hospitals, schools and public spaces: to encourage life-long learning for personal and professional development. Smaller multi-stakeholder units foster innovation, collaboration, and knowledge exchange for social and business innovation. Universities extend their presence and premises in deprived communities, small towns and rural areas so more people have contact with HEIs.

The dispersed and co-located university particularly appealed to those interested in social and business innovation (e.g. start-up companies or social enterprises); and those who thought universities have a role to support life-long learning and effective partnership working. Smaller campuses and dispersal were viewed positively, but most thought universities would maintain large estates concentrated in particular areas. However 'spin off' units and shared spaces were seen as essential investments to foster sustained collaboration, and important to bring HE to deprived/ rural areas.

Innovative ideas

- More access points of relevance to the community e.g. a shop front in the high street with changing displays to highlight what researchers are doing.

- The campus consists of learning hubs connected both physically and digitally to solve problems for society, business and the world (e.g. energy crisis).

- Universities share spaces or open up satellite premises in rural areas.

- Open plan areas/ offices available to students with tables and whiteboards on wheels. Helps generate cultures of innovation, collaboration and shared learning.

- Departments have galleries and display spaces in the community. Extensive use of communication tools and events to engage beyond the campus.

- The pop-up university, operating in under-used or co-managed spaces across the city and society. Shops could provide advice for students, parents, and the wider public about their educational needs, and adult education/ access courses.

- Universities run courses, talks and workshops in community venues and locations.

- 'De-campusisation': teaching and research activities are integrated into the city with all buildings and spaces co-owned and co-governed.

- Universities buy up public libraries to support life-long learning in deprived communities.

Examples mentioned by participants (co-owned, co-occupied spaces)

- Watershed Media Centre, Bristol

- Campus for Aging and Vitality, Newcastle University

- Knowledge exchange hubs for the creative economy

- Southend Campus, University of Essex

- Science shop movement in Europe

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
Shared physical space helps collaborations	"Regarding shared spaces – it's not just a functional thing. It's about networking and relating what people are doing to what the university is doing." (Academic)
'De-campusisation'	"I'd like the campus idea to disappear – learning in different spaces with different organisations is really exciting for us." (PE Specialist, HE)
Widening access to HEIs	"Much of the region is not near an HEI so there needs to be other ways to penetrate a larger proportion of the population." (Senior Manager, HE) "I'd like a university located in my school. If you had education between 4-21 in the same place, all sorts of things could come in – childcare, undergraduate maths for school children – others seeing them being taught there. The physical location of universities is interesting. We talk about life-long learning but we don't mean it. It's only in the hands of individuals who want it. I'd like to see family learning credits for the educationally marginalised, linked to the universal benefits system to create an expectation the family learns together. It's linked to the public engagement theme – to blur things and make education more accessible." (Community Partner)
Flexible learning	"It's important for buildings to be more adaptable for flexible learning… we need flexible spaces to change that learning scenario, to support a blend of learning, mixed economy, seminars taught in offices – for the walls of institutions to come down. Universities being out and about as well as people moving into universities." (HE, Other)

Most people thought digital engagements will enhance but not replace face-to-face engagement, collaboration and dialogue. Generally people were supportive of the idea that university-based knowledge should be more open and accessible to the public; that there is demand for information from the public (research and course content), although this needs to be fostered; and that if more information was out there, the public would have more of an opportunity to engage, creating a virtuous cycle of dialogue and exchange.

DIGITAL MEDIA AND OPEN DATA: WHAT MIGHT THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Innovative ideas

- Universities and HE funding bodies develop open data policies to improve the availability of research outputs to industry, the general public and communities to stimulate innovation and debate.

- Academics are recognised and rewarded for articles written in simple language with a broader readership.

- Course content is more widely available to the public, with a view to developing access to a wider constituency of students, both locally (e.g. to support continuing professional development) and to attract international students to UK higher education.

- Academics funded to pioneer techniques to enable the sharing of research data and enhance data linkage across public organisations.

- Crowdsourcing to fund research: networked individuals can bring their own funding into academia, without being tied to the peer-reviewed academic publishing model.

- Academic blogging: academics writing to be accessible to communities of interest: a new source of power and influence for academics compared to publications in peer-reviewed journal articles.

- Data-driven journalism: writing and blogging which empowers citizen and community choice.

- People tweeting responses to published research/ press articles.

- Funders continue to encourage academics to publish research papers in open access journals and press for changes to further open this model.

- Digital technologies are used to enhance participation in research, for example, citizen science projects or clinical trials; and to debate the terms of public engagement.

- Campaigners and third sector organisations harness new data sets to hold governments and corporations to account on environmental and social justice issues.

- Open data can enable the public and other academics to scrutinise research data, methods and findings, extending quality checks on published research beyond current dependence on the peer-review process.

- University websites as portals which excite and inspire the public about the ongoing research, teaching, activities and collaborations.

Examples mentioned by participants

- **LSE policy impact blogging**

- **Open Knowledge Foundation**: global movement to open up knowledge around the world and see it is used and useful.

- **Mysociety.org** – data apps to empower communities (Mapumental, FixMyStreet, FixMyTansport)

- **Climate Change London network**

- **TED talks,** open lecture and course content e.g. Harvard, MIT, OU

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
University websites: improved access, and accessibility for the public	"University websites are generally drab and not that accessible, not as zingy as I would like. Some of the language is very different for those who haven't been involved in university – it's quite frightening, not understandable and difficult to navigate. We need an overhaul of language to help people to want to engage more. Where is the engagement part of the website? I think it's important to have something more universal to all universities. That's the bit where I can ask about anything. There should be a portal for the public." (Community Partner)
A digital revolution in the knowledge economy?	"There is no current evidence that digital media will change the business model of universities – MOOCs in current form is not the answer. By 2025, hundreds of thousands of youngsters will not be choosing to study in a different way. The business model of university is about filling accommodation. If you stop wanting to go away to university, it might change, but not by 2025." (Funder)

"Universities need to rethink how they deliver their product. For example, if you can access for free lectures from Harvard/ Oxford online, why bother turning up for lectures at Southbank poly? There will be big changes in terms of the kind of product universities can produce and the mechanisms it is delivered into the minds of students/ wider public, if strategies are in place to make universities be able to deliver education around the needs of everyone." (PE Specialist, HE) |
| The public have the right to access research | "People will bounce around information, say if your child is diagnosed with a condition. Yet if you click through news articles and abstracts, unless you are on a university campus, you'd have to pay hundreds of pounds to access the article. It's just wrong. The public should have access to information because it's funded out of the public purse." (PE Specialist, HE) |
| Evolution or revolution in academic publishing | "Public consumption of journal articles is not going to achieve much because of language barriers. We need different models in order for academics to get information out there. Blogging is one way to go beyond the limited number of academics who might otherwise have access to that knowledge……it's not just about online or offline. It's about getting into the right networks and how best to engage with that network." (PE Specialist, HE)

"The whole journal article culture will become obsolete as web based publications take off. There are some real questions about how universities re-align themselves to generate a different sort of excellence which is validated by the people they are engaging with, rather than the two people who are reading their article on the bus on the way to their lecture. We see the beginnings of that with citation services, Google scholar you can see if stuff is being read and used rather than where it is published – that is some sort of proxy of its use and the fact that it is being engaged with. I think it will go wider – much stronger global communities of practice that validate the quality of work. And trust relationships with be built with the partners in the ground – it will link much more to the real perceived value of the work." (Academic) |

Engaged research was seen as an area where considerable progress had been made over the last ten years. People saw engaged research as a continuum. At one end were the more traditional dissemination activities, which tended to be led by experts. At the other end was authentic co-produced research where university researchers worked with those outside the university to develop all aspects of the research cycle – from generating the research question to sharing the results. The spectrum of activity was considered important, with several PE engagement specialists suggesting that getting academics 'out there' sharing their research was a first step towards more engaged and engaging research.

There was a consensus amongst consultees that engaged research is good thing. For example:

"Engagement is more productive and leads to research that is more applicable and used by society. If society is involved in the discussion about what that research should be and the direction it should take, it's more obvious to me that the outputs are going to be more useful. You get to work with a wider variety of people – for the majority of us that has to be a good way of working. The process is more enjoyable." (PE Specialist, HE)

Even amongst this supportive group opinions differed about how we define the potential, scope and governance structures for engaged research. The spectrum of engaged research is underpinned by a range of different purposes. For those committed to participatory research, engaged research is a radical movement which questions and challenges academic expertise and supports people to do their own research, rooted in a commitment to social justice. For others, it is an opportunity to inform people about the latest scientific research. Where most visions meet is the middle ground in a shared commitment to the importance of dialogue, as something that enriches the research endeavour, in any topic area.

ENGAGED RESEARCH: WHAT MIGHT THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Innovative ideas

- There are dedicated funding streams to support research which is truly participative and collaborative: that people affected by a particular issue are able to shape every aspect of the research process: as collaborators and contributors to funding bids; in setting key questions and the scope for enquiry; in conducting the research and analysing data; and in determining the final outputs of the project, and translating research findings into actions to impact the real world. Researchers support people to do their own research, to generate their own solutions to problems.

- Key stakeholder groups shape research agendas so that the knowledge produced is useful to their community of interest.

- Collaborative partnerships lead to the strengthening of research capacity in partner organisations.

- Community-led task forces, networks of interest groups and question hubs are established to shape the knowledge agenda in different areas.

- Responsive funding models open up research for social and economic innovation.

- Research questions evolve out of sustained collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders.

- Research partnerships produce outputs which are of value to academics and other partner organisations.

- Different academic disciplines/ research councils should adapt engaged research agendas in consultation with the interested publics and academics, to understand the ways in which disciplines serve the public interest and what engagement, dialogue or dissemination can add to different projects or specialisms.

- The public are able to suggest areas for research and define priorities perhaps through 'Dragon's Den' style funding pitches which are open to the public.

- Different academic subjects and/or multidisciplinary interest groups work productively to tap the expertise of the public: to enhance the quality, relevance and impact of their research.

- Academic disciplines discuss how the public can and should be involved throughout the research lifecycle: to increase dialogue and consensus about the scope and support for different types of engaged research.

Examples mentioned by participants

- Social innovation hubs: e.g. **Participle**; the **Impact Hub**

- **The Institute of Development Studies** (IDS): with a large outward facing knowledge services department

- **British Library of Development Studies**; and global network for participatory development

- **Involve**, **National Health Service**

- Sandpits: residential interactive workshops with multidisciplinary academics and partner organisations to develop research priorities and projects

The following section highlights some of the key debates and tensions, shaping people's visions for the future for engaged research:

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
Engaged research is about world-leading research	"Engagement in research is about world-leading research – that's what we fund." (Funder) 'Engagement with research is not an end in itself, it should lead to more impactful, excellent research.' (PE Specialist, HE)
Engaged research is about changing the world	"I would like to see research that changes the world – engaging with people on the ground in equal partnerships – recognising that people have intellectual value in equal partnerships – an equal intellectual value. Partnerships are constructed, we are coming in as expert researchers, we know about knowledge and meaning and you know about doing stuff. We should be saying, because you are doing stuff you have an ability to understand what is going on – whereas we have some techniques and methodological techniques that we can offer into that process – in a seriously realistic partnership. The driving force is on the ground – universities are facilitators of that rather than the other way round." (Academic)
Less blue sky research, more applied research	"Blue sky research (how atoms split, astronomy) is interesting, and helps us to understand the world. Philosophers who have conceptual models of society inform how we think – but the whole of the academic world is skewed in that direction. If we consider theoretical versus applied research, applied research is seen as secondary – but it should be of primary or equal importance – it is engaged and it is making a difference, and the quality of the knowledge is higher because it is generated out of the real world." (Academic) "It's clear that abandoning blue skies research would be a catastrophe, but also resisting the notion that research could be applied is also a silly idea." (PE Specialist, HE)

A diverse research landscape, which includes but is not dominated by applied research	"You can have a demand-led consultation or applied type of research – a community group wants this research done, can you do it? That needs to be part of research landscape, but if that becomes a dominant form, you lose some value of the academic endeavour – the intellectual freedom to think beyond the constraints, to free up the agenda." (PE Specialist, HE)

"Universities provide space to reflect beyond the money – a place of calm where people aren't obsessed by money. There is a danger if you give funding to the community – it becomes very demand-led. Some would like to see all those models." (PE Specialist, HE). |
| Researchers as facilitators of community-based research | "We are supporting people to generate their own knowledge, about their own situations and then create their own solutions to those situations or the capacity to lobby others to make responses or generate evidence." (Academic)

"In the future, more people can do research on their own. It's like everyone now can pick up a camera. There will still be professional photographers and researchers, but the whole industry will be different. More people will have the tools and knowledge and understanding than ever before to do their own research. There will be a different relationship with the university as people have the technology and tools to generate knowledge." (Academic) |
| Engaged research is about dialogue not dissemination | "For good research there needs to be a dialogue throughout the whole process. Public lectures are about "putting it out there", not about people being involved in the study design and in the implementation phase." (Community Partner)

"We communicate the things we do in university to people out there. It's essentially one-way – in fact if we didn't have something to communicate of that kind, if we didn't have more people who were expert in certain areas, then we would be failing as a university. But it is a different part of the spectrum, compared to other things: what is it you need? And what can we help you do? It's a different starting point from giving a public lecture on the history of the city." (Senior Manager, HE) |
| People should have a say in research agendas | "Academics need to be willing to listen to those with lived experience – they need to change their views, to listen, to go out into communities. There is a disconnect between the mind-set and the 'set mind' of an academic and the lived experience of someone with a condition. Academics are a proud lot, but it should be the ones with the condition who lead the change." (Community Partner) |

Engaged research is values-based	"My work has been underpinned by a sense that our research is relevant for the end user and that collaboration can be powerful to get us there. I've got a natural inclination to involve people in all aspects of research. I can see the benefits of it. I have done lots of collaboration and worked in different settings, so I understand the world outside academia a bit." (Academic)
	"Values are important. We believe people should be constructing their own futures and generating their own knowledge. The quality of that knowledge generated is much higher. We challenge the view that academic knowledge is a higher form of knowledge by saying engaged and situated knowledge is much richer, deeper and more likely to generate action that makes a difference." (Academic)
Impact agenda is important, but does it go far enough?	"Academics have resisted the impact agenda – people see it as value sets around academia being changed in a way some academics don't like. How do we value that knowledge? There has been a kick back around the idea we value it in terms of its short-term impact." (PE Specialist, HE)
	"If we were to do away with impact, that would be a real hit – but we don't have to determine it in one assessment cycle. We want to embed it much more. There will be much more active tracking going on, so it should be easier next time." (Funder)
	"At the moment there is a prescriptive idea of accountability, and that's strengthening rather than weakening. They [funders] don't see that the impact statement is working with quite traditional forms of research in traditional ways – more scientific work will have direct impacts, but it's tricky if you are going to do engaged action research with communities – its real qualities can't be reflected." (Academic)
	"I did lots of work to produce impact case studies for the REF, but things got more hard-nosed. Someone else had a case study with impact on the World Health Organisation. This was chosen above my case study. Community engagement is not as valued. If you impact a large organisation by traditional research, that will count." (Academic)
The impact agenda works for business but not community engagement work?	"The concept [impact] is impoverished in terms of understanding the impactivity of this work (community engagement)." (Academic)
	"The Impact agenda in the REF is fairly narrowly framed – what policies have changed in light of that research? What about impact on ordinary people's lives, even if not in policy – e.g. access by people with disabilities to housing, community studies accounts of ordinary people's everyday lives. This is enormously impactful in different ways. Spin out and things like that are considered to have an impact – but that's a narrow field of vision." (Academic)
	"The REF funding and impact accelerator awards. It's an issue that people see it's all about commercialisation and knowledge transfer/ knowledge exchange and public engagement is down the agenda." (Academic)
Strengthen the evidence base to demonstrate the benefits of engaged research	"There is some evidence researchers who engage with non-experts or experts in different domains do better research. Even if you didn't have responsibility to the public purse, building your spaces where experts can engage with non-experts makes for better research…but we need more narratives that outline the benefits to the researchers and wider communities." (PE Specialist, HE)

THEME 4: ENGAGED LEARNING

Engaged learning was seen as an important way in which universities and partner organisations could work together, with a shared set of values to enhance the skills and experiences of students and employees. Several thought that this was an important area for future collaborations: while innovations in research had taken off, there was a considerable amount of work to be done to support immersive and life-long learning.

ENGAGED LEARNING: WHAT MIGHT THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Innovative ideas

- Pick and mix education courses so people can move freely between work and universities.

- Life-long learning for personal development. A move away from traditional three year degrees after school.

- Staff/ students working out in the local community as volunteers and ambassadors.

- Reconfiguring physical spaces to make the most of digital opportunities to become more inclusive to a larger group of students.

- Highly trained facilitators, who support learning and collaboration.

- Digital access helps to widen participation and diversity of student groups.

- Community engagement embedded into the curriculum.

- More learning takes places in businesses and in the community. Partners help to shape the course curriculum.

- Universities develop closer links with schools to promote higher education as an aspiration for all students.

- The public are invited to interview prospective candidates in caring professions (e.g. in social work, medicine).

Examples mentioned by participants

- **University of the Third Age**

- **The Open University**

- Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCS)

- Place-based learning: for example, in social work, medicine, sandwich courses with industry

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
Learning is fun and life-long	"Learning being fun and appropriate and life-long. We compartmentalise learning too much. We should always be trying and open to new things." (Community Partner) "Education is not about people just getting degrees – it's about learning about life, to lead the best life that it's capable of being for them. We don't do that enough." (Community Partner)
Inspiring people	"For me, it was really important to have one person who inspired me to think about university… one to one contact is really important." (Community Partner)
Universities fit learning around people's lives	"Universities need to become institutions which fit with people's lives – to design interactions which allow a wider range of people to benefit from this. If you are not able to make supervisions in working hours, if you can't access the library, lectures during the working day, you can't get much out of universities. There are few marginal costs for universities to engage with a much wider range of people on their own terms." (PE Specialist, HE) "All of education has been structured around the convenience of educators. It's not clear that can continue. With elite research intensives, that's the deal – but what a waste if people have to give up everything for it. Birkbeck and Open University models allow a much wider set of interactions that are classed as learning – you should have a much wider range of people to benefit from them." (PE Specialist, HE) "I want universities to understand the needs of employers in producing great graduates." (Funder)
Do students actually want more engaged learning?	"More engagement should be part of the package – to improve skills for employability. Some students want that engagement – people who are motivated. They want to give back to the community, to get involved. Sometimes it's about faith. It's how they have been brought up rather than employability. But some want a piece of paper from an elite institution and that's their ticket. Our students are risk averse – if it's not tried and tested, they want to know if there are the same number of 2:1s awarded for learning in a different way. If something is new, you can't answer them." (PE Specialist, HE)

Our consultees put great value on partnership and collaboration and emphasised the importance of mutuality, listening and equally valuing different kinds of expertise. While the development of effective partnerships is a mantra for those working on engagement in universities and other organisations, collaborations are complex, difficult and time consuming, if ultimately rewarding. The following section provides insights into people's visions and current challenges.

PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS: WHAT MIGHT THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Innovative ideas

- Universities establish a department of community knowledge, staffed by members of the community with expertise in different areas such as health or community development, to encourage collaborative working and engaged research.

- More funding streams are developed to support collaboration with community partners and small enterprises.

- Partnership working is aligned to other key strategic priorities for the sector: such as the employability of graduates, engaged learning, and widening participation.

- Small autonomous units (e.g. business or social enterprise angels) are set up in universities which make collaboration easier.

Examples mentioned by participants

- Community-University Partnership Programmes e.g. **University of Brighton**, **University of Salford**

- **The Beacons Projects** (RCUK, Wellcome Trust)

- **Connected Communities Project** (AHRC)

- **University of the West of England**: the partnership university

Preferred futures	Supporting quotes
The expansion of strategic partnerships with long-term commitment	"Working with local NHS, the local authority or city council will become the norm." (PE Specialist, HE)

"All museums will have partnerships with their local universities, with PhD students to support collaborative work." (Funder)

"Every school should have a university partner, a link with business, to develop mutual learning triangles. How do you educate a city? That's part of our strategic plan. Universities have got to be part of that, but things will vary from place to place." (Community Partner)

"Strategically universities have very similar values to voluntary organisations – social mobility, social cohesion, building a better society, they are also charitable organisations that have a responsibility to provide a service to the wider community. That is what we are doing. We are not a million miles apart – it's just about having key people who are able to see the opportunities of the two sectors to collaborate and to achieve these shared aims and initiatives: volunteering, mentoring, education initiatives, research, community engagement, and about pooling resources."   (Community Partner)

"What we are starting to do now, is what we hope will be less opportunistic – i.e. partnerships formed in the heat of a funding bid or in a crisis. We are getting in the habit of forming memorandums of understanding with local authorities. We are going to develop the well-being and transport strategies together. That's more prevalent now in our way of working." (PE Specialist, HE) |
| Financial support for community partners | "Make it a requirement that universities do strong community and third sector engagement and to resource that – in the same way that widening participation and employability are given funding. If we were to have funding for this we could then work with universities. Our staff member has added this onto her job – funders can say, why are you spending time doing that, when we are paying you to do this? There's only so far you can go with this – we need more recognition/ funding to support partnership development." (Community Partner)

"There is an assumption partners have the time, money and resources to engage but many can't afford to. Can universities step in to fill the gap as funding is so tight? Universities have social responsibility to support other organisations to help society." (Community Partner) |
| Mutual understandings and initiatives evolve over time | "If staff and students spend more time on the operational side – that's not spend time in meetings, but done over hours spent in their company – they start to get a picture of what the issues and needs are and vice versa. They understand more what the capacity is in the university and expertise. You start to see things that make sense. Why aren't students the people that you go to when you need events staff? Why don't we share window cleaning? Things evolve. It's about openness. Some community partners providing statutory services have had bad cuts e.g. rape crisis counselling. They are having to work in a different way – the more we find out about each other's work, the more things come up." (PE Specialist, HE) |

Values in partnership: mutuality, equality, respect, collaborative working	"We need meaningful engagement when we are treating people as equals, with experience." (PE Specialist, HE)
	"We wrote the Beacons bid together. There is definitely something about joint writing of bids, so that it is definitely an equal partnership, and it isn't about universities doing something 'to' other organisations. It's about jointly working together. Beacons worked so well because we wrote the section of the bid that was directly relevant to them, so that's why it was more successful." (Community Partner)
	"It's important to understand what collaborative working is – some don't quite understand how to be fully collaborative – and understanding the mutual benefit aspect of things and enabling and allowing people to go into a discussion even if people have agendas – going in to meet each other's agendas. In Scotland we have more collaborative working because we are smaller. We have research pools, initiatives between universities. More work could be done with local authorities. We have good partnerships with businesses." (PE Specialist, HE)
Aligning community engagement with other agendas: widening participation and student employability	"The outcomes of our current partnership are strongly linked to the widening participation agenda: giving people an opportunity to access university that would never have happened before. Other examples of outcomes – like children going onto study at higher education – we have testimonies from people who have gone onto drama school, some of whom were complete school excluders. People who volunteer with us getting jobs with us, and generally increasing employability of students. There are boundless opportunities." (Community Partner)
Different career paths for academics/ volunteering experience: to walk in 'different people's shoes'	"I've spent time trying to link people up, to broker partnerships – normally academics with people from arts and cultural sector. They have different time scales, different language. It's a hard job to do that – if you have people who have done a lot of work outside the sector (e.g. more mature PhD students), it's easier to work from that basis. More fluid porous career paths would be very beneficial." (Community Partner)
	"I'd like to see a change in the academic career path that there's an expectation you will have worked outside academia. All should have experience outside of education." (Community Partner)
	"Academics have changed: now some are fantastic, not posh or stuffy. We need to find a pathway for those who have an 'appetite for PE' as research leaders. It is a demanding skill set to have – not many have the right qualities or support, as this is not central to their responsibilities. They need further training and support. Some already there, but more needed e.g. training in social media, improved communication skills." (Community Partner)
Secondments between other organisations and universities	"Relationships won't be knocking on the door when something has come up. It will be more of a natural understanding. Things like secondments – people working in the city council and us taking people on secondment. We have a science company that float in and out of different roles. That's part of the culture and part of our skills development that staff go out and work in different organisations. It happens on an ad hoc basis, but should be part of staff development – an embedded part." (PE Specialist, HE)

Key challenges	Supporting quotes
Universities prioritise commercial partnerships with large businesses	"What I would like to see and what I envisage are two different things. I anticipate there will be constraints on the public purse which means universities will value high-level commercial partnerships that can bridge students into employment/ support activities financially – HP/ Rolls Royce, companies like that – that will grow, versus the aspiration to connect with SMEs, social enterprises, and community groups. I would like energy and resources to be put into particular partnerships – they are happening but not necessarily valued." (PE Specialist, HE)
Collaborative work is challenging	"Collaborative working is different. It's harder work in many ways. There are a range of different outputs, different people, different things feed into it. People in positions are pulled in number of directions – the more you do of one thing, the more another objective is harder to achieve. Admin etc. all the things it takes – payment for community partners. Recompense people for their travel if they don't have a bank account. It takes depth of experience to iron out those challenges." (Academic)
Context is important	"In the league table culture, people are encouraged to hold up examples of good practice. Institution X has done this. Institution Y has done that. It doesn't follow that others can do it. There's no formula you can take from one place to another." (Academic)
Time pressures	"Partnerships used to be more fluid, about volunteering. There's now a huge emphasis on academics spending time on students. The ability to spend time elsewhere is not there anymore." (PE Specialist, HE)
Good partnership working: personal relationships, face-to-face contact	"They understand how to work alongside the community. It's not possible to understand how to work with a community, unless you actually do it – face-to-face – one to one contact is important. The feedback you get from the people you work with makes it worthwhile." (Community Partner)
Bias against collaborations with smaller institutions?	"For good partnership working, you need to have personal relationships, longevity, time and resource to develop it. Exclusive use of that time and resource mean you don't want it with an organisation that is going to fold. So it's easier to partner with organisations that have significant resource and an agenda that is close to ours – so things already feel quite constrained." (PE Specialist, HE)
Investing time, saving resources	"Through collaborative partnerships, you can make 2+2 = 5. Engagement between institutions, that connected-upness can leverage better value (money) than perhaps is currently happening. Vision and values is the first priority – then you can make choices with the resources you have." (Community Partner)

ORGANISATIONS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT:

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	HEFCE distributes public money for higher education to universities and colleges in England, and ensures that this money is used to deliver the greatest benefit to students and the wider public. **www.hefce.ac.uk**
National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE	The NCCPE was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the four UK Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public. **www.publicengagement.ac.uk**
Research Councils, UK (RCUK)	RCUK, the strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils, are responsible for investing public money in research in the UK to advance knowledge and generate new ideas. **www.rcuk.ac.uk**
The Russell Group	The Russell Group is a member organisation representing 24 leading UK research universities. **www.russellgroup.ac.uk**
University Alliance	University Alliance brings together leading global universities for science, technology, design and the professions to tackle the big issues facing universities, people and the economy. **www.unialliance.ac.uk**
The Wellcome Trust	The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health by supporting science, the humanities and social sciences, and public engagement. **www.wellcome.ac.uk**
Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)	WUN is a leading global higher education and research network made up of 18 universities, spanning 11 countries on five continents. They work to drive international research collaboration and address issues of global significance. **www.wun.ac.uk**

The Beacons for Public Engagement	The Beacons were university-based collaborative centres, funded to accelerate work to support, recognise, reward and build capacity for public engagement. The Beacons group of universities consisted of universities in Wales (Cardiff and Glamorgan), East Anglia, London UCL, Edinburgh, Newcastle/ Durham and Manchester, Salford and MMU. Although formal funding for the Beacons project has ended, the legacy created by the project still lives on in many universities as leading institutions which continue to support and embed engagement work. **www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/completed-projects/beacons (accessed February 2015)**
The Catalysts for Public Engagement	The Catalysts for Public Engagement with Research were funded by RCUK to build on the work of the Beacons and develop effective support for public engagement with research. The Catalysts are based in the universities of Aberdeen; Bath; Exeter; Institute of Education; Nottingham; Open University; Queen Mary, University of London; and Sheffield. **www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/catalysts-project (accessed February 2015)**
The Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research	The Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research outlines the expectations and responsibilities of research funders with respect to public engagement, to help embed public engagement in universities and research institutes. Launched in 2010, and now with over 50 signatories, it sets out clear expectations for research organisations, researcher managers and supporters and researchers themselves, and aims to strengthen existing good practice in public engagement by ensuring it is valued, recognised and supported. The Concordat consists of a set of key principles for the future support of public engagement: 1. **UK research organisations have a strategic commitment to public engagement** 2. **Researchers are recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities** 3. **Researchers are enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities** 4. **The signatories and supporters of this Concordat will undertake regular reviews of their and the wider research sector's progress in fostering public engagement across the UK** **www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/concordat** (accessed February 2015)

Connected Communities programme	The Connected Communities programme is being led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It is designed to help understand the changing nature of communities in their historical and cultural contexts and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life.
	The programme seeks not only to connect research on communities, but to connect communities with research, bringing together community-engaged research across a number of core themes, including community health and well-being, community creativity, prosperity and regeneration, community values and participation, sustainable community environments, places and spaces, and community cultures, diversity, cohesion, exclusion, and conflict.
	www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Connected-Communities/Pages/Connected-Communities.aspx (accessed February 2015)
	http://connected-communities.org (accessed February 2015)
The Research Excellence Framework (REF)	The Research Excellence Framework is the successor to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and is a method of assessing the research of British higher education institutions. It took place in 2014 to assess research carried out during the period 2008–2013 inclusive. The results were published on 18 December 2014.
	For the first time the REF included a measure of the social and economic impact of research 'beyond academia'.
	www.ref.ac.uk (accessed February 2015)

Workshops

Contributors with an asterisk also contributed to the 'sense makers' workshop in October 2013.

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3. Danny Burns, Team Leader, Participation, Power and Social Change Team, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

4. June Burrough, formerly of Pierian Centre, Bristol City Elder

5. David Carter, Executive Principal, Cabot Learning Federation

6. Sharon Court, Community Engagement Specialist, Freelance

7. David Coslett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Plymouth

8. Graham Crow, Director of Scottish Graduate School of Social Science and Professor of Sociology, University of Edinburgh

9. John Dovey, Professor of Screen Media, Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, University of the West of England, Bristol

10. Daniel Glaser, Director of Science Gallery, King's College London

11. Kate Hudson, Engagement Manager, Newcastle University

12. Dom Jinks, Head of Arts and Culture, University of Exeter

13. Michael Johnson, Founder, Pocketspacecraft

14. Sam Jones, Head of Communications, University Alliance

15. Stuart Laing, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Brighton

16. Maggie Leggett, Head of the Centre for Public Engagement, University of Bristol

17. Sally MacDonald, Director of Museums and Public Engagement, University College London

18. Lyn Meadows, HR Director, Bangor University

19. Heather Rea, Beacon for Public Engagement Manager, University of Edinburgh

20. Claire Reddington, Watershed Director, iShed and The Pervasive Media Studio

21. Karen Rees, Children's Service Manager, Barnardos

22. Elen Ap Robert, Artistic Director, Pontio, Art and Innovation Centre, Bangor University

23. Mandy Rose, Associate Professor, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Digital Cultures Research Centre, University of the West of England, Bristol

24. Dee Smart, Co-ordinator, Public and Community Engagement, University of the West of England, Bristol

25. Sophie Staniszewska, Principal Research Fellow, Royal College of Nursing Research Institute, University of Warwick

26. Mary Schwartz, Freelance, Arts and Culture. Former director of the Centre for Participation, Dartington College of Arts

27. Hedley Swain, Director of Museums, Arts Council England

28. David Sweeney, Director for Research, Innovation and Skills, Higher Education Funding Council for England

29. Abigail Tweed, Public Engagement/Philanthropy, Pontio, Bangor University/Freelance

30. Deborah Watson, Executive Director, Universities South West

Additional activity

In addition to the people listed above we would like to thank participants in the following events/ activities:

Engage 2012: Engaged Futures launch event: We hosted an evening event with 100 delegates, including people attending the NCCPE's Engage 2012 conference. Ten contributors shared their ideas about the future of the Engaged University as a stimulus to encourage others to feed into shaping the consultation.

CU Expo 2013 workshop: Over 30 participants from this international conference shared their ideas about the Engaged University of the Future.

Engage 2013 workshop: Participants discussed the emergent findings from the consultation, and explored how this might affect how universities engage with others.

Engaged Futures blog series: Individuals shared their own visions for the future of the Engaged University.

CUPP '10 down 10 to go!': As we launched Engaged Futures we worked with the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) at the University of Brighton who were exploring the future for community university partnership work in Brighton. Their study explored the characteristics of the future of community university partnership working. The study aimed to build a vision of community university engagement in 2023 that is rooted in the practicalities of working in partnership on a daily basis. The main inputs were a literature review of future scenarios and methods for collaborative visioning of possible futures, research interviews and a symposium. These findings were then used to inform a creative writing exercise. You can find a link to this report in Appendix 2. We were pleased to be part of their work, and were grateful for their contribution to ours.

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