



National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

Civil society consultation response

This document contains the NCCPE's response to the DCMS / Office for Civil Society consultation on the Civil Society strategy.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-society-strategy-have-your-say>

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Our civil society

This section is about the big questions of what civil society is, how it is working well, and what needs to change to strengthen it further. It also explores how public trust in civil society can be strengthened, and how we can ensure a strong role and voice for civil society in developing government policy and practice.

Civil society has traditionally been seen as the action of organisations, individuals and community groups that sit between the state, the private sector and private or home life. This includes the work of charities, community groups and youth organisations. However, in recent years a growing numbers of profit-making businesses have been set up primarily to do good, such as social enterprises* and mission-led businesses. In addition the wider businesses community and private investors are making a positive contribution to communities. For the purpose of this Strategy, we interpret civil society to be inclusive of all those outside of the public sector, who share the mission of building a stronger society and improving lives, regardless of traditional sector boundaries such as charity or private and for profit or not. This mission-based interpretation will encompass individuals, movements, groups, organisations and businesses.

What are the strengths of civil society today? You might consider its mission and motivation, services for the public, difference to quality of life or economic and/or social impact.

To answer this question, we would point to the current **Civil Society Futures Inquiry** (<https://civilsocietyfutures.org/>) and the variety of other reviews of different aspects of contemporary civic life for robust evidence about the current state of civil society.

Other relevant reviews include:

- Making good society: Final report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland, 2010:
https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/02/pub1455011693.pdf
- What is the Civic Role of Arts Organisations?
<http://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/>

- The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century: report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldcitizen/118/118.pdf>
- NCVO's annual Civil Society Almanac which provides a useful state-of-play report each year: <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>

The 'Ties that Bind' House of Lords report articulates a simple vision for civil society: 'The creation of a country in which every one of its citizens feels secure, engaged and fulfilled must be a primary objective of a successful modern democratic nation. This would be a country in which everyone feels that they belong, and to which everyone feels they can contribute'.

The reviews and research referenced above confirm the vital role of civil society, but also raise concerns about its future. Memorably, the Carnegie Trust 'Making Good society' report concluded:

Why does a strong civil society matter? The fact that millions of people devote a great deal of their time and passion to civil society points to much of the answer. Civil society activity meets fundamental human wants and needs, and provides an expression for hopes and aspirations. It reaches parts of our lives and souls that are beyond the state and business. It takes much of what we care about most in our private lives and gives it shape and structure, helping us to amplify care, compassion and hope. It is also a fundamental part of any liberal democracy, providing many of the ideas, the arguments and the campaigning that give richness and substance to the formal processes of democratic assembly and political parties. It provides innovation, the social research and development that the rest of society depends on, inventing new models such as hospices, street newspapers or microcredit. In many communities it provides protection – a source of support that exists even if the state and market disappear. And civil society provides a counterweight to the tendencies to monopoly which are found so strongly both in markets and in politics and which can turn against the public interest (p.17).

It also pointed out that civil society is less than it could be: 'For a century or more it has been pushed to the margins by commerce and the state, which have claimed the lion's share of resources and power. It has been paid lip-service, but generally neglected. And it has lost ground in areas it was once strong, like finance or childhood'.(p.1)

This theme of the pressures bearing down on civil society is picked up in the end of year one report of the Civil Society Futures Inquiry. This identifies seven trends which will impact on the future of civil society:

- Social fracturing
- Personal precarity
- Environmental pressures

- Economic restructuring
- The end of the organisation
- Changing places
- Global volatility

Bearing in mind these stresses and their potential impact on civil society, we are keen to highlight in our response the active role which universities are playing in civil society. While this is not a new development – universities typically have a long standing commitment to civic engagement – a number of recent developments are strengthening that involvement, and we see this as a very welcome development. For instance:

- An increasing focus on ensuring that research is ‘engaged’ with society and realizes social impact, incentivised by, for instance, the Research Excellence Framework (REF)
- A growing commitment to public engagement, supported by investment in staff and by opening up facilities and resources to the community
- A growing interest in the role of universities as ‘anchor institutions’ and in the importance of civic leadership
- A long standing commitment to supporting student and staff volunteering
- A growing repertoire of innovative approaches to research, knowledge exchange and teaching which encourage purposeful engagement between universities and society to build powerful knowledge and skills and to realise mutual benefit

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) plays a national role in supporting these trends, supported by our funders, the HE funding Councils, UK Research and Innovation and Wellcome. The NCCPE was established in 2008 to influence how effectively the sector supports public engagement, and to help improve the quality and impact of that work. We do this by:

- Supporting culture change: we have launched a Manifesto for Public Engagement, and a ‘Watermark’ benchmarking process to benchmark the effectiveness of their support and leadership of public engagement
- Galvanizing innovation: we support a network of public engagement leaders and professional staff across the UK, celebrate excellent practice through skills sharing events and awards, and offer an extensive training and development programme
- Building partnerships: we broker collaboration between universities and civil society, for instance with community organisations and the museum sector, through networking events, the development of useful tools and resources and through awarding small development grants to help initiate projects

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk>

Throughout our response we point to examples of how universities are contributing to civil society, and make suggestions for how these might be scaled up. We wanted to highlight two broad areas of activity in this first answer.

THE CIVIC UNIVERSITY

There are many examples of universities identifying civic engagement as a strategic priority, for instance:

- Kings College London 2029: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/aboutkings/strategy/Kings-strategic-vision-2029.pdf>
- Queen Mary University London: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/strategy/index.html>
- De Montfort University: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/university-governance/strategic-framework-2015-2020.pdf>

To take one of these as an example, Queen Mary University of London has identified Public Engagement as one of its 6 aims: ‘to achieve maximum impact from our academic work through public engagement and partnerships with businesses, government, charities, cultural organisations, and others in the wider community’. The University has a senior leader with responsibility for public engagement and a team of professional staff to support the delivery of the strategy. Queen Mary was the first university to undertake the NCCPE’s Watermark process, and was awarded ‘Gold’ in recognition of their work:

<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/>

RESEARCH INTO CIVIL SOCIETY

Universities are contributing significantly to the evidence base and understanding of civil society through an extensive portfolio of research programmes and centres. We list more of these later in our response, and pick out just a handful of examples here:

- The WISERD Civil Society Research Centre <https://wiserd.ac.uk/wiserd-civil-society-research-centre>
- The What Works Centre on wellbeing, particularly its community theme and work around community involvement and community wellbeing.
<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/our-work/community/>
- In addition to these wider research Centres, the **Civil Society Futures Inquiry** is undertaking its own programme of academic research, led by Professor Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths University of London: <https://civilsocietyfutures.org/researching-together-civil-society-futures-participatory-action-research-framework/>

How can government help to increase the impact of civil society?

We would prefer to frame this question as ‘how can government help to improve the functioning of civil society, and what would be useful indicators of their success in doing so?’

To help to do this government will need to:

- Make explicit its understanding of the **trends and contextual factors** which are bearing down on civil society. A robust understanding about how civil society is changing and how it is being affected by wider social and political forces is vital to ensure any planned interventions are sensitive to their context. The NCVO's and Third Sector Research Centre's UK Civil Society Almanac is vital in providing these forms of evidence: <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>. The Civil Society Futures work to identify the seven key trends noted in the previous answer provides an excellent basis. The higher education sector is generating a significant amount of new insight into the dynamics and functioning of civil society.
- Identify a meaningful set of **outcome indicators** to describe what 'success' would look like. Without clear goals, it will be difficult to mobilize action and monitor success. We suggest that the Sustainable Development Goals, which the government is already committed to, could provide a meaningful way to do this. These goals include addressing poverty; health and wellbeing; quality education; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; and partnerships to achieve the goals.
- **Identify where change is most needed, and prioritise** these areas. Again, the Civil Society Futures inquiry provides a helpful steer. Through their consultation, they have identified four priority areas where people want to see change: focusing on **places**; on **belonging together**; on **reimagining work and purpose**; and on **organising**. Identifying focal points like these to mobilize and coordinate collective action will help towards achieving the goals. https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/04/CSF_1YearReport.pdf
- **Invest in 'scaffolding'** to support collective action between agencies and organisations who want to work together to these ends. We would point to Stanford's work on 'collective impact' as a useful way of approaching this. This points to the fact that often attempts to realise system wide change are thwarted by the 'silo' mentality of different organisations. They highlight five conditions which help guarantee impact: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and the presence of backbone organizations, to provide brokerage and to scaffold collaborative action. Organisations like Citizens UK help provide such a 'backbone' function, supporting civic alliances and community organising training (<http://www.citizensuk.org/>)
- **Factor the Higher Education sector into the strategy:** there is a strong government narrative around universities and the economy – and an assumption that HE is integral to economic growth. It would be unthinkable for a new innovation strategy not to foreground the contribution of universities and research. There should be a similar expectation of universities in relation to the future of civil society: in terms of the new knowledge they generate; the social innovation they nurture; the contribution of their people and resources to the communities they are based in; their role in widening participation in learning and nurturing talent; and in terms of their 'backbone' role in sustaining partnerships and collaboration.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

We want to provide some more context about how universities are currently contributing to civil society, firstly by providing an example of some of the innovative and impactful research that is underway to 'co-produce' and apply new knowledge about civil society. This is typical of a growing trend for universities to support active co-production of knowledge between academics, community organisations, citizens, policy makers and other social actors, including business.

The Imagine project was a large five-year Economic and Social Research Council project (2013-17) funded through the Research Councils UK Connected Communities programme. The project involved university researchers from a range of disciplines working together with a variety of community organisations across the United Kingdom to explore why and how people participate in civic and public life. The research has foregrounded the importance of community development and community activism. They used the term 'co-production' to describe methodologies that are collaborative, participatory and democratic and which try to access hidden or otherwise absent voices in civic life. Co-producing research has enabled the team to develop methodologies that include voices and perspectives that uncover different forms of engagement, whether this be with groups of Muslim women, young people, people with complex needs or diverse groups within community settings::

<http://www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/>

This project is just one example of how universities are contributing to civil society through their research and knowledge exchange. This activity is tracked through the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction survey (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/ke/hebci/>). The recent HEFCE report, The State of the English University Knowledge Exchange Landscape, identifies three outcome areas where universities are contributing to the health of their communities and wider society:

- **SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY GROUP BENEFITS:** benefits to individuals (e.g. improved wellbeing) and communities. This encompasses direct benefits such as new facilities for community use and wider benefits such as the promotion of cultural heritage.
- **WIDER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS:** effects that accrue in the wider economy, beyond the areas in which an institution operates. The benefits can be at different spatial levels, ranging from the local level (e.g. local economic growth) to the international level.
- **BUSINESS, PUBLIC AND THIRD SECTOR BENEFITS:** direct benefits to partners/clients involved in knowledge exchange activities at a transactional level. Benefits to business typically concern business performance, whereas benefits to public and third sector partners are more focused on the delivery of services.

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2017/The_state_of_the_English_university_KE_landscape/2017_kelandscape .pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2017/The_state_of_the_English_university_KE_landscape/2017_kelandscape.pdf)

Building on the above, we recommend that the civil society strategy must be considered within the context of the government's Industrial Strategy. Civil society organisations have the potential to play an important role in delivery of the five foundations of the strategy (ideas; people; infrastructure; business environment; places) to address the four grand challenges (leading in AI; driving clean growth; future of mobility; ageing societies). There is a risk that as the civil society strategy is developed, it does not pay attention to the Industrial Strategy and that this results in disconnected and even competing national goals. The civil society strategy must therefore be equally cross-cutting across all parts of government.

It is an encouraging development that the newly formed UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which oversees research and innovation funding, identifies the strategic importance of interaction with civil society and investment in public engagement in addressing these grand challenges. Their strategic prospectus identifies the need to:

- sustain strong public dialogue to ensure people are engaged and involved with research and innovation, with the issues, the opportunities and the implications
- engage with research communities, businesses, civic society and policymakers to foster strong partnerships and collaborations and ensure our investment can deliver impact.

<https://www.ukri.org/files/about/ukri-strategy-document-pdf/?pdf=Strategic-Prospectus>

How can public trust in civil society be built and maintained?

The Civil Society Futures Inquiry has identified a crisis in trust:

'Trust in big civil society organisations is falling. The media has placed a spotlight on issues from Chief Executive pay to fundraising practices to sexual exploitation. Relationships within civil society have corroded as everyone competes for funding. Big changes are needed to allow smaller groups and more informal networks to flourish — but the large institutions need to change fastest and most profoundly, learning from the best of what's new. People are losing trust in large institutions, including charities, which are too often rigid, unaccountable and distant from the people they are meant to serve'

https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/04/CSF_1YearReport.pdf

However, it is hard to make broad generalizations, as trust is very affected by context. For instance, a 2014 study into the context of analyzing willingness to donate data, the University of Nottingham found that well-known charities (such as Cancer Research UK) ranked top of the list in terms of trustworthiness. The study found that prominence of organisations played a big role in willingness to trust organisations and therefore such trust cannot be guaranteed for lesser known charities.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269101036_Data_Donation_Sharing_Personal_Data_for_Public_Good

The Civil Society Futures study found that university researchers also remain one of the most trusted roles in society, however this cannot be taken for granted. Universities have had to grapple with issues of trust in relation to research and innovation for a number of years. The late 1990s, with GM crops and BSE, vividly demonstrated the risks of science and research falling out of step with society. The influential House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee report in 2000 opened with ‘the crisis in trust’:

‘Society’s relationship with science is in a critical phase. On the one hand, there has never been a time when the issues involving science were more exciting, the public more interested, or the opportunities more apparent. On the other hand, public confidence in scientific advice to Government has been rocked by a series of events, culminating in the BSE fiasco; and many people are deeply uneasy about the huge opportunities presented by areas of science including biotechnology and information technology, which seem to be advancing far ahead of their awareness and assent. In turn, public unease, mistrust and occasional outright hostility are breeding a climate of deep anxiety among scientists themselves’.

The report went on to recommend the vital role of investing in public engagement:

We have argued above that public confidence in science and policy based on science has been eroded in recent years. In consequence, there is a new humility on the part of science in the face of public attitudes, and a new assertiveness on the part of the public. Today’s public expects not merely to know what is going on, but to be consulted; science is beginning to see the wisdom of this, and to move “out of the laboratory and into the community” to engage in dialogue aimed at mutual understanding.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldselect/ldsctech/38/3801.htm>

The report led to a variety of new investments and policies, including the establishment of the Sciencewise programme, a centre of expertise in dialogue with the public around emerging areas of science and technology. Its guiding principles clarify what public dialogue is and is not:

‘For Sciencewise, public dialogue includes:

- *opening up discussion with public and different perspectives to help explore issues, aspirations and concerns when shaping policy*
- *talking with the public about ethical and societal issues related to public policy*
- *requiring the instigators of the dialogue to be potentially willing and able to change their minds*
- *ensuring that public insights can inform policy involving science and technology issues*

Public dialogue is not:

- *solely one-way communication 'to' the public*
- *representative - participants do not formally represent their geographic area or discipline*
- *a talking shop with no policy purpose*
- *about the public actually making decisions - these are ultimately the responsibility of elected government ministers and others*
- *about simply gaining public support or acceptance for preconceived policies'*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673990/sciencewise-guiding-principles.pdf

Sciencewise has demonstrated successful approaches to bringing citizens, researchers and policy makers together to both deliberate on policy and to actively contribute to its development. Two recent examples of this kind of work are:

- Data for Public Benefit: a project to explore, through 6 workshops across the UK, the tensions between reaping benefits from data sharing and the risks of sharing data. <https://www.involve.org.uk/2018/04/26/data-public-benefit-report/>
- Mitochondria replacement: a public dialogue to feed public views in to Government considerations on whether to change the law to allow clinical practice of mitochondria replacement. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170712123006/http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/mitochondria-replacement>

Sciencewise is now hosted within UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) where it will continue to provide a crucial service to explore the social and ethical sensitivities around emerging areas of research and innovation. UKRI's recently published Strategic Prospectus makes a commitment to supporting dialogue and engagement with the public:

We must forge strong collaborations, strengthen trust and build understanding, and

- *listen and respond to a diverse range of views and aspirations about what people want research and innovation to do for them. We will ensure today's discoveries ignite and excite a new generation capable of addressing tomorrow's questions*
- *build public understanding and earn and retain trust in UK research and innovation*
- *inspire people of all ages to participate in research and innovation in partnership with our stakeholders*
- *promote, support and encourage researchers and innovators to engage with the public as they shape and conduct their work*
- *sustain strong public dialogue to ensure people are engaged and involved with research and innovation, with the issues, the opportunities and the implications*
- *engage with research communities, businesses, civic society and policymakers to foster strong partnerships and collaborations and ensure our investment can deliver impact.*

<https://www.ukri.org/files/about/ukri-strategy-document-pdf/?pdf=Strategic-Prospectus>

A critical area of development is 'open science'. This is an increasing priority within higher education, and wider society, where there is a clear need for people to have access to key information and the ability to use it to understand and shape their lives; where powerful institutions are comprehensible and accountable; and where vital research information that can help us tackle challenges such as poverty and climate change is available to all.

The case for Open Science was convincingly made in the 2012 Royal Society report, 'Science as an Open Enterprise': <https://royalsociety.org/~media/policy/projects/sape/2012-06-20-saoe-summary.pdf>. They make a number of useful recommendations about how a culture of openness can be developed which could usefully inform the Civil Society Strategy.

In wider civil society, organisations like Open Knowledge International are playing a key role in promoting these developments: <https://okfn.org/about/>

There are numerous examples of other approaches to dialogue and deliberation which could be adopted to address this challenge. The participation organisation, Involve, is a leading exponent of such approaches and their application: <https://www.involve.org.uk/about-involve/#>

How can civil society be supported to have a stronger role in shaping government policy now and/or in the future?

We want to make two points in this answer.

- There are tried and tested ways for civil society to be supported to contribute to government policy, though a variety of methods and approaches. These require specialist skills to design and execute, and strategic investment if they are to deliver results
- Currently, there are significant barriers to interaction and collaboration between different actors in civil society which need to be addressed if more active involvement in shaping policy is to be realised

INVESTING IN PUBLIC DIALOGUE

The Sciencewise programme has demonstrated how engagement and dialogue processes can provide productive ways of involving civil society in shaping policy. These are distilled in the report 'What the public say: public engagement in national decision making (2010)'. The report provides a number of recommendations which could helpfully inform the Civil Society Strategy, including:

1. **Engaging the public (and other stakeholders) in critical, potentially controversial issues could be a core part of delivering the Government's agenda of openness and transparency.** The public have shown that understanding complex information is not a

problem and that they are willing and excited to be involved in deeper levels of debate.

2. **Providing feedback to the public on the results of decision-making (and how public/stakeholder views have or have not been taken on board) will strengthen the understanding and legitimacy of policies in contentious areas.** Effective feedback helps the public to understand the impact they are having on policy which in turn builds trust.
3. **Government could usefully engage the public in more dialogue and engagement which focuses on the social good.** The Government faces challenges from the public around its ability to achieve firm governance for social good (rather than private interests). Flexible and adaptive governance will help to build public trust in Government's decisions.
4. **Government must take final responsibility for making fair and balanced policy decisions that are informed by dialogue with the public.** The public see decision-making as a complex process that requires a wide range of inputs, and do not want to have the final decision in complex technical areas of public policy.
5. **The Government must work to make the process of deliberation responsive and meaningful when opening up public services to greater citizen control.** Dialogue-based events can help ensure maximum support, confidence and buy-in from future participants and are valued highly by public participants.

<https://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/What-the-public-say-report-FINAL-v4.pdf>

In addition to the many practical examples funded through the Sciencewise programme, there have been a number of innovations in participatory practice, developed by organisations like Citizens UK and Involve, which provide robust examples of how citizens can be more actively involved in shaping government policy. An excellent example is the recently announced Citizens' Assembly on Social Care, being developed by Involve working closely with two parliamentary committees. <https://www.involve.org.uk/2018/04/24/fund-social-care-working-parliament-citizens-assembly-social-care/> This is the first time that parliamentary committees have used a citizens' assembly, or similar large-scale deliberative method, to inform their work. Citizens' assemblies are useful for situations like this, where there is an element of political deadlock. They allow for an in depth exploration of not just what a representative sample of the population think, but also why they think it – and what choices or trade-offs they make to reach a workable decision.

These processes require significant expertise, investment and commitment if they are to genuinely influence policy making. We would like to see recognition of their value and recommendations for how they might be resourced and coordinated built into the new Civil Society strategy.

INCREASING THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF COLLABORATION

The recent Carnegie report, 'InterAction: how can academics and the third sector work together to influence policy and practice', authored by Professor Mark Shucksmith from Newcastle University, addresses the challenge of how universities and the third sector can be more effective in influencing public policy and practice. The report identifies a number of barriers to such collaboration which need to be addressed if this kind of interaction is to flourish. There are useful pointers here for the civil society strategy.

Their key recommendations cohere around improving connectivity and brokerage – making it easier for different actors to 'find' each other, and to build productive collaborations, for instance by:

- Creating 'gateways' into universities and other organisations (which are often 'impenetrable and siloed')
- Employing specialist engagement staff to facilitate interaction
- Investing in secondments, training, tools to support partnership working, and principles / codes of practice
- Using advisory groups etc to ensure perspectives and expertise from different areas of civil society are productively shared

They advise that HE funders should:

- Resource gateways through which third sector organisations, businesses and other publics can make contact with researchers in (what are perceived to be impenetrable) universities.
- Explore how the Research Excellence Framework can best incentivise this kind of interaction.
- Consider funding models for translation and co-creation of research
- Continue encouragement of open access to publicly-funded academic outputs.

https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/04/LOW-RES-2578-Carnegie-Interaction.pdf

Building on the above, we would highlight the particular value of innovative research methodologies. Executed well, these provide really meaningful ways for communities to contribute to the knowledge base at the same time as developing their own capabilities and influencing change. Examples include action research approaches since the 1950s which have supported change across organisations, and participatory action research approaches since the 1970s that have empowered marginalized communities to affect social change. Critical to these approaches is a commitment to working closely with community organisations and trusted intermediaries to build useful knowledge. Examples include the Imagine Project, which demonstrated how communities can be supported to identify and

tackle their own issues, in turn helping to build individuals' self-confidence and esteem:

<http://www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/>

The current **Civil Society Futures Inquiry** is undertaking its own programme of academic research, led by Professor Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths University of London:

<https://civilsocietyfutures.org/researching-together-civil-society-futures-participatory-action-research-framework/>.

We recommend that the Civil Society strategy seize both these opportunities – investing in timely and effective public dialogue; and providing incentives and encouragement for more effective interaction and collaboration to building knowledge with and about civil society.

Later, in the 'Partnership' section we describe a variety of ways in which the NCCPE is supporting the HE sector to engage more proactively and effectively with civil society.

We interpret civil society as inclusive of all those outside of the public sector, who share the mission of building a stronger society and improving lives, regardless of traditional sector boundaries such as charity or private and for profit or not. What are the advantages of using this interpretation in developing this Strategy?

We are not convinced of the value of this framing, nor its rationale.

What are the disadvantages of using this interpretation in developing this Strategy?

Conventionally, civil society is differentiated from the state and the market, and the three domains understood to be in some ways in tension. This provides a helpful reminder that the market, despite good intentions of some, has enormous power to destabilize and undermine civil society by for instance prioritizing profit at the expense of collective benefits. This is powerfully expressed by David Held in a quote featured prominently in the Making Good Society report, which identifies an important role for government in moderating market forces: *'Without a secure and independent civil society, goals such as freedom and equality cannot be realised. But without the protective, redistributive and conflict-mediating function of the state, struggles to transform civil society are likely to become more fragmented'* (D. Held, 1989, Political Theory and the Modern State)

Therefore, the 'inclusive' definition of civil society which you propose has significant risks. It brushes over the crucial accountability function which the more conventional framing of civil society provides, where it is viewed as distinct from government and the market.

At the NCCPE, we have developed a pragmatic way of representing the territory to help people working within the university sector to think about the wider society, and public, with whom they might collaborate and engage. Our representation of the territory differentiates between

- Civil society (charities, associations etc)
- The public sector (health, social care, education etc)
- Businesses (including corporates, SMEs and other social businesses)
- Policy makers (local and national)

Each of these are dedicated in different ways to developing products and services that contribute to a well-functioning society. We differentiate these four 'sectors' from the various 'types of 'public' who interact with them, in a variety of different roles (as citizens, volunteers, customers, communities of place or interest etc)

We focus attention on:

- How do these organisations work to deliver public benefit?
- How do they interact with the public – citizens, consumers, patients, service users etc – and to what extent do they choose to involve and engage them in their work?
- How might they work together more coherently and effectively to maximise their collective impact?
- What specifically can universities contribute by aligning their research, teaching and wider activities to support social responsibility?

We would argue that this provides a more useful strategic framework. It recognizes the different roles played by each of the sectors, and their different professional cultures and accountabilities. It also focuses attention on how, by working more effectively together, and by actively engaging with citizens, they can help to create a 'citizen-centric' society where people are valued and empowered to live good lives.



People

This section explores how more people can be supported to play an active role in building a stronger society. This can be through social action*, which includes anything from simple acts of neighbourliness through to charitable giving, volunteering, community asset ownership, civic engagement* or running groups/organisations with a social mission.

We want to understand the potential to enable all citizens to be fully engaged, active and with the skills and self-confidence to change the world they live in for the better - no matter what their background.

When people contribute they enrich both their own lives and the lives of others. Everyone has the ability to give something if they are given the right support and opportunities.

Questions in this section relate to:

- Enabling more people to play an active role in society
- Encouraging more young people to participate in society

Enabling more people to play an active role in society

Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how have people successfully taken action to improve things for themselves and their communities? Please tell us why it has worked well.

The higher education sector is making a significant contribution to supporting communities to take action. The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement plays a significant role in capturing evidence of this activity, and in promoting excellence in university-community collaboration.

To this end, we run a bi-annual competition, our 'Engage Awards' to showcase and celebrate excellence. Below, we provide some examples of competition winners, to provide a snapshot of ways in which universities are interacting with civil society across the UK.

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/engage-competition/current-winners>

Our goal is to encourage more, high quality practice of this kind. Our competition criteria identify the principles which we underpin excellent practice, and include:

- **Purpose**

We believe that high quality engagement activities have considered both the purpose of the project and the audience/participants and used this to inform the development of the project. By being clear about why you are engaging, and thinking carefully about the people you want to engage with, the project will be more effective. It is important to consider the outcomes of the project, and how you will assess these.

- **Quality**

High quality projects are usually planned and managed well. Often they will draw on learning from previous engagement projects, or expertise from partner organisations. They will use evaluation intelligently to inform, develop and assess the project.

- **Mutual benefit**

Core to high quality engagement is the idea of mutual benefit. We would expect there to be benefits to all those involved in the project.

- **Sustainability**

Whilst some activities are planned as a one off, we are interested to know about if and how projects planned for sustainability. This includes how they managed the relationship with your participants and partners over time.

We would hope that similar principles would be enshrined in the Civil Society strategy: it is important that we share what we are all learning about how to support and plan excellent work that generates value for communities.

So what does this work look like in practice? Here are four examples of our competition finalists.

The winner of our Working in Partnership category (2016) was the project 'Older People as Co-Researchers: Developing Age-Friendly Communities in Manchester'. The project sought to respond to the fact that by 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will reside in cities, with at least one-quarter of their populations aged 60 and over. This project involved a partnership with the University of Manchester, Manchester City Council and local community organisations, to develop neighbourhoods responsive to the needs of people as they grow older. This project was unusual in involving older people as co-investigators leading a study designed to improve the quality of life in low-income communities. Older people were recruited and trained as co-researchers, taking a leading role in the design, implementation, analysis and dissemination of the research. The 17 co-researchers conducted 68 qualitative interviews with socially isolated older people living in low-income neighbourhoods in Manchester, who were experiencing isolation, poverty and/or health problems. The project led to tangible policy outcomes for the City Council to advance 'age-friendly' communities.

Another finalist in the Working in Partnership category (2016) was called 'Fostering Hope', a partnership between the University Of Bath and the fostering service TACT. Fostering Hope used participatory research to shift public perceptions of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in foster care, and address mis-perceptions. A local fostering service, TACT, was facing challenges recruiting sufficient numbers of foster carers to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The team ran workshops with young asylum seekers, providing activities such as art, music and climbing. The project sought to promote accounts of the young people's lives in foster care to challenge misconceptions and negative stereotypes. In order to access these accounts, participatory methods were chosen that recognised the young people's competence and promoted their involvement. Photo-voice was a particularly appropriate methodology as it enabled the team to communicate and engage effectively with a group of young people for whom English was not their first language. Photographs taken by the young people were shown to foster carers in a focus group and then shared as posters at public events during Refugee Week.

The winner of our Individual-led projects category (2016) was a project called 'Writing Back', led by University of Leeds student Georgina Binnie. The British Red Cross state that more than 3.7 million people over the age of 65 are thought to live alone, and a third say they have no one to turn to. Loneliness doesn't just affect older people: a 2010 study by the Mental Health Foundation found that 18 to 34 year olds were more likely to feel lonely than their older counterparts. Writing Back targeted loneliness and social isolation in young people and older people by matching University of Leeds students as pen pals with older Yorkshire residents, and encouraging them to engage with the Yorkshire archives by sharing historic photographs in their letters. The project succeeded in increasing the emotional wellbeing of participants – by creating a unique friendship, the pen pals' views of the university or of older people are consistently challenged.

A brochure of the finalists can be downloaded here:

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/nccpe_engage_awards_brochure_2016.pdf

Another strong example is the winner of the NCCPE's 2014 Engage competition, the CAER Heritage project at Cardiff University, set up to explore Cardiff's prehistoric past and put local people at the heart of cutting-edge research. Surrounded on three sides by the housing estates of Caerau and Ely, the ramparts of Caerau hillfort are hidden beneath woodland, meaning many people don't even realise it is there. The estates that surround the hillfort are home to more than 25,000 people and, despite strong community ties; many local residents are burdened by significant social and economic deprivation, particularly high unemployment. From the outset the project's key objectives have therefore been to employ archaeology and history to develop educational opportunities and to challenge stigmas and marginalisation associated with these communities. The project has involved community participants in a variety of co-produced projects, including geophysical survey, Iron-Age themed art installations, museum exhibitions, adult learners' courses, heritage trails and a large-scale community excavation:

<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/case-studies/caer-heritage-project-caerau-and-ely-rediscovering>

Many other examples can be found in the recent Carnegie report, 'InterAction: How can academics and the third sector work together to influence policy and practice'

https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/04/LOW-RES-2578-Carnegie-Interaction.pdf

Other examples can be found in the Guild HE and NUS publication, '**Active Citizenship: The role of higher education**'

<https://www.guildhe.ac.uk/blog/active-citizenship-the-role-of-higher-education/>

Which of the following changes are the most important in enabling more people to take action on issues that matter to them?

(Please rank **up to three choices** in order of importance, with 1 as the most important, 2 as the second most important and 3 as the third most important)

_____ Developing more opportunities for individuals to get involved

_____ Give citizens more opportunities to be part of the decision-making processes on local and national issues

_____ Increasing awareness of the range of opportunities for individuals to get involved in civil society

_____ Empowering people or giving them permission so that they think that they do have a say and are able to take action

_____ Developing a better understanding of how social action* can build the networks and relationships among people as well as the confidence and skills of the disadvantaged and disengaged

_____ Supporting employers and businesses to promote active citizenship, such as volunteering, becoming a school governor or charity trusteeship

Are there any additional changes that would enable more people to take action on issues that matter to them?

All of the above are important and can make a significant contribution, depending on the context and purpose for involvement.

We would point to the extensive contribution made by higher education researchers and research centres to deepening our understanding of how social action can be supported effectively, and to the evolving nature of civil society. There is a wealth of knowledge being generated within HE, and in partnership with others, which can inform the choices being made through this strategy development process about where best to focus efforts to enable more people to take action and to strengthen civil society.

We list below just some of the key investments:

- The WISERD Civil Society Research Centre <https://wiserd.ac.uk/wiserd-civil-society-research-centre>
- The What Works Centre on wellbeing, particularly its community theme and work around community involvement and community wellbeing. <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/our-work/community/>
- The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action at the University of Durham, made up of academic researchers from a number of departments and disciplines and community partners: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/socialjustice/>
- The CASS Centre for Charity Effectiveness, based at City University of London, which supports the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector with knowledge and tools <https://www.cass.city.ac.uk/faculties-and-research/centres/cce>
- The Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham consists aims to enhance knowledge of the sector through independent and critical research, giving a better understanding of the value of the sector and how this can be maximised <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/index.aspx>
- ESRC's investment in data research centres like the Business and Local Government Data Research Centre which supports the use of data to inform data policy decisions and

tackle difficult challenges faced by business and society:

<http://www.blgdataresearch.org/about-us/>

- ESRC's support over the last three years of the UK Civil Society Almanac, produced by The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Third Sector Research Centre. The almanac provides the key source of evidence on trends in the sector

<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>

- ESRC's Civil Society Data Partnership Programme which provided for direct academic support to civil society organisations on building data capacity. In the four funded projects, two provided direct support to civil society organisations in enhancing their data capabilities and two helped to enhance data resources to be utilised by the sector.

<https://esrc.ukri.org/research/our-research/civil-society-data-partnership-projects/>

- The Voluntary Sector Studies Network promotes understanding of the voluntary sector through research: <https://www.vssn.org.uk/>

- The Association for Research in the Voluntary & Community Sector that provides information and training in research for an about the community sector

<http://arvac.org.uk/>

- Individual small scale community collaboration projects funded through ESRC's Impact Acceleration Accounts. An important example of the impact of this funding is the co-produced project between academics at Newcastle University and the charity Sustrans on community engagement and socially engaged design to involve residents in the design of their local area. This work led to the receipt of funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government to build a mini-sized 'pocket park' for public access which opened in May 2016. Feedback has shown the success of the project approach, with the park being regularly used and being seen as a community asset.

<https://esrc.ukri.org/news-events-and-publications/impact-case-studies/participation-research-kick-starts-newcastle-mini-park/>

Despite this activity, a number of challenges remain which the Civil Society Strategy could helpfully identify and seek to address. Despite significant advances in this area, there is still a need to encourage research councils and academia to be more open to civil society research. As highlighted by Dan Corry in his ESRC Blog, part of this is due to structural issues related to scholarship in the academic study of civil society. The topic is inherently interdisciplinary, leaving scholars of the sector without a coherent discipline and relevant high quality journals to publish in. Furthermore Dan points to a need to cultivate more work focused on the day-to-day challenges of civil society in the UK. Government could play a key role in helping to address some of these challenges. <https://blog.esrc.ac.uk/2016/12/02/the-importance-of-voluntary-sector-research/>

We also argue it is essential to highlight issues linked to diversity and inclusion which impact profoundly on this area. We would point to the Common Cause research project as one example of how this area is being tackled in higher education, seeking to address the under

representation of black and minority ethnic groups in higher education, particularly in the arts and humanities. In doing so, it is exploring widening participation, action on the curriculum, research and structural inequalities within the HE sector. Its objective is to explore where and how common cause can be made between change agents in universities, communities and funding bodies who are looking to create an Arts and Humanities knowledge base that fully reflects the cultures and experiences of the UK's Black and minority ethnic communities. It is doing so by mapping, strengthening and extending research collaborations that exist between Black and minority ethnic cultural and community organisations and academics currently working in the Arts and Humanities.

<https://www.commoncauseresearch.com/>

Finally, we would also note the potential of digital engagement. There is significant work underway in higher education to explore the potential of this, including under the Connected Communities programme. The 'Digital Technologies Connecting Communities' report provides a helpful overview: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/digital-technologies-connecting-communities/>. EPSRC are funding a new NetworkPlus on Social Justice through the Digital Economy

<http://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=EP%2FR044929%2F1>

Considering all the changes you discussed in this section, how could these be implemented now and/or in the future?

You may want to think about the role of different parties, for example central and local government, charities, businesses, yourself / your organisation and others.

We are particularly interested in the potential of partnership working and collaboration to unlock 'joined up' work. There are a host of challenges with this which we unpick and explore in the 'Partnerships' section.

We would also emphasise the critical importance of developing organisational cultures which incentivise and encourage social engagement, and make it a strategic priority, rather than an 'add on'. This is exactly the challenge the NCCPE was established to address in the higher education sector. We were founded in 2008, at a point where there was widespread perception that universities were out of touch with society; where powerful challenges were being made about the relevance of research and the accountability of researchers for their use of public money; and where issues of trust were highlighted through public unease about BSE and Genetically Modified Organisms. It was recognised that responding to these challenges required a major change in the culture of universities, to ensure staff felt supported, encouraged and recognised for the quality of their engagement beyond the university.

The NCCPE was established by a consortium of funders, the UK HE Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and Wellcome, "To create a culture within UK higher education where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels, and for students": <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about-us>

Since 2008 we have worked alongside a host of universities, including the 6 Beacons for Public Engagement (2008 – 12), to road test and codify the best ways of recognising, rewarding and building capacity for public engagement. What is clear is that without an explicit focus on developing supportive organisational cultures, staff can feel discouraged from engaging with others; and the quality and effectiveness of that engagement can be compromised.

Key achievements for the Centre include:

- Launching a Manifesto for Public Engagement which over 80 HEIs have committed to
- Developing a host of resources which support university staff and students to plan and deliver effective, high quality engagement
- Celebrating this work through our biannual Engage Competition
- Working closely with the sector and with our funders to advise on how public engagement can be incentivised and evaluated
- Developing a benchmarking process to provide universities with a rigorous assessment of their support for public engagement
- Developing highly effective methods for brokering and facilitating collaboration between university staff and other sectors

We have identified a set of principles which provide helpful focal points for organisations to assess the effectiveness of their strategic support for public engagement. We believe that these principles could inform the Civil Society Strategy, helping to make explicit the conditions which need to be in place within organisations if their staff and volunteers are to be effectively supported to engage with others, and to contribute to a thriving, engaged and highly interactive civil society.

We have identified three broad questions organisations need to ask of themselves to assess their support for engagement:

- Purpose: have you embedded a commitment to public engagement in institutional mission and strategy, and do you champion that commitment at all levels?
- Process: have you invested in systems and processes that facilitate involvement, maximise impact and help to ensure quality and value for money?
- People: are you effectively involving staff, students and people outside the university and using their energy, expertise and feedback to shape your strategy and its delivery?

For each of these areas we have identified key areas where attention needs to be focussed. For instance, key areas that underpin 'purpose' include how commitment to engagement is embedded in the organisation's mission and strategies; in its leadership; and in its external and internal communications. Key processes that require attention are how this activity is recognised and rewarded; the provision of opportunities for learning and professional development; and investment in coordination and support.

We have developed a self-assessment tool, known as the EDGE tool, which allows institutions to assess themselves in each of these areas and establish how effectively they are tackling them, from 'embryonic' to 'embedded':

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-engagement/strategy-and-planning/edge-tool/introducing-edge-tool>

We recommend that the Civil Society Strategy recognises the significant challenges and obstacles to engagement which can exist within organisational cultures, and highlights the need to address these through the kind of coordinating and developmental functions that organisations like the NCCPE provide.

Encouraging more young people to participate in society

Youth social action* including activities such as campaigning, fundraising and volunteering creates a double benefit both to young people and their communities.

Are there any additional things that are important to further grow involvement in youth social action?

Universities make a significant contribution to youth social action, through a variety of routes. One is by providing opportunities for students to participate in volunteering; another is through student participation in the democratic process through the students' union, or by being exposed to social issues such as sustainability. There are also numerous ways in which students are being introduced to social issues through the curriculum. Finally, they make a significant contribution through their work to support Widening Participation. We look at these areas in turn and provide a snapshot of current activity.

STUDENT VOLUNTEERING

We would like to highlight the contribution made by university students through the extensive support for volunteering across the sector. Highlights include:

- Student volunteering week, **led by the UK Student Volunteering Network in partnership with Student Hubs, the National Union of Students and the #iwill campaign.** In 2017 students and staff from 60 Higher and Further Education Institutions led 298 events.
- **Student Hubs**, who provide all sorts of ways for students to engage with social and environmental challenges during their time at university, strongly focused on social action: <https://www.studenthubs.org/> Their 2017 impact report revealed that 36% of the volunteers they worked with had not been involved in social action before, and 94% of the students they worked with improved their ability to work with others to make change.
- **The Brilliant Club**, founded in 2011 by two teachers who became involved in university access through their work in inner-city schools. As classroom teachers, they recognised the barriers that students from under-represented backgrounds face in accessing university. It began with a grassroots project which utilised the expertise and passion of PhD students who delivered programmes of academic enrichment to small groups of pupils. This year, The Brilliant Club will work with more than 10,000 pupils across England and Wales, making it the largest university access programme for secondary schools in the UK.

Research in student volunteering by the National Union of Students and NCVO in 2014 discovered:

Contribution of student volunteers

- Over 725,000 students currently volunteer – that is 31 per cent of the higher education student population.
- Students volunteer on average for 44 hours a year, based on an average 32 week term.
- Student volunteering contributes £175million per year to the UK economy

Motivations

- Some 78 per cent of students who volunteer indicated that they do so to improve things/help people.
- Developing skills was highlighted by 66 per cent of student volunteers as one of their main motivations for volunteering.

Barriers

- The majority (69 per cent) of students who do not currently volunteer said that the major barrier for them was not having enough time – either due to the pressures of study, paid work, family commitments or involvement in other activities.
- Some 18 per cent of all students said they did not think they could afford to do more volunteering than their current levels.

Moving forward

- Forty per cent of students said that education institutions linking volunteering opportunities to their course or academic qualification would encourage them to do more volunteering.

- A third of students said they would like to see more one-off opportunities to encourage them to volunteer

(The Student Volunteering Landscape,

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/student-volunteering-week-production/attachments/resources/pdfs/47/original/The Student Volunteering Landscape.pdf?1392977996](http://s3.amazonaws.com/student-volunteering-week-production/attachments/resources/pdfs/47/original/The_Student_Volunteering_Landscape.pdf?1392977996))

This is further supported by the UK Civil Society Almanac 2018 which shows that 37% of those aged 16-25 volunteer at least once a year, with 20% volunteering once a month. The data further shows that people from well-educated backgrounds are more likely to volunteer:

<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac18/volunteer-profiles-2015-16-2/>

EMBEDDING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN THE CURRICULUM AND ENCOURAGING REFLECTIVE CITIZENS

Many universities are striving to support students to not just act but also reflect on their activity. This can be both outside and inside the formal curriculum. Many institutions provide a framework for development by defining the **attributes** that they want the higher education experience they offer to instill within their students. These attributes identify academic and personal transferable skills that the higher education experience allows students to develop. These can be applied in many contexts, including within teaching, learning and research and in employment and work, as well as in relation to society and how students contribute to society and develop citizenship skills. We provide three examples below of how universities are supporting this kind of reflective practice.

ABERTAY UNIVERSITY: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Abertay was the first Scottish university to develop a set of graduate attributes in 2007, and in 2015 it undertook a fundamental review, developing a widely praised four dimensional conceptual framework, encompassing the intellectual, professional, personal and active citizenship. Each dimension has a series of qualitative descriptors. For 'Active Citizen', the Abertay Attributes state that Abertay will foster individuals to:

- deploy their skills and learning to make a real contribution to society locally, nationally and internationally
- be inclusive, globally conscientious, socially respectful and self-reflective
- maintain and continuously develop awareness of their civic, ethical and environmental responsibilities

<https://abertaytle.wordpress.com/2015/08/28/abertay-attributes-defining-our-values-and-distinctiveness/>

THE PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY COMPASS

The Plymouth Compass was designed to help students to navigate their way through their *whole* university experience, in both the taught curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The Compass identifies key attributes in four broad areas of life - academic, civic, professional, and personal. During their time here, students are offered opportunities to practice and develop these attributes, helping them gain experiences, improve skills, and build networks for life beyond graduation. One of the key attributes is the sustainable and global citizen, which includes change leadership.

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/plymouth-university-compass>

ENGAGED LEARNING

The University of Bristol is typical of many universities who are seeking to work in productive partnership with the local community. One way of achieving this is offering opportunities for students to work with local organisations as part of their degree. This is often called Engaged Learning. It offers the opportunity for students to work on a real world issue and gain knowledge from the local community. Partners find the projects beneficial through:

- Providing answers to questions they may not have the time or resource to answer themselves
- Providing a different perspective on their work
- Being able to feed experience into the academic world
- Some students continuing working with the organisation in a voluntary capacity.

Their website includes examples of current projects: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/public-engagement/public/engaged-learning/>

Other universities provide courses aimed at supporting social enterprises / voluntary & community sector organisations. For example. MSc students in Bath's School of Management take part annually in the Zurich Community Challenge, raising money and undertaking activities for community organisations. As an example, see:

http://www.bath.ac.uk/management/news_events/news/2013/16-12-Zurich-Community-Challenge.html

The University of Sheffield has made a significant investment in supporting engaged learning: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/staff/learning-teaching/our-approach/current/engaged/publication>

Considering all of the things you have discussed in this section, how could these be implemented now and/or in the future? You may want to think about the role of different parties, for example central and local government, charities, businesses, education, funders, yourself / your organisation and others.

HOW CAN GOVERNMENT HELP?

Government can help by demonstrating how much it values these types of activities happening within the university sector, listed in the previous answer.

It could set clear expectations that all universities should invest in supporting these types of activities.

It could seek to ensure that the role of students and the contribution of universities is factored into any broader strategic initiatives that seek to build capacity and collaboration across civil society.

It should also monitor how its extensive reforms of higher education, and the increasing marketization of the sector, are impacting on this vital activity.

Universities themselves should continue to prioritise these activities, and to invest appropriately in them.

The recent Guild HE and NUS publication, **Active Citizenship: The role of higher education**, provides a very helpful summary of the current 'state of play' in this area. It showcases many examples of active citizenship that are supported in universities and demonstrates how higher education introduces students to many experiences that go beyond their degree programme, including volunteering, but not limited to this.

This report highlights how higher education can promote active citizenship, and the benefits that arise from student involvement in active citizenship:

- **Students** are empowered to contribute to their communities, get involved politically and consider a wider perspective. They gain valuable employability skills, enjoy enhanced mental health, have a better connection with communities and become agents of change.
- **Institutions** benefit because a culture of active citizenship contributes to the sense that an institution has a wider role to play in society whether locally, nationally or internationally.
- **Society** benefits from engaged and community-focused members of society who contribute to the public good.

The report helpfully provides a Charter for Active Citizenship for the higher education sector, with 6 pillars. The Charter is intended to act as a signpost highlighting the active citizenship activity that is currently under way at institutions and in students' unions, and how it can be further supported. The 6 pillars are intended to enable universities to reflect on the practices at their institution and to develop the students of today into the employees, employers, parents, carers, leaders and citizens of tomorrow

Volunteering

- Active citizens contribute to the community through voluntary work. Charities, societies, clubs and public bodies all rely on volunteers, and taking an active role in these organisations fosters citizenship skills that will enable graduates to contribute to public life. Higher education should play a role in supporting volunteering, ensuring that all students have the option to get involved in these opportunities and develop core skills.

Democratic Engagement

- Active citizens have the skills and knowledge to participate in political life. Active citizens engage with democratic processes at a local and national level and seek to participate in ways that they think will improve society. As a formative experience, higher education has a large role to play, not only in fostering and encouraging democratic engagement, but also in appropriately questioning received wisdom and process.

Environmental Sustainability

- Active citizens of today understand that their actions affect the citizens of tomorrow. Higher education has a large role to play in developing citizens who understand the natural environment and are inclined to act sustainably. This will include supporting research designed to tackle key issues such as sustainable energy and food production, and in the cultivation of students as citizens who understand the sustainability challenges facing society.

Community Engagement

- Active citizens work with their local communities to collaborate and problem solve. They contribute to the communities in which they live and work. Developing ways for students to engage effectively with the community develops the skills of citizens to operate effectively in these areas, including an understanding of the local area's tensions, politics and needs.

Global Citizenship

- Active citizens understand that citizenship does not stop at home. They appreciate that actions that occur on a local level have international consequences, and they act accordingly. Higher education has a role to play in the development of students as global citizens who have the knowledge and understanding, relevant skills, and the values and attitudes to meet the demands of globalisation.

Reflection and Development

- Active citizens have the capacity to self-reflect and a commitment to personal development. Active citizens reflect on their experiences and examine the lessons learned, exploring their values, strengths and weaknesses in order to translate these personal attributes into tangible assets for themselves and society.

The report also identifies the significant risk that the increasing marketisation of higher education means active citizenship and its contribution to wider society could be side-lined within higher education institutions. This would be detrimental because promoting active citizenship benefits students, institutions and society. They also note Higher education in the UK is less focused on active citizenship than in other countries such as the US and Singapore, where activities and awareness are more likely to be embedded in institutional life.

The report contains numerous case studies to illustrate how these different types of activity are currently being supported (<https://www.guildhe.ac.uk/blog/active-citizenship-the-role-of-higher-education/>)

Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how have disadvantaged and disengaged young people been successfully encouraged to get involved in social action* or delivering social impact?

Universities play a key role as engines of social mobility: providing opportunities for all members of society, including the disadvantaged and disengaged, to both develop their own life chances, and to contribute actively to society.

However, there remain very considerable challenges in supporting social mobility. We would point to the work of the Social Mobility Advisory Group, whose final report summarises these challenges, and points to the vital role of partnership working in addressing them. The Advisory Group was set up in 2015 at the request of the then Minister of State for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson.

The final report makes a number of recommendations which could helpfully inform the new Civil Society strategy including:

- The establishment of an independent 'Evidence and Impact Exchange' to systematically evaluate and promote the evidence relating to the role of higher education in supporting social mobility and to support the sharing of data from schools through to employers. This will help build greater strategic coherence and coordination between all parties and allow for more effective targeting of interventions at each stage of the student lifecycle.
- A greater focus on outreach activities by universities, colleges and employers to support attainment in schools. This should be supported by a systematic review of the evidence on the impact and effectiveness of these interventions by the Evidence and Impact Exchange.
- Further consideration to be given to developing, strengthening and expanding universities links with schools. The form this takes will depend on institutional mission and local circumstances and should include an evaluation of impact.

- The expansion of datasets to enable universities to assess their work on social mobility, including the development of a shared basket of indicators in relation to socio-economic disadvantage.
- The development of a directory of charitable third sector organisations across the country to enhance school, college, university and employer collaboration.
- <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/working-in-partnership-executive-summary.pdf>

The NCCPE's School-University Partnerships Initiative, funded by RCUK provides an excellent example of how universities' links with schools can be strengthened.

The SUPI programme was funded by RCUK between 2012 and 2016. It was set up to encourage the establishment of long-term school-university partnerships that made a difference to school students, teachers, researchers, and research. There were four key aims:

- to inspire the next generation by bringing research into formal and informal learning contexts;
- to reach secondary school students from a diversity of backgrounds and abilities;
- to provide researchers with opportunities and training to engage with secondary school students;
- to support secondary schools and higher education institutes to work together to create structured, strategic, sustainable and equitable mechanisms for school-university engagement.

As part of the project, the NCCPE produced a literature review of the factors underpinning effective school-university partnerships. This review identified five critical characteristics of successful partnerships. These characteristics, though focused on school-university collaboration, are more widely applicable:

- Power and control: all voices to be heard. Successful partnerships reject a hierarchical approach in which the university dominates and practitioner knowledge is devalued.
- Mind the gap - cultural differences. Successful partnerships often appear to succeed by creating a 'third space' which is separate from the culture of either institution and allows for more creative ways of working.
- The importance of leadership. Partnerships and networks are not naturally self-organising. They require strategic leaders who recognise and prioritise external working of this nature as well as distributed and shared leadership across the boundaries between the partners. Also important are the 'blended professionals' who work across institutional boundaries.
- Strategic relevance and fit. Partnerships work well when there is joined-up coherence and strategic fit. Successful partnerships are often design led and focussed on solving locally defined problems through an enquiry approach: bringing together academic research, practitioner knowledge and priorities, and commercial expertise in a sustained programme of activity. Many partnerships – particularly those focussed on widening

participation - also have an extended membership from the wider community, including parents.

- Material resources: making it happen. Partnerships pose a challenge and have transaction costs - the time, energy and resources necessary to keep the partnership alive and well. Therefore funding is a crucial contributor to partnership success, but partnerships also need to develop strategies to persist in austere times.

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/supi_project_report_final.pdf

The lessons learned from the programme are captured in this publication: School-University Partnerships Lessons from the RCUK-funded School-University Partnerships Initiative

(https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/nccpe_supi_lessons.pdf)

A key outcome from the project was the creation of a Perspectives on Partnership tool. Created by the NCCPE in consultation with the SUPI projects (including researchers, teachers, students, and university staff) this resource is a planning and talking tool to help develop effective partnerships.

https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/nccpe_supi_pop_tool_0.pdf



Partnership

This section explores the best ways to work in partnership across sectors. We are particularly interested in unlocking the full potential of the private and public sector to work with civil society, to create social good and have a positive impact across society.

By working towards shared goals and pooling knowledge and resources, partnerships, old and new, can help to improve outcomes for those in need and grow or replicate solutions that work. At the same time partnerships can help realise efficiencies and unlock new, more innovative delivery models.

Working in partnership

Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how are partnerships across sectors improving outcomes or realising new potential?

A significant amount of the NCCPE's work is focused on supporting partnership working and collaboration, as we are convinced that this is key to improving outcomes and realising new potential. However, while the principle of 'working in partnership' is attractive, in reality it can be very challenging. It can be helpful to differentiate between different purposes and types of partnership working. Across the HE sector, collaborations between HEIs and civil society organisations include:

- Developing communities of practice around a particular issue or challenge (see for instance work at the University of Brighton: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/business-services/community-partnerships/working-with-our-community/index.aspx>)
- Consultancy work
- Networks (like the Centres for Leadership in Applied Health Research, supported by NIHR: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-managed/our-structure/infrastructure/collaborations-for-leadership-in-applied-health-research-and-care.htm>)
- Collaborative projects (for instance, participatory action research projects)

We want to point out here some of the lessons we have learned through a variety of different projects which have sought to improve the quality and impact of partnership working and

collaboration between universities and different sectors. We detail two of the projects below, focussed on partnership working between universities and community organisations and universities and museums. In each case, we identified a range of barriers, but also productive ways to address these, and have developed a range of useful resources which distil these lessons and provide guidance and tools for others to draw on.

THE UK COMMUNITY PARTNER NETWORK

The NCCPE worked with a team of community partners to establish the UK Community partner network in 2012. It started from the recognition that:

- Partnering with universities can help organisations improve what they do and boost the impact they have.
- Community organisations have important things to contribute to what universities do.

The network set out to build resilient community university partnerships that make a difference.

You can find out more about the network here: <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/connect-with-others/uk-community-partner-network>

The network has produced a variety of resources, including a set of principles that all members of such partnerships should aspire to, which are:

- Build a shared understanding of the purpose of the activity/action/project whilst recognising the differing agendas and motivations of those involved
- Recognise and respect each other's expertise
- Set out well-defined roles and responsibilities, and clear timelines for all involved
- Create an environment of transparency and honesty
- Provide timely updates and inclusion in project progress, throughout the project cycle
- Maintain open channels of communication, with nominated contacts at each organisation
- Discuss areas of difference in constructive ways
- Reflect on the partnership throughout the process and bring to the table any issues which could affect the relationship:

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/principles_of_practice_for_cups.pdf

THE STFC/NCCPE WONDER MATCH PROGRAMME

Funded by the Science and Technologies Facilities Council (STFC), Wonder Match supports community organisations and researchers working on STFC-funded projects to create collaborations to engage diverse audiences with research. The specific focus is to encourage engagement with audiences from the 40% most socioeconomically-deprived areas of the UK, especially 8-13 year olds and their families, by bringing together STFC scientists and engineers who are keen to engage the public with their work, and organisations with expertise in working with underserved audiences. The events support community organisations and researchers to find each other, and to gain a small amount of funding to explore a partnership approach to developing public engagement activities. It is anticipated that some these partnerships will lead to applications for STFC funding through STFC Spark Awards.

THE MUSEUM-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Wonder Match process is based on the NCCPE's successful Museum-University Partnerships programme which developed really effective ways of linking museum staff and researchers through regional 'match' events. The MUPI project was funded through Arts Council England's Museum Resilience Fund.

The MUPI match events were day-long networking events, with equal numbers of museum and university staff. They brought groups of people together to network, and explore potential partnership projects, for which they could then bid for a small amount of development funding (between £100 and £1500). They were carefully facilitated to ensure that there was an equal opportunity for people to participate in the event, irrespective of their organisational home, experiences of partnership, or their confidence in speaking about their work. The approach proved extremely effective at breaking down many of the barriers to museum-university engagement highlighted in the literature.

The NCCPE has now published a guide to how design and run similar Match Events:

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/nccpe-projects/museum-university-partnership-initiative>

We strongly recommend this approach as a way to maximise the potential of partnership working.

Which of the following factors are the most important to enable more impactful partnership working across sectors?

(Please rank up to three choices in order of importance, with 1 as the most important, 2 as the second most important and 3 as the third most important)

- _____ Better knowledge of potential partners
- _____ Better understanding of the benefits of partnerships
- _____ Better knowledge of opportunities to work in partnership
- _____ Better understanding of other sectors
- _____ Greater leadership around partnership working
- _____ Ability to prove impact of partnership working
- _____ Making it easier to identify and access funding opportunities to support partnership working
- _____ A common agenda / shared vision and strategy
- _____ Shared values
- _____ Shared measurement practice
- _____ Better skills (e.g. commercial skills, collaborative commissioning practice and social value*) and capacity (e.g. time, resource) to form partnerships

Are there any additional factors that would enable more impactful partnerships across sectors?

All of the above factors need to be taken into account when seeking to support partnership working, depending on the context and purpose.

The NCCPE has brought together a range of resources to support partnership working between universities and other sectors, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/do-engagement/partnership-working>

Considering all of the factors you have discussed in this section, how could these be addressed now and/or in the future? You may want to think about the role of different parties, for example central and local government, charities, businesses, yourself / your organisation and others.

Universities are large and complex institutions, involved in many different types of partnerships, at many different levels and scales. We want to identify some examples of the types of partnerships they are involved in, to demonstrate the diversity of approaches. We see these as useful and effective approaches which help to unlock the value of the university sector for civil society.

We have identified three broad areas which provide powerful models for the future: one is investment in brokerage and networking; another, the establishment of strategic partnerships focused on different outcome areas (economic development, health and arts and culture); the third is the incubation of innovative new methods and approaches to research. These reflect an increasing desire from universities to be 'joined up' and to play an active part in their communities, cities and regions.

EFFECTIVE BROKERAGE & NETWORKING

Universities can be tricky organisations to navigate. This means that 'brokerage' – making it easier to establish contact and build collaborations – is vital. Here are three examples of how this is being done:

- Through professional staff who are skilled and proactive in building powerful partnerships. The NCCPE has established a national network of Public Engagement Professionals, a key part of whose work is to support collaborations between university staff and students and external communities:
<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/professional-development/public-engagement-professionals-network>
- The Community University Partnership Programme Helpdesk: established in 2010, the CUPP Helpdesk at the University of Brighton was set up to help local community, voluntary, social enterprise and statutory organisations access the university research resources and partnership opportunities: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/business-services/helpdesks/index.aspx>

- Through networking events: earlier we described the ‘MUPI Match’ events which the NCCPE has developed to better link museum and university staff. Many universities now routinely run their own networking events, for instance the Creating Connections events at UCL. Creating Connections is organised by the Public Engagement Unit, Volunteering Services and one or more partner organisations. It’s designed to bring UCL staff and postgrads together with social enterprises, residents’ groups, charities and other community organisations: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/creating-connections>.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

There are an increasing array of examples of universities working in long term strategic collaborations with key sectors:

- Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) are one obvious example. All but one of the LEPs has a university represented on the board and many sub committees are chaired by university staff. These reflect the strong commitment from HEIs to contribute to their communities. We expand on this below, the ‘Place’ section
- Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) and Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs) bring together local providers of NHS services with universities, other local organisations and patient representatives, helping to improve patient outcomes locally and across the wider NHS: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-managed/our-structure/infrastructure/collaborations-for-leadership-in-applied-health-research-and-care.htm>
- The North East Culture Partnership brings together practitioners, local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and voluntary organisations across the North East of England to champion, promote and support the arts and heritage sectors in the region and internationally. <http://www.case4culture.org.uk/>
- In Scotland The Scottish Third Sector Research Forum (TSRF), supported by the Scottish Government, brings together a wide range of Scottish stakeholders including academics, third sector and public sector partners <http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/our-work-partners/scottish-third-sector-research-forum/>
- Citizens’ UK and the College of Social Sciences at Birmingham University recently formed a strategic partnership, forming a diverse civil society alliance of education, community, trade union and faith-based organisations in the city committed to using community organising to generate collective power for social change
- <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/socsci/partnerships/citizens-uk/index.aspx>

NEW METHODS AND APPROACHES TO RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

There has been a long tradition of ‘engaged’ research in higher education, going back many decades. Recently, these approaches have become more mainstream, encouraged by an increasing expectation from funders that research funding should realise social benefit, and that researchers should demonstrate accountability. We note three examples below:

- The RCUK Connected Communities Programme, led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, was established to explore how community and university expertise can best be combined to better understand how communities are changing, and the roles that communities might play in responding to the problems and possibilities of the contemporary world. Since 2010, the programme has funded over 300 projects, bringing together over 700 academics and over 500 collaborating organisations on topics ranging from festivals to community food, from everyday creativity to care homes, from hyperlocal journalism to community energy. The lessons learned from the programme are described in the Creating Living Knowledge report: https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Creating-Living-Knowledge.Final_.pdf
- Social Innovation: there are numerous examples of universities investing in social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Social innovation aims to address and improve social outcomes for people through collaboration or co-creation. The innovation may take place in the public, private or charitable sectors, or direct with user communities. One example is the HEFCE funded pilot social innovation fund in 2016-17 which funded six projects bringing together university staff and community partners to address topics such as food poverty; prejudice towards young Muslims and community building (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/sifund/>). As part of its work to support knowledge exchange, HEFCE invested approximately £5 million between 2009 and 2015 in programmes to encourage social entrepreneurship in the English higher education sector. The 2017 report, ‘To what extent has the higher education sector the capacity to support social entrepreneurs?’ identifies a number of areas of strength, including: outreach capabilities to build the pipeline of new social entrepreneurs; start-up support; a cadre of staff with specialist social enterprise knowledge; and expertise in building partnerships and collaboration. <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2018/entrepreneurs/>
- Patient and Public Involvement in research: there is an increasing commitment to involving the public more actively in health and social care research. Such work provides a powerful example of how people from across civil society can be brought together, with common purpose, to develop better quality services and decision making. INVOLVE define public involvement in research as research being carried out ‘with’ or ‘by’ members of the public rather than ‘to’, ‘about’ or ‘for’ them. This includes, for example, working with research funders to prioritise research, offering advice as members of a project steering group, commenting on and developing research materials, undertaking interviews with research participants. When using the term ‘public’ they include patients, potential patients, carers and people who use

health and social care services as well as people from organisations that represent people who use services. <http://www.invo.org.uk/>

The funding and financing environment

The funding and financing environment that supports the work of the voluntary and community sector has changed significantly in recent times. For example charities' income from government in the form of grants has declined, whilst contract income has increased. For some parts of civil society income from trading is playing a much greater role. Technology is also making it possible to find funding in new ways, for example crowdfunding, online fundraising platforms and tools that seek to bring together funders with projects.

Reflecting on your own experience, or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, what does an effective pool of funding and financing as well as income opportunities for the voluntary and community sector look like?

We would point to the written evidence submitted to the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement, 2016-17, by the ESRC Funded Imagine Project, and which was referenced in the final report, The Ties that Bind. The vital role of community development officers and small development grants was noted in the final report:

'342. Key support for disadvantaged groups can be supplied by community development officers employed by local authorities to build working relationships with community groups, local residents and voluntary organisations, and to encourage and support community action. The Imagine Project, a five-year ESRC project exploring how and why people participate in civic and public life, underlined the importance of community development workers and pointed out that local authorities were cutting back on support—no doubt more so in those areas of low social capital where they are needed most. They suggested that the Government should provide funding which "could take the form of small development grants that are 'light touch' in terms of review and which encourage experimental development projects.'

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldcitizen/118/118.pdf>

Their full response can be accessed here:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/citizenship-and-civic-engagement-committee/citizenship-and-civic-engagement/written/69778.html>

More details of the Imagine project can be found here:

<http://www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/>

Where is there the potential for changes to the funding and financing environment to better support the work of the voluntary and community sector, for example increasing the use of new models of funding, use of technology and/or changes to current funding practice?

A key challenge in developing purposeful collaborations between universities and the voluntary and community sector is that developing such partnerships takes time; the funding that is currently available is limited; in many cases, the funding is directed at one community (e.g. to fund researchers; or to fund community organisations) but rarely at both. This can seriously limit the quality of collaborations that emerge.

A number of recent strategic research programmes have sought to address these challenges by actively encouraging collaborative approaches, for instance by:

- Making funding available for development work and partnership development, before larger pots of money are bid for
- Ensuring that community partners' time can be costed into proposals, as Co-investigators, acknowledging their vital contribution and the need to recompense their involvement
- Encouraging the use of participatory research methods
- Ensuring that investment in vital infrastructure and capability in civil society organisations – e.g. community development workers – is maintained

We would recommend that these practical suggestions inform the future Civil Society strategy. We provide more details of the findings and recommendations which underpin them below.

Imagine was a large five-year Economic and Social Research Council project (2013-17) funded through the Research Councils UK Connected Communities programme ([Grant number ES/K002686/2](#)). The project involved university researchers from a range of disciplines working together with a variety of community organisations across the United Kingdom to explore why and how people participate in civic and public life. The research has foregrounded the importance of community development, community activism, and arts and humanities approaches to civic engagement. In recent written evidence to the House of Lords Committee they made 3 key points:

- *Co-produced research is important. We use the term 'co-production' to describe methodologies that are collaborative, participatory and democratic and which try to access hidden or otherwise absent voices in civic life. Co-producing research has enabled us*

to develop methodologies that include voices and perspectives that uncover different forms of engagement, whether this be with groups of Muslim women, young people, people with complex needs or diverse groups within community settings. Community research teams are an essential part of this as they are able to set priorities that are important to them.

- *Funding should be made available for open ended, experimental projects that make use of creative arts and a multiplicity of methodologies to encourage dialectical thinking. This can include groups researching hidden histories, artistic and visual understandings of engagement, including poetry, visual and relational art and approaches that rest on creating spaces for dialogue and communities of practice.*
- *Community development support is essential. Local authorities are cutting back but there needs to be staff supporting community projects and initiatives, regardless of whether or not there is a co-production partner such as a University.*

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/citizenship-and-civic-engagement-committee/citizenship-and-civic-engagement/written/69778.html>

These issues were also identified and addressed in two reports produced as part of the RCUK funded Connected Communities programme. The 'Universities, Cities and Communities: Co-creating Urban Living' report concluded that: 'funding for partnership building and networking alongside longer-term project-based funding is required to enable the development of sustainable and transformative research collaborations'. <https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Universities-Cities-Communities-Co-creating-Urban-Living-Spreads.pdf>

This was explored in more detail in the '**Creating Living Knowledge**' report, which identified a number of recommendations for funders, which we would like to see informing the new Civil Society strategy. They include:

- Enhance the infrastructure for high quality collaborative research partnerships, for instance by investing in professional services to better support collaborative research
- Recognise that time is to collaborative research what a supercomputer is to big data, for instance by extending (the same) funding over longer time scales, and re-balancing funding for partnerships and projects
- Take explicit steps to mitigate the risk of enhancing inequalities through collaborative research, for instance by making explicit efforts to understand and address the barriers that prevent different minority groups from contributing to research projects.
- Invest in civil society's public learning infrastructure by establishing a new funding programme open to civil society organisations resourced by a combination of RCUK and the larger charitable trusts and foundations

[https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Creating-Living-Knowledge.Final .pdf](https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Creating-Living-Knowledge.Final.pdf)

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO FUNDING

The last recommendation has now been addressed with the launch of the Community-University Partnerships Initiative, which is being coordinated by the NCCPE and is funded by AHRC and Power to Change, the independent trust that supports and develops community businesses in England: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/news/community-organisations-partner-academics-success/>

CUPI supports community organisations (including community businesses, charities, social enterprises, and voluntary organisations) and university researchers to create trusting and useful research collaborations which benefit all those involved. CUPI is an England wide initiative which if successful hopes to roll out across the UK. Up to 80 community organisations will be matched with academics through workshops in Bristol, Manchester, Newham and Birmingham in 2018.

The project utilizes the 'matching' process piloted successfully as part of the NCCPE's Museum-University Partnership Initiative described earlier in our response, day-long networking events which facilitate partnership development.

Partnered community organisations and researchers have access to grants worth up to £1000 to fund 'thinking time' and up to £5000 to develop their project. Aimed at representatives from community organisations and universities who are keen to build new longstanding partnerships, the events provide an interactive opportunity to explore research ideas and access seed corn funding. The funded partnerships might seek to: assess the value of a community business; support business development; understand community needs; develop evidence based interventions; apply research in practice etc.

<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/nccpe-projects/community-university-partnership-initiative>

RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY HERITAGE

A final example of such collaborative funding is the **Research for Community Heritage project**, which was a unique partnership between the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), facilitated by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE). The HLF ran a small grants scheme to support community groups to run community heritage projects. As part of the Connected Communities programme, the AHRC funded 18 research organisations to help their researchers work more closely with these community groups. The project recognised the wealth of expertise, enthusiasm and knowledge of all project partners:

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/completed-projects/research-community-heritage>.

This collaborative funding approach continues in the current World War One Engagement Centres, supported by both HLF and AHRC:

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/worldwaroneanditslegacy/worldwaroneengagementcentres/>

Which of the following factors are the most important in strengthening the funding and financing environment in the future?

(Please rank up to three choices in order of importance, with 1 as the most important, 2 as the second most important and 3 as the third most important)

_____ Making it easier to bring together civil society with potential funders

_____ More skills training for civil society

_____ Raising awareness of new funding models

_____ Stronger collaboration between funders

_____ Improved funding practices by funders

_____ Increased use of technology to support fundraising

Are there any additional changes that would improve the funding and financing environment for the voluntary and community sector?

We would emphasise the vital importance of skilled 'brokerage' to help different parties within civil society find each other and come together to develop productive partnerships. Our experience has taught us that this isn't just about better signposting. Skilled facilitation is needed if people working in different areas of civil society and sectors of society are to be supported to better understand each other's worlds, priorities, ways of working and types of expertise. This is exactly the kind of function that the NCCPE's 'match' events seek to support, and which many universities are now investing in.

A good example of the latter is the University of Bath's Community Matters programme brokered relationships between 15 researchers and 15 community partners in the design and delivery of 5 community based participatory projects. Alongside the projects, the programme involved a series of 7 training workshops and 3 events that brought academics and community partners together to develop shared skills (e.g. measuring impact from their projects; developing infographics) and to reflect on the process of collaboration, on the challenges and benefits. This approach attuned those involved to how they were developing both personally and professionally, alongside the benefits arising for service users from the projects themselves. Community Matters was co-designed with the South West Foundation,

ensuring the community voice was built in from the outset: <https://www.the-foundation.org.uk/community-research/>

Funders like ESRC and AHRC are also increasingly interested in facilitating such connections.

We recommend strongly that the Civil Society Strategy factors the need for such brokerage, facilitation and development work into its proposals.

Considering all the changes you discussed in this section, how could these changes be implemented now and/or in the future? You may want to think about the role of different parties, for example central and local government, independent funders, charities, businesses, yourself / your organisation and others.

The fundamental point that needs to be made is that, if universities are to play an active role in their communities, this work will need to be funded. Investing in building relationships; in providing accessible routes for people outside the sector to engage with staff and students; and providing development funding to incubate new projects – all of these things require investment.

Notwithstanding the various challenges we have identified in previous answers, it is encouraging that there already exist a number of routes by which such funding can be accessed by universities. For instance, when applying for research grants from the UK research councils, researchers are expected to submit 'Pathways to Impact' statements in which they outline who has a stake in their research, how they might benefit from it, and what activities the research team will invest in to seek to maximise that potential. Greater encouragement should be given to researchers co-produce projects with partners and subsequently to draw down funds for these purposes. Peer reviewers of pathways to Impact statements also need more support to judge excellence in this area. Universities are also awarded strategic 'Quality Related' (QR) funding on the basis of their contribution to the three elements of research assessed in the REF, which provides them with strategic funding to invest in such activities

In England, the HE Innovation Fund (HEIF) also provides vital strategic funding to invest in developing collaborative work. Currently universities are encouraged to use this to invest in a variety of mechanisms to support business and community interaction, including:

- Facilitating the research exploitation process (non-technology transfer)
- Commercialisation (technology transfer, including spin-outs and licensing)
- Skills and human capital development
- Knowledge sharing and diffusion
- Supporting the community and public engagement
- Enterprise education and entrepreneurship

- Exploiting the HEI's physical assets

It is vital that this breadth continues to be encouraged (and that the funding isn't limited to commercialisation and tech transfer). HEIF is currently allocated on the basis of performance and the approval of a knowledge exchange strategy, with a number of HEIs failing to reach the cutoff point. There is a strong case to be made for this kind of innovation funding to be available to all HEIs, to provide the necessary investment in infrastructure to support productive interactions with civil society.

The recent announcement of the development of a KEF (Knowledge Exchange Framework) for the university sector could provide an opportunity to consider, holistically, how the various investments in university's knowledge building activities align to generate social value (through research, knowledge exchange, teaching, widening participation and community engagement). The NCCPE's response to the recent consultation on KEF metrics expands on this, and explains how the KEF might be developed to provide such intelligence about universities' interactions with civil society. We would like to see the Civil Society Strategy recognising the potential of the KEF as a tool to help provide recognition of ways in which universities are contributing to civil society, not just to the economy:

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/kef_metrics_call_for_evidence_nccpe_response.pdf

Lastly, we are encouraged that the newly formed UK Research and Innovation is committed to developing new approaches to support partnership working and to incentivise and encourage public engagement, as detailed in their recently launched strategic prospectus:

<https://www.ukri.org/files/about/ukri-strategy-document-pdf/?pdf=Strategic-Prospectus>



Place

This section explores how to enable more people, service providers, voluntary and community organisations, businesses, including social enterprises*, and public sector institutions to work together to make the places they care about brilliant places to live and work in. In particular we are interested in exploring:

- how to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose
- how to build strong local public services that respond to the needs of communities and draw on the talents of diverse people and organisations from across different sectors

By focusing on the place as a starting point communities are better able to take charge of their own futures, speak for themselves and build social capital. This is about local and central government and other institutions responsibly moving from a 'top down' to a more 'bottom up' way of doing things - devolving power and decision making to local people, without stepping away entirely and leaving communities to it without any support.

Devolution/localism

Reflecting on your own experience or examples in the UK or abroad, how have local people, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and decision makers worked together successfully to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose?

We want to provide three examples of how universities are working together successfully in their communities, cities and regions. As mentioned earlier, this has become an increasing focus of attention for university leaders, staff and students and for funders. Recently, the phrase 'anchor institution' has gained traction in the sector, as a way of capturing how universities contribute in a very distinctive way to their cities and regions. Developed in the US, the anchor concept describes institutions which alongside their main function, play a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy. Anchor institutions share a number key characteristics:

- **Spatial immobility:** these organisations have strong ties to the geographic area in which they are based through invested capital, mission and relationship to customers and employees

- **Size:** anchor institutions tend to be large employers and have significant purchasing power. Both these factors influence the level of impact these institutions can have on the local economy
- **Non-profit:** these institutions tend to operate not-for-profit; it is much simpler for private businesses to move, meaning there is no guarantee they will continue serving the local community in the long-term. However, there are examples of for-profit organisations playing the role of an anchor.

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY (DMU) SQUARE MILE PROJECT

Our first example is the DMU Square Mile volunteering programme. Launched in 2011, the project is at the heart of De Montfort University Leicester (DMU)'s mission to create positive change across Leicester. The programme began in a 'square mile' area of the city and following its success, in 2016 the university formed a unique partnership with Leicester City Council to create #DMUlocal, to grow this activity and work alongside communities, schools, charities and organisations across the city to help tackle issues raised by people living and working in Leicester. In 2017/18 more than 2,800 students volunteered, contributing more than 33,000 hours' worth of support to communities.

It includes:

- Raising aspirations of local school children, through mentoring schemes, maths competitions and paired reading. In one school a child's reading age increased by three years in one term thanks to his regular DMU volunteer reading buddy.
- Improving health outcomes. Students volunteer to visit, shop and cook for Macmillan patients and run regular diabetes screenings which have enabled hundreds of people to take better control of their health.
- Transforming spaces across the city. Thanks to #DMUlocal, the city now boasts four free arts clubs for children and families in different parts of Leicester. Regular clean-ups target areas of the city nominated by residents, and students help community groups to create pop-up events and shops in empty shop spaces.

Both students and staff contribute their time and talents to #DMUlocal. Working on these innovative projects not only provides students with a unique opportunity to put the knowledge they learn on their degree course into practice and strengthen their CV, it also enriches their lives and forms relationships which last beyond their university experience.

Website: <http://dmulocal.dmu.ac.uk/>

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social responsibility is one of the three core strategic goals in the University of Manchester's strategic plan, sitting equally alongside their commitments to world-class research, and outstanding learning and student experience.

Their commitment is to pursue change across five priority areas:

- Research with impact: their research is making a positive difference to society, addressing the major challenges of the 21st century.
- Socially responsible graduates: their ethical grand challenges enable their undergraduates to tackle and understand problems relating to equality and diversity, sustainability, ethics and social justice. They also encourage all Manchester students to participate in activities such as volunteering and to undertake diverse roles of responsibility among their peers and in the wider community.
- Engaging our communities: their events and activities are harnessing the university's knowledge, resources and visitor attractions for the benefit of our communities.
- Responsible processes: their processes are balancing efficiency with opportunities to create social and environmental benefit.
- Environmental sustainability: their research, teaching and activities are guided by a commitment to environmental sustainability.

Their 'Measuring the Difference' impact report (2016/17) provides convincing evidence of their impact across a number of dimensions. One example is their School Governor initiative. This pioneering programme engages University staff and alumni in making a difference to the leadership across hundreds of state schools. By combining the efforts of staff and their extensive alumni the university has supported state schools with more new governors than any other UK employer. Schools where University staff are governors have also received higher than average inspection ratings, with many citing the quality of governance as being particularly notable. <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=32801>

LEADING PLACES PROGRAMME

A third example is the Leading Places Programme, a joint programme to build and transfer best practice in collaborative leadership between combined or local authorities, universities and other local anchor institutions. The programme is owned by the Local Government Association, with support from the Higher Education Funding council for England (HEFCE).

In many places formal and informal relations already exist between universities and their civic partners. But common institutional barriers and related challenges often make working in partnership harder.

The Leading Places Programme uses Action Learning Partnerships (ALPs) to design and deliver practical solutions to priority challenge themes identified by local senior leadership groups. The issues chosen are ones where the existing knowledge base in local universities is inherently strong. An interim evaluation of the project identified some significant achievements:

- Provided a framework to take forward shared opportunities and challenges, and to identify practical ideas and actions
- Encouraged place-based local partnerships and leadership

- Senior leaderships stimulated creativity and innovation and helped to build momentum within projects
- Evidence of local leadership at all levels of institutions and actors
- Local leadership groups worked well when based on existing collaborations, but also evidence of Leading Places being catalytic
- Genuine optimism about the sustainability of local partnerships

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Local,growth/Interim_Evaluation_Leading_Places_Phase_1_Peter_O_Brien_HEFCE.pdf

Public services

Civil society is involved in our public services in a variety of ways - from delivering public services with or on behalf of public sector organisations, investing in solutions to complex public service problems, providing supplementary preventative services or when people have a say in shaping the type of services that they receive. Through its participation in public services, civil society is well-placed to create social value*, i.e. social, economic and environmental benefits to society.

Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how have local public services successfully responded to the needs of communities?

Throughout our response we have provided examples of the various ways in which universities are contributing to improved interactions between communities, local public services and other key actors in civil society. For almost any challenge – like supporting more responsive local public services – there are tools, methods and evaluations to draw on. One example relevant to this question is work in the field of design to support participation in public services, such as the ‘Leapfrog Project: Transforming public sector engagement by design’ at the University of Lancaster:

http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Leapfrog_transforming_public_sector_engagement_design. There is a useful toolkit and other resources accessible here, to enable others to improve their engagement of communities in public service decision making:

<http://leapfrog.tools/about/>

So what conditions are necessary for this kind of work to thrive, which could be reflected in the Civil society strategy?

We would point again to the report, ‘InterAction: how can academics and the third sector work together to influence policy and practice’, which we referenced in the first section. This provides a useful overview of how universities, policymakers and public and third sector organisations can work together for mutual benefit. It emphasizes the vital importance of building skills, capabilities and cultures of collaboration if the promise of joined up, purposeful working is to be realised. This is exactly the function which ‘bridging’ organisations like the NCCPE seek to deliver.

The RCUK Urban Living Partnerships and Connected Communities programmes have also both generated rich examples and insights in this area. These projects came together to publish the report 'Universities, Cities and Communities: Co-creating Urban Living' to examine how can cities engage with their citizens to address longstanding issues and open up new possibilities? It provides case studies and recommendations for building partnerships across universities, local government, civil society and communities, and demonstrates the value of Arts and Humanities practice and research in setting new agendas. Key recommendations include:

For universities working at a city-scale

- Research findings related to the city need to be made more easily, accessibly and widely available to local communities and stakeholders perhaps through publicly accessible city-focused research events as well as online.
- There is a key role for universities in developing community and civic research skills; this could be developed as part of widening participation agendas.
- Flexible, responsive and trusting partnerships with partner organisations requires long-term commitments beyond the project funding model; universities need to identify how they might support and sustain partnerships at an institutional level for the longer term.
- Arts-based and creative practice can play a critical role in building partnerships, reframing research questions and generating novel research data.
- There is a need for universities to work with local government and civil society to create opportunities to actively promote and share the research that is already happening in a local area.

For civil society and community organisations:

- Have greater confidence in their own expertise and local knowledge. This means being confident to ask for sufficient resourcing to cover their involvement in projects and ensuring that partners are aware of the expertise involved in developing long-term community relationships.
- Develop a more proactive approach to contesting passive forms of citizen consultation, with the aim of challenging top-down policies and becoming active co-creators of urban services.
- Work with universities and local government to create opportunities to actively promote and share the research that is already happening in a local area.

For local government and city authorities:

- Consider using more creative and arts-based methods to diversify and expand the range of participation in consultation at all stages of public policy development.
- Defend accessible and inclusive public spaces as important resources for the development of citizen voice, democracy and informal public engagement/ consultation.

- Work with universities and civil society to create opportunities to actively promote and share the research that is already happening in a local area.

https://connected-communities.org/index.php/project_resources/universities-cities-communities-co-creating-urban-living-report/

If these recommendations are followed, what can happen as a result? We want to conclude by pointing to two examples from the city of Newcastle, a city with a very long history of supporting civic engagement.

Part of their success is down to their long term investment and support for research groups with a commitment to generating better understanding of civil society and to tackling societal issues. For example the Institute for Social Renewal at Newcastle University explores how 'communities and individuals thrive in turbulent times' and has an active research programme, workshop and event series and a number of partnerships with external stakeholders.

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/socialrenewal/>

Arising from this long standing commitment has been The Newcastle City Futures project, led by Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones which has brought citizens together with university researchers, local authorities and partners from business and the third sector to help tackle issues and ensure the continued prosperity of Newcastle and Gateshead. This began with a Foresight study of Newcastle 2065 and a small exhibition on Newcastle City Futures sponsored by the Institute for Social Renewal, leading then to the Urban Living Partnership investment by the seven UK Research Councils and the government's innovation agency, Innovate UK. The £1.2m ULP – named Newcastle City Futures – is led by Newcastle University working with Northumbria University, and includes representatives from local government, businesses and community sectors. It has generated more than 100 'quadruple helix' projects. Details may be found at <http://www.newcastlecityfutures.org/>