ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
2010-2013

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on behalf of the
Engagement Strategy Development Group

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Executive Summary

Introduction and context
The University's vision, mission and values have been established in the Strategic Review ‘Vision 2021’. This Engagement Strategy determines priorities and activities for realising these in the particular context of its interactions with wider society. The Engagement Strategy will be an important means by which we will fulfil our institutional vision of “Newcastle University as a civic university with a global reputation for academic excellence”, which aims (inter alia) “to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England”. Engagement is the interaction of the University with the civil society to which it belongs. As such, our Engagement Strategy Vision is to develop Newcastle University as “an exemplar of global best practice in the interaction of a research-intensive civic university with civil society”.

Engagement is far from being a novel concept at Newcastle University. Rather, this Strategy builds on a rich and long-established portfolio of existing engagement practice which provides a sound base for future development. Engagement covers a broad spectrum of activity, ranging from individual contributions through community involvement (eg as a school governor) to major initiatives of global relevance that extend far beyond our city and region. An important underpinning principle is the effective translation and application of our expertise and insights, borne of impactful, engaged work with our communities, in regions throughout the world that face similar challenges.

At the Strategy's heart is the principle that engagement is an integral, embedded part of our teaching, research and service endeavours, rather than a separate, additional strand of activity. We believe that engagement is fundamental to our institutional culture: it is part of the way we do things. In honouring the institutional values established in Vision 2021, we approach our engagement activities in a spirit of ‘open minds / open doors’, manifest in openness, mutuality, humility, integrity and solidarity, in which engagement is seen as a genuinely two-way activity, rather than something that the University delivers to civil society. All of our engagement activities are based on high standards of quality, and seek lasting significance and impact. We believe absolutely that engagement adds value to our academic and service work, rather than detracting (or distracting) from it.

Closely linked to our strategies for Learning, Teaching and the Student Experience, Research and Innovation, Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Positioning, our Engagement Strategy is also set in the context of external drivers:

- The decision that the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) will take account of the impact of research
- The Charities Act 2006, which has led to a renewed emphasis on charitable bodies demonstrating the public benefits achieved in pursuit of their stated charitable purposes.
- The University’s status as leader of Beacon North East, which puts our engagement activities under a national spotlight.

Strategic Engagement Objectives and Key Action Themes
The Objectives of our Engagement Strategy derive from the University’s Strategic Overview, ‘Vision 2021’:

- Attract top talent to settle in the North East
- Develop and implement the concept of Newcastle Science City
- Contribute our facilities, knowledge and skills to support healthy growth of civic and regional culture
- Use our global standing and intellectual capital to influence and inform national and international debate
- Implement strategic partnership initiatives to address major global challenges relating especially to health, wellbeing and sustainable development

The Action Themes, Engagement Practices and Key Performance Indicators associated with these objectives are articulated in detail in the full Strategy document and the accompanying Strategy Map. The
following priority actions give a brief flavour of some of the specific proposals through which the University will seek to realise its Engagement Strategy objectives:

- We will promote the further encouragement of engaged staff by: implementing appropriate recruitment and promotion criteria and staff development opportunities; promoting and celebrating engagement-rich research and teaching practices; encouraging policy work and maximisation of impact, using the Beacon to explore, develop and embed best practices; and introducing ‘Engagement Sabbaticals’ for academic and professional service staff.

- **Students’ citizenship programmes** will help us to celebrate clinical contribution; expand ‘service learning’ modules in degree programmes; and optimise participation in initiatives such as ncl+; SCAN; Student Ambassadors.

- **Education for life** will be promoted through ongoing aspiration-raising programmes such as PARTNERS and the rich range of outreach activities with schools and colleges; and partnership programmes addressing regional prosperity, health and wellbeing. We will introduce ‘Open Chairs’ to support engaged research on critical societal issues. The pursuit of a limited number of Societal Challenge Themes, identified as key strategic objectives in Vision 2021, will foster new research, teaching and engagement collaborations and celebrate impact and influence.

- We will optimise the development and use of engaging spaces on our campus, through initiatives such as Coherent Campus; our investment in the development of the campus; and through key entities such as the Great North Museum; clinical facilities; Culture Lab; Dove Marine Lab; Outreach Labs (including OPAL), Science Central and other spaces.

- The concept of **Cherishing our Neighbours** will underpin much of our activity. A new ‘Public Associates’ scheme will be introduced for voluntary collaborators; Examples of existing activities include: Aphasia Clinic; leading community networks (e.g. Northern Rural Network; United Nations RCE in Education for Sustainable Development etc); the Ten-Point Plan to help the region through recession; and community-based projects fostering inclusion, confidence in identity and appreciation of historical and natural aspects of the environment.

**Making it happen**

A number of enabling factors will be key to the realisation of these plans. It will be necessary to review and implement appropriate staff recruitment, induction, PDR, development and advancement processes and criteria; we will continue our work to develop the service elements of our student curricula and opportunities to foster an engaged student population; there will be implications for budgets, processes, Unit-level strategies, infrastructure and systems; it will be important to optimise the contribution of our engagement activities to the impact measures in the new REF; and we will need to invest in our PR and public affairs capability in order better to communicate our activities and key messages to wider society. Most importantly, however, it will be essential to harness, celebrate and recognise the enthusiasm, expertise and success of our many ‘engagement champions’ with a view to promoting an engagement culture throughout our University community. For this, we need effective internal communication of our strategy and the active support and involvement of our staff, students and alumni.

**First steps**

These documents represent the first articulation of an Engagement Strategy which will necessarily evolve over time. Realisation of all of the Strategy’s aspirations and plans will reflect a significant achievement by our whole University community, and must be implemented in stages. First steps will include the establishment of an Engagement Coordination Panel and Engagement Forum, the development of robust mechanisms for measuring progress and impact, and the production of a costed Action Plan for the first phase of delivery. The Action Plan will clearly articulate priorities for the first phase of delivery and will clarify where specific implementation responsibility lies.

Informed by a wide-ranging institutional survey of existing engagement activity and a literature review and survey of best practice, the Engagement Strategy has been developed by a Development Group comprising engagement experts and enthusiasts drawn from across the University. Further details are included in the attached full version of the Engagement Strategy.
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY MAP

**DEFINITION:** Engagement is the interaction of the University with the civil society to which it belongs.

**VISION:** To be an exemplar of global best practice in the interaction of a research-intensive civic university with civil society.

**MISSION:** To play a leading role in the development of North East England and regions worldwide that face challenges addressed by our research base.

**VALUES:**
1. “Open minds / open doors”: our engagement work will be characterised by openness, mutuality, humility, integrity and solidarity.
2. Engagement means delivering our teaching, research and service activities to achieve beneficial impacts, as part of our institutional culture; it is not a separate ‘third strand’ of activity.

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**STRAIGHT OBJECTIVES**

- **Attract top talent to settle in the North East**
- **Use our global standing and intellectual capital to influence and inform national and international debate**
- **Develop and implement the concept of Newcastle Science City**
- **Contribute our facilities, knowledge and skills to support healthy growth of civic and regional culture**
- **Implement strategic partnership initiatives to address major global challenges relating especially to health, wellbeing and sustainable development**

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**KEY ACTION THEMES**

- **Attracting top talent to settle in the North East:**
  - Stimulate an entrepreneurial culture and the growth of a knowledge-based economy
  - Embed engagement principles in staff recruitment
  - Prioritise diversity, quality and mobility in student recruitment
  - Ensure our marketing is fit for this purpose
  - Actively promote City & region with NGI, ONE etc
  - Recognise and celebrate the talent we already have

- **Realising the Science City concept:**
  - Provide leadership in Science City activities, with a focus on creating wealth and jobs
  - Promote the importance of STEM subjects amongst all age groups in City / region and raise aspirations to encourage progression
  - Embed Science City key messages in our internal and external communications/marketing strategies
  - Increase the number and quality of industry partners

- **Stimulating the healthy growth of regional culture:**
  - Realise full engagement potential of the GNM, Culture Lab, the Public Lectures series and similar activities
  - Successfully implement annual campaigns on institution-wide ‘societal challenge’ themes
  - Building on UN RCE status, develop an ‘economy of hope’ with deprived communities in NE and beyond

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**ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES**

- **Engaged Staff:** e.g. appropriate recruitment and promotion criteria; promoting engagement-rich research and teaching practices; encouraging policy work and maximisation of impact, using the Beacon to explore, develop and embed 'best practices'; Engagement Sabbaticals’ for academic and professional service staff.
- **Students’ Citizenship Programmes:** e.g. celebrate clinical contribution; expand ‘service learning’ modules in degree programmes; ncl+ initiative; SCAN; Student Ambassadors.
- **Educating for Life:** e.g. aspiration-raising and outreach programmes; PARTNERS; partnerships addressing regional prosperity, health and wellbeing; ‘Open Chairs’ on critical societal issues; annual Societal Challenge Themes; new partnerships in lifelong learning, encouraging goodwill University friends (alumni, retired staff, Council / Court members etc).
- **Engaging Spaces:** Coherent Campus; GNM; clinical facilities; Culture Lab; Dove Marine Lab; Outreach Labs; Moorbank (including OPAL) Stephenson Quarter; Science Central etc
- **Cherishing our neighbours:** e.g. ‘Public Associates’ scheme for voluntary collaborators; Aphasia Clinic; leading community networks (e.g. Northern Rural Network; United Nations RCE in Education for Sustainable Development etc); ten-point plan to help region through recession; community-based projects fostering inclusion, confidence in identity and appreciation of historical and natural aspects of the environment.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</th>
<th>ENABLING FACTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attracting top talent to settle in the North East:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- % of staff of international standing appointed and retained</td>
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<td>- Number of staff who are Fellows of national Academies (FRS, FREN, FMedSci, FBA)</td>
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<td>- Percentage of new graduates entering employment or further study in the region</td>
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<td>- HR &amp; student recruitment data on marketing impact</td>
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<td>- Statistics and narratives from annual Enterprise Challenge Awards</td>
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<td>- New businesses and jobs created in the region through University activities</td>
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| Influencing and informing national and international debate: |
| - Numbers of staff holding Member / Fellow status in chartered institutions |
| - Catalogue of major policy documents (Directives, laws, regulations, guidance) to formulation of which staff have contributed (obtain from MyImpacts entries) |
| - Numbers of staff attending important national (e.g. Select Committees) & international forums |
| - Feedback from HR on incidence of policy-related cases for promotion |
| - Cuttings file for news items referencing University’s policy impacts |

| Realising the Science City concept: |
| - Research income and REF impact statements for the NSC Science Themes |
| - Statistics and narratives on commercial involvement in NSC (from annual report of CEO to NSC Board) |
| - Statistics on University enterprise activities |
| - Statistics and user-feedback from STEM outreach activities (e.g. Headstart; elements of PARTNERS) |
| - Cuttings file for internal and external communications referencing Science City |
| - Number of companies with which we have significant collaborative activities |

| Supporting healthy growth of regional culture: |
| - Attendance figures for GNM and Public Lectures & Challenges |
| - Annual statistics and narratives from post-hoc reports to Senate on Societal Challenges Themes campaigns |
| - Annual statistics and narratives on participation of schools and community groups in aspiration-raising activities (RCE, OPAL, Dove and WP activities etc) |
| - Statistics and narratives from annual ncl+ activities (Achievement Awards, Foundation, modules), and SCAN annual reports |
| - Numbers of staff holding statutory positions in public, private and voluntary organisations (e.g. school governors, charity trustees, company directors) |

| Strategic partnership initiatives: |
| - Annual statistics and narratives characterising the clinical contribution of the University |
| - Founding documents and annual reports of regional HIEC |
| - MyImpacts entries and document portfolios (published and unpublished) substantiating contributions to major partnership activities |
| - Annual statistics and narratives on public participation in, and practical progress of, major learning networks with substantial University involvement / leadership |
| - Annual digest of income and achievements of Angel Alliance, and of projects supported by the Regional Special Projects Office |

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<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Procedures / processes / structures</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Appropriate engagement criteria clearly articulated and used in staff recruitment, induction &amp; promotion</td>
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<td>- Enhance Staff Development modules to include engagement-related elements and fostering of appreciation of regional identity and challenges – pilot these using Beacon resources</td>
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<td>- Allow for explicit inclusion of service-related engagement activities in workload models</td>
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<td>- More quality service learning modules &amp; development of accreditation of engagement within the curriculum</td>
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<td>- Student representation in Univ engagement forums</td>
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<td>- Inclusion of key engagement and regional issues in student induction programmes (UG &amp; PG)</td>
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<td>- Harmonious student / local community relations</td>
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<td>- Continued updating of SCAN database and similar information sources on student volunteering etc</td>
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<td>- Celebrate engaged, impactful teaching and research: e.g. prizes, other forms of recognition</td>
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<td>- All academic and service units must include engagement strategies in their strategic plans</td>
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<td>- Encourage collaborative working across boundaries (faculties, schools &amp; services)</td>
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<td>- Ongoing support for “Inreach for Outreach” forum</td>
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<td>- Foster advocacy: empower engagement “champions” internally and externally</td>
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<th>Communication</th>
<th>Financial</th>
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<td>Effectively communicate the Engagement Strategy internally and externally in order to:</td>
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<td>- Engage colleagues to promote an engagement culture</td>
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<td>- Raise consciousness through examples of how Newcastle’s best research schools/institutes tend also to be amongst the most engaged</td>
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<td>- Promote engagement as key to maximising REF impact</td>
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<td>- Foster positive attitudes of Alumni and other friends of the University</td>
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<td>- Raise the University's profile as an exemplar of global best practice in the interaction of a research-intensive civic university with civil society</td>
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<td>- Strategic funding to support novel engagement practices (e.g. Open Chairs; Engagement Sabbaticals)</td>
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<td>- Reviews of Estates and ISS planning to ensure appropriate consideration of engagement in budgeting</td>
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<td>- Extend those mechanisms piloted in ten-point plan which have been shown to build working partnerships, to include community groups</td>
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<td>- Enhance budget provisions to allow proactive PR</td>
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<td>- Sponsorship of regional events &amp; organisations</td>
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<th>University Engagement Coordination Panel (ECP)</th>
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<td>Efficient data capture for updating engagement survey: preferably via MyImpacts</td>
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<td>Review procedures for novel engagement approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish benchmark indicators for engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent commitment to rapid communication of key issues and developments in engagement:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Internal: web portal; annual events at Faculty level</td>
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<tr>
<td>- External: public opinion surveys; public events; free training for community leaders / Public Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic links and synergies with key University strategies, eg Strategic Positioning and Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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1. Strategic Context

1.1. Engagement and ‘Vision 2021’

During Academic Year 2008-09, the University underwent a thorough strategic review process, resulting in the publication of a strategic vision document entitled ‘Vision 2021’. This document specifies the vision, mission and values for the University, with which all daughter strategies must be harmonious.

Of particular relevance to the University’s engagement agenda is the institutional vision of “Newcastle University as a civic university with a global reputation for academic excellence”, which aims (inter alia) “to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England”. The latter aim, which constitutes the third line of the University’s mission statement, is a particularly bold aspiration for any university; certainly this commitment to regional development is unusual in the Russell Group. The values of the University embrace “social responsibility and transparency” and aspire to “value diversity ... respond to societal challenges ... educate for life” and to be “globally ambitious and regionally rooted”.

The Engagement Strategy set out in this document aims to establish priorities and activities for realising the University’s vision, mission and values in the particular context of its interactions with the wider society of which it forms a part. This, indeed, provides the definition of engagement upon which the Strategy is based:

Engagement is the interaction of the University with the civil society to which it belongs.

The phrase ‘civil society’ is used here in accordance with the definitions offered by the Carnegie UK Trust’s Democracy and Civil Society Programme, which emphasises three particular meanings (not mutually exclusive) which are accorded to the term in different contexts:

1. “A good society”: a vision (or ‘goal’) of how we would like society to be.
2. “Associational life”: an array of individuals and organisations (voluntary, public, governmental and private) providing the means of achieving this ‘good society’.
3. “Arenas for deliberation”: a framework for collaborative deliberation on a ‘good society’ and ‘associational life’.

The concept of civil society as ‘Associational Life’, the ‘Good Society’ and ‘the Public Sphere’ is further explored in Civil Society [Michael Edwards, Polity Press, 2009].

The development of this Engagement Strategy has been based on a wide-ranging survey of existing engagement activity within the University, and on a critical review of global best practice. Drafting of the Strategy has been based on the deliberations of a ‘task-and-finish’ Development Group, comprising relevant Deans and engagement experts and enthusiasts from throughout the University. Valuable external comments and perceptions have also been provided by lay members.

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¹ Only about half of the Russell Group universities have formal mission statements. While several of these talk of ‘dissemination to’ or ‘benefit to’ society in general, only two include engagement aspirations which express a similar level of commitment to that of Newcastle: Glasgow aims to “sustain and add value to Scottish culture and society”, while Queens “fully embraces its leadership role in Northern Ireland and beyond”.

of Council and a number of others who have volunteered their input and advice. (See Appendix A for list of members and contributors).

1.2. External Drivers

Further strategic context for this Engagement Strategy is provided by certain external drivers, of which three are currently of particular importance:

(i) The decision that the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) will weight the ‘impact’ of research at between 20% and 30% of the grade for a given Unit of Assessment. As impact (social, economic, cultural) does not just happen, and cannot usually be successfully appended a posteriori, engagement ab initio is an enabler for realising impactful research.

(ii) The renewal of charities legislation, by the enactment of the Charities Act 2006, which has resulted in a renewed emphasis on charitable bodies demonstrating the public benefits which they achieve in pursuit of their stated charitable purposes. For the Higher Education sector in England, the regulator of compliance with the Charities Act is HEFCE; increasingly they are asking penetrating questions arising from this particular duty. Truly engaged universities have nothing to fear from these developments.

(iii) The University’s status as leader of Beacon North East, (with Durham University and the International Centre for Life) one of the six national pilot ‘Beacons for Public Engagement’ in the HE sector which were established in response to HEFCE’s drive to establish a co-ordinated approach to recognising, rewarding and building capacity for public engagement. Although a project of modest resources and restricted scope, our leadership role in a Beacon gives engagement activities at Newcastle University unusually high visibility and raises expectations of wider success in engagement.

1.3. Engagement Vision, Mission and Values

The Executive Summary (Pages iii – iv) and the Engagement Strategy Map summarise the overarching rationale for the Engagement Strategy together with the Vision, Mission and Values underpinning Newcastle University’s engagement activities. Further elaboration of these is provided here.

Closely reflecting the University’s institutional vision, the vision for engagement seeks to develop Newcastle University as “an exemplar of global best practice in the interaction of a research-intensive civic university with civil society”. In other words, we aspire to develop and hone significant elements of our world-class research and teaching capabilities in the laboratory of everyday life as experienced in our home city, region and further afield. Since the laws of physics apply everywhere, and since Homo sapiens is a single species worldwide, it need be no surprise that the particular challenges which face society in North East England are replicated in many places worldwide. Drawing on data and syntheses provided by the North East Regional Information Partnership (NERIP), issues of particular concern include the following:

- The social, medical and economic pressures arising from the population with the most rapidly increasing average age of any English region
- Significant cultural and economic pressures that adversely affect the aspirations and ambitions amongst the young, and are reflected in low levels of enterprise amongst adults
- The region’s low proportion of jobs requiring high-level skills
- Major inequalities in health associated with variations in social context (including poor diet, high rates of alcoholism, drugs and smoking)
- Excessive reliance of the regional economy on a few large ‘branch plants’
- Failure to redeploy transferrable skills from former industries into growth sectors

Clearly a comprehensive University such as ours is particularly well-equipped to respond to such issues. ‘Challenges’ are often also opportunities, and there are many positive attributes of North East England upon which future prosperity and happiness may be based. These include:

- The lowest population density in England, which in turn means:
  - lower land and house prices than in much of England
  - minimal traffic congestion compared to other conurbations
  - excellent quality of life for people with adequate employment
  - unspoilt coastal and rural landscapes of high tourism appeal and attractive for business and residential relocation
- The most vibrant and distinctive regional culture in England, manifest in a high degree of associational activity (e.g. social, sporting and musical pursuits) and a thriving cultural sector
- Abundant natural resources (especially water, forestry, and (particularly offshore) wind and coal)
- Persistent strength in the real economy: the North East is the only English region which still exports more than it imports
- A global reputation for successful culture-led regeneration, providing a model which is being widely copied elsewhere
- Some of the UK’s best medical treatment facilities

Newcastle University is itself one of the region’s principal assets. Our international links provide an ideal platform for extending our influence worldwide on both the positive and negative issues which we can address by proactive engagement in our home region.

This aspiration is further reflected in the engagement mission, which seeks to fulfil the institutional commitment to “play a leading role in the development of North East England”, addressing economic, social and cultural dimensions, whilst also addressing the concerns of “regions worldwide that face challenges addressed by our research base”. In this context, the Engagement Strategy articulates closely with the University’s emerging Internationalisation Strategy - indeed, all of our core engagement objectives have resonance in the context of internationalisation. In particular, fulfilment of this Engagement Strategy will demand that at least some of our international partnerships be purposely established in regions of the world which have experienced, or face, similar challenges, and / or have similar aspirations.

In identifying the underpinning values for our engagement activities, the starting point for this strategy are the institutional values expressed in Vision 2021, with which all of our activities must be consistent. When focusing on how to live out these values in the particular context of interactions with civil society, we draw upon a thorough literature review of global best practice in university-society engagement commissioned by Newcastle University, which revealed that the most effective civic universities approach their engagement activities with a suite of values amongst which the following are prominent:
- **Openness**: We perceive the University as learning community, and we wish to make the boundaries of this community more permeable than has hitherto been the case.

- **Mutuality**: Our approach to engagement recognises that we have much to learn from the society to which we belong, as well as much to contribute. We see engagement as a genuine two-way activity rather than something which the University delivers to civil society.

- **Humility**: We recognise that the University has no monopoly on knowledge, and that it is often less endowed with experiential learning than many others.

- **Integrity**: If our engagement is to be credible, we need to display consistency between what we say and what we do.

- **Solidarity**: we will give particular priority to working with under-privileged and marginalised people to address the circumstances, structures and social relationships which hinder their advancement.

We summarise this suite of values in the phrase “**open minds / open doors**”, and note their consistency with our over-arching institutional values of social responsibility and transparency, valuing of diversity and responding to societal challenges. Engagement practices must be underpinned by an unflinching commitment to academic excellence. The values on which our Engagement Strategy are based will find further expression in the forthcoming **Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy** and in the **Strategic Positioning Strategy**, both of which are closely linked to this Engagement Strategy and share many fundamental principles.

The Newcastle University literature review has been enthusiastically adopted and promoted by the [Talloires Network](https://www.talloires.com) (an international network of educational organisations that espouse and demonstrate the values of engagement). By virtue of our membership of the Talloires Network, the University subscribes to its stated values:

- Respect for mutual learning between institutions of higher education and communities
- The application of standards of excellence to community engagement work
- The aspiration for diversity in our approach to civic engagement
- Empowerment of individuals and groups to strengthen relationships between higher education and society
- Scholarly recognition of the value of service and action in teaching and research

The approach to engagement which has emerged at Newcastle University eschews the language of a “third strand” or “third mission”. In our view, engagement should not be seen as an additional task to our teaching and research, but rather as a critical, intrinsic approach to how we undertake our principal tasks of teaching, research and service activities. When we research or teach in an engaged manner, we work with others from the start to ensure that our activities are appropriately planned to deliver beneficial impacts. As such, there are clear links between this Engagement Strategy and the University’s [Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltse) and [Research and Innovation Strategy](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research). The Engagement Strategy also sets the context for our emerging Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy and aspects of our approach to Strategic Positioning. The Strategy also promotes and harmonises with the mature policies and practices of those units within the University which provide specific services to industry and society. Prominent amongst these are the following:

- The Faculty of Medical Sciences’ [Clinical Deanery](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/medicine) and [Newcastle Biomedicine](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/biomedicine) brand, which integrates numerous engagement activities with NHS partners, for instance through the [Institute of Health and Society](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ios) and the world-leading engagement-informed research of the [Institute for Ageing and Health](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/iah)
• The cluster of **teaching, speech and language services** based in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, most notably the Literacy Clinic, the North East Aphasia Centre, the Centre for Learning and Teaching and the North Leadership Centre.

• In the Faculty of Science Agriculture and Engineering, the policy-focused **Centre for Rural Economy**, and an array of applied research and specialist consultancy units in the engineering industries, including **INEX, RCID, NEWRAIL, the Biopharmaceutical Bioprocessing Technology Centre** and the **Centre for Software Reliability**, as well as the wide-ranging ongoing consultative engagement processes with industry and business which inform research and curriculum developments and priorities. Across the Faculty, high-level industrial engagement also leads to developments (both within the University and in industry) that have significant impact on the economy or society (eg renewable energies).

• A wide range of Knowledge Exchange activities, many of them with SMEs.

• The ground-breaking work of the RCUK-funded hub for **Inclusion through the Digital Economy**, which aims to tackle the barriers to involvement in the life-enhancing benefits of digital technologies which can arise from poor health, disability, family breakdown, poverty and unemployment.

1.4. Strategic Engagement Objectives: Key Action Themes

The Strategic Objectives set out in the Engagement Strategy Map were developed during the institutional strategic review process which led to the publication of *Vision 2021*, and are therefore prescribed by that document. It is important to note that the order in which the objectives are listed below and in the Strategy Map does not reflect relative importance or priority. The key action themes corresponding to these Objectives merit brief introduction and explanation.

**(i) Attract top talent to settle in the North East:** The North East has been losing its native talent to emigration for more than a century. The continuation of this process is one of the reasons why the average age of the population is rising more rapidly here than in other UK regions. Newcastle University has a key part to play in increasing the opportunities for local people to pursue rewarding careers in the region. At the same time, we are the most significant net-importer of talent to the North East. Promoting these two things together reflects the educational value of diversity: “We will learn more from those people, those ideas, and those phenomena that we do not know than from those we know only too well”\(^2\). All of our staff and students benefit from the cultural and educational diversity provided by a broad vision of talent attraction, and this principle applies at many levels. By seeking to attract the ‘top talent’ in all spheres of our activity, we not only enhance our engagement impact and address the wider societal need for diversity, prosperity and economic resilience in the North East, but we also expose our indigenous population to educational richness, diversity of perspective and the aspiration for self-realisation.

The delivery of graduates from diverse backgrounds into employment in the regional economy has long been one of our University’s major contributions to the region: a net-importer of talent, both through recruitment of students and staff, and through our alumni who return to the region and enrich its economy and skills base. In a region which underperforms in business start-ups, promotion of entrepreneurship amongst students, staff and alumni also helps to ensure that appropriate jobs are there to accept our graduates. The concept of ‘attracting top talent’ is implicit

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in our staff recruitment practices and is fundamental to our ongoing academic reputation and impact. Finally, given the many great attributes of the region alluded to in Section 1.2, it is important that the University community make its contribution to broader efforts to promote the City and the wider area to student, staff and business markets world-wide.

(ii) Develop and implement the concept of Newcastle Science City: As one of the three principal partners in this venture, the University gives high priority to this, a prime example of the type of strategic partnership through which we will realise a large proportion of our engagement aspirations. Designation of Newcastle as a Science City by the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP means that this partnership has high visibility, and is thus accompanied by high reputational risks and imperatives. Effective communication of the concept, and its realisation in practice, are an ongoing challenge. If the full benefits of the partnership are to be achieved, then it is essential that we maximise the translation of research into commercial value, both by closer collaborative working with industry and by University-led exploitation. We must also focus on the attraction of the next generation of scientists, researchers and innovators into Higher Education; and increase the formation of the next generation of employees to work in businesses founded on science, engineering and/or medicine.

(iii) Contribute our facilities, knowledge and skills to support healthy growth of civic and regional culture: The University has made major capital investments in cultural facilities in recent years, and the priority now must be to extract the maximum public and academic benefit from entities such as the Great North Museum and Culture Lab. We are already building on decades of success in our programme of public lectures and concerts, and are exploring other ways of bringing the public onto our campus. We are involved in supporting and celebrating the achievements of NE actors and writers, through the Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts. Our academic programmes and research activities reflect a wealth of creative expertise and community involvement in areas such as fine art, folk music, museums and heritage. On a broader cultural scale we have much to contribute far beyond our campus, working with others to address the chronic problems which hinder the progress of our region. A new initiative in this regard is the concept of societal challenge themes, in which the University will build on existing nuclei of expertise to broaden the deployment of academic and professional resources institution-wide, to address issues of particular societal importance. For each theme, an intensive year-long programme will be used to launch the programme of activities. We have much existing good practice to learn from in this endeavour. For instance as the Regional Medical School, Newcastle University has much to offer in relation to the preponderance of unhealthy lifestyles in our region, notably:

• As the lead partner in the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, in which all of the region’s universities collaborate to transform public health through the application of knowledge in policy and practice
• as a founder member of the North East Obesogenic Environment Network
• Through wide-ranging collaborations with the Strategic Health Authority

In the drive to combat lack of aspiration and poverty of hope, the University is active within the context of widening participation and student progression through the PARTNERS programme and other access initiatives, including work to support the Education and Community Engagement activities of Newcastle Science City, which focuses on nurturing and attracting people to work in and learn science, through the widespread promotion of participation and excellence in our schools, colleges and universities. The University also works more widely in formal and informal educational settings, such as through our leadership of RCE North East, a particularly high-profile
node in the rapidly-growing global network of these ‘Regional Centres of Expertise’ in Education for Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the United Nations University.

(iv) Use our global standing and intellectual capital to influence and inform national and international debate: Many staff – both in academic units and professional support services – are skilled in influencing policy development regionally, nationally and internationally. Examples of good practice in this regard abound. Impressive examples include the work of:

- the Hydrogeochemical Engineering Research and Outreach group, for which the University was awarded the prestigious Queen’s Anniversary Prize in 2006
- the Global Urban Research Unit (GURU) in housing policy in the developing world
- the Tyndall Centre in engineering cities to cope with climate change
- the Centre for Rural Economy and
- the Institute for Ageing and Health, recently recognised by the award of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize in 2009.

The engagement skills of staff in these units have largely been improvised over the years. There is a clear opportunity for the University to empower more staff to engage in policy work by taking advantage of the heuristic knowledge of these experienced staff in the formation of more junior colleagues. Maximising impact in national and international debates will also demand that the University develop a more proactive public affairs capability, as part of our emerging strategies for corporate positioning, particularly in the context of the strategic societal challenge themes.

We also benefit, of course, from the ongoing impact and influence of our alumni, whose expertise and loyalty to Newcastle University extend and enrich our global influence and reputation.

(v) Implement strategic partnership initiatives to address major global challenges relating especially to health, wellbeing and sustainable development: Large-scale impact demands large-scale working, and this in turn demands participation in substantial and sustained partnerships with other organisations (public, private and voluntary). Science City (objective ii above) is a prominent example of such a partnership, currently in the early stages of realisation. The focus of Science City on the key research themes of Ageing and Health; Energy and Environment; Molecular Engineering and Stem Cells and Genetic Sciences provides a robust stage for a collaborative approach to addressing major national and global challenges both through academic activity and related business initiatives. The renewal and enrichment of clinical partnerships with the NHS and pharmaceutical industry is also a vital part of the University’s engagement, for example through the Biopharmaceutical Bioprocessing Technology Centre (BBTC) (see also Section 1.3, page 5, above). Of longer pedigree is the Northern Rural Network, which was founded by the University’s Centre for Rural Economy in 2000, and which now has more than 1200 members working together to address the socio-economic challenges affecting the extensive sparsely-populated areas of the three northern regions of England. Nascent partnerships are emerging addressing a wide range of other issues, such as the socio-technical requirements for a successful ‘Green New Deal for the North East’, the realisation of ambitions for Newcastle to become a low carbon city, and the contribution which Newcastle’s Earth Systems Science expertise can make to achieving a sustainable future for crucial habitats, such as the rainforests of South America. An important foundation for all such strategic work is the maintenance of constructive relationships with government and private sector partners within and beyond our region. While the selection of government partners is usually obvious, further consideration and effort needs to be dedicated to identifying and cultivating truly strategic partners in the private sector.
2. Strategic Framework for Engagement

2.1. Engagement Practices
Two of the fundamental bases for the development of this Strategy were:

(i) The critical review of global best practice in university / society engagement
(ii) The ‘stock-taking’ survey of existing engagement activities throughout the University, through which some 1166 separate examples of engagement have been captured and categorised.

Working from these sources, and reflecting on the experience of students and staff throughout the Institution, a number of recommendations can be made for enhancing the capability of individuals – and therefore of the institution as a whole – to deliver engaged research, teaching and service activities.

A key attribute of the best examples of civic universities worldwide is the emphasis placed on student participation in engagement activities. For instance, a clear majority of presentations at the Talloires Network-supported ‘Campus Engage’ conference in Dublin in June 2009 concerned the most effective approaches to incorporating ‘service learning’ in degree programmes. Service learning is defined\(^3\) as “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities”. Newcastle University already boasts numerous successful examples of service learning, most notably our medical degree programme, which offers very broad choices in ward-based, community and charity contexts, especially in years 3 through 5, and the Career Development Module, which is offered to a wide range of degree programmes by the Careers Service. Academic Audit Committee has identified 101 other programmes which include placements with external organisations, in 53 of which the placement is compulsory\(^4\). Clearly not all of these placements would constitute ‘community service’ (as per the definition of ‘service learning’), but a large proportion of the possibilities covered by the Career Development Module (i.e. the ‘Student Tutoring’, ‘Students in the Community’ and ‘Student Volunteering’ elements) qualify eminently. Taken together with the mature ncl+ initiative, SCAN, the Student Ambassadors programme, and the wide range of community engagement activities supported by the Union Society, the University already boasts a substantial student engagement portfolio, nurturing active and responsible citizenship. There will always be scope for further expansion of such activities, and there is certainly scope for a more proactive PR approach to raising awareness (and thus uptake) of them, both internally and externally. Indeed, the concept of Newcastle University as a prime destination for those who wish to join an engaged student population could be developed as an important attribute for UK and international student recruitment.

Engagement will never realise its full potential without engaged staff involved in high quality research, teaching and service provision. Experience around the world suggests, however, that the most common and persistent barrier to greater engagement is the lack of value accorded to such work in promotions mechanisms. To realise our engagement aspirations, it is essential that we formally acknowledge and recognise that engagement adds value to high-quality teaching, research and service delivery, rather than detracting from them. Promotions criteria at Newcastle

\(^3\) [www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning](http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning)

\(^4\) [www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/internal/AAC_reports/report_placements.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/internal/AAC_reports/report_placements.pdf)
University have long allowed for consideration of engagement activity in deciding on advancement cases, and there is clearly an important role here for our Human Resources department to consider how best to convert intent into reality. Whilst we view engagement as integral to the University’s core work, we must also take account of the fact that it is an activity distinct from our other core functions of research and teaching: it requires different skills, different audiences and readerships for research, and may involve different partners in collaborative initiatives. Thus the Staff Development Unit is now pioneering programmes to encourage and enable staff to include engagement in their research and teaching practices, taking advantage of the time-limited funding opportunity offered by Beacon North East. The success of these developments presupposes that engagement will be given appropriate space in workload models in future, and that senior managers will identify the potential for greater engagement activities for individual within an appropriate overall portfolio. It is recommended that a mechanism be established to facilitate and fund a limited number of ‘Engagement Sabbaticals’ each year, externally-funded where possible, which will be open to both academic and professional service staff, to allow staff the space to develop and mature their engagement-enhancing teaching, research or service activities and support the transition to a fully-integrated approach.

Vision 2021 commits the University to “educate for life”, a phrase which both signifies the lifelong learning community which our students join on enrolling here, and the notion that the education which we provide is well-attuned to life around us. Given the particular problems of poverty of ambition which beset our region, this commitment to “educate for life” must first grapple with the prevailing cultures that affect the attitudes of young people, and their parents and others who advise them. Aspiration-raising programmes already form a prominent part of the University’s portfolio of educational outreach, most notably through PARTNERS, our involvement in programmes such as Aimhigher, and by our delivery of the Headstart programme and other initiatives which aim to encourage entry into higher education, particularly in skill-shortage disciplines. The Teachers’ Toolkit offers further online support for allied activities, while RCE North East supports a wide range of activities without any explicit link to direct recruitment. New approaches to aspiration-raising in informal settings are currently being explored using strategic engagement funding by Operating Theatre, a pioneering theatre company which developed out of ethics teaching in the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

The University already has a strong track record in Knowledge Sharing\(^5\) activities with private sector companies. Many staff have built up impressive expertise in this area, and (as in the case of policy work) the University should facilitate the internal sharing of this expertise with less experienced colleagues. In recent months, the degree of interaction with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has significantly accelerated, largely thanks to the enthusiastic reception of the Business Voucher Scheme which forms one of the principal elements of our Ten-Point Plan to help the regional economy through the recession and beyond. This voucher scheme is a particularly efficacious mode of strategic investment in engagement, as the benefits all accrue to SMEs (or voluntary organisations) while the actual spend of each £5K voucher is an internal transaction, transferring resource to academic ad service units that become involved in provision of applied research services or training to the external organisations. It is recommended that consideration be given to perpetuating the Business Voucher Scheme, so far as resources permit, as a key means of stimulating private-sector engagement.

\(^5\) Sometimes referred to as ‘Knowledge Exchange’, or the less satisfactory, unidirectional ‘Knowledge Transfer’
Provision of **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** has considerable potential to contribute to several of the strategic objectives for engagement. The University already has significant clusters of CPD provision, such as the wide-ranging programmes in *Civil Engineering and Geosciences* and in the *North Leadership Centre*. A recent investigation into CPD provision concluded that around 7% of the University’s non-core income currently comes from CPD provision, which compares with a sector average closer to 20%. There is clearly scope for expansion of CPD provision, though the same report noted that timetabling pressures and lack of suitable teaching space currently hinder aspirations. **It is recommended that consideration be given to development of high-quality, dedicated CPD teaching space in future estates developments.**

A particularly novel approach to “educating for life” has arisen from Latin American experience: the concept of a *Cátedra Libre* or ‘**Open Chair**’6. An as-yet unknown concept in Anglophone academe, Open Chairs share the same sustained focus on a particular theme as any academic Chair would, but differ from it in the following respects:

- The Open Chair will not be occupied by a single individual, but will belong to a consortium of academics, community groups, NGOs, professionals from diverse fields of knowledge, and other participants.
- The theme addressed by the Open Chair will be decided jointly by the consortium; it will be a theme which closely reflects pressing societal need, and the aim of the Open Chair will be to yield transformative actions which address the identified need.
- The activities of the Open Chair will be undertaken in a spirit of free enquiry, placing particular value on the ‘secular expertise’ resident in communities (be they local, regional, national, continental or international).
- Although the Open Chair can be expected to result in new teaching and/or research activities, these outcomes will not be prescribed in advance; as such, the Open Chair will be a locus of largely unconstrained action within the university domain.
- Coordination of an Open Chair is typically undertaken by a team of academics with relevant skills and interests, who will ensure that the dissemination of the findings of the Open Chair (formal or informal, on line or by other means) occurs in an appropriate and timely manner.

In strategic terms, Open Chairs have potential to catalyse activities in relation to our objectives to “contribute our facilities, knowledge and skills to support healthy growth of civic and regional culture” and to “implement strategic partnership initiatives to address major global challenges relating especially to health, wellbeing and sustainable development”. **It is recommended that Newcastle University experiment with the concept of Open Chairs, by establishing three pilots:** one in each Faculty (established through competitive bidding), each to run for five years in the first instance.

The University’s commitment to annual programmes launching institution-wide activities on selected *Societal Challenge Themes (SCTs)* was mentioned in Section 1.3 (iii). The first of these Challenge Themes, *Changing Age*, has been launched in September 2009, with others set to follow in coming years. While the SCTs are primarily conceived as a means of marshalling research power, they clearly have strong engagement and PR/public affairs dimensions, and interaction with Open

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Chairs and other engagement practices will be of mutual benefit. As part of the University’s commitment to delivering excellence with impact, the SCTs provide an opportunity to embed engagement practices institution-wide and make explicit the concept of engagement as an intrinsic part of our academic endeavours. The goodwill of alumni, retired staff, Council / Court members, and other friends of University is likely to prove of particular value in developing such activities.

Before leaving the theme of “education for life”, some consideration must be given to lifelong learning. The University transferred its former Centre for Lifelong Learning to Sunderland University several years ago. Although the operation now run by Sunderland is billed as being “in partnership with Newcastle University”, collaboration is currently restricted to use of some of our premises on favourable terms. The entire field of informal adult learning is currently undergoing rapid and significant change, and will probably not reach a new dynamic equilibrium until several years after the 2010 General Election. In the meantime, existing partners in the Great North Museum and other projects are actively exploring the provision of adult learning opportunities. It is recommended that the University maintain a watching brief on these developments, with a view to establishing new partnerships in lifelong learning in the medium term.

While many of our engagement activities will take place off-campus, when partners come to our premises it is important that they feel welcome and comfortable: we must ensure that our estate is replete with “engaging spaces”. The original layout of the campus did us no favours in this regard, with its principal entrance (the Armstrong Building) facing away from the City Centre. However, the current £200M investment programme is finally redressing this ergonomic issue, with the King’s Gate building and the remodelled King’s Walk putting our best face forward to the approach from Haymarket. As part of the ‘Coherent Campus’ initiative launched by the Vice-Chancellor, numerous smaller improvement are currently being made to the accessibility and ‘feel’ of the campus. As each of these improvements is completed, the overall suitability of our campus for engaging with the public is incrementally improved. This in turn helps to integrate into an appealing continuum those spaces which are wholly or partly dedicated to engagement, such as the Great North Museum, Culture Lab; the Open Air Laboratory (OPAL) at Moorbank Botanical Gardens; clinical facilities within our buildings; and outreach facilities maintained by several Schools and Institutes, such as the Chemistry Outreach Laboratory. The same principles apply to the University’s various outstations. Some of these are already extensively used for engagement activities: this is particularly true of the Dove Marine Laboratory. Both the Dove and other outstations are currently in need of further investment to fully realise their engagement potential; this is the case particularly in relation to the Centre for Renewable Energy from Land (CREEL), at Cockle Park Farm, which offers an opportunity unique in the UK to claim a leadership position in an area of major growth. New build developments, such as on the Science Central site, offer unparalleled opportunities to design new areas of campus which embody engagement principles from the outset. Further possibilities are now emerging for private sector-led developments which have the potential to greatly boost Knowledge Sharing with global industry in areas of major academic strength (the case of NEWRAIL and the Stephenson Quarter being particularly promising at present).

A further element of our drive to develop our estate is the welcome that we offer to external organisations to share and contribute to our engaging environment, such as the location of Northern Stage within our campus.
Having considered our students, our staff, activities we might initiate and the spaces in which we welcome our partners, the remaining issue is how we live out an ethos of “cherishing our neighbours”. In part we do so by dint of providing needed services, the most prominent examples being clinical provision (in the Faculty of Medical Sciences and in the School of Education Communication and Language Sciences); elements of the Ten-Point Plan; our engagement with regional schools and colleges (e.g. through PARTNERS and through school-based applied research, or through individual contributions (eg as school governors)). We also do so wherever we provide inspiration and / or leadership in community learning networks (most notably the Northern Rural Network, RCE North East and Years Ahead). A further demonstration is when the University finds the resources to undertake work which fosters and celebrates community identity, and appreciation of the region’s history and/or environment, such as the “Wiki Wonderland” project with refugees and asylum seekers, the development of a community allotment on University land at Henderson Hall, and the “Utopia” project on community identity in Byker. Experienced engagement practitioners have identified a need to acknowledge and encourage those individuals who, whilst not being members of the University, make important and sustained contributions to the success of major engagement-based research, teaching and service activities. It is proposed that a mechanism be created to formally recognise such people as ‘Public Associates’ of Newcastle University, perhaps accompanied by some degree of privileged access to the University’s libraries and other facilities and linked to the Visiting and Guest status scheme (currently under review).

2.2. Key Performance Indicators

The Engagement Strategy Map lists the Key Performance Indicators which we will use to assess progress against our Strategic Objectives. Wherever possible, these have been designed to be quantitative, and to draw upon data which is already gathered or can be collected without great additional effort. However, it is in the nature of engagement activities that some of the most important evidence for success will be predominantly qualitative, requiring consideration of narratives. Where this is so, efforts will be made to align any relevant statistical evidence alongside narrative descriptions.

2.3. Enabling Factors

The Engagement Strategy Map identifies a range of factors which need to be addressed in order for the aspirations in this Engagement Strategy to be realised. The rationale for most of these enabling factors has already been given in Section 2.1. Therefore only brief supplementary notes are given here.

In relation to staff, the key challenge is the inclusion and use of engagement criteria in recruitment and promotions exercises. With regard to the latter, it is in turn necessary to ensure that engagement activities are included in staff development programmes and in workload models.

Enhancement of student involvement in engagement activities can best be enhanced by promoting and expanding existing “service learning” provision (such as the Career Development Module), and by ensuring key engagement messages are evident in induction processes. Effective participation of student representatives in engagement coordination activities (see Section 2.5) is also essential.
In financial terms, a key item requiring a significant budget provision is the proposal that the University develop a proactive Public Relations and Public Affairs capability, to supplement the existing, successful ‘reactive’ press office provision. A similar conclusion has been reached in the development of the Strategic Positioning strategy. A more systematic approach to sponsorship of regional events and organisations would also enhance the influence and profile of the University as a key regional player. Further details of financial implications will be presented in the costed Action Plan which will also clarify implementation responsibility for delivery of the Strategy.

Fundamental to the success of the Engagement Strategy is the need to develop and nurture an institutional culture in which engagement is seen and embraced by all as an essential, embedded element of our activities. This is perhaps the hardest enabling factor of all to put in place. At a broader level, we need to aspire to create a greater sense of collegiality, in which both individual and institutional successes are acknowledged and a sense of corporate pride and mutual support are championed among our staff, students and alumni. This requires effective and sensitive internal engagement and good internal communication, and is a key part of ensuring that the values, vision and mission articulated in the University’s strategic overview are proactively applied. A range of channels will be used to engage with different groups. Some stakeholders will prefer face-to-face communication, while others may be more comfortable with a range of electronic channels. Internal engagement will also foster better external communication, engagement and ‘positioning’ and hence greater recognition. The University has a legacy of failing to celebrate success, and success in engagement has typically been accorded least esteem. A step change is required to address this, with annual engagement prizes and other forms of recognition. It will take sustained effort to achieve a consensus around the proposition that engagement is integral to our ‘mainstream’ teaching and research activities, rather than some unwelcome additional burden, and it will be important to demonstrate some early clear success stories arising from this Engagement Strategy. Initiatives such as the ‘Inreach for Outreach’ forum will also help to facilitate this process.

With regard to University procedures, processes and structures, the principal requirement – a coordination structure – is addressed in Section 2.5 below. The recently-completed ‘stock-taking’ survey of existing engagement activities has revealed the breadth and depth of these endeavours for the first time. As we move into implementation of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) there will be a need systematically to capture and convey information on impact, for which effective engagement is a pre-requisite. The experience of analysing returns to the stock-taking survey has yielded a proposed structure for data collection, which can hopefully be incorporated into a future version of the “MyImpacts” software, to make it easy for colleagues to record their achievements, and easy for the University to synthesise these centrally to characterise our overall contribution. Implementation of this Strategy will involve the piloting of a number of novel engagement practices (e.g. Open Chairs, Engagement Sabbaticals, Public Associates, Societal Challenge Themes etc). For such piloting to be effective it is essential that processes of review and evaluation be built-in from the start, so that mistakes are not propagated and successful approaches can be promoted. Finally, although we view engagement as integral to our mainstream activities, demonstrating that we are committed to becoming a world-class civic university requires that our engagement highlights can be clearly identified and evaluated. As such, some degree of dedicated communication of key issues and developments in engagement will be needed. Many academic and service units already have prominent ‘engagement’ sections on their own web-sites; other units should be encouraged to do the same. A modest central website for engagement will also be required, to host this Strategy, supporting documents, and links to
examples of best practice throughout the University web presence. As part of delivering on a
culture of celebration (see above) internal and external events will be needed, to share effective
practices and celebrate success. These will need to take account of the interests and expectations
of the wide range of stakeholders affected by this Strategy (eg staff; students; alumni; local / regional / national government bodies and other influencers; businesses and organisations (local, regional, national and international) and international organisations and bodies).

2.4. Balance of costs, risks and benefits

2.4.1. Costs

Because engagement is integral to the way we carry out our work, for the most part it does not
carry a separately identifiable invoice – indeed, effective engagement can actively help to promote income-generation, for example through better REF scores leading to higher income. Impactful research will be based on prior engagement activities (some of which will be notionally covered by QR income), while those further engagement activities needed to deliver the benefits should be allowed for when costing the grant proposal. Nevertheless, delivery of this Strategy is not cost-free. The costs of a coordinating function and support infrastructure need to be borne in mind, and some of the specific initiatives will require resources for implementation. The fully-costed Action Plan which will be produced following adoption of this Strategy will be updated annually. As noted in Section 2.3, a key new request for funding relates to the development of proactive PR and public affairs functions.

2.4.2. Risks

The principal risks attending this Strategy relate to failure to implement it. This is because of the important external drivers discussed in Section 1.2. If implemented as proposed, risks do not vanish but are considerably reduced. The ever-present risk of embarrassment when a much-vaunted initiative fails to achieve its targets is as real for engagement initiatives as for any other activity. Indeed, given the experimental nature of the actions proposed, some degree of failure can be expected. However, as much can be learned from failure as from success; this underlines the importance of building in evaluation and review from the outset of new initiatives (e.g. Open Chairs etc).

In extolling the value of engagement, we must reiterate its articulation as a fully-integrated element of high quality research and teaching rather than as a separate strand of activity. In particular, we must ensure that the engagement imperative is appropriately embedded in recruitment, induction, line-management, mentoring and PDR processes, especially for early-career researchers for whom it has significant career implications (and risks if not done properly).

2.4.3. Benefits

Although the primary motivation of engagement is based on a commitment to ‘live our values’, there is no denying that an element of “enlightened self-interest” is manifest in the benefits of doing so. Of especial importance are the following benefits:
1. Having done what we said we would do (Strategic Objectives) and told people what we have done (proactive PR), the University is seen to live-out its proclaimed values, and to truly be a world-class civic university.

2. The University is perceived as a desirable partner by a wide range of organisations in the private, voluntary and public sectors, and therefore benefits in terms of placing of research and training contracts etc.

3. The University becomes well-positioned in relation to regulation of the ‘public benefit’ duty which is incumbent upon us under the Charities Act 2006.

4. The University performs well in the REF, thanks to high scores for ‘impact’ in most Units of Assessment, and this has a positive effect upon income.

5. The University makes the most of the opportunity to influence our sister organisations in the sector, through working closely with the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (part of the Beacons initiative).

6. The University is perceived as a highly desirable destination by students (and their advisers) for whom being part of an engaged student community is an important factor.

7. The University is perceived as a highly-desirable place to work, drawing on the benefits of a vibrant region offering a high quality of life.

8. Finally (and perhaps most importantly), the University works with its communities to deliver genuine, tangible benefits to the civil society of which it is a part, and is perceived to be approachable, accessible and responsive to societal needs and challenges.

2.4.4. Balance

Although the costs, risks and benefits are not evaluated on commensurate scales, an heuristic joint appraisal of them leads to the conclusion that implementation of this Strategy will lead to a balance which is strongly positive.

2.5. Coordination Structure for Engagement

2.5.1. Implementation

Our integrated view of engagement presupposes that the implementation of the Engagement Strategy will be achieved as part of the normal, ongoing work of all parts of the University, rather than via a separately identified delivery mechanism. For example, the rich range of student engagement activity is already delivered academic units, by relevant professional services and the Union Society, and it serves no purpose to duplicate provision and ownership. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to establish a co-ordination structure to oversee delivery of the Strategy, as proposed below.

2.5.2. Context: creatio ex nihilo

Unlike in the cases of ‘teaching and learning’ and ‘research and innovation’, the University has no existing coordination structure for engagement. In one sense, this can be deemed logical and desirable, given that we view engagement not as an additional ‘third strand’ but as a critical approach to how we do our mainstream activities. Nevertheless, attainment of many of the benefits identified in Section 2.4 demands that we have some means of knowing what we are doing, promoting best practices, and telling our stories to the wider world. It is therefore proposed
that some form of coordination (rather than ‘governance’ *sensu stricto*) of engagement is desirable, and that this must work across the corporate levels from Schools to the University as a whole. In the absence of an existing structure, and with little precedent elsewhere in the sector, the structure below is proposed from first principles.

2.5.3. **Engagement Strategies at Faculty / School / Institute / Professional Service Unit Level**

As a matter of policy, *every Faculty, Academic Unit and Professional Support Service Unit must develop and implement its own engagement strategy as part of its strategic plan.* Many units have already done so. While it is not expected that all individual members of staff will have engagement duties, all Units must allow for inclusion of engagement activities in the workload models of staff for whom engagement work is appropriate, and support this commitment through PDR processes.

In several Units, the responsibility of ‘engagement coordinator’ (or similar) has already been assigned to an individual member of staff, typically someone with a strong track record in some aspect of engagement. Some Units with particularly large engagement commitments have appointed full-time managers to such a position. The level of provision appropriate for each particular Unit is clearly a matter for the Head of Unit to resolve; however, **the principle that a named individual be responsible for collating and transmitting information on engagement activities is recommended for all Units.**

2.5.4. **University level: establishment of an Engagement Coordination Panel (ECP)**

To facilitate effective coordination and information-sharing on engagement activities it is proposed to establish an Engagement Coordination Panel (ECP), to be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement (PVC-E). The ECP will have the following remit:

1. Take the lead on collating and reporting on the overall performance of the University against the Key Performance Indicators identified in this Strategy. Reporting to Senate and Council will occur not less than annually.
2. Steer the design and implementation of a mechanism (probably based on MyImpacts) for ongoing collection of information on engagement activities.
3. Review and revise the Engagement Strategy as appropriate on the basis of performance evaluation and emerging priorities.
4. Review the engagement strategies of all Schools, Institutes and Professional Support Service Units, as part of the annual planning cycle.
5. Develop the mechanisms for internal engagement, staff development and activities to promote and ‘champion’ the engagement agenda throughout the University.
6. Provide the strategic lead for liaising with HEFCE over compliance with the Charities Act 2006.
7. Develop a costed Action Plan for implementation of this Strategy and update it annually for the approval of Council.
8. Propose events and activities to promote more effective engagement (in liaison with Staff Development Unit and other Human Resources officers, and in liaison with Beacon North East during the life of that project).

9. Oversee proactive PR activities on the engagement theme.

10. Assist the PVC-E in disbursing the University’s strategic funds for engagement activities, and on monitoring performance of activities funded under this mechanism.

11. Review the effectiveness of this Strategy and bring proposals for its renewal to Senate and Council in academic year 2012-2013.

The ECP will normally meet quarterly, and not less than six-monthly. Extraordinary meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chair if pressing business arises. The ECP will report annually to Senate and Council on progress against KPIs, and on any other strategic matters concerning engagement which they consider opportune. The membership of the ECP will be included in the Action Plan.

2.5.5. **External representation: the Engagement Forum**

It is inherent in the nature of engagement that ongoing dialogue be maintained with partners who are not members of the University. On a day-to-day basis, this process occurs naturally in hundreds of projects. However, in order to ensure that the development of corporate strategy on engagement is not conducted at one remove from such dialogue, it is proposed that the members of ECP will meet regularly (typically every six months) with a panel of external partners, typically drawn from existing projects throughout the University and from the lay membership of Court and Council. This gathering will be referred to as the Engagement Forum and it will have an advisory and consultative role with a remit that reflects the strategic objectives and associated issues in the Engagement Strategy. It is proposed that the Engagement Forum be chaired by an elected external member. Suggestions of the names of external partners willing to participate in the Engagement Forum will be sought by the Deans, and updated every two years to reflect current activities.

3. **Conclusion**

Informed by a wide-ranging institutional survey of existing engagement activity and a literature review and survey of best practice, the Engagement Strategy builds upon the University’s Strategic Review document ‘**Vision 2021**’ to establish priorities and activities for optimising interactions with civil society. At the Strategy’s heart is the principle that engagement should be seen as an integral, embedded part of our teaching, research and service endeavours, rather than a separate, additional strand of activity. Our engagement is based on values of openness, mutuality, humility, integrity and solidarity. This document represents the first formal expression of a Strategy which will necessarily evolve over time. Realisation of all of the Strategy’s aspirations and plans will reflect a significant achievement by our whole University community, and must be implemented in stages. First steps will include the establishment of an Engagement Coordination Panel and Engagement Forum, the development of robust mechanisms for measuring progress and impact, and the production of a costed Action Plan for the first phase of delivery.
Appendix A: Membership of the Engagement Strategy Development Group

Professor Paul Younger (Chair), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement)
Mrs Lesley Braiden (Secretary), Director of Marketing and Communications
Professor Eric Cross, Dean of Cultural Affairs, HaSS
Professor Alastair Burt, Dean of Clinical Medicine, FMS
Professor Tom Anderson, Dean of Business Development, SAgE
Professor Michael Whitaker, Dean of Development, FMS
Dr Douglas Robertson, Director of Business Development
Mr Nick Keeley, Head of Careers Service
Mr Bob Milan, CEO of Student Community Action Newcastle
Mr Pete Mercer, Sabbatical Officer for Student Support, Union Society
Professor Mark Shucksmith OBE, Architecture, Town Planning and Landscape, HaSS
Ms Sue Robson, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, HaSS
Dr Jaime Amezaga, Sir Joseph Swan Institute for Energy Research, SAgE
Professor Philip Lowe OBE, Centre for Rural Economy, SAgE
Dr Jane Delany, Dove Marine Laboratory, Marine Science and Technology, SAgE
Professor Margaret Bell, Civil Engineering and Geosciences, SAgE
Professor Cam Donaldson, Institute of Health and Society, FMS
Professor Richard Thomson, Institute of Health and Society, FMS
Professor David Charles (later replaced by Dr Rob Wilson), KITE, Business School, HaSS
Professor Martin White, Institute of Health and Society, FMS
Mrs Jill Taylor Roe, Robinson Library
Mr Philip Renforth, PhD Student, IRES / Civil Engineering and Geosciences, SAgE
Mr David Butler, School of Arts and Cultures, HaSS

In attendance:
Dr Ian Hall (RA on Engagement Survey), Education, Communication & Language Sciences, HaSS
Ms Anna Wraith (Minutes Secretary)