

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT & PLACE COMMITTEE**29 January 2024****Present (Committee):**

Jane Robinson (Chair), Mike Capaldi, Helen Challis, Martin Cox, Andrea Henderson, Darren Kelsey, Suzanne Nestor-Robson, Boguslaw Obara, Vee Pollock, Alison Shaw, Liz Todd, Luisa Wakeling and Siân Breen (Secretary).

Via Teams: Rachel Pain

Observers:

Emma McQuillan - Strategic Delivery Manager
Siân Johnson - Operations Administrator, NHIP

Apologies:

Justin Cole, René Koglbauer, Chirag Kumar, Paul Tyack

MINUTES**1. MINUTES**

Resolved that the minutes from the meeting held on 27 November 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

2. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Received an update from the Chair of the committee:

2.1 Investment Zones (IZ) are progressing and colleagues are working closely with the Combined Authority to ensure the University is aligned. Further updates will be brought to the group, especially regarding the opportunities to support innovation and skills.

2.2 North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA)

2.2.1 Insights North East – led by Newcastle University, in collaboration with NICD, Northumbria University, Newcastle and Northumbria NHS Foundation Trusts, NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, North Tyne Combined Authority and Newcastle City Council – is developing a proposition to cover the whole of the NEMCA geography.

2.2.2 Henry Kippin (interim Chief Executive of the North East Mayoral Combined Authority) will be attending Executive Board on 27 February to discuss the Investment Plan and public service reform, including health inequalities.

2.2.3 There are six candidates for the directly elected mayor. The University is supporting hustings events including transport and student engagement, the latter part of a programme for students to input into debate across the North East. Mayoral Assembly, run by Tyne & Wear Citizens, involving all candidates takes place on 22nd April.

2.3 Student Engagement with City Council: Pam Smith (Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council) attended Executive Board this month and is keen to link up with Newcastle and Northumbria including a focus on student housing.

2.4 North East Collaboration: SQW Consultants commissioned by Newcastle, Northumbria, Durham and Sunderland to undertake a review to understand how the universities can better collaborate. Phase 1 of the exercise – literature review – now complete and phase 2 – speaking to internal and external stakeholders (not limited to business consultations) – is ongoing. Phase 3 – initial report to VCs - is due to take place in February. Beneficial to understand Global opportunities following receipt of first report.

2.5 Budgets – PVC, HEIF and Policy Support allocations - will be reviewed at KEPOC meeting on 26 February, prior to submission to Executive Board in March.

2.6 E&P Awards - calls open for the event on Friday 3rd May with categories aligned to the E&P strategy. Event will run slightly different - focusing more on the awards, with the panel debate taking place separately.

2.7 Discover Festival, 8 June. General update shared with Executive Board and programme expected to be finalised in February.

2.8 Living Wage Employer – University one of first large organisations in Newcastle to commit. Focus now on a living wage city, an idea launched in November with an action plan due on 21st March. This is intended to mobilise leaders across the City to encourage payment of living wage by all.

STRATEGIC MONITORING

3. ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (APP)

Received a presentation from Alison Shaw, Professor of Practice – Inclusive Learning to update on submission of the Access and Participation Plan.

Noted:

1. APP is an important submission for the University, forming part of our registration with OfS. The shaping of intervention strategies, some of which require more detail, is crucial to ensure objectives can be met.
2. New education strategy has three key objectives – Equity, Leading Edge, Fit for the Future - and the APP will be key to Equity. The APP approach will be universal – ensuring the core offer helps students access their entitlements. The University’s intent is displayed in the Education for Life Framework which shows how key areas, such as Academic Development and Social & Civic Contribution, are interconnected.
3. Risks to Equality of Opportunity are revealed by statistics but the complex task is identifying and understanding causal relationships.
4. A whole provider approach is essential to achieve commitments, with a strong focus on partnerships. Following submission of the APP, implementation will take place from 2025.
5. The current draft interventions focus on the key required features of the APP. This includes, amongst other things, diversifying the curriculum (context, delivery and mode); working more closely with employers to allow for the application of learning outside the University; and providing students with a good level of experience of research in action. The latter has been found to have a disproportionately positive benefit for disadvantaged groups. The University is also required to help raise attainment in local schools and work is ongoing to ensure action and support is targeted effectively.
6. Objectives have been kept simple at University level to respond effectively to the gaps identified.
7. The four draft intervention strategies are broken down into a number of priority actions – those that will be most impactful, practical to implement and provide value for money. Examples of ongoing work:
 - 1) Reduce gaps in access: activity includes partnership with the NUFC Foundation, funding the Into centre with Northumbria University and reading projects in the West of the City. There is also scope to tackle big hitting strategic items with partners in the region.
 - 2) Effect greater equity in educational outcomes: continuation and degree award levels.

- 3) Support equitable progression into research or other workplace settings.
- 4) Within faculties:
 - SACS: research and pilot schemes, some NTCA funded, undertaken to diversify entry.
 - FMS: street games, work experience offers.

Other factors pertinent to inclusive educational opportunity:

- North East has lowest maths attainment levels of the country. Exploring options to work with teachers to help improve knowledge and skills.
 - Parent Power project – a partnership with Citizens UK and The Brilliant Club: seek to ascertain how to change perceptions of Newcastle University amongst Black and other minoritised ethnic communities locally, using learning from King's College, London who have undertaken similar work. Newcastle University is not always seen as a viable option by potential students from these communities, partly because of lower attainment, self-perception and perceptions of the University.
 - not always seen as a viable option by potential students from some communities – ascertaining how to change perceptions through learning from Kings College London who have undertaken similar work, in addition to developing a partnership with Citizens UK.
8. APP does not list all University work so understanding and articulating the purpose of each activity is crucial, as is effective evaluation.

4. GLOBAL

Received a presentation from Helen Challis, Director of International Office, to update on Global Place-Based Partnerships.

Noted:

1. Global strategy has been refreshed, following acknowledgement that strategic narrative had become overly focused on economic needs and student recruitment. Feedback was obtained from partners as well as colleagues and students – 60 attended an away day.
2. University of Pittsburgh - plans for more visits and potential to expand to include institutions in other countries. Continuation of study abroad partnership, with interchange of 30-50 students providing overseas experience. There are opportunities for further learning across comparable projects – such as HIN and Hazelwood Green (rebuilding Pittsburgh's riverfront as a beacon of innovation, creativity, and wellbeing) – and the Citizens University conference which takes place in Newcastle on 5th June.
3. Additional place-based partnership opportunities include:
 - University of the West Indies – parallels in coastal heritage, endangered coastlines as well as colonial and post-industrial experiences.
 - Sites of Conscience NGO – 350 members in more than 65 countries – “*Sites of Conscience provide safe spaces to remember and preserve even the most traumatic memories, [enabling] their visitors to make connections between the past and related contemporary human rights issue*” Newcastle's museums could become part of the network.
 - University of Mosul – visit discussed how devastated parts of Iraq may be recreated.
4. Collaboration with Saudi Arabia – energy big focus of UK-Saudi agreement and the North East has the expertise to feed in on low carbon, hydrogen and carbon capture.
 - Working with the Newcastle United Foundation, Northumbria on a programme to provide access to football training alongside degrees.
 - Newcastle University Director of Sport training female soccer coaches.
 - University to consider appetite to undertake additional activity on a case-by-case basis.
5. Emerging activity includes the Norway consortium – Newcastle, Durham and York Universities working with Oslo, Bergen and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology on artic and clean energy. Lead by PVC Global and Sustainability.
 - Languages and Culture – assistance provided to schools to complete Turing applications

6. Opportunities:

Desire to contribute to a Global Strategy for the City and Region.

Working with NGI on a welcome to the City, ensuring a positive first experience.

Continued collaboration of the five North East universities, which could develop political lobbying strength.

5. FACULTY UPDATES

Received an update on recent activities.

Noted:

1. HASS – ongoing scoping, census and mapping work including meeting the 11 Heads of Schools. Action plan will be developed further to link in with NUShape. Intended completion by early spring.
2. FMS – E&P action plan first draft completed and shared with FMS Executive Board. To be shared with UEPC once feedback has been incorporated.
3. SAgE – £12 million grant obtained for computing, new lab due to open in the Stephenson building and the Royal Academy of Engineers is running an enterprise hub in Newcastle. Three Innovate UK applications submitted with Malaysia/Singapore campuses. JR and BO to continue conversation on the Centre for AI ethics.

ROUTINE BUSINESS

6. AOB

1. New members of E&P team: Carrie Rosenthal – HIN Community Engagement Manager started this month and Stevie Donely – Collaborative Newcastle university Agreement Programme Lead (joint post with Northumbria) will be joining in February.

7. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Members of the committee to note the times for meetings of UEPC for academic year 2023-24:

- Thursday 21st March 2024 14.00-15.30
- Monday 20 May 2024 09.30-12.30 (extended)
- Monday 22 July 2024 10.00-11.30