



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Civic University Agreement

From the radical vision of our first Chancellor, Joseph Chamberlain, the University of Birmingham was founded in 1900 as the first civic university.

Continuing this mission, the University of Birmingham (UoB) has developed a Civic University Agreement. This will develop and further enhance the University of Birmingham's civic role, our collaboration with local stakeholders and our contribution to the city-region.

The agreement covers four, related thematic areas, all of which contribute to our civic engagement: education and skills, public engagement, research and innovation, policy and public sector support.

Key priorities are proposed within each of these areas. Given the scale and breadth of the University's engagements in the region the focus is on major areas of activity and investment, including the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus, the Energy Innovation Hub, the launch of The Exchange in Birmingham city centre, and the University's Official Partnership with Birmingham 2022 supporting the delivery of a successful Commonwealth Games for the city and region. As part of these activities, and more broadly, the University also plans to increase its public engagement across the city-region.

As a supporter of the Civic University Commission and a founding partner of the national Civic University Network, the University of Birmingham commits to work collaboratively with local partners to enhance further the economic, social and cultural fabric of our city and region. Together, we are striving to improve lives and to build a sustainable future, for our people, our city, and our region.

As evidence of this commitment, Birmingham City Council (BCC) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) are joint signatories of our Civic University Agreement.

Signed on Thursday 4th November 2021 by:

Professor Sir David Eastwood

Vice-Chancellor and Principal
University of Birmingham

Councillor Ian Ward

Leader
Birmingham City Council

Councillor Bob Sleigh

Deputy Mayor
West Midlands Combined Authority



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Birmingham
City Council



West Midlands
Combined Authority

1 The University of Birmingham Civic University Agreement

- 1.1 In addition to the programmes, activities and contributions to our city-region listed below, the University commits to providing support for civic committees, advisory boards and local organisations, such as: the WM Growth Company, the West Midlands Innovation Board, the WMCA Covid-19 Economic Impact Group, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Economic Recovery Taskforce, the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce Board, Birmingham Health Partners, Citizens UK, Governing Boards of schools and local NHS Trusts and other relevant stakeholders.
- 1.2 These connections to local decision makers help align our institutional strategy for civic engagement and enable us to provide support as an anchor institution to our regional stakeholders. We have a long-term interest in the prosperity of the regional economy and the well-being of our local communities.
- 1.3 The agreement covers four interrelated themes: education and skills, public engagement, research and innovation, policy and public sector support. The following outlines our main priorities within each.

2 Education and skills. The *place* dimension and the fit between our teaching and learning programmes and the needs of local labour markets are central to our civic contribution. The University of Birmingham School (UBS), a growing range of apprenticeships, the BMet relationship and careers engagement placing students with local organisations all demonstrate our growing contribution.

- 2.1 The University of Birmingham recruits and trains over 400 teachers on postgraduate routes, including in key shortage subjects, each year. UoB student teachers undertake placements in over 120 local schools, including UBS, and over 70% of our cohort usually take up posts within 25km of our Edgbaston campus, making a significant contribution to education in the region.
- 2.2 Our widening participation programmes engage more than 10,000 West Midlands students on campus every year to motivate and widen participation to higher education. Our sector leading Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme continues to help Year 13 students enter undergraduate programmes. Our Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scheme launched in 2019 has broadened our reach to sixth form students, and includes the Year 12 Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) that has demonstrably

increased the chances of students from less advantaged backgrounds, and from non-selective state schools, attending a Russell Group university.

- 2.3 We lead the [Aimhigher West Midlands](#) Uni Connect Programme (previously known as NCOP) in partnership with Aston University, Birmingham City University, University College Birmingham and the University of Worcester, working with young people facing multiple dimensions of disadvantage. The programme focuses on local areas where higher education participation is lower than might be expected and supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access higher education. Our own University of Birmingham School (UBS) plays a key part in our approach to widening participation.
- 2.4 UoB has active outreach programmes and these are developing into a broadening range of formal partnerships with local colleges and FE institutes. These range from teaching training and support from the School of Education across an extensive network of [partner schools](#) in the region, to the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Institute of Technology collaboration with the UoB's College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.
- 2.5 In May 2021 the University completed an agreement to incorporate the National College of Advanced Transport & Infrastructure (NCATI) into the UoB group. With the [Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education](#) (BCRRE), this will help our region become the leading centre for rail infrastructure skills and innovation in the country.
- 2.6 Through our [Mentoring scheme](#) and [Transformation West Midlands](#) we help support and boost job opportunities for local graduates in the region. The [future digital skills programme](#), jointly with PWC and HSBC as part of the Centenary Square Innovation Zone, is one example we have launched and will grow. We also provide entrepreneurial support through [B-Enterprising](#) and our B Start-Up programme that will increase with the opening of The Exchange. In addition, our [Impact Internships](#) offer opportunities with local start-ups, SMEs and Social Enterprises, whilst our [Virtual Internship Programme](#) offers opportunities from local to international. A new Office for Students and Research England funded project 'Student Knowledge Exchange Re-Imagined' will offer students and graduates, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, opportunities with charities, community groups, social enterprises, public bodies and businesses.

- 3 **Public engagement.** UoB has a dedicated Director of Public Engagement and a co-produced Public Engagement with Research Strategy. We have been awarded a [Silver Engage Watermark](#) from the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement and are developing capacity for public engagement, supporting skills development via communities of practice and dedicated training programmes.
- 3.1 Over the coming years, we will expand our public engagement commitments through [The Exchange](#) in Centenary Square. The University will use the new facility to enhance our civic and community engagement. This includes an ambitious public programme of exhibitions, activities and events designed to engage people with the breadth of University research and to co-create knowledge by involving people in the design and delivery of research, overseen by a Programme Board comprising key UoB staff and city stakeholders.
- 3.2 Student entrepreneurship, WMREDI (the [West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute](#)) and other centres and activities will complement broader engagement initiatives developed in collaboration with regional stakeholders. Our new [Birmingham Leadership Institute](#), with civic leadership at its heart, again demonstrates our future commitment to working in partnership with local stakeholders - private and public - to develop skills that fill current gaps in our regional capacity.
- 3.3 Public engagement provides opportunities to promote a wide range of activities that will support people with the knowledge and skills to cope with the challenges of their daily lives. For example, the [Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research \(CEPLER\)](#) will further develop its pro bono service, offering free legal advice to help vulnerable members of the local community and supporting students working on real cases covering a range of legal areas.
- 3.4 We will further develop our work with communities, curating these relationships and providing intellectually and physically accessible opportunities for city and regional citizens to contribute to the planning, development and delivery of [Research that Matters](#), ensuring we work to address regional priorities at grass roots level. The University's [Community Living Hub](#) also supports residents of Selly Oak.
- 3.5 The University manages a wide range of cultural and community assets (already attracting almost 200,000 visitors per year) and has a strong track record of civic engagement, providing access to schools and local citizens to music, art, museum and sports facilities. On-campus cultural attractions include The [Barber Institute of Fine Arts](#), [Winterbourne House and Garden](#), the [Bramall Music Building](#), [Cadbury](#)

[Research Library](#) and the [Lapworth Museum of Geology](#). UoB has strong relationships with numerous local cultural partners, enriching the cultural offering in the city-region and widening access to all.

- 3.5.1 Our formal partnerships with cultural organisations include those with the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#), the [Library of Birmingham](#), the [National Literacy Trust](#) (with whom UoB launched an National Literacy Trust Hub in Birmingham in October 2019), and the [Hay Festival](#). Other major public engagement projects (including [Midlands Arts Papers](#)) are run in close collaboration with city and regional partners, including the Birmingham Museums Trust, the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and the National Trust in the Midlands.
 - 3.6 The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games represents a significant opportunity to engage both local communities and a large number of visitors to the region. The University of Birmingham is proud to be playing a significant part in this effort as an Official Partner of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, having signed the most comprehensive university partnership agreement in the history of the Games. The University will be a competition venue for both hockey and squash, and the principal campus village during the Games. The University is also the Official Partner of the Queen's Baton Relay - International Leg as the ceremonial baton travels through Commonwealth nations and territories in the build up to the Games.
 - 3.7 The University's [Institute for Global Innovation](#) (IGI) will hold the inaugural [Forum for Global Challenges](#) in May 2022, as part of the lead up to Birmingham 2022. This multi-sector and interdisciplinary conference will build on University engagement with COP26. With commitments of support from regional and national government, the Forum will provide routes for Birmingham-led and international research to reach policymakers, industry leaders, civil society and the public.
 - 3.8 We will build on a series of UoB economic impact studies, noting the opportunity to innovate and broaden the concept of impact to include social value, community engagement and widening participation. Previous impact studies provide a baseline and have included elements of our civic contribution, such as volunteering and community action by staff and students.
- 4 **Research and innovation**, encompasses a wide variety of local partnerships, including our major STEM assets in the region and our commercialisation activities, centred around the BioHub, BizzInn, the Institute of Translational Medicine and the

Birmingham Research Park overseen by UoB Enterprise. Moreover, The first Knowledge Exchange Framework results by Research England issued in May 2021 ranked the University of Birmingham first amongst all UK universities for local growth and regeneration with income generated for the region accounting for 21% of total sector income which totalled over £41m – more than four times that of the next institution.

- 4.1 STEM areas in which the University has significant strengths aligning with the local industrial strategy and regional needs include health, energy, advanced manufacturing, transportation, enterprise engagement and skills development. We have numerous examples of collaborative R&D investments, which benefit regional businesses and economic growth while also contributing to inclusivity, through the regeneration of community spaces and reducing skills and income inequalities. Both are necessary for our region to prosper.
- 4.1.1 Examples of our contributions to local growth, skills and community development include flagship projects with large-scale capital investments dedicated to collaboration with partners, such as the [Birmingham Health Innovation Campus](#), [Tyseley Energy Park](#) and [the Manufacturing Technology Centre](#).
- 4.1.2 We are playing a central role in supporting the regional and national response to the Covid pandemic. This includes testing innovation and delivery; surveillance and evaluation of Covid mutations; real time use of health data to plan and deliver effective care; recruitment into and design of cutting-edge clinical studies/trials ensuring West Midlands patients benefit from academic led innovations, and the repurposing of the Institute for Translational Medicine to put in place a major vaccine hub at the heart of our campus.
- 4.2 In the wider area of healthcare, [Birmingham Health Partners](#) (BHP) has provided the platform for an integrated approach to research, innovation and improved healthcare delivery across the region by the University and its NHS partners. Its joint strategy, governance and delivery mechanisms, facilitated in association with the [West Midlands Academic and Health Sciences Network](#), allows us to target research at key areas of local population need, while drawing in cross-sector working across industry, charities, policy and patients.
- 4.2.1 The [Birmingham Health Innovation Campus \(BHIC\)](#), a ten-acre site due to open in 2023 has been awarded Life Sciences Opportunity Zone status by government and will attract further inward investment to complement the University's R&D strengths in the areas of translational and precision medicine. In addition to a growing number

of specialist skills and jobs, the region will benefit from access to advanced healthcare as BHIC develops through a series of growth stages to completion in 2031.

- 4.2.2 We will also build on a range of existing regional collaborations in the healthcare area to tackle the biggest health challenges faced by the West Midlands' six million residents. For example, the Birmingham Health Partners & Industry Steering Group (BHPISG) oversees a partnership between [Birmingham Health Partners and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry](#) (ABPI) which uses real-time clinical trials and health data to speed up research and improve cancer care, maternity services, child health, obesity, and dementia. The Midlands-level [Health Data Research Centre](#) consortium is also central to our growing contribution to the wider region.
- 4.3 Our leading work delivered the Policy Commission, '[Powering West Midlands Growth: A Regional Approach to Clean Energy Innovation](#)' which resulted in the establishment of Energy Capital and is now embedded as the WMCA Energy Strategy. The University has invested in the City's Energy Innovation Zone at Tyseley as a significant physical asset designed to tackle the region's energy and climate change challenges, including energy poverty, poor quality air and decarbonisation of mobility and heat. The latter will contribute significantly over the long-term to zero emissions targets and the region's sustainability goals, partly through [support for technology-adoption and training in local SMEs](#). This inclusive civic-driven innovation approach aligns with the ambitions of the City Council's recently launched Birmingham Route to Zero (R20) Taskforce, a cross-party multi-agency taskforce, which includes the University of Birmingham and aims to develop strategies to tackle the declared climate change emergency.
- 4.4 The [Midlands Innovation Commercialisation of Research Accelerator](#) (MICRA) is a large regional technology transfer collaboration led by UoB. It is a connected system of incubators and accelerators that will drive jobs and economic growth across the Midlands region.
- 4.4.1 The University also leads a £40M portfolio of projects funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds supporting **small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) across our region to develop new innovative products and processes. These projects open up and support the translation of the University's world-class research into business through one-to-one interventions enabling businesses to innovate and grow.

- 5 **Policy and public sector support.** All of the University's Colleges provide input and support for regional policy makers, anchor institutions and regional development organisations which benefits the city-region.
- 5.1 The [City-Region Economic Development Institute](#) (City-REDI), established with UoB funding in 2015, is dedicated to regional policy support. An award of £5 million from Research England to establish the [West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute](#) (WM-REDI) in The Exchange has been matched by funding from the University, the WMCA and partners Aston University, BCU, the WM Growth Company, the GBS LEP, the GBS Chamber of Commerce and Birmingham.
- 5.1.1 This will extend City-REDI's activities with a new regional data analytics centre located in The Exchange and a series of research programmes focused on inclusive and sustainable economic growth. This builds on existing work supporting the Mayor's Economic Impact Group, with a weekly Monitor on the effects of Covid and Brexit. It also is also helping to shape the civic contribution of UoB and other universities by providing frameworks, data and evidence to evaluate and accelerate the regional impacts that stem from university activities.
- 5.2 UoB will expand its collaboration with other anchor institutions, building on current projects with the [Centre for Local Economic Strategy \(CLES\) on Local Wealth Building](#). In partnership with Birmingham City Council (BCC), Aston University, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, local hospitals, housing providers and Further Education Colleges, supported by Barrow Cadbury. We will focus on the East Birmingham area in the next stage of this programme, with the aim to produce a measurable uplift in economic and social opportunities for its residents.
- 5.3 Other research and teaching with significant local impact continues to develop. This includes: work by [INLOGOV](#) to improve local government policymaking, through the Public Service Academy and in support of the Birmingham Leadership Institute and the Institute for Global Innovation; the work of [HSMC](#) (the Health Services Management Centre) providing support, advice training on healthcare improvement, public servant leadership and NHS leadership; the School of Social Policy, with a mission 'to understand the world – but also to change it', in the areas of adult social and primary care and homelessness; [CHASM](#) (Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management) working with local organisations on financial inclusivity.
- 5.4 UoB continues a long track record of engaged research and support in the area of mental health. This includes [partnership with HSBC UK](#) and the Birmingham Children's Hospital tackling bullying in Birmingham primary schools.

5.5 The Birmingham Energy Institute has also initiated several new innovation policy research activities with local and national stakeholder in the areas of decarbonisation of heat, energy from waste, autonomous manufacturing, critical materials in the economy and the potential for the region as a hydrogen hub.

6 The University's leading civic partners: Birmingham City Council (BCC) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

6.1 The University will continue to develop on its long track record of working in partnership with local stakeholders and will focus in particular on collaborations with BCC and the WMCA, co-signatories of our CUA.

6.1.1 The University Station redevelopment is an example of a co-funded project with partners, to accommodate over 7 million passengers in time for Birmingham 2022 and serving the local community and the emerging Birmingham Health Innovation Campus.

6.2 Our partnership with BCC includes a multi-programme framework agreement with BCC to deliver Degree Apprenticeships across a number of disciplines, supporting efforts to address any skills gaps and future-proof the Council's workforce. This includes Education, Public Management, Health and Care System Leadership as well as Executive MBAs.

6.2.1 **The Birmingham Education and COVID-19 Initiative tracks the evolving education offer in the city, with the Council and provides support for schools and parent groups.**

6.2.2 **As well as building on the above education and skills initiatives, we will focus on developing the Anchor Institutions programme of work referred to in 5.2 above, with City-REDI, over the coming years. This link to a wider range of joint work with WMREDI on regional inclusive growth and the [local industrial strategy](#), with an ambition to expand the Office of Data Analytics to serve the region.**

6.3 Skills and education are also central to our partnership with the WMCA. UoB was the first higher education institution to sign up to the [Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund](#), supported by the BBC, HSBC, Lloyds and other major Birmingham-based businesses.

6.3.1 The West Midland Combined Authority [Inclusive Leadership Pledge](#) and wider collaboration to develop public-sector leadership sit alongside these initiatives.