



delivered by:

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Civic University
Network

Civic University Network
and Sharing event



Join the conversation:

@civicuniversity

#TrulyCivic

Our Civic University Agreement

5th October 2022

Professor Alison Blunt, Deputy Vice Principal Impact (Civic, Culture and Community)

Sarah Barnes, Interim Head of Public Engagement

Sarah Gifford, Community Engagement Manager

2019

- Queen Mary signs pledge to create a CUA as part of the Civic University Commission
- Initial plan for community listening campaign developed with London Citizens.

2020

- Queen Mary becomes a partner in the Civic University Network
- Community listening campaign takes place with London Citizens after a slight pause due to the pandemic.

2021

- Work with the Institute of Community Studies to build listening activity, with workshops on co-analysis and prioritisation of data.
- Workshops and interviews with internal stakeholders to socialise priorities.

2022

- Governance processes established
- Draft CUA produced and internal approval sought.
- Civic Engagement Lead appointed.
- CUA launched in May 2022
- Queen Mary becomes a partner in the new National Civic Impact Accelerator.

Co-creating Queen Mary's CUA



What are the key opportunities for civic action in east London?

Strong third sector

Strong community networks, including family and faith-based networks

The heritage and history of place and communities

Diversity – and a vibrant youth population

Community spirit and entrepreneurship

Strong local institutions

Green spaces and local high streets with strong identities

Five themes

**Inclusive
place-making**

**A healthy and
sustainable
future**

**Pathways for
life**

**A cultural hub
for east
London**

**Enabling civic
practice**

Our Civic University Agreement: five priority areas

Inclusive place-making

- Convene local champions
- Support innovation and enterprise
- Access to QM space
- Student volunteering
- Research network

A healthy and sustainable future

- Strengthen health equity
- Lived experience at the heart of research
- Focus on climate and sustainability

Pathways for life

- Local student recruitment
- New education and employment opportunities
- Lifelong education
- Institute of Technology

A cultural hub for east London

- Celebrate local heritage and history
- Provide spaces and support to local arts and culture
- Access to arts and culture

Enabling civic practice

- Fair local employer
- Build equitable partnerships
- Governance around the agreement
- Connect and align with others

Civic engagement

Inclusive
place-
making



A healthy
and
sustainable
future



Pathways
for life



A cultural
hub for
east
London



Enabling
civic
practice

Governance

Civic Advisory Board

- Key external partners and senior internal colleagues to provide oversight of this work, and to hold us to account

Civic Working Group

- Internal colleagues who can help drive this work forward.
- Two theme leads for each of the 5 themes, one academic and one professional services colleague

Other networks and support

East London Research Network

- Internal network launched this month to bring together academic colleagues working on research related to east London

Civic Champions Network

- To be developed – bringing together internal and external colleagues around a particular theme, building on successful events as part of the CUA development and utilising our convening power locally.

Supporting civic work at Queen Mary - staff

Centre for Public Engagement – draws on public engagement culture change expertise, includes civic and community engagement as part of remit.

Deputy Vice Principal Impact (Civic, Culture & Community) – internal senior champion for this work.

Vice Principal Policy & Strategic Partnerships – member of university's senior executive team.

What's next?

Mapping what's already happening at Queen Mary in order to maximise our impact (Autumn 2022)

Developing an evaluation framework for the CUA to enable us to track progress (Autumn 2022/Spring 2023)

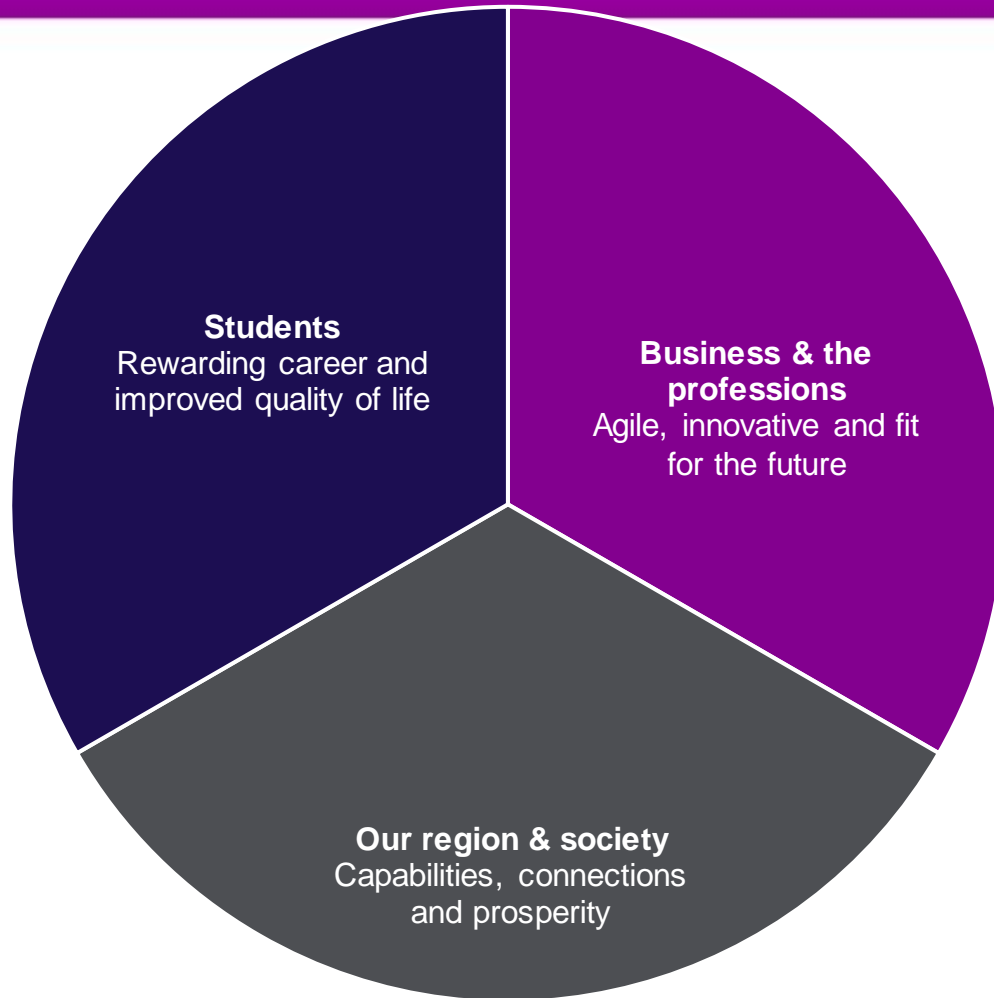
Launching Civic Champions Network (Spring 2023)

Our Civic University Agreement for Birmingham

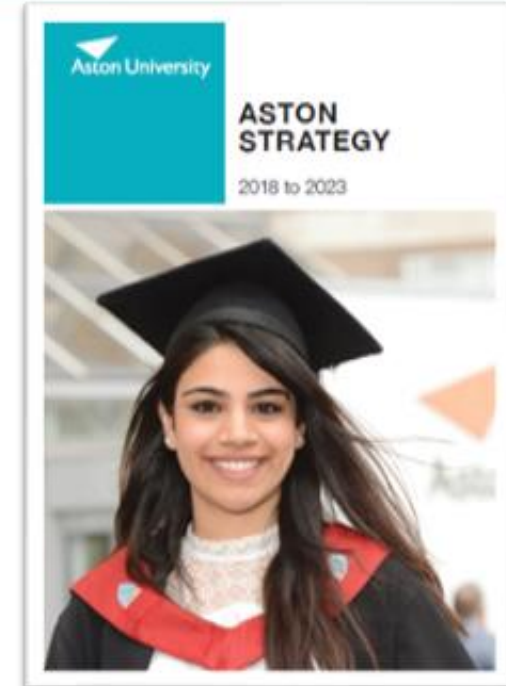
Dr Angela Jeffery, Director of Regional Strategy
Civic University Network



Our beneficiary strategy



Civic activity is what underpins Aston since its inception as a Technical College in 1895



We are motivated by those we benefit and these beneficiaries will be the main focus of our strategic direction over the next five years.

Aston University – building the evidence base

Socio economic impact report
by Metro Dynamics 2019



Market Research of Citizens
Views Nov 2019



UKRI part funded public
engagement project 2020

PROJECT REPORT

Involving citizen's in Aston's research

Tiago Moutela, Dr Angela Jeffery, Prof Monder Ram, Prof Frank Austermuehl and Prof Leon Davies

A collaboration between



Part-Funded by

UK Research
and Innovation

Supported by



Further evidence collated for **KEF** in 2020 including narratives of Public engagement and local growth and regeneration

Regional priorities

- Mapped priorities from the WMCA, Greater Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnership, Birmingham City Council, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Citizens (using our Market research, Citizens UK, WMCA Citizen's panel)
- **Health and Wellbeing** – especially **mental health**
- **Business growth/productivity/jobs** (including innovation, export and inward investment)
- **COVID-19 recovery**
- **Inclusive growth**
- Making the **most of regional opportunities** – e.g. HS2 & Commonwealth Games, Paradise Circus and Birmingham Smithfield developments
- **Crime/justice**
- **Environment** and **quality of life/litter**
- **Education** and **skills**
- **Housing**
- **Addiction** – drugs/alcohol
- **Refugee** settlement

Mapping exercise of Aston's areas of strength relevant to regional priorities

University Research Institutes

- Energy & Bioproducts Research Institute – **Environment/ energy from waste/ energy systems and low carbon**
- Forensic Linguistics – **crime/justice**
- Photonics – **sensors, digital and communications (including 5G)**
- Health and Neurodevelopment – **health/diagnostics/prevention**

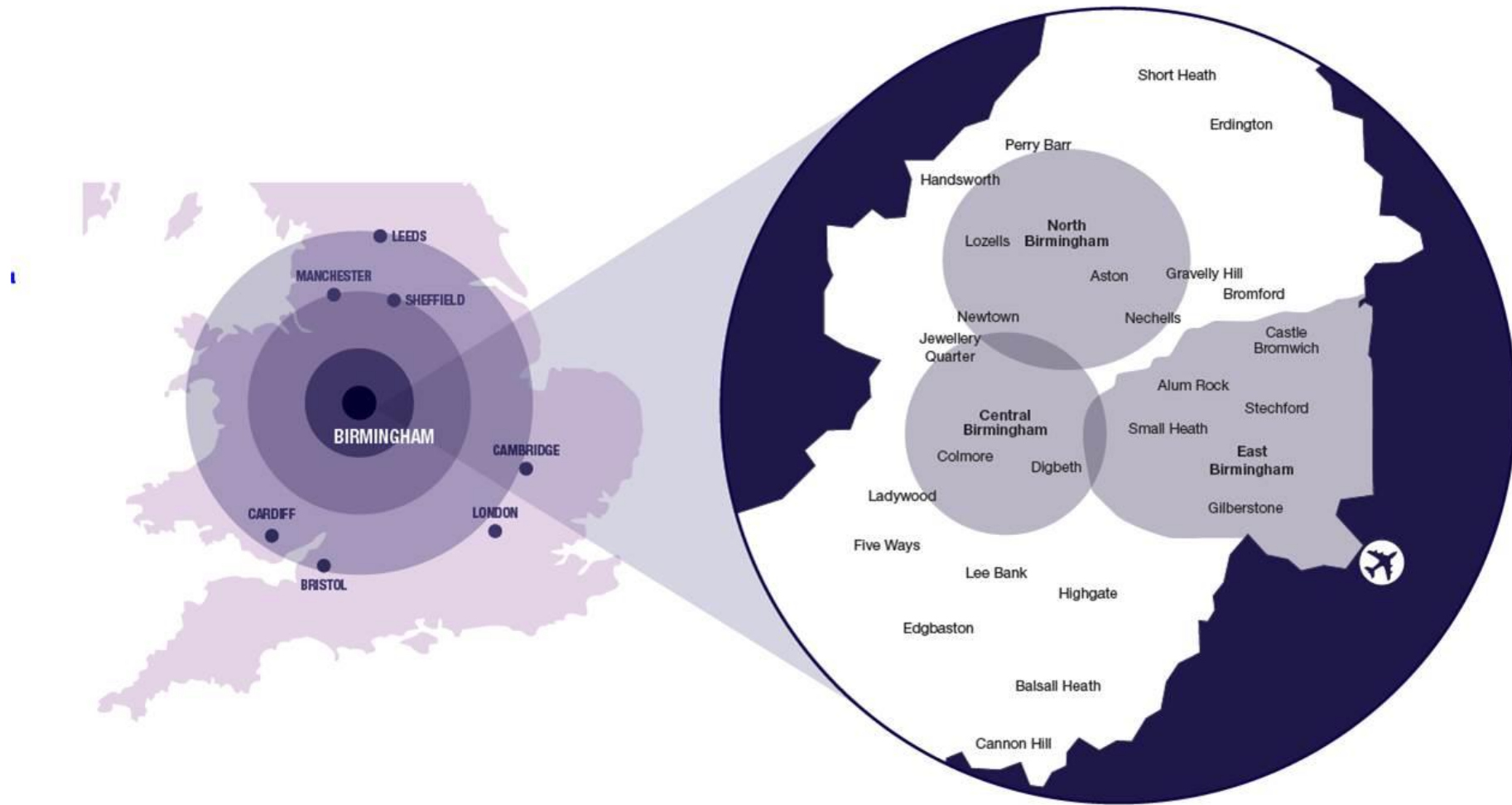
Key Civic strengths

- Centre for Growth - **growing and scaling SMEs**
- CREME - **Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship/inclusive growth**
- **Social Mobility** - placement year, pathways programmes opening up exclusive professions to everyone (Medicine, Law, Pharmacy, Optometry & Audiology)

Our Agreement Partners



Initial Geographical Focus – Central, North Central and East Birmingham



Civic University Themes



Combining Aston research with our anchor role to collaborate with others in the city to amplify impact



An agreement for Birmingham?

- There are 5 Universities in Birmingham (and 12 in the wider West Midlands)
- Only 2/5 have signed up to develop Civic University Agreements
- All 5 put forward papers to Birmingham City Council Cabinet on their civic engagement in 2021
- Birmingham City Council approved all of the papers in March 2021 (see the press release [Civic University Agreements strengthen role in local community | Birmingham City Council](#))
- Aston University's official launch took place in June 2022 [Aston University celebrates official launch of its civic university agreement to strengthen role in local community | Aston University](#)
- Future developments of BCC City Board will include all 5 universities working together to support our city



Governance and measuring

- Overall governance sits with Executive
- Knowledge Exchange Oversight group
- Operations in Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Measurement of activities and reporting progress
 - Citizens survey in progress (repeating 2019 qs)
 - KPIs
 - developed for KE strategy – 1 of our 5 strands is Regional and Civic engagement (many of the KEF metrics around public and community engagement and working with public and third sector)
 - Developing a report on our CSR activities and then Civic Agreement as an annual report
 - Planning an event to report back to partners and citizens

Some of what have we done so far?

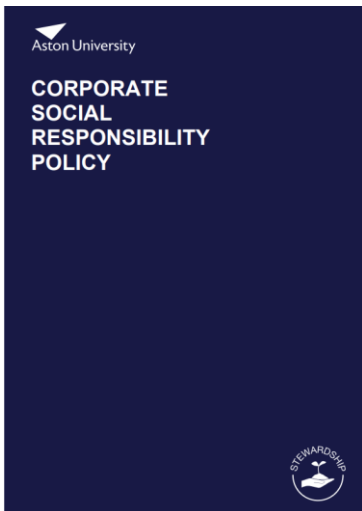
Our Corporate Social Responsibility Policy has been developed to complement the Civic agreement

Sponsored the Commonwealth Games (to support our City with the biggest event it has ever hosted)

Engagement with BSOL ICS Health inequalities board
Health listening to share Citizens views

Signed the pledge to support City of Sanctuary; and Submitted our University of Sanctuary application

Became a Living Wage accredited employer



Positives and Challenges

Positives

- Beneficiary led strategy - Region and Society underpinned by senior level buy in
- Partnership with Citizens UK was key
- Centre for research into Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship support for business leaders
- Timely UKRI Engaging Citizens from deprived areas in research award facilitated visits into our local wards

Challenges

- Ideal would be a single agreement for Birmingham
- Making the launch event happen!
 - Covid, 7 senior leaders and TV moving the football dates to clash twice!
- Meaningful measures
- ESIF funding ending and UKSPF being much smaller for West Midlands – affecting our ability to deliver

Next steps

- Continue our strong engagement with Citizens UK Birmingham Chapter
- Continue engaging colleagues with our local partners to deliver on our themes
- Develop our Birmingham Anchor Network work on local procurement (Coordinated by CLES) with partners
- Develop our partnership with BCC City board/corporate plans in coordination with the other universities
- Develop our partnership with WMCA in conjunction with the other 11 (University check in meeting/Innovation Board).
- ...and ideally a future Civic University Agreement for Birmingham with all 5 universities



Q&A



www.aston.ac.uk/



a.jeffery@aston.ac.uk



Thank you

Upcoming events

20th October 09:00-11:00 – Civic University Network: London Forum

**1st November 10:00-11:30 – Negotiating and implementing a shared vision:
measuring universities' contribution to local and regional sustainability**



**Civic University
Network**

delivered by:

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Join the conversation:



@civicuniversity
#trulycivic