Strategy 2030:
Civic Engagement Strategy

A. Alignment to Strategy 2030	
Strategic Pillars: Sustaining and progressing	
- Research excellence - Transformative learning experiences - An excellent student experience - A thriving Welsh language and bilingual environment	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Transformational themes: Strengthening and promoting	
- Economic, social, and civic impact - Global reach - Health and wellbeing - People and talent	* ✓ ✓ ✓
Underpinned by	
Institutional sustainability	✓

*   primary

✓ secondary

B. Alignment to Corporate Risks
CR7   Poor engagement with local/regional communities
CR15 Inadequacy of institutional strategic direction

C. Governance
Strategy period   2022-2026
Strategy review arrangements   The strategy will be reviewed annually by the Civic Mission Strategy Group and the outcomes will be reported to the Executive.
Last reviewed

D. Introduction

From our establishment in 1884, Bangor University has been committed to working with the local and regional community to safeguard, develop and enhance the social, economic and cultural life of north Wales. As a research-led University of and for north Wales, our institutional strategic plan *Strategy 2030* outlines our commitment to support a wealth of civic engagement activities regionally, nationally and internationally and to recognise these as a fundamental aspect of our core activities. In *Strategy 2030* the vision for civic engagement centres around four priority areas:

- Social and economic prosperity: providing thought leadership for north Wales by working collaboratively with regional partners to provide the critical research and innovation backbone to feed wider economic and societal impact, play a leading role in the post-pandemic recovery, and play a leading role in the vibrant health and life sciences sector across the region.

- Supporting businesses and skills: Support regional workforce development through our undergraduate and postgraduate provision, CPD and professional qualifications and ensuring that our teaching portfolio aligns with the needs of employers across north Wales.

- Cohesive, resilient communities: Ensure that we embed civic engagement throughout our strategies, engage in a clear and effective stakeholder communication and develop research that addresses regional, national and global challenges and opportunities.

- An accessible University: Ensure that the University is an accessible space in the life of our local communities and work to develop and enhance cultural activities for the benefit of the region.

Actions aimed at attaining these goals are articulated across a range of sub-strategies including *Research and Innovation, Sustainability, Employability, Widening Access and Participation, People and Talent, Health and Wellbeing, International* and *Teaching and Learning.* We will therefore achieve the objectives outlined in this strategy through interconnectedness and consistency with objectives across our strategic pillars.

The aim of this strategy and related action plan is to provide our Civic Engagement work with direction, visibility, and the status it now demands and deserves. By ensuring that our partnership work is coherent and holistic, we will be able to fuel growth and accelerate change.

The strategy is built on firm historical and contemporary foundations. There is a wealth of civic engagement activities undertaken by staff across academic and service departments. These activities are often based on long-established and well-developed networks with a plethora of partners which include public bodies, community groups, businesses, and key individuals. The strategy seeks to celebrate the work that is currently undertaken, give it greater momentum and impact, and help identify new opportunities. To achieve this, we need to:

- Communicate effectively with internal and external audiences;

- Support our staff and stakeholders to foster sustainable partnerships and collaborations;

- Know our locality well by understanding its people and challenges in depth.

Our Civic Engagement work is wide and varied but for the purpose of this strategy, falls under three 'umbrella' themes:

- Working with stakeholders to identify and address societal challenges (e.g. the 'big' challenges of public health, climate change, Welsh language, housing, poverty, post-Covid recovery, ageing population and others);

- Working with stakeholders to ensure economic growth and sustainability;

- Improving the quality of life through social and cultural engagement.

This strategy can only be achieved through partnership work. The strategy provides direction for developing and sustaining partnerships and maximising the beneficial impact that we can have through collaboration. We will adopt a values-based approach to civic engagement. We will emphasise our *ambitions* for our communities, *accountability* to external stakeholders, *curiousness* to exchange ideas and find solutions, *collaboration* in our approach and thinking, *mindfulness* of interdependencies and *respectfulness* of people, place, culture and processes.

The civic engagement team of PVC, APVC and officers will provide institutional leadership and operational support for the strategy. Given the inherently cross-institutional nature of civic engagement, effective internal collaboration and dovetailing with other strategies and workflows is essential. The accompanying action plan will detail roles, responsibilities and timescales to direct and facilitate this.

E. Objectives

1. Effective and timely communication of civic engagement activities.

Effective communication is key to the success of this strategy. The work that staff and students undertake with external partners will be celebrated and shared internally. Using established internal communication channels, we will ensure that the University community understands the range, breadth and depth of our civic engagement activities and the possibilities that arise from it. The value of civic engagement to the University will be recognised and its status elevated. We will use external communication channels effectively to ensure that external stakeholders understand what we do and how we can work with them to achieve shared aims and aspirations. To achieve these aims we will:

- Ensure that we effectively articulate the University's vision and strategy in a way that illustrates our unique and long-term partnership with our communities.
- Develop our internal and public-facing lines of communication including bespoke webpages which articulate civic engagement activities (ensuring that the terminology used resonates with the target audience).
- Collate case studies of established and emerging partnerships and ensure that these are regularly celebrated and disseminated internally and externally through our communication channels.
- Establish an annual Community Day to open our doors to the community to showcase our work, provide an opportunity for external stakeholders to engage with staff and students, and highlight the potential for partnership working.

2. Understand the breadth and depth of our links with external stakeholders, maximise the potential of these links and support staff engaged in Civic Engagement activities.

A wealth of Civic Engagement activity is undertaken across all parts of the University. Many of our staff and students instinctively seek to engage with our communities through their research, teaching and/or participation in a variety of externally facing activities. In order to develop and grow these partnerships we need to understand their scale and impact and embed the support mechanisms that will facilitate collaboration and maximise their full potential. To achieve these aims we will:

- Provide institutional leadership and have a dedicated institutional unit and structure for Civic and Community engagement.
- Undertake an audit of current stakeholder and community engagement activity.
- Develop a database of stakeholders and related activities that is shared across the University so that connections can be made.
- Develop a comprehensive University-wide *Stakeholder Engagement* strategy.
- Develop our understanding of the wider benefits of civic engagement activities and seek to incorporate more effectively into business planning.
- Develop the status and profile of Civic Engagement across the academic colleges and in professional services and ensure that Civic Engagement is 'championed' through new or existing roles.
- Develop programmes and/or training to build institutional and community capacity.
- Embed institutional recognition for Civic Engagement work through awards and honours.
- Ensure that Civic Engagement work is recognised in PDRs, Workload Allocation Models and in the evaluation of promotion applications.

3. Improve information sharing and facilitate collaboration between the University and its stakeholders

E. Objectives

As a large and complex organisation, the University has a multitude of operational and strategic partnerships and engages with a large number of stakeholders and community organisations. To maximise the potential of these partnerships, we must understand how the relationships work and share best practice. We will promote the engagement of the institution with our stakeholders through two-way knowledge exchanges, and actively and broadly communicate the relevance and impact of our activities. To achieve these aims we will:

- Ensure that our Community Board draws together a broad range of stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Ensure that the Community Board feeds into the development of the Civic Engagement Strategy by identifying opportunities to collaborate and provide feedback on our civic engagement work.
- Embed a commitment to Civic Engagement through membership and involvement with national and international community engagement networks.
- Substantially increase the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the University and wider society.
- Involve external/community partners in phases and aspects of projects and collaborations.
- Recognise the needs, interests and potential of external stakeholders and partners.
- Respect and accept different ways of working and organisational cultures.
- Engage in evidence-gathering with local communities via polling and consultation
- Establish strong relationships with Public Services Boards in north Wales.
- Work with community groups and networks across the region, ensuring that we have a shared understanding of priorities and objectives.
- Identify opportunities for engaging with the 'Levelling Up' agenda.
- Establish a programme of events in collaboration with external partners (e.g. Institute of Welsh Affairs).
- Ensure that the civic engagement team work with colleagues to identify collaboration and funding opportunities and act as a point of contact for external enquiries related to our strategic aims.
- Ensure that we have a budget dedicated to Civic and Community Engagement.
- Establish a *Community Collaboration Fund* to facilitate 'pump-priming' civic engagement activities and fund modest costs associated with building partnerships.

4. **Work with external stakeholders to identify and address societal challenges' (e.g., the 'big challenges' of public health, climate change, Welsh language, housing and poverty).**

The need to engage with external stakeholders at local, regional, national and international level and work collaboratively to address a range of societal challenges is an institutional transformational theme. Work in developing economic growth and sustainability is at its most effective when rooted in a deep understanding of the economic, social, linguistic, and cultural profile of the region. Through deepening and strengthening our civic partnership work we can further support our contribution to developing skills and employability and to extending educational opportunity. We will partner with relevant stakeholders and agencies to promote the institution as a hub of engagement activity in order and actively address local and regional development, regeneration and research agendas. In order to achieve these ambitions we will:

- Ensure alignment of objectives across a range of University sub-strategies including *Research and Impact, Employability, Sustainability, Welsh Language* and *Widening Access* and work to support colleagues in achieving these goals.
- Accelerate innovation and inclusive economic growth across the north Wales region.
- Invest in new civic projects and platforms through externally funded or co-funded capital investment (e.g. Parc y Coleg).
- Actively involve the public in the research activity of the institution.
- Ensure that our strategies align with the aspirations set out in Welsh Government's *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act* and the United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals.*
- Ensure that our Civic Engagement activities are informed by the sustainability agenda and contributes to community wellbeing and economic development.
- Work with local, regional and national groups and bodies (including local and national government and PSBs) to identify and address societal challenges.

E. Objectives

- Ensure that our science park, *MSParc*, provides the facilities, expertise and access to entrepreneurs and local business and the networks that can translate research into impactful economic development.
- Support local businesses through externally focussed training and support (e.g. ION).
- Work with local and national employers to ensure that the skills acquired by our graduates align with their needs and support the drive for a sustainable economy.
- Work with external stakeholders to create opportunities for students to undertake the extracurricular activities that will improve their work readiness.
- Work with internal and external stakeholders and partners to fulfil the potential of the opportunities afforded by UNESCO status for the Welsh Slate Community around themes including history, language, culture, industry and landscape.
- Working with external stakeholders to support aspirations and initiatives such as the City of Culture.
- Work closely with employers to identify their Welsh language needs.
- Work with external stakeholders to extend educational opportunities for children, young people and adults.
- Ensure procurement practice contributes and supports the delivery of social and local community benefits.
- Develop our understanding of the skills and employment needs and opportunities in our communities.
- Identify further opportunities for student placements.
- Use partnerships to understand the most effective ways of reaching communities and delivering educational / skills provision to them.
- Support student volunteering initiatives.

- Through the Civic Mission Framework (Wales), work with other Welsh Universities on areas of common interest, identify collaboration opportunities on ad hoc projects and partnerships.

5. To deliver a rich and diverse programme of public and social engagement initiatives and to ensure that our facilities and spaces can be used to the benefit of our communities.

Since our establishment in 1884, knowledge exchange has been an inspiring and enduring institutional vision and mission. Across our academic disciplines and through numerous forms of engagement, Bangor has a long and well-established track record of delivering a programme of public-facing events and activities. Our vision is to build on those foundations. We will strengthen our relationship with communities across the region and ensure that our activities are relevant, understandable and purposefully provide added value. We will work collaboratively to raise aspirations and provide opportunities to improve the quality of life and broaden horizons. We will continue to open our campuses to local communities and ensure that, wherever possible, our social, arts, cultural, academic and sports activities will promote community engagement and partnership. To achieve these aims we will:

- Ensure that Pontio is an ambitious and attractive centre that engages effectively with our communities through a diverse range of programmes and events.
- Ensure that our academic expertise in the Arts is shared with the community more widely through initiatives such as *Bangor Music Festival* and events such as the *National Eisteddfod*.
- Through our sports facilities in *Canolfan Brailsford* and 3G at Treborth, ensure that we continue to provide a range of sports activities and support to the community.
- Work closely with organisations including Rygbi Gogledd Cymru (RGC) to develop community-facing strategic initiatives.
- Ensure that the University's expertise in Health and Wellbeing is deployed for community benefit (e.g. mindfulness community sessions, wellness walks at Treborth)
- Maximise the potential of Treborth Gardens for use by a broad range of demographics within society to highlight and support wellbeing and environmental initiatives.
- Develop *Parc y Coleg* and promote its use to as broad a range of the population of Bangor and surrounding area as possible.
- Hold an engaging range of series and events that allow communities to learn about and engage with areas of academic expertise.

E. Objectives

- Develop new ways and employ a range of media to share our work with communities beyond the University (e.g. free MOOCs, podcasts, web materials etc).

F. Key Performance Indicators

Progress against each of the objectives will be articulated through key performance indicators (KPIs); these are underpinned by a framework of more detailed KPIs and targets which are aligned and operationalised through the University's annual business planning round.

1. No of annual civic engagement enquiries (objective 3)

2. HEBCIS metrics including No. of public facing and civic engagement badged events and numbers attending; No. of individuals and groups using University facilities; No. of people attending the annual Community Day; No. of school visits and talks (objective 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

3. No. of research projects that engage with societal change themes (objective 4)

4. No. of staff acting as consultants and advisors on societal change themes (objective 4)

5. No. of open access resources (free MOOCs, podcasts, web materials, blogs, archives etc) (objective 4, 5)

6. No. of student placements with local employers and organisations; No of students who can contribute to a bilingual workforce (objective 3 and 4)

7. Proportion of spend with Welsh suppliers based on suppliers where location is known; Number of projects including social value clauses and value of social benefit obtained through procurement. (objective 4)

8. No. and/or % of students who volunteer (objective 4)

9. No. of staff who serve on local, community and charitable organisation committees (objective 2, 4, 5)

10. 10. No. of staff who volunteer in community groups, organisations and NGOs (objective 2, 4, 5)