



A partnership for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Civic University Agreement



Introduction

This Civic University Agreement is a commitment between De Montfort University, the University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the city and counties of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to work together, in collaboration with our partners and the community, for the benefit of local people and the prosperity of our places.

Universities touch people's lives at many different points – it could be at an individual level for those who have benefited from studying at one of our institutions, or at a societal level as a result of ground-breaking research, pioneering innovations and knowledge creation.

This agreement describes the many ways in which our universities make a positive impact in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, while recognising that none of it can be achieved in isolation. It is only through working together and learning from each other within our universities, institutions, communities and places that real change happens.

That is why, in the wake of a global pandemic and the significant hardships this has brought to our local communities and economy, we are coming together as universities and places to commit to enhance our partnership working through the Civic University Agreement.

The Civic University Agreement for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland combines the collective strengths of our universities and civic institutions to make a greater impact by working together more closely for our communities.

Through this partnership we hope to instil collective civic behaviours across our institutions, establishing synergy in regard to how we support our local communities and ensure the prosperity of our places. This will be delivered through a combination of aligning work that is already happening and supporting new joint innovations.

This Civic University Agreement marks the beginning of a journey. It signals a commitment by the partners to bring together our collective skills, expertise and social capital and collaborate in the long-term interests of our communities.

Signatories:

The signatories of this agreement commit to work together, in collaboration with our communities and partners, to address the priorities set out in the Civic University Agreement.

- De Montfort University

- University of Leicester

- Loughborough University

- Leicester City Council

- Leicestershire County Council

- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

- Rutland County Council

- Charnwood Borough Council



Introduction to our universities

It is a matter of great pride that our universities are truly civic and inextricably rooted in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We are institutions founded to support local people and our communities.

De Montfort University traces its beginnings back to the 19th century and early 20th century, when the School of Art and Leicester Technical School began training apprentices for local industries, such as boot and shoe manufacture, furniture making and design, hosiery and textiles manufacture.

The University of Leicester was established by the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in 1921 as a living memorial to those who made sacrifices in the First World War and to offer hope for the future through the transformative power of education.

Loughborough University was awarded its Royal Charter in 1966, but traces its roots back to 1909, when, as Loughborough Technical Institute, it began with a focus on skills directly applicable in the wider world. Over the years the University has become renowned for engineering and sport.

Our universities continue to share a mission to improve the lives of local people through our teaching and research. We are committed to working with our communities to provide inclusive and transformative educational opportunities and deliver a positive impact locally.

We look forward to working with you, the people and communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, as part of this Civic University Agreement.

Our combined contributions

We partner with business to power innovation, address skills gaps and create economic prosperity. Our universities are international beacons of education that attract investment and raise the profile of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

- De Montfort University, the University of Leicester and Loughborough University are worth a combined **£1.7 billion** to the UK economy.

- We contribute a total of **£1 billion** to the Leicester and Leicestershire economy, which supports nearly **17,000 jobs**.

- Our student spending alone contributes nearly **£300m** to the local economy, helping to sustain more than **4,500 jobs**.

- Between us we have more than **60,000 students** studying locally.

- Around **1 in every 25 jobs** in Leicester and Leicestershire are supported by our universities.

(All statistics taken from De Montfort University, University of Leicester and Loughborough University independent economic impact reports undertaken by Hatch Regeneris. 'Leicester and Leicestershire' refers to the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) geographical area.)

Our impact extends far beyond the economy and out into our communities. We utilise cutting-edge research to pioneer new health technologies and treatments, while our clinical expertise underpins local healthcare provision. Our graduates are the dedicated teachers, doctors, nurses and professionals that are so vital in every aspect of our lives. Our students, staff, events and activities contribute to the vibrant cultural fabric of our places.

We are making a commitment through this agreement to work more closely together to increase our joint contributions to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. As the partnership progresses, we will continue to assess our economic and social impacts and measure our progress.

Our approach

The Civic University Agreement marks the beginning of a new venture and an enhanced partnership. It sets out key priorities that we are committing to deliver in collaboration with our partners and communities. The publication of the Civic University Agreement is the start of an ongoing process of collaboration, co-creation and co-production that will allow us to achieve our shared goals.

In consultation with our partners and communities we have identified five themes, devised around key priorities for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and aligned to areas in which our universities have world-leading knowledge, expertise and best practice:

- Education

- The economy

- Health, wellbeing and sport

- Environmental sustainability

- Arts, culture and heritage

We have established joint theme groups, comprised of academic and professional experts from our universities, in each of the five areas. The theme groups, in collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders, will work towards the delivery of objectives in the agreement. This partnership will be overseen by a joint steering group, through which we can deliver the Civic University Agreement.

We will embed consultation as a constant throughout our partnership, ensuring that we are regularly engaging with local stakeholders and local communities to remain relevant and focussed on the issues that matter. Each year, we will measure our progress and review our objectives to ensure they align with the evolving priorities of our communities.

As universities, we are committed to tackling inequalities and creating a more inclusive society. As such, our approach to the Civic University Agreement seeks to embed inclusion throughout all the themes and in everything we do.



THEME 1:

Education

Our universities are at the heart of our educational ecosystem. In partnership with primary, secondary, specialist and post-16 providers, we provide outreach and support across all ages of the educational journey, as well as training and support for school teachers. Through widening participation partnerships, we deliver targeted outreach programmes across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to raise aspirations and ensure that every local child who has the ability to succeed at university is afforded the opportunity. Our shared mission is to provide inclusive and evidence-based educational opportunities, tailored to our local region, that both transform our students' lives and equip them with the skills and competencies to change the lives of many others.

Aim

To work in partnership with our local schools, colleges, businesses and wider communities to support the educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by creating educational skills and opportunities that enable local people from all backgrounds to flourish.

Together we will:

- a. Work in partnership with our local schools and colleges to create an inclusive educational system that improves outcomes for those facing educational barriers and supports the most disadvantaged young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to succeed in their lives.
- b. Create pathways and support programmes to increase higher education participation for local people facing barriers to entering university.
- c. Equip our education system with the best possible talent by partnering with schools and colleges to train new teachers, develop their staff and nurture their professional development.

THEME 2:

The Economy

Our universities are critical to sustainable economic prosperity in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Our world-leading strengths attract major global businesses in industries such as the space sector, life sciences, sport and the creative industries. We work hand-in-glove with businesses of all shapes and sizes and our innovation programmes seek to boost productivity in the local economy. Furthermore, our outstanding graduates provide a pipeline of talent to industry and are the foundation of the local knowledge economy. We are working with our local authority partners and businesses to match talent to opportunities and ensure that more of our graduates start businesses – building their lives here and helping to drive future prosperity in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Aim

To power inclusive and sustainable economic growth, innovation and prosperity across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and support the region to recover from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Together we will:

- a. Drive inward investment into our region through attracting businesses to the area, supporting national Government initiatives and funding bids (e.g. the Levelling Up Fund), and partnering on major regional developments (e.g. East Midlands Freeport).
- b. Retain more graduates locally by working with our local authorities and partners to promote local employment opportunities to graduates, matching their skills to local employment needs.
- c. Invest our own resources and lever the resources of others into research and development – creating an effective basis for an innovation-led local economy.
- d. Support a thriving local business, voluntary and community sector through our research, innovation, leadership and business support programmes.
- e. Lead the way in supporting the development of a fair, inclusive, green and sustainable economy.

THEME 3: Health, Wellbeing and Sport

Our universities are embedded in the health and wellbeing of our communities. Our world-leading advances in medicine, sport and life sciences have a positive impact on health and wellbeing in our communities. Together we train the doctors, health professionals, social workers and youth workers who provide a backbone of support throughout our lives. During the pandemic we worked in partnership with public health teams to mitigate the spread and impact of the virus—providing expertise, equipment and volunteers to support our communities. The pandemic also brought into sharp relief the deep-rooted health inequalities that exist in our society; our experts were the first to identify the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnically diverse communities.

Aim

To work with our communities to identify the health inequalities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and, through using our expertise and working with health partners, improve the health and wellbeing of our diverse communities.

Together we will:

- a. Work with communities and partners to support local public health priorities, improve health and wellbeing outcomes and address inequalities.
- b. Support research to explore the impact of key contributors to poor health and wellbeing – including social and economic disadvantage, inequality and barriers to access – and make recommendations for best practice.
- c. Raise awareness, provide advocacy and support specific interventions to tackle identified inequalities.

THEME 4: Environmental Sustainability

Working within well-established local and national partnerships, our universities are committed to act sustainably and nurture our environment. We are fortunate to benefit from the knowledge of world-leading experts and benchmark our delivery against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through global research, partnerships and collaborations we are committed to addressing the most pressing issues of our time such as the climate emergency. We will focus on ambitious local actions that are not being addressed through other established forums and which could not be achieved through acting alone. We will draw upon innovative ideas from staff, students and public engagement to deliver collaborative solutions.

Aim

To maximise the environmental sustainability of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland through developing and delivering innovative collaborative projects.

Together we will:

- a. Commit to reducing our carbon footprints and improving our environmental sustainability.
- b. Support behavioural change by delivering educational programmes that promote environmental sustainability, including carbon literacy training and sustainability audits (SDG 4).
- c. Deliver research that tackles environmental challenges: supporting mitigation and adaptation to climate change (SDG 13) and ensuring access to clean, affordable and sustainable air, water, sanitation and energy (SDG 6, SDG 7).
- d. Enhance natural capital and biodiversity locally, including on our university campuses (SDG 14, SDG 15), and reduce the negative environmental impacts of local resource use (SDG 12).

THEME 5:

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have proud and distinctive histories and offer a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape. Our universities are home to leading arts, culture and heritage venues and we deliver high-quality and inclusive festivals, events and exhibitions. Beyond our campuses we collaborate with leading partners on projects as far reaching as art, archaeology, dance, music, heritage and urban history. Our research tackles inequality and promotes inclusion in arts, culture and heritage. Our discoveries and research-inspired ideas have boosted tourism, supported creative businesses and added to the social and cultural fabric of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Through partnerships and sponsorships, we raise the profile of our region and celebrate everything that is special about our place.

Aim

To work with partners and communities to enhance the thriving local arts, creative, cultural and heritage landscape, celebrate our diversity and inclusion, and promote our region as a national destination.

Together we will:

- a. Develop and establish effective, sustainable and scalable cultural partnerships that enable the universities to effectively contribute to the cultural life of our locality, driven and informed by the needs of our community and responding to strategic priorities (e.g. the cultural creative industries strategy).
- b. Deliver a bold and distinctive contribution of inclusive arts, culture and heritage programmes and events through our campus cultural venues, estate and digital assets.
- c. Enhance and raise the profile of our region as a diverse and inclusive arts, cultural and heritage destination through continuing to sponsor and support local festivals and events, collaborating with partners, and delivering innovative place marketing initiatives.



In conclusion

The foundation of this Civic University Agreement is a strong partnership between the universities. Working to serve our communities is not new to us, it is what we have been doing since we were founded. What makes this collaboration different is that we will be doing it in lockstep together with our partners across the region. We will pursue shared objectives and outcomes and undertake joint projects as part of this agreement. Networks and relationships will be forged across the universities and other local key organisations that will support our communities. By coming together regularly and talking about the local challenges we face, we will identify new, better solutions and maximise the impact we have for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.



**Universities
Partnership**

Working together for Leicester,
Leicestershire and Rutland

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