

Senate 12 September

The University of Kent
Our Civic Mission Strategy 2018 - 2025

We are invested in our communities

The University is required under its Charter to 'advance education and disseminate knowledge by teaching, scholarship and research for the public benefit'. We have since our foundation taken our public benefit responsibilities seriously. We have a major impact on the economy of our region. We contribute socially, culturally and intellectually to our local communities.

The current University Plan focuses on engagement as a means of building our national and international reputation for excellence in education and research. We will continue to engage with a wide range of local, national, European and international partners as part of the research and education strands of this strategy. We will also give enhanced emphasis to our civic role, strengthening the ways in which our staff and students, our assets and facilities and our national and international networks can help deliver social, educational, cultural, public and economic benefits across Kent and Medway. We want our civic mission to be a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

We will do this through:

1. Building on recent civic initiatives

The University is committed to being a visible and effective player in the county as a whole, not only in Medway and Canterbury. In order to help us to become a stronger university in a stronger county, we will

- Work with local health authorities and Canterbury Christ Church University to ensure that the **Kent and Medway Medical School**, and associated university activity, delivers significant health, well-being and social care benefits to the region
- Confirm **KMTV** as the 'go-to' TV station for local news and community involvement in Kent and to help build a sense of common purpose and identity in the region. In doing so, KMTV will provide a showcase for our students and staff.
- Work with Medway Council and other partners to strengthen **cultural and creative activity** in Medway,
- Work with Kent Union both to increase the profile and value of the **volunteering** work that our students carry out to make a difference to our local communities and to use engagement activity within course or co-curricular activity to help develop new skills for our students.

2. Working in Partnership

The university draws strength from its location. Economic growth, sustainability and quality of life in the region matter to us. We will identify ways to strengthen our partnerships with individuals, groups and organisations in Kent and Medway and within Europe to strengthen our economic and social contributions.

We will

- Enhance our communication and partnership with local authorities and other bodies, including regional economic and development fora, such as the South East LEP, KMEP and the South East Creative Economy Network, so that we have a better understanding of **the region's wider needs** and can support the delivery of initiatives such as the Thames Estuary Vision 2050 and other local industrial strategies
- Strengthen our dialogue with local business, community leaders and other stakeholders to ensure that **relevant academic courses and modules best reflect the needs of employers and the economy**
- Encourage academic schools to develop joined up networks and contacts with business, charities or other bodies that may **benefit from our research** and help them to share and grow these networks more effectively
- Continue to support **small and medium enterprises** to grow and develop and to play an active part in business support organisations such as the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and will work with other partners
- Continue to support **cultural organisations and events** such as the Whitstable Biennale and People United that address the needs and interests of diverse communities around the county. Work with Arts Council England to deliver the shared ambitions in our 2018 Memorandum of Understanding to support and promote the engagement of all children and young people in Kent in arts and culture addressing inequalities of opportunity.
- Work with other universities and stakeholder groups to strengthen both **community relations** and our social and economic impact.
- Develop a **major philanthropic campaign** for delivery by our 60th anniversary with the aim both to raise funds and to engage our alumni and supporters in the university's renewed ambitions.

3. Opening up our Campuses and Resources

The University has developed a range of facilities and activities with the prime objective of delivering an outstanding educational and co-curricular

experience for our students. We recognise that they constitute a wider potential resource for our communities

We will

- Enhance opportunities to **engage our communities with our Research and academic expertise** in new and innovative ways including public lectures and festivals such as Being Human and Pint of Science and networks such as Business Soundbite events.
- Explore opportunities to be a **focus for the exchange of ideas** and innovative practices across a range of endeavours and Increase opportunities for external groups to make greater use of University facilities, including meeting rooms and library services
- Build on the Gulbenkian status as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation to build a **wider range of cultural and artistic events** of the highest quality at both our Canterbury and Medway campuses
- Develop our extensive conference and leisure facilities through the provision of a high quality all year round **residential hotel and conference centre**

4. Widening Opportunities

The work that we do in widening participation is part of what we are: inclusive, diverse and a university that changes lives. We are committed to remaining leaders in our field.

We will

- Strengthen our outreach with learners in communities and **students within partner schools and further education colleges** and develop an ambitious new programme to underpin the University's new collaborative medical school.
- Focus our **partnership work with our FE partner colleges** to support BTEC students who may wish to progress to higher education and through the shared development of new higher apprenticeship pathways.
- Continue to develop the **University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT)** in a variety of ways
- Build on our award-winning **student success project**.

5. Embed Sustainability

The University will embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals into our research, education, leadership, operations, administration and engagement.

There will be consultation about what this will mean in practice but the elements will include:

- **Developing our campuses** sensitively and in keeping with their local characteristics.
- Continuing to **reduce our carbon emissions** with a target of 33% reduction by 2025, against our 2005 baseline
- Strengthening our engagement with the **Global Challenges Research Fund**
- Exploring opportunities to embed **Education for Sustainable Development across** our formal and informal curriculums to equip our graduates with the knowledge, skills, attributes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

Enabling these Priorities

Taking forward these priorities will require action at many different levels and in many different ways.

We will:

- Encourage staff to share contacts so that the university as a whole can be more than the sum of its parts
- Increase our visibility in the region and ensure that those outside the university, particularly those whose interests span multiple areas, find it easier to make contact with the area that is of greatest relevance
- Streamline and simplify our communications so that what we do to make a difference is better recognised internally and externally. We will better articulate how our local roots and global vision fit together.
- Provide guidelines to staff on what activity is (and is not) appropriate to further our civic mission. This will include recognition of how we can change and influence the external environment and of how we can enable external partners to influence us.
- Create new opportunities to involve staff in activities which enhance the civic mission, supporting sustainable partnership initiatives in the region, and brokering staff participation in selected festivals, consultations, and events.
- Develop appropriate recognition and reward for activities that help the university to deliver its ambitions