



# Civic University Movement

Presentation to CHEAD, March 2022

@UPP\_Foundation



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# About UPPF

## Our overall impact:

OVER

**£1m**

directly invested  
in projects...

...through

**34**  
**innovative**

pilot schemes.

This includes helping to establish the **University Mental Health Charter** to which 41 universities are already signed up...

Reached over

**70%**  
**of UK HEIs...**

...and directly funded  
opportunities for around

**8,000**  
**students.**

...and leading a **refreshed civic universities agenda** by setting up the commission and then supporting the establishment of the Civic University Network.

- Established in 2016 by student accommodation provider University Partnerships Programme
- Independent corporate foundation with
- Dual purpose - grant funder and public policy platform
- Three key goals
  - Student and graduate success
  - Sustainable and green civic universities
  - Higher education's impact on society



# The Civic Journey







# The Civic University Commission

1. Huge amount of civic engagement but...
  - Not much evidence of a strategic approach based on the needs of a place
2. Govt policy/incentives often mitigate against the civic and placemaking
3. Funding paradox
4. Sharing best practice





# Civic University Agreements – 65 signed up

## Place

- As a place-based institution we are committed to attaching a high-priority to the economic, social, environmental, and cultural life of our local communities

## Public

- Our civic role will be informed by an evidence-based analysis of the needs of our place, developed collaboratively with local partners and informed by the voice of our local community.

## Partnerships

- We will collaborate with other universities and anchor institutions and form partnerships to overcome the challenges facing our local communities.

## Measurement and Impact

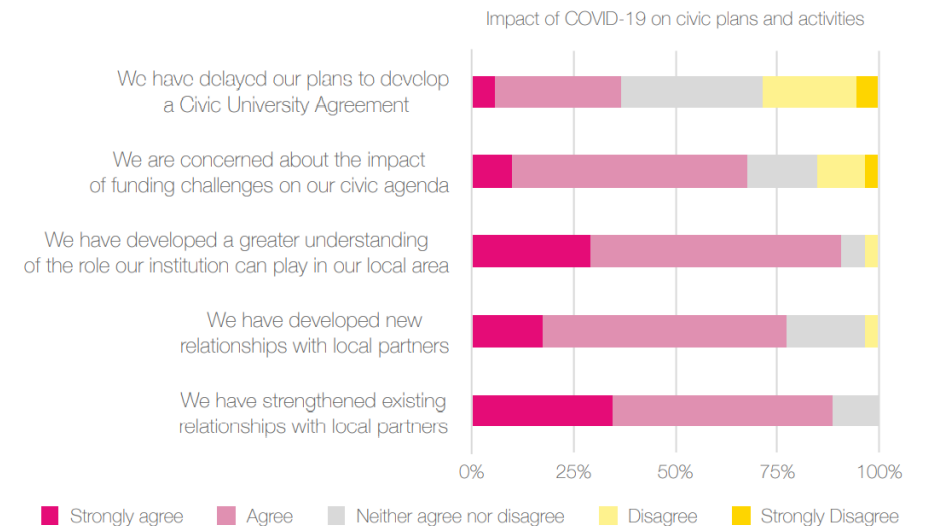
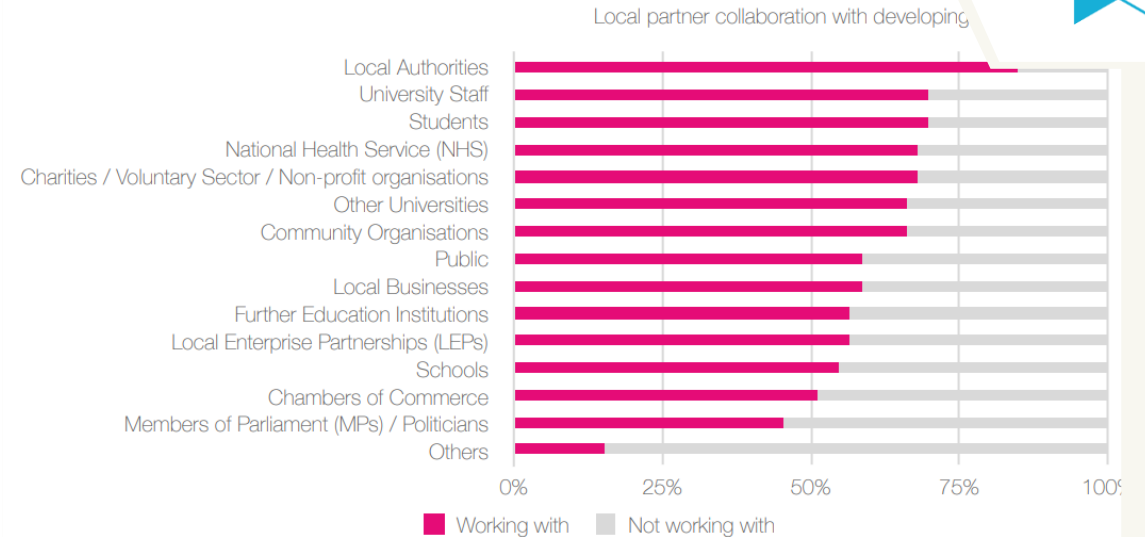
- With our partners, we will be clear about what we do and how we measure it, so we can say with confidence what we have achieved – and how we might do better in the future.



# CUAs – Some themes

- Several universities have published a CUA
- Some delayed due to Covid
- Purpose/values driven motivation rather than enlightened self-interest
- Strong partnerships with local authorities, surprisingly less for FECs
- Economy and health key focus
- University collaboration a real positive
- Challenge around measurement, accountability and reporting
- What about arts bodies?

Civic University Agreements.





# Key reflections

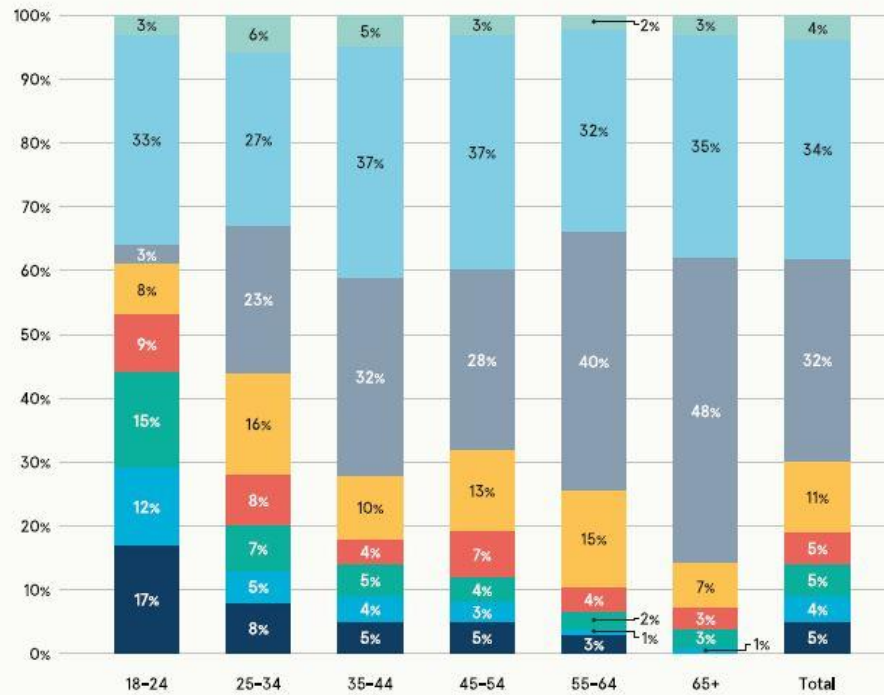




# Public engagement



**Figure 1: Thinking back to before the first national lockdown in England, in March 2020. When did you last visit a university in England before that time, for whatever reason?**



- In the week before lockdown in March 2020
- In the month before lockdown in March 2020
- In the few months before lockdown in March 2020
- In the year before lockdown in March 2020
- Over a year and up to 5 years before lockdown in March 2020
- More than 5 years ago before lockdown in March 2020
- Have never visited a University in England
- Don't Know

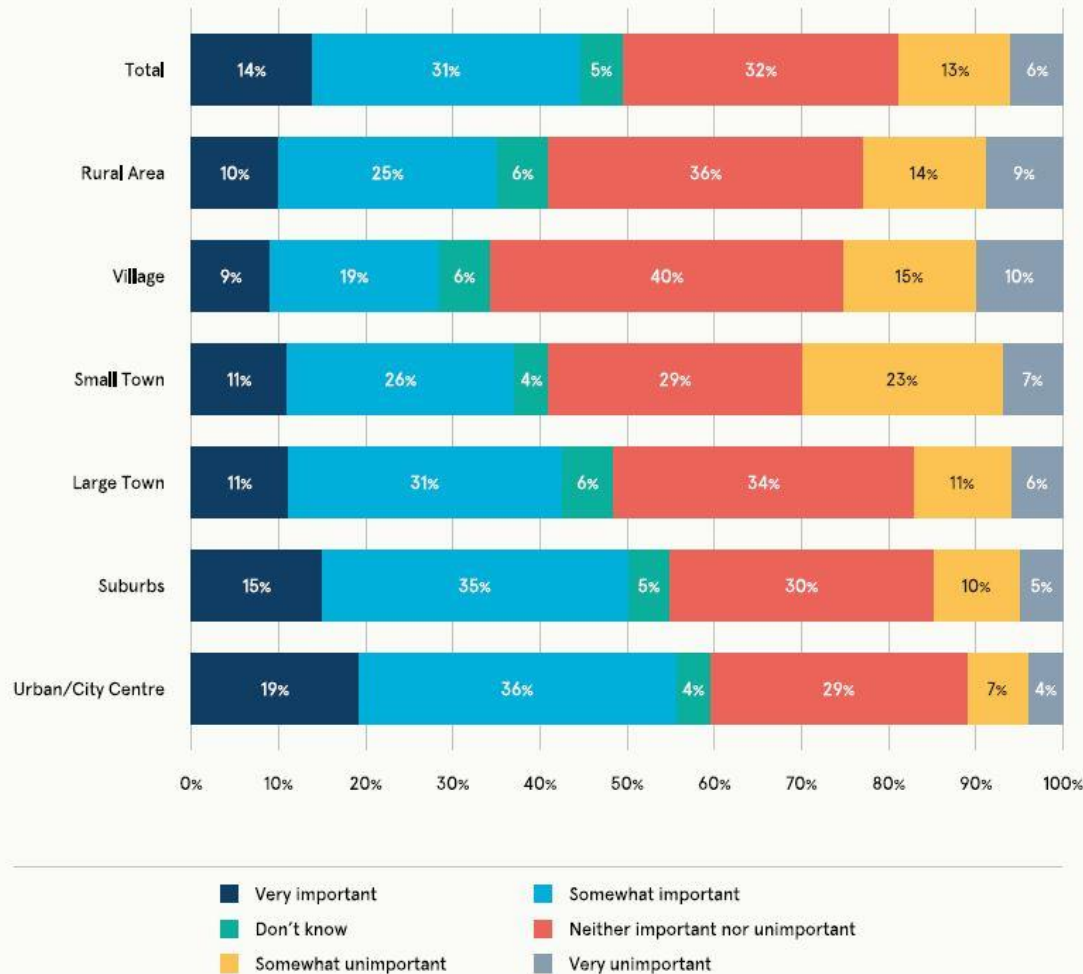
**Figure 2: Thinking back to before the first national lockdown in England, in March 2020. When did you last visit a university in England before that time, for whatever reason?**



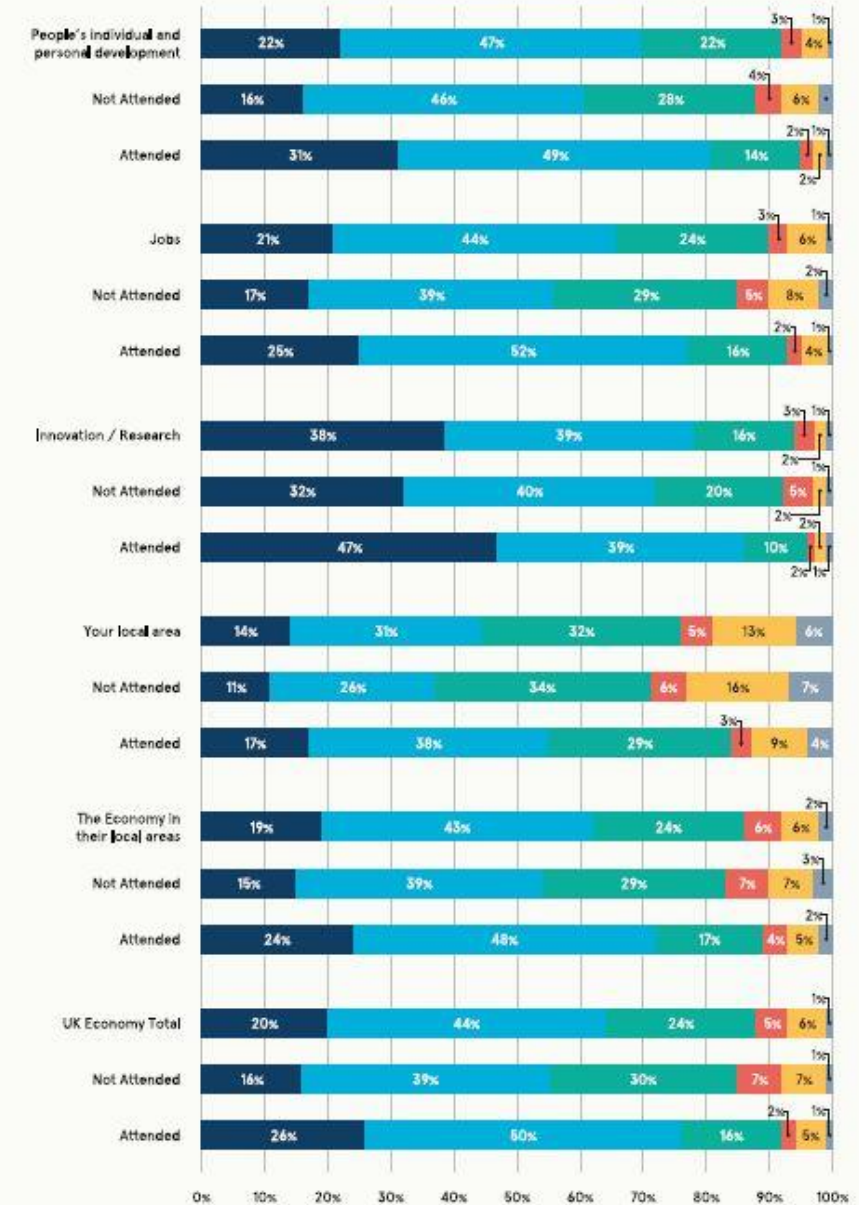
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# How important are local universities

**Figure 3: How important or unimportant do you think universities are for your local area**



**Figure 4: How important/unimportant universities are to the following overall, and then by whether people personally attended university for study**

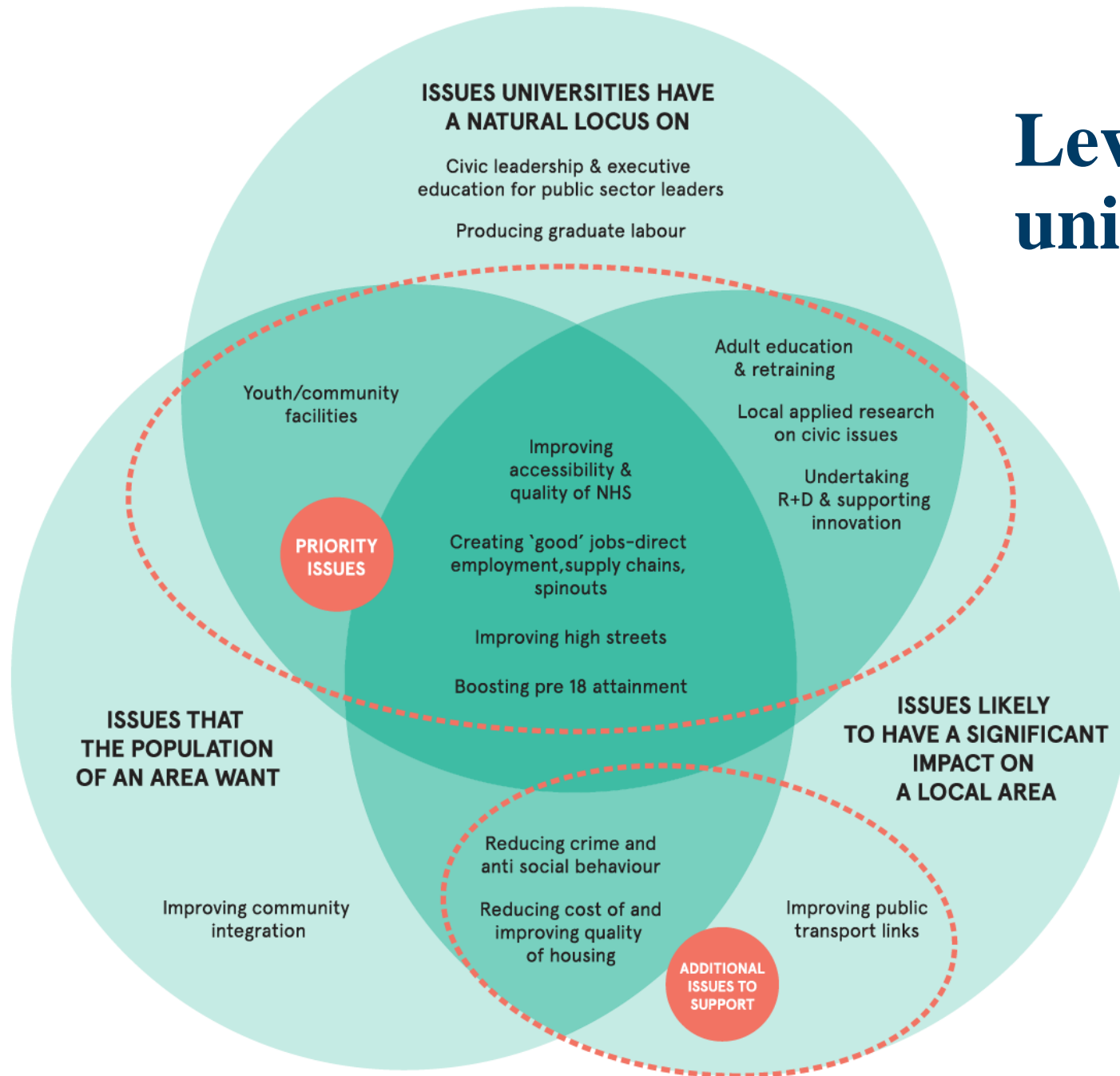




# Extending civic engagement to towns

- The successor report that builds on the Civic University Commission
- Originally conceived of and begun in late 2019 – before the General Election, the Brexit Deal, Covid....
- Develops the concept of ‘place’ and university’s role as civic actors
- The key questions for this report were
  - What role can universities play in ‘left behind areas’ where they do not have direct provision?
  - What can they realistically do, either as the lead or in partnership?
  - And crucially – and often overlooked – what do local people in these areas want from their areas, to improve them?

# Levelling-up - what can universities do?







# Other key themes

- Net Zero/sustainability and social value – convening local communities to take action
- Student Futures Commission - Embedding civic/service into the curriculum to support community renewal, wellbeing and social capital
- New access and participation agenda – local attainment and outcomes
- LLE





# Role and challenges for art and design?

- Creative industries core part of levelling-up white paper / future of our economy
- **BUT** disconnect between R&D and Skills/Augar – undermine role of creativity in levelling-up?
- Public do not see arts and culture as a civic priority (for universities)
- **BUT** Creativity and social innovation – key role in partnership with others to deliver public priorities