beacons
for public
engagement

Briefing Paper: Auditing, Benchmarking and Evaluating Public Engagement

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Co-ordinated by: University of BRISTOL   UWE BRISTOL University of the West of England

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Acknowledgements

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)'s vision is of a higher education sector making a vital, strategic and valued contribution to 21st century society through its public engagement activity. Our mission is to support universities to increase the quality and quantity of their public engagement activity.

Part of this work is to develop a research base that supports people in their public engagement work. This research synthesis is the first of a series of papers that we will be publishing over the coming years, and we have also produced a summary of this research that is available online.

You can find out more about the work of the NCCPE on our website at www.publicengagement.ac.uk.

1 Introduction

This briefing paper is written for academics, university administrators and community partners interested in monitoring and evaluating university public engagement. It provides an accessible guide to the field that can assist them in answering the questions they want to answer, in tailoring their own approach and negotiating that approach between the university and local communities. By 'local communities' we mean geographically defined communities, identity communities, and other collectivities that universities want to engage with.

Our starting point is the university, and in so far as we are concerned with getting the measure of 'engagement', this is from a perspective rooted in higher education. This approach therefore excludes from analysis those measures developed by, for example, Local Authorities and Health Trusts. However, increasing overlap of interest with public sector organisations in engaging and consulting with the public means that HEIs cannot develop and implement systems in ignorance of that wider agenda. To the extent that government may seek to develop a national framework for measuring university public engagement it is likely to follow similar principles emerging in other community strategies. These include a focus on direct accountability to local communities and clear outcomes for citizens, within a framework of local freedoms and flexibilities (see www.communities.gov.uk).

Equally, we do not start from a community perspective. As we discuss in the conclusion, tools that capture the role of community partners in community-university partnerships are thin on the ground. More broadly, a number of tools have been developed for benchmarking and auditing community participation. However, these have focused more on local capacity building and neighbourhood regeneration and tend to be developmental on action-research approaches (see Burns et al, 2004). More recently the development of indicators that make it possible to capture specified community outcomes without compromising communities' own choices makes it possible to show measurable improvement on such things as: the influence people feel they have in their locality; levels of voluntary activity; numbers of people benefiting from community group activities; and skills development (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). Some of these indicators are now embedded in official guidance on Local Area Agreements and local authority Best Value Performance Indicators in England (see CLG, 2006, *Safer Stronger Communities Fund – Indicators of Strong Communities*. Only available electronically at www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1567)

Although there are many resources available to assist universities and their partners, there is no single approach to audit, benchmarking and evaluating that can be taken off the shelf and applied to any given university and its partners.

While we hope that the briefing will be helpful in presenting a complex and rapidly expanding field in an accessible way, the case study, as a 'real life' example of the problems of evaluating university public engagement, may be equally useful in avoiding some of the pitfalls (see Section 8).

Box 1 How to use this briefing

Each section provides a potential starting point for the reader, depending on your interests and experience:

- If you want to learn more about the methodological issues we encountered in writing this review go to Section 2

- Section 3 explains the differences between audit, benchmarking and evaluation, giving practical examples of each

- For a discussion of the complexities involved in measuring engagement, see Section 4

- Section 5 contains a discussion of the difficulties of defining university public engagement, and offers some definitions to use as a starting point

- For a quick overview of our framework describing seven dimensions of university public engagement, and examples of engagement for each dimension, look at Table 2 in Section 5 (p. 14)

- A more detailed presentation of our framework is given in Section 6. This mentions different tools and techniques relating to auditing, benchmarking and evaluating university-public engagement that are currently in use in Europe, North America and Australia. It also sets out in summary form some potential indicators

- For a summary of different tools and techniques mentioned in Section 6, go to Section 7. This section also contains information on what each of these tools or techniques is particularly useful for

- If you want to read about a practical example of monitoring, auditing and evaluating public engagement, Section 8 describes the University of Brighton's experience in some detail. It outlines the challenges we faced and shows how we got over them

- In our conclusion we summarise some of the lessons we have learned from evaluating university public engagement activity (p. 39)

- Finally, the References section lists a wide range of references and useful websites (Section 10)

2   Undertaking the review: some methodological issues

Central to this report is our exploration of public engagement. This is a term that in the UK has been developed in the context of local government concerns, although due to policy initiatives such as the widening participation, civic engagement and inclusion agendas (see www.hefce.ac.uk; www.communities.gov.uk/communities), it also overlaps with recent strategies within Higher Education.

In undertaking our literature search the ISI Web of Knowledge (all citation indexes) was searched for papers from the year 2000, using the terms 'university public engagement'; 'community university collaboration'; 'evaluation, audit and higher education'; 'evaluating university community engagement', and 'evaluating public engagement'. A total of 150 papers were returned.

From these, 27 papers were initially selected as having some relevance to broader level strategies for developing university-community engagement and the processes by which universities might constructively build links with their local citizens and the wider public. Papers covered a diverse range of topics, including: the role of universities in a knowledge economy; case-studies of public participation events; models of university-community partnership; service learning; and education for citizenship. However, the focus of the majority of these was not primarily on how such engagement could be evaluated. Indeed, the search terms 'evaluating university community engagement' and 'evaluating public engagement' produced a mere five papers. Overall, only 13 papers drew attention to an evaluative element that might have transferability to other situations.

The literature search confirmed our impression that the development of effective audit and evaluation tools for university public engagement is still at a formative stage. Indeed, a recent useful review of the literature on effective university-community partnering (Kenworthy-U'Ren and U'Ren, 2008) makes no reference to evaluation. Despite many examples of imaginative practical activity and a tradition, both in the UK and internationally, of the 'socially purposeful' university - rooted in the Victorian civic universities and the US land grant universities - evaluation of this engagement work has been largely neglected. Oliver et al (2008), reviewing the literature on public involvement in research, arrive at the same conclusion:

> 'Formal research of public involvement was rare. The literature was replete with enthusiastic reports and reflections but with little or no detail about public involvement, and often little attempt at objectivity' (p.78)

Many of the relevant tools and approaches currently being developed are to be found in the 'grey' literature; including web-based audit tools that are set up with wiki software (see for example http://tuftstoolkit.pbwiki.com/) and conference proceedings published on the internet (eg www.auceaconference.net.au/). Thus, in addition to searching the bibliographic literature, we explored this material. Here we adopted an iterative approach: some of the most helpful sources resulted from following up interactive links and internal cross-links to websites and electronic source documents. We are conscious of the limitations of this approach: it is difficult to provide a succinct audit trail and other equally valid sources may be overlooked. Nonetheless, in developing our own framework for auditing and evaluating university public engagement we found these to be an important resource. In exploring a complex and rapidly expanding field we believe that the inclusion of such sources will prove of value to others negotiating their way through this territory.

3   What is the difference between audit, benchmarking and evaluation?

Before discussing the framework in detail it is worth clarifying the terminology used in the context of measurement. This should help the reader define what kind of a question they want to answer and how they then might go about answering it.

Audit

Audit is essentially a quality improvement process where performance is measured against pre-determined standards or criteria, which are chosen as important 'indicators' of overall performance. The breadth of audit is far greater than areas of financial concern, including environmental, social and health related issues. What is distinct about audit is not the methodology used but the aim of the questions: in audit there will be pre-determined standards within defined parameters, against which performance will be evaluated. Changes can then be implemented to improve standards.

Externally, universities are subject to formal auditing by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Within individual universities, audit tools for their own use will vary from self-assessment questionnaires relating to course and project activities, to the more formal collection of Faculty and Department statistics itemising such factors as hours worked, voluntary time contributed, etc. Similarly, Schools, Research Centres and even individual research projects may establish their own audits to monitor themselves, results being published in reports written for stakeholders, funders, or the institution.

Example of a typical audit question: public events

> Please select all types of community work and activity in which your department engages (other than outreach to schools and colleges) by indicating the number of each type of activity undertaken in the academic year September 2006 to August 2007. If not applicable, leave blank.
>
> - Conferences
> - Exhibitions
> - Forums
> - Music / theatre productions
> - Non-accredited public courses
> - Sport activities
> - Public lectures
> - Talks and lectures given to community organisations
> - Web-based projects
> - Seminars
> - Other
>
> Source: University of Brighton Community Engagement Report 2006-7
> (see www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp)

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a process used in management, including Higher Education, in which organisations evaluate various aspects of their processes in relation to best practice, usually within their own sector. It thus has an important comparative purpose. This then allows organisations to develop plans on how to adopt best practice, usually with the aim of increasing some aspect of performance. As Watson and Maddison (2005) argue in the HE context, it is at least as important to check how you are doing against the performance of institutions unlike your own as against natural fellow-travellers.

A benchmark may be a standard set by an accrediting body, standards achieved by a similar organisation or an indicator to which general approval is given. When used in complex scenarios (eg HEFCE), benchmarks are usually adjusted so that they don't simply represent averages but may be calculated for individual sectors, or derived from a range of factors, the details of which are then specified. Effective

benchmarking depends on HEIs having an audit system in place at an early stage in order to build up sufficient data to define comprehensive benchmarking measures.

The initial audit provides a baseline (a conceptual starting point or standard against which subsequent changes can be identified) from which to measure institutional progress and impact. Therefore, deciding which data to collect, and the indicators to use, requires careful thought. Decisions have to be made about what change it is important to capture, at both institutional and programme level, and whether comparison is to be made externally, for example with other universities, on some or all indicators.

Example of typical benchmarking indicator: support for community-based regeneration

Rationale

Considerable support is required to address the problems of disadvantaged communities in many of Britain's cities and rural areas. Much of this is provided through government programmes that require partnerships to deliver assistance. HEIs can provide support in a number of ways, through expertise based on research into the nature of community problems and regeneration policies, through direct services, through educational programmes, and as neighbours and landlords in many inner city areas. The benchmark examines whether the HEI seeks to provide integrated support for needy communities, and uses resources in a way that meets needs and maximises partnerships while also supporting the HEI's mission.

Sources of data

Internal assessment

Good practice

Good practice goes beyond support for individual departments wishing to engage in community regeneration, and prioritises specific target communities for integrated support from the institution as a whole. Support may be provided within a compact involving a wide variety of departments and schemes. In the case of neighbouring communities this may extend to using the HEI estates strategy as a pump primer for physical regeneration. Senior staff within the HEI may seek to take leadership roles in regeneration partnerships or companies, and ensure that expertise from the HEI is made available to the community and other local partners.

Levels

1	2	3	4	5
No engagement with community regeneration schemes, apart from individual efforts		Some representation of the HEI on local partnerships at senior management level, but with limited implementation capability. Main focus is on research role and possible property development role		Active and creative engagement with community programmes, with the HEI taking a leadership position and applying a wide variety of resources. Community regeneration seen as a mainstream activity with role for access policy, link to student community action, and staff involvement as part of staff development

Source: HEFCE (2002)

Evaluation

While audit and benchmarking are mainly descriptive, evaluation is essentially concerned with assessing the worth or value of an activity, i.e. its outcome or impact in social and economic terms, and how well its processes operate. Assessment of worth or value often leads to different judgements being made by different stakeholders – staff, students, the corporate university, members of the public, voluntary and community organisations. Good evaluation needs to be capable of addressing the question: 'value to whom?' or 'for whose benefit?' Evaluation therefore requires careful design, collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

In the context of university public engagement activity, this aspect needs to go hand in hand with the development of productive audit tools. The two should be cross referenced since any evaluative framework will need to be tested against the quality, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data collected.

Evaluation also has an important learning purpose. It should therefore provide clear feedback to everyone involved in the partnership: members of the public, staff, management, funders and the wider community.

Example of evaluation: using REAP to evaluate community university partnership projects

The University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme has a number of Communities of Practice (CoP) which involve members from a range of stakeholder groups. For example, the CoP focusing on working with older people to lead active and productive lives has retired citizens, academics, students and community group members.

The University of Bradford's REAP approach (see Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007) to measuring community engagement uses a self-assessment and measuring tool designed to capture essential inputs, outputs and outcomes for both University and Community partners.

The aim of the REAP tool is to support and encourage those involved in community engagement activities to critically reflect on and analyse their work.

The University of Brighton is adapting this to evaluate its Communities of Practice (CoP) approach. The benefit of using the REAP tool is that it will provide a common outcome evaluation framework for all the CoPs and strengthen the evidence base for the university's community engagement work, building up a database of all projects and how each one has assessed the value added to the universities and to local communities. The differences between audit, benchmarking and evaluation are summarised below:

	Audit	**Benchmarking**	**Evaluation**
Aim	Measures what is being done	Identifies problem areas and areas of excellence	Assesses the value of what is being done
Process	A cyclical series of reviews	An ongoing process	A series of individual assessments over time
Data collection	Collects routine data	Collects data for comparative purposes	Collects routine and complex data
Methodology	Review of what is actually being done	Review of best practice in the organisation or sector	Evaluative research methodology not necessarily for external comparison purposes
Purpose	Not possible to generalise from the findings	Possible to make comparisons across a process or sector	Often possible to generalise the findings

Table 1: Differences between audit, benchmarking and evaluation
(Adapted from the PDP Toolkit: see www.pdptoolkit.co.uk)

4   The measurement challenge

The diversity of engagement activity means that the development of measurement tools that are fit for the task of establishing the terms of good practice, evaluating outcomes, assessing impact, and demonstrating value for money is complex.

Furthermore, where the university itself sets out aims and objectives in terms of measuring and evaluating its public engagement activity, for example through its corporate plan, the development of audit tools becomes a requirement at corporate, faculty and departmental levels. To avoid these dominating the process, it is important that those undertaking the monitoring and evaluation work towards incorporating public and community perceptions of their engagement with the university. A pragmatic approach may well work best here (see Watson and Maddison, 2005, pp. 114-118). In our experience, the need to measure engagement from a community perspective must be balanced with the acceptance that this is likely to be such a complex task that any university can be forgiven for focusing on their own perspectives and activities to start with. Otherwise there is a danger that the task is completely abandoned because it can seem too difficult. Campus Compact (see Section 7) provides some practical advice and self-assessment tools to help universities evaluate and deepen their own community engagement practices.

For those who seek to include community perspectives, there is as yet little published material specific to the audit and/or evaluation of public perspectives on community-university engagement. However, a start has been made in literature which sets out analytical tools and models that can be adapted for purpose.

For example, Hart and Aumann (2007), as academic and community practitioners, set out a framework aimed at helping practitioners, community members and university workers discover 'how they can best achieve effective partnership' (p.172). (For more information see Section 7.) Dobbs and Moore (2002) show how a model of participation can be built into working practice, allowing local people to play a successful role in the research process. They describe work undertaken in Tyneside:

> … which sought to encourage community involvement in evaluation by employing, training and supporting local residents to carry out a range of baseline and impact surveys. (p.157)

This process they found 'gave the survey results and the recommendations which resulted, widespread credibility amongst all stakeholders' (p.168). Whilst they do not spell out how their model can be used by others, it appears easy to adapt.

Watson discusses measurement challenges in his book *Managing Civic and Community Engagement* (2007), in which he focuses on the issue of differing national/international approaches to widening participation, touching on what is involved in selecting indicators and interventions, together with the need to critically examine underlying assumptions and categorisations. He has also written about 'returning to the fundamental purposes of universities' (p.53) through civic engagement and the revival of liberal educational principles (Watson, 2008).

Todd, Ebata and Hughes (1998) set out factors they found important to consider in developing university-community collaborations, and provide 'an ecological framework for collaboration'. Suarez-Balcazar, Harper and Lewis (2005) develop a contextual and interactive model that includes three main phases in the development and sustainability of partnerships between researchers and community members: gaining entry into the community; developing and sustaining the collaboration; recognising outcomes and benefits.

Other sources provide a more general insight into the importance of taking into account the views of, and evaluation with, those with whom the university is engaged. See for example Ambrose et al (2007): Aumann, Broome-Smith and Cook (2007); CCPH (2006); Schoem et al (2004); MacDonald et al (2007); Morrice et al (2007). A useful collection of papers can be found in Lerner and Simon (1998), in particular their final chapter.

Evaluative tools suitable at the research project level need to be embedded within already well-established methodological parameters of the research process. Dickert and Sugarman (2005) set out ethical goals of community participation in relation to health research, including, with regard to conferring legitimacy, 'giving those parties with an interest or stake in the proposed research the opportunity to express their views and concerns at a time when changes can be made to the research protocol' (p.1125). Similarly, in the UK, organisations such as INVOLVE (see Section 10) provide guidance and advice on such ethical and protocol issues in relation to health research.

The Kellogg Foundation Commission suggests that the challenge for higher education is to shift its focus from 'teaching, research and service' to 'learning, discovery and engagement' (see CIC, 2005).

However, this shift of focus does not always fit comfortably with existing organisational structures. The CIC Report (p.3) notes:

> (this) conceptualization of engagement does not easily translate into clear objectives relative to faculty roles and responsibilities, student learning environments, or institutional benchmarks and outcome measures.

Nor are there established conventions for determining quality in outreach and engagement, as there are for teaching and research (see Southern Region Indicator Work Group, 2005). As a result, 'many university administrators are not aware of the breadth of community engagement that occurs within their own institutions' (Goedegebuure and Lee, 2006, p.8).

Outside of the higher education sector, The Work Foundation has produced a series of publications setting out a proposed framework for measuring outcomes in relation to 'public value' (for more information see Section 7).

In each case, consideration needs to be given to what form of tool will be most useful for which community.

Broadly, we identified two approaches to the problem of measurement. At the strategic university level there are various attempts to define high-level institutional benchmarks. Some of these are discussed in Section 7. However, as Goedegebuure and Lee point out in discussing the Australian context, these can be rather abstract and do not necessarily provide directly usable indicators for public engagement (p.11).

At the project specific level there are a variety of accounts of individual university activities that relate teaching and learning to the wider world, involve dialogue between practitioners, researchers and community members and are concerned with the wider role and responsibility of the University community (see Hart, Maddison and Wolf, 2007). However, these do not necessarily demonstrate benefits at an institutional level. Demonstrating impact at the level of citizen health or the local population and placing an economic value on those activities is even more problematic (see Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007). An added difficulty is that long-term timescales are required for measuring both higher level institutional outcomes and broader social/community outcomes.

Bearing in mind the different interests involved and the funding sources supporting this work, including intangibles such as contributing 'value in kind' (i.e. providing facilities or personnel without charge), audit instruments will need to be tied as closely as possible to the specific function under scrutiny.

It is also essential to integrate equalities and diversity monitoring into all aspects of evaluative activity. This includes age, disability, gender, race and sexual orientation. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission has a wide range of publications and resources available on developing equalities and diversity policies and on monitoring (see www.equalityhumanrights.com).

Some of the less tangible impacts of public engagement will be more difficult to measure but may be considered intrinsically worthwhile or important preconditions for achieving long-term goals. This characteristic of university public engagement suggests the value of incorporating a 'theory of change' approach in evaluating partnership processes (Anderson, 2005). The theory of change approach specifies the changes (outcomes) planned by a particular programme or intervention, and tries to spell out the reasons behind the changes. Such an approach provides a 'pathway of change' that can be mapped and indicators defined to measure success at each level. (For further discussion see the case study in Section 8.)

Evaluative analysis is likely to need to be context driven. Indeed, it is important that there is room for innovation, inspiration and leadership where universities are crossing boundaries, breaking new ground, and developing novel forms of communication with local communities and the public. Of course there are tensions here with the need to establish benchmarks in this field – there are considerations of how to compare one institution with another and the international context to bear in mind (Watson and Maddison, 2005, pp. 117-118). Benchmarking is likely to become easier once public engagement is more institutionally embedded in a number of universities in the UK.

What we have attempted in presenting the framework that follows is not to set out a definitive approach to evaluating university public engagement but rather to provide some starting points when considering engagement measures. There is little value in collecting data that cannot be subjected to broad scrutiny and comparison. However, given the different institutional stages of development, the variety and variability of links being forged between universities, their communities and the public and the complexity and breadth of university public engagement activities, it is unlikely that anything other than a variety of measurement instruments will provide an informative and useful picture of such activity.

Before setting out the framework we turn our attention to discussing the definition of 'university public engagement' in more detail.

5 Defining university public engagement

There is an interesting definitional question raised by the location of public engagement within higher education 'third stream' activity in general. One of the first definitions in the field was put forward by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) (2002):

> Engagement implies strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens.

In launching the six Beacons of Public Engagement to establish a co-coordinated approach to recognising, rewarding and building capacity for public engagement, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has defined public engagement in the following way (HEFCE, 2007a):

> 'Public engagement' involves specialists in higher education listening to, developing their understanding of, and interacting with non-specialists. The 'public' includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with an HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.

The Chief Executive of HEFCE, in setting out its funding allocation for 2008-2009, saw these funds as helping to 'foster the wider social roles of universities through public and community engagement' (HEFCE, 2008). Underpinning this is the notion that by opening up higher education to the public, research, teaching and learning will be enriched, and that local communities will enjoy wider benefits.

Despite the search for a co-ordinated approach to building capacity for public engagement, the descriptions of the Beacon projects on the National Co-ordinating Centre website reflect the multiple aims of university public engagement (see www.publicengagement.ac.uk/default.htm). Key themes running through the descriptions are: relevance; democratisation; exchange; and inclusivity. The rationale here is that breaking down barriers to public involvement will ensure that universities are more relevant to society, that the public has trust in their work, and that a more democratic research process will both strengthen academic excellence and develop knowledge for the common good. A useful distinction is made between knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange by one of the Beacons, where the latter is seen as involving:

> …genuine engagement activity that promotes questioning from the public and listening and involvement from staff and students themselves.
>
> (See Community University Engagement East (CUE East) at: www.publicengagement.ac.uk/beacons/cueeast/default.htm)

Finally, in the Beacon portfolios an ethos of inclusivity underpins an explicit focus on disadvantaged and excluded communities, the needs of a multicultural society, and sustainable living.

HEFCE is also funding the South East Coastal Communities initiative, a £3 million programme across nine universities in the South East region. Its aim is to demonstrate the worth of strategic partnerships between universities and their local communities, bringing together academics, community practitioners, students, service users and community members to enhance health and wellbeing.

Given this range, it is unsurprising that there are several overlapping terms used to describe university public engagement activities, frequently used interchangeably. These include 'civic engagement ', 'public engagement', 'community engagement', 'community outreach', 'community-university partnership', and 'knowledge exchange'. In some contexts engagement is also conceptualised as part of other agendas, for example volunteering, widening participation, social inclusion, public engagement with the political process, or global citizenship.

Widening participation, for instance, has been defined primarily as an equalities and diversity issue. However difficult to achieve, all individuals, whatever their gender, race, class, or disability, should have equal access to the benefits of the 'graduate premium' – higher earning potential; increased longevity; and better health. A wider definition, however, links it more directly to public engagement. As Laing and Maddison argue (2007, p.13), widening participation to higher education does not have to be only access to existing courses,

> …if it is indeed the case that engaging with higher education, with universities and their resources, does have positive effects in terms of health, stability and happiness then maybe we should imagine a set of situations where all citizens and all social groups should be able to access the intellectual capital, the resources…and the learning networks which are at the heart of what makes a university.

Thus one of the main challenges facing any HEI embarking on audit, benchmarking, and evaluation of its public engagement activity is to reconcile a diversity of local, national and international interests regarding both the conceptualisation and practice of public engagement (see Watson and Maddison, 2005, pp. 144-145; Council of Europe, 2006; Watson, 2007, pp. 108-113). The University of Cambridge Community Engagement Report 2003-4 illustrates some of the different priorities involved. The stated objectives of its community engagement activities include to:

- Communicate the university's work to the public

- Maintain good relations with the communities in which we live and work

- Provide learning and personal development and enrichment opportunities for students and staff

- Help maintain a competitive advantage over other universities

- Lead to new opportunities for learning and research

- Challenge negative perceptions about Cambridge being elite

- Strengthen the local economy and increase social cohesion, with the practical benefits that brings to the university; and

- Lead to better recruitment, retention and diversification of staff (University of Cambridge, 2004, p.25)

As Watson (2007, p.111) points out, there are tensions involved between these objectives and it is not clear what order of priority is given to them.

Reviewing the literature for this briefing it became clear that the term 'university public engagement' covers a diverse range of university encounters. In drawing up a framework for auditing, monitoring and evaluating university public engagement we have attempted to give some sense of shape to this diversity by categorising engagement under seven 'dimensions'. These were derived both from our experiences of monitoring and evaluation at the University of Brighton and from reviewing indicator sets developed elsewhere (see Section 7). We have not attempted to create a synthesis of existing approaches. Rather, it has been a creative process of trying to make sense of the overlaps (and gaps) highlighted by the different models and testing these out between the authors of this briefing paper and our colleagues.

We are conscious that other UK institutions and their community partners are also negotiating their way through this territory. The framework is one which others may wish to challenge or refine and we hope that this will be a useful contribution to such efforts.

We identify seven 'dimensions' of public engagement. These are not mutually exclusive but overlap. They also encompass both different 'types' of engagement (eg public access to facilities) and different motivations (eg widening participation). The dimensions are:

- Public access to facilities

- Public access to knowledge

- Student engagement

- Faculty engagement

- Widening participation

- Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement

- Institutional relationship and partnership building

These are summarised in Table 2 together with examples of engagement

Table 2   Dimensions of university public engagement

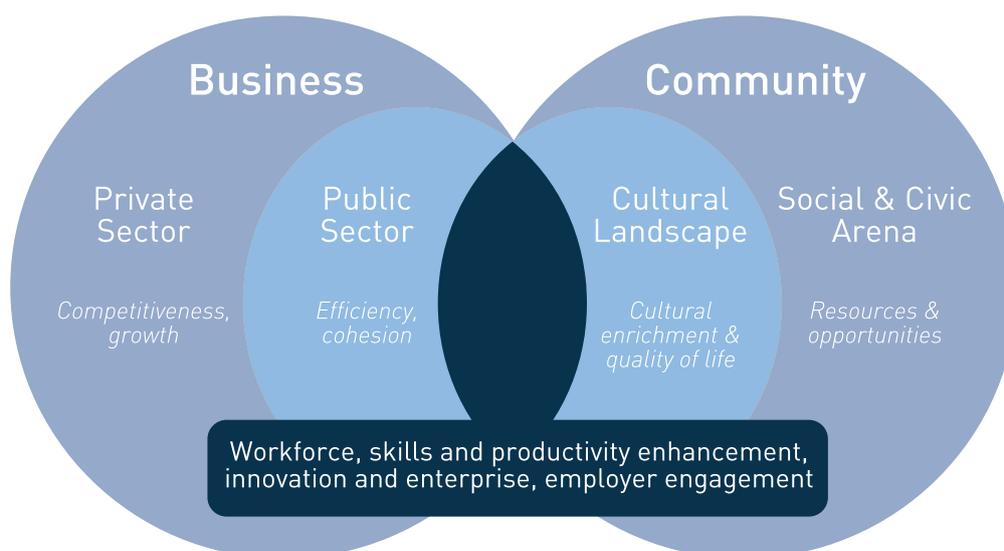| Dimension of public engagement	Examples of engagement	Possible higher level outcomes
1 Public access to facilities	• Access to university libraries • Access to university buildings and physical facilities eg for conferences, meetings, events, accommodation, gardens etc • Shared facilities eg museums, art galleries • Public access to sports facilities • Summer sports schools	• Increased public support for the institution • Better informed public • Improved health and wellbeing
2 Public access to knowledge	• Access to established university curricula • Public engagement events eg science fairs; science shops • Publicly accessible database of university expertise • Public involvement in research	• Increased quality of life and wellbeing • Increased social capital/ social cohesion/social inclusion • Enhanced public scholarship
3 Student engagement	• Student volunteering • Experiential learning eg practice placements; collaborative research projects • Curricular engagement • Student-led activities eg arts, environment etc	• Increased student sense of civic engagement • Increased political participation
4 Faculty engagement	• Research centres draw on community advisers for support/direction • Volunteering outside working hours eg on trustee Boards of local charities • Staff with social/community engagement as a specific part of their job • Promotion policies that reward social engagement • Research helpdesk/advisory boards • Public lectures • Alumni services	• Social benefit to the community • Increased staff sense of civic engagement • Institutionalised faculty engagement • More 'grounded' research
5 Widening participation (equalities and diversity)	• Improving recruitment and success rate of students from non-traditional backgrounds through innovative initiatives eg access courses, financial assistance, peer mentoring • A publicly available strategy for encouraging access by students with disabilities	• Improved recruitment and retention of undergraduates, especially from excluded communities

6 Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement	• Research collaboration and technology transfer • Meeting regional skills needs and supporting SMEs • Initiatives to expand innovation and design eg bringing together staff, students and community members to design, develop and test Assistive Technology for people with disabilities • Business advisory services offering support for community-university collaborations (eg social enterprises) • Prizes for entrepreneurial projects	• Local/regional economic regeneration • Social and economic benefit to the community
7 Institutional relationship and partnership building	• University division or office for community engagement • Collaborative community-based research programmes responsive to community-identified needs • Community-university networks for learning/dissemination/knowledge exchange • Community members on Board of Governance • Public ceremonies, awards, competitions and events • Website with community pages • Policies on equalities; recruitment; procurement of goods and services; environmental responsibility • International links • Conferences with public access and public concerns • Helpdesk facility • Corporate social responsibility	• More effective strategic investment of resources • Conservation of natural resources and reduced environmental footprint • Expanded and effective community partnerships • Social and economic benefit to the community

6 The Framework

The numerous attempts to define indicators for university-public engagement suggest that there is no single approach to audit, benchmarking and evaluation that can be applied to any given university and its community partners.

We are also aware that there are many different models conceptualising public engagement. For example, Whittemore (2007) shows how the field of business and community engagement overlaps:

JISC   The External Mission: Business and Community Engagement – Diversity of institutional scope of engagement and *outcomes*

Business

Community

Private Sector

Competitiveness, growth

Public Sector

Efficiency, cohesion

Cultural Landscape

Cultural enrichment & quality of life

Social & Civic Arena

Resources & opportunities

Workforce, skills and productivity enhancement, innovation and enterprise, employer engagement

Source HEFCE   *Note: This diagram does not represent scale of activity*

Hill (2005) develops a model showing how different aspects of 'engagement' link together.

The diagram below has been adapted from Hills work:

Dimensions of Engagement at Bristol

RESEARCH
Applied
Theoretical
Community research

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
Business and Social Enterprise
Research dissemination
Business Links

EDUCATION
Lifelong learning
Skills development
CPD

ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Media
Thematic events
Public lectures
Presentation of research

FLEXIBLE LEARNING
Foundation degrees
Part-time degrees
Access & widening participation
Collaborative programmes

COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS
Student volunteering
Staff volunteering
Action research
Cultural and social partnerships

In developing our own framework, we do not intend to propose yet another set of indicators, or to recommend any tools as being more 'fit for purpose'. Rather, the framework attempts to help clarify the activities that universities might want to capture and sets out in summary form some potential indicators for audit, benchmarking and evaluation, related to the dimensions of public engagement identified. It also provides pointers to key sources, most of which are discussed in some detail in Section 7, including a consideration of their potential uses.

It is important to remember that the dimensions are complementary. They need to be used in combination to provide an overview of a university's engagement across the dimensions.

A note on outcomes

Programme evaluation frequently focuses on the measurement of outcomes (Robson, 2000). Yet the terms 'inputs', 'outputs', 'outcomes', and 'impact' are often confused. **Outcomes** can be defined as 'the changes, benefits, learning or other effects … as a result of your work' (Cupitt and Ellis, 2007 p.6).

Inputs are all the resources put into the project to enable the delivery of outputs. Inputs may include time, money and premises. **Outputs** are all the products and services delivered. Examples of outputs are: training courses, support sessions and publications. Whereas an outcome is the change occurring as a direct result of project outputs, **Impact** is the effect of a project at a higher or broader level, in the longer term, after a range of outcomes has been achieved.

The selection of appropriate indicators is more critical than the use of specific research methods, in particular ensuring a clear relationship between indicators at different levels. For example, output data will provide important information for assessing outcomes.

The relationship can be represented like this (adapted from Cupitt and Ellis, 2007):

The inputs to your project enable you to deliver outputs. These bring about outcomes, which may eventually lead to an impact

From inputs to impact
Case study: The Women's Project

The Women's Project aims to reduce unwanted teenage pregnancy by offering support and groupwork to young women.

INPUTS

- Staff
- Budget
- Venue
- Advertising

OUTPUTS

- One-to-one support sessions
- Groupwork
- Outings

OUTCOMES

Increses in young peoples:

- confidence
- awareness of alternatives to young parenthood
- access to education and training opportunities

IMPACT

Reduction in:

- social exclusion
- teenage pregnancies

Dimension 1 - Public access to facilities

Universities are often endowed with substantial physical resources in terms of grounds, residential accommodation, meeting spaces and high quality sports, arts and science facilities. Public access to these facilities may be on a commercial or non-commercial basis depending on the nature of the activity. Possible audit measures include levels of use but also more qualitative measures such as satisfaction levels both with the facilities themselves and the way relationships with the public are managed.

It would also be possible to audit public access points both in terms of their physical location (i.e. campus or community) and in terms of factors such as transport links, access for people with disabilities, and 'bridging mechanisms' eg effectiveness of publicity and information; role of helpdesks, etc.

These metrics could be used as a basis for evaluating broader level outcomes such as the level of public support for the university.

'Public' access does not imply 'unrestricted' access. Resource or space limitations may require some form of rationing in terms of numbers. Institutions may also wish to manage access to certain political groups where this might conflict with broader issues of equality and diversity. Universities will have to make explicit their own boundaries and rationale for restricting access.

		Location of access point Campus	Community
Dimension 1 **Public access to facilities**	**Examples of engagement** • Access to university libraries • Access to university buildings and physical facilities eg for conferences, meetings, events, accommodation, gardens etc • Shared facilities eg museums, art galleries • Public access to sports facilities • Summer sports schools	X X X X X	 X X
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Number of public members accessing • Level of charges **Possible outcome indicators:** Satisfaction surveys of public eg perceptions of: • ease of contacting the university • communication • responsiveness	**Examples of benchmarking measures:** Benchmarking at institutional level overlaps across the dimensions. See for example: • **HEFCE (2002)** • **Higher Education Community Engagement Model** • **Kellogg Commission**	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	Initial benchmarks are likely to be a complex mixture of (context specific) indicators rather than a formally summarised standard or ISO-type classification. For each university additional goals, strategies and measures will also be developed as appropriate to the local environment	• **AUCEA** • **Talloires** For institutional outcome indicators see for example: • **COPE**	
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • Increased public support for the institution • Increased satisfaction with accessibility of facilities		

Dimension 2 - Public access to knowledge

While universities do not have a monopoly on knowledge creation, their capacity for creating and transmitting knowledge makes public access to university knowledge a central dimension of public engagement, whether through established curricula, access to individual experts, or through 'one-off' events such as science fairs.

Quantitative measures of such activity are useful but only give a partial picture of public engagement. However, evaluating outcomes for this dimension is not straightforward. Approaches being developed in other sectors may have potential, for example the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) outcomes framework. MLA is developing outcome measures based upon Generic Learning Outcomes and Generic Social Outcomes and mapping its outcomes framework against Local Area Agreement Indicators (MLA, 2007).

Co-production models of 'public value' and 'cultural capital' developed by the Heritage sector (see websites referred to below for DEMOS; The Work Foundation; Accenture) suggest outcomes which go beyond the delivery of specific service outcomes. These include:

- quality of life, wellbeing and happiness
- social capital/social cohesion/social inclusion
- safety and security
- equality/tackling deprivation and social exclusion
- promoting democracy and civic engagement

Where the public value model may be particularly relevant to university public engagement is in capturing outcomes that are generated by the combination of activities across multiple dimensions.

		Location of access point	
		Campus	**Community**
Dimension 2 **Public access to knowledge**	**Examples of engagement** • Access to established university curricula • Public engagement events e.g. science fairs; science shops • Publicly accessible database of university expertise • Public involvement in research	X X X X	 X X X
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Number of public members accessing/ participating **Possible outcome indicators:** • Satisfaction surveys of public	**Examples of outcome measures:** **The Work Foundation** Public Value Measurement Framework	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1	**Accenture** Public Service Value Model: three possible outcome levels identified:	
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** Co-production' models: public value; cultural capital **Museums, libraries and archives** Generic learning outcomes/ generic social outcomes	• optimisation of the user experience (i.e. individual level); • impact on the local community (i.e. local population level); • impact on the wider population (i.e. national level)	

Dimension 3 - Student engagement

This dimension of public engagement focuses on releasing student capacity for community benefit. Audit measures include more straightforward quantitative output indicators such as numbers of students involved and hours worked. Broader level outcomes for students would include the development of a sense of civic engagement in students. Institutional commitment might also be assessed by whether activities attract formal recognition or credit.

The Carnegie Foundation's *Elective Classification for Community Engagement* (see web links in resources section below), provides a useful set of detailed indicators for curricular engagement, outreach and partnership.

The Institute for Volunteering Research has published *The Volunteering Impact Assessment Framework*, a matrix for assessing the impact of volunteering for volunteers, organisations, users, and the community. The Framework identifies impact in relation to physical, human, economic, social and cultural capital (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2004).

		Location of access point Campus Community		
Dimension 3 **Student engagement**	**Examples of engagement** • Student volunteering • Experiential learning e.g. practice placements; collaborative research projects • Curricular engagement • Student-led activities e.g. arts, environment etc		X	X X X
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Numbers/hours • Attracts formal support/academic credit	**Examples of outcome measures:**		
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1	**Institute for Volunteering Research** A matrix for assessing the impact of volunteering on physical, human, economic, social and cultural capital		
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • Increased student sense of civic engagement/ political participation • Benefit to students; organisations; users; community	**Carnegie Foundation** Curricular engagement/ outreach and partnership outcomes		

Dimension 4 - Faculty engagement

Faculty engagement overlaps to some extent with both Dimension 2 (Public access to knowledge) and Dimension 7 (Institutional relationships and partnership building) but the emphasis here is on individual staff involvement. The University of Brighton Community Engagement Audit Tool (for up to date information see www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/), represents one approach to auditing this dimension, including data on paid and pro bono work; volunteering outside of work hours; and governance roles with local voluntary and community sector organisations. Institutional commitment might be gauged by measures such as whether activities attract continuous professional development (CPD) recognition.

Outcomes are particularly difficult to capture as they are intended primarily to have a social impact (rather than an economic or commercial one). These would need to be defined in specific contexts. Broader level outcomes for staff include the development of a sense of civic engagement.

		Location of access point	
		Campus	**Community**
Dimension 4 **Faculty engagement**	**Examples of engagement** • Research centres draw on community advisers for support/direction	X	X
	• Volunteering outside working hours e.g. on trustee Boards of local charities		X
	• Staff with social/community engagement as a specific part of their job	X	
	• Promotion policies that reward social engagement	X	
	• Research helpdesk/advisory boards	X	X
	• Public lectures	X	X
	• Alumni services	X	
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Numbers/hours (paid/in kind) • Attracts formal professional recognition/ career progression	**Examples of outcome measures:** **University of Brighton audit tool** **The ACE Way** **UPBEAT**	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1		
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • Social benefit to the community • Increased staff sense of civic engagement • Institutionalised faculty engagement		

Dimension 5 - Widening participation (equalities and diversity)

The widening participation policy is an attempt by government to address social class and other inequalities in access to taught courses via individual entry. Audit and outcome measures tend to focus on recruitment and retention of students from non-traditional backgrounds. However, the usefulness of such tools is dependent on the availability of sound baseline data on the potential student population involved. In some cases, for example refugee communities, 'looked after children', etc this may be limited (see for example Morrice et al, 2007; Conlan et al, 2007; Hart, 2007; Adoption & Fostering, Special Issue, 2007).

		Location of access point Campus	Community
Dimension 5 **Widening participation (equalities and diversity)**	**Examples of engagement** • Improving recruitment and success rate of students from non-traditional backgrounds through innovative initiatives e.g. access courses, financial assistance, peer mentoring, etc • A publicly available strategy for encouraging access by students with disabilities	X	X X
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Numbers/hours (paid/in kind) • Attracts formal professional recognition/ career progression	**Examples of output indicators:** Annual Performance Indicators (PIs) are collated and published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (see www.hesa.ac.uk).	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1		
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • Social benefit to the community • Increased staff sense of civic engagement • Institutionalised faculty engagement		

Dimension 6 - Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement

Currently, a major research initiative is underway (2007-2010) mainly sponsored by the ESRC and HEFCE in conjunction with several universities, looking at social impact; students and graduates; regional competitiveness; university-industry relationships. There is also a cross-cutting initiative, to be undertaken by the University of Strathclyde, examining the overall impact of HEIs on regional economies in the UK. The aim of these initiatives is to better understand how HEI activities and processes may generate benefits for wider society. Of particular relevance to this briefing paper is the HEART project (Open University), which runs until May 2009, and whose central question is: To what extent and in what ways do universities in practice operate to benefit or further disadvantage members of socially disadvantaged groups within their regional contexts?

In particular, the HEART project aims to advance understanding of the role played by universities in:

•   helping to build new or strengthen existing institutions of civil society

•   encouraging and facilitating new cultural values and social cohesion

•   selecting and socialising new leaders

•   generating new possibilities for relationships between local, national and global trends and opportunities

For further details, and updated reports, see the main website: http://ewds.strath.ac.uk/Default. aspx?alias=ewds.strath.ac.uk/impact

Where the emphasis is on 'social enterprise', extra care needs to be taken to ensure outcomes are derived from the specific objectives of the enterprise. Evaluation needs to examine strategy and organisation as well as economic impact. The SIMPLE model (McLoughlin, 2008) is a holistic impact measurement tool for social enterprise managers. The impact model offers a five step approach to impact

measurement called Scope it; Map it; Track it; Tell it & Embed it. These steps help social enterprise managers to conceptualise the impact problem; identify and prioritise impacts for measurement; develop appropriate impact measures; report impacts and embed the results in management decision making.

The Quality and Impact Project, run by the Social Enterprise Partnership (SEP) and led by the New Economics Foundation was designed to play a part in meeting some of the needs of the sector. The aim of the project was to allow social enterprises to prove their added value, and to continuously improve their performance. The programme is now finished but resources, including the Prove It toolkit, are available at: www.sepgb.co.uk

| | | Location of access point | |
		Campus	Community
Dimension 6 **Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement**	**Examples of engagement** • Research collaboration in technology transfer	X	X
	• Meeting regional skills needs and supporting SMEs	X	X
	• Initiatives to expand innovation and design e.g. bringing together staff, students and community members to design, develop and test Assistive Technology for people with disabilities	X	X
	• Business advisory services offering support for community-university collaborations (e.g. social enterprises)	X	X
	• Prizes for entrepreneurial projects	X	
	• Research centres draw on community advisers for support/direction	X	X
	• Collaborative community-based research programmes responsive to community-identified needs	X	X
	• Community-university networks for learning/dissemination/knowledge exchange	X	X
	• Curricular engagement	X	
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Number of initiatives/ enterprises supported • University awards for entrepreneurial activity, with publicly available criteria • Mechanisms to provide systematic feedback to community partners • Number of formally credited community based learning courses offered • Number of departments/ staff/ students involved • Examples of staff or student outcomes for curricular engagement	**Examples of outcome measures:** **UPBEAT** **SIMPLE** Impact measurement tool **New Economics Foundation**	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1	The Prove It! evaluation approach was developed by a partnership of Groundwork, Barclays and NEF to Measure the impact of neighbourhood renewal projects on social capital (NEF, 2000)	
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • Effective examples of innovative collaborations • Expanded and effective community partnerships • Enhanced public scholarship • Social and economic benefit to the community • Teaching, learning and scholarship which engages faculty, students and community in mutually beneficial collaboration		

Dimension 7 - Institutional relationships and partnership building

This dimension tries to capture how the institution operates and organises itself to meet its public engagement objectives through corporate level activities. It includes the university's mission; balance of activities; deployment of resources (including human resources); and corporate support for monitoring, evaluation and communication (see Watson, 2007, in particular Chapter 8 on ACU benchmarking). It also encompasses corporate social responsibility issues, including environmental impact.

The Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement (see Driscoll, 2008, and Carnegie websites below) provides a useful set of detailed indicators for institutional identity and culture and institutional commitment.

The University of Bradford's REAP approach to measuring community engagement (see Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007) is a reflective tool useful for reviewing outputs/outcomes of community engagement activity. In this metric REAP represents reciprocity, externalities, access and partnerships, and seeks to capture the 'public good' generated by community-university collaboration.

| | | Location of access point | |
		Campus	Community
Dimension 7 **Institutional relationships and partnership building**	**Examples of engagement** • University Division or office for community engagement	X	
	• Collaborative community-based research programmes responsive to community-identified needs	X	X
	• Community-university networks for learning/dissemination/knowledge exchange	X	X
	• Community members on Board of Governance	X	
	• Public ceremonies, awards, competitions and events	X	
	• Website with community pages	X	X
	• Policies on equalities; recruitment; procurement of goods and services; environmental responsibility	X	
	• Helpdesk facility	X	
	• International links	X	
	• Conferences with public access	X	
	• Corporate social responsibility	X	
Audit Performance measurement	**Possible output indicators:** • Public engagement identified as a priority in the institution's mission statement; strategic plans; awards and celebrations; data recording; marketing materials etc • Proportion of total university operating budget allocated to engagement (dedicated positions and operating expenses) • Co-ordinating infrastructure to support engagement (budgets, office, etc) • System for assessing community perceptions of the institution's engagement with local community • Assessment data is used	**Examples of outcome measures** **Carnegie Foundation** Institutional identity and culture/ Institutional commitment outcomes **REAP (University of Bradford)** Community engagement metric	
Benchmarking Best practice/quality standards/accreditation	See Dimension 1	**The ACE approach**	
Evaluation and reflective practice Outcomes focus	**Possible outcome indicators:** • More effective strategic investment of resources • Conservation of natural resources and reduced environmental footprint		

7. Current approaches

7.1 The United Kingdom

The diversity of approaches to university public engagement has resulted in the development of several indicator sets for evaluating engagement. Some of the key approaches summarised in this section help to articulate the different ways in which HEIs are currently engaging with audit, benchmarking and evaluation. In weighing up the potential uses of each approach, we provide a thumbnail sketch of what each one may be used for. However, in doing so we acknowledge that the authors themselves are not necessarily claiming applicability of their tool for all of the purposes we identify. We include an indication of relevance to the task merely to guide the unfamiliar reader who wants to quickly decide whether it is worth following up a specific approach that may be suitable for their needs.

Box 2   Some issues to bear in mind when deciding on which approaches might be useful

- Do I want to capture change over time or is this a one-off exercise?
- Do I want to establish a set of targets, and then measure whether we've completed them?
- Do I want to compare what we are doing with what others are doing?
- Do I need external verification, or can this be an internal exercise?
- Do we need to measure what the whole institution is doing?
- Do we want to understand what is happening at the individual project level?
- Are we interested in finding out how individual faculty members and their community partners best collaborate for mutual benefit?
- Do we want to measure engagement from a community perspective?

7.1.1 Higher Education Funding Council for England

In 2002 HEFCE produced *Evaluating the regional contribution of an HEI: A benchmarking approach*, developed by Charles and Benneworth, from the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (HEFCE, 2002). The benchmarking tool was designed to help higher education institutions assess the contribution they were making to the economic and social development of their region, and how those contributions might be developed. The tool has three functions:

- to assess improvements in the strategy, performance and outcomes of HEI regional engagement
- to help the HEI set its strategic priorities
- to support joint strategies within a regional partnership

The benchmark measures are grouped according to seven regional development processes (i.e. infrastructure, cultural development and business development) rather than to internal characteristics of the HEI. Measures and outcomes need to be examined for their relevance to the underlying competitiveness mission.

Relevant for:

- strategic planning at the level of individual universities and regionally
- assessing regional development links with business and the community
- devising benchmarking indicators

Not so relevant for:

- assessing how well universities manage the implementation of their regional development strategy
- evaluating success in educational or research terms
- assessing or defining the benchmarks from a community perspective

HEFCE also manages the annual Higher Education-Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey to inform the strategic direction of 'third stream' action undertaken by funding bodies and HEIs in the UK. Data are gathered on a wide range of Third Stream activities, reflecting the contribution of HEIs to the economy and society. These range from commercial and strategic interaction with businesses and public sector organisations to working with the local community. Individual universities fill out the survey, so of course the quality of the data is dependent on the individual university's submission. The latest report (HEFCE, 2007b) covers the period 2004 - 2006 and was carried out:

- to provide data regarding the continuing development and range of interactions between the higher education (HE) sector and business and the wider community
- to provide reliable and relevant information to support the continued public funding of the so-called 'third stream' of HEIs' activity - that is, enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society
- to give HEIs a consistent basis for benchmarking and information management
- to develop a suite of indicators at the level of the individual HEI, some of which will be appropriate to inform allocations of funding in the UK

The survey is managed by a stakeholders group which includes the UK HE funding bodies, sector representative groups and government departments. As such it has a high profile and formal agreements between the funding bodies and their respective HEIs ensure data are validated and corrected where needed.

Relevant for:

- getting information on national trends in the development of HEIs' capacity to respond to the needs of external partners
- obtaining full data by institution, region and nation
- international comparison: data from HE-BCI have been used by the UK funding councils and others to compare the UK's performance with both North America and Europe in exchanging knowledge with business and the community
- using as an example from which ideas can be generated for indicators, audit, benchmarking or evaluation tools on public and/or business engagement

Not so relevant for:

- assessing or defining the benchmarks from a community perspective
- understanding the micro dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

7.1.2 The Higher Education Community Engagement Model

The Higher Education Community Engagement Model was created in 2003 by several Russell Group universities, in collaboration with the Corporate Citizenship Company. It is based on the London Benchmarking Model which is used by many large companies to measure their contributions to the community, but has been adapted for use by any higher education institution. The model was piloted in 2004, underwent a large scale evaluation and was opened up for use by any HEI in 2006. It is available at: www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/community/communityhub/model/

The final evaluation report (Corporate Citizenship Company, 2004) presents headline findings and analysis from returns received from 10 universities for the academic year 2003-04. It considers the conclusions that can be drawn from the data, and includes some recommendations for how Russell Group members can work together to make the benchmarking aspect of this project more productive in the future.

The aim of the benchmarking model is to capture community activities which are conducted over and above the University's core purposes of teaching and research. 'Community' is here defined in its broadest sense, i.e. any contribution which would be broadly accepted by society as charitable.

The model has been designed to offer a framework for institutions to compare their findings and thus use it as a benchmarking tool. It captures data on a number of key categories for each community activity to establish consolidated information about both the costs and benefits of a university's community involvement programme.

Relevant for:

- developing benchmarking

- systematic monitoring and to inform strategic planning

- quantifiable evidence for senior mangers to demonstrate the value of community engagement

- public relations and marketing opportunities

Not so relevant for:

- assessing or defining indicators from a community perspective

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

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7.1.3 REAP

The University of Bradford's REAP approach to measuring community engagement uses a self-assessment and measuring tool designed to capture essential inputs, outputs and outcomes for both University and Community partners (Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007).

The aim of the REAP tool is to support and encourage those involved in community engagement activities to critically reflect on and analyse their work. It is a work in progress, and has been adapted from methodologies in the field of UK community development and development projects in the global south, so it is very practical.

The REAP model is based on four key principles: reciprocity; externalities; access; and partnership.

Reciprocity

Principle: There is a flow of knowledge, information and benefits in both directions between the University and its community partners.

Externalities

Principle: There are benefits outside of those accruing to partners, including building social trust and social networks, enhanced sustainability, wellbeing and cohesion locally and the building of a learning and knowledge based society.

Access

Principle: Community partners have access to University facilities and resources as opposed to one-off provision of goods and services.

Partnership

Principle: Partnerships deepen and develop through extended reciprocity and improved access. They are an output and outcome of community engagement activities which become key inputs to improving and enhancing those activities.

Relevant for:

- developing an outcome evaluation framework for university-community engagement work

- assessing the value added to the university and to local communities through community engagement activities

- adapting to the specific circumstances of individual institutions

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

Not so relevant for:

- measuring economic impact

- collating institutional audit or benchmarking data

7.1.4 The Work Foundation

Outside of the higher education sector, The Work Foundation (see websites below) has produced a series of guides around measuring 'public value'. In *Measuring Public Value 2: Practical Approaches*, Hills and Sullivan (2006) set out a proposed framework for reviewing outcome measures. Key criteria are whether measures are: appropriate; holistic; democratic; trustworthy; and that the measurement process itself generates public value.

The authors suggested that the concept of public value might lead to different ways of thinking about measurement over the course of a programme. For example, it might help identify the need for a clear conceptualisation of how different inputs or approaches to the delivery of the programme are intended to lead to measurable outcomes. In turn, failure to achieve anticipated outcomes might encourage a review of earlier stages in the planning and delivery cycle and identify where there was a lack of clarity or where there had been insufficient negotiation over what it was hoped that the policy or programme would achieve, and over what time scale.

Other guides cover quality of life, economic theory, management, learning and skills.

Relevant for:

- developing models of university public engagement that incorporate public perceptions of their value

- developing mechanisms to capture outcomes that are generated by the combination of activities across multiple dimensions

Not so relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

- collating institutional audit or benchmarking data

7.1.5 SIMPLE tool for assessing the social impact of Social Enterprise

Developed by the University of Brighton Business School, the SIMPLE model (McLoughlin, 2008), is a holistic impact measurement tool for social enterprise managers. The model was developed to provide the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of a training programme for social enterprises, specifically designed to develop capabilities to systematically measure their impacts. The impact model offers a five step approach to impact measurement called Scope it; Map it; Track it; Tell it & Embed it. These steps help social enterprise managers to conceptualise the impact problem; identify and prioritise impacts for measurement; develop appropriate impact measures; report impacts and to embed the results in management decision making.

Relevant for:

- developing impact measures for social enterprise

- supporting strategic planning and decision making

- accommodating all types of organisations and incorporating other measurement methodologies

- contributing to university-level audit or benchmarking data

Not so relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

- assessing the relationship between the university and external organisations

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7.1.6 University of Brighton Community Engagement Audit tool

The University of Brighton audit tool (for up to date information see www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp) was developed to capture the necessary baseline information about university-community engagement, to support the social engagement aspirations of the university's Corporate Plan (University of Brighton, 2007a) and to underpin the development of its long-term economic and social engagement strategy. A fuller account of this is included in the case study (Section 8).

Relevant for:

- capturing data on university-community engagement activities that are intended primarily to have a social impact

- establishing baseline information

Not so relevant for:

- measuring economic impact

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

- assessing or defining baselines from a community perspective

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7.1.7 An ACE way

The ACE model is set out in Hart and Aumann (2007), and provides a practical methodology for documenting drivers, processes and outcomes of partnership working where the university and the community collaborate for the purpose of socially beneficial outcomes. The specific example used for the model relates to the authors' ongoing work around Resilient Therapy (see also Hart, Blincow with Thomas, 2007), the parameters of the model evolving retrospectively as part of the process of analysis. It is because this model is practice-based, derived from a collaborative approach to understanding effective partnerships that it can be suggested as a rare example of a tool to evaluate whether or not, and to what extent, such partnerships are productive and beneficial. While making no claims that this methodology provides a long-term evaluative framework for therapeutic interventions, the authors suggest that it is:

> … both a sounding board against which prospective project partners can try out their ideas and a method of benchmarking the status of the partnership along different dimensions at its inception. (Hart and Aumann, 2007, p.173)

The ACE way sets out seven dimensions: attractions, conservation, crevices, contingencies, expectations, enlightenment, and emergence. In unpacking 'attractions' – what draws particular partners to each other and aids the process of maintaining the relationship (that is, as forms of 'capital') – the authors outline seven elements that usefully reveal important aspects of this. These are: purpose, finances, leadership, personal capital, organisational capital, status capital and Aristotelian capital.

Relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

- using as a reflection tool for partnership processes

- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective

Not so relevant for:

- capturing institutional change

- establishing large data sets for comparative purposes

7.1.8 UPBEAT

UPBEAT is a project development and evaluation tool developed at Salford University (see UPBEAT reference in bibliography). It is aimed at helping universities learn how to reach out to business and the community by encouraging HEIs to transform academic research into 'real world' projects, products and services.

The UPBEAT matrix maps critical human success factors (business acumen; social networking intelligence; individual performance; foresight enabling skill) against six levels of engagement with business and community partners.

Relevant for:

- guiding academics/researchers who are interested in putting their research into practice but do not know where to start

- staff development. The matrix looks at the skills/expertise of individuals in the project team and identifies areas of development

Not so relevant for:

- capturing institutional change

- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective

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7.2   Selected international approaches

As Watson points out, "there is an international convergence of interest on issues about the purposes of universities and colleges and their role in wider society" (Watson, 2007 p.1). It is therefore important to consider approaches to audit and evaluation from outside the UK. The examples included here are mainly from North America but also from Europe and Australia.

In many respects the questions for consideration posed at the beginning of this section are as relevant when looking at international approaches and many of the tools have self-evident similarities. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that these have been developed in different social and cultural contexts. In thinking about the usefulness of any particular approach a number of further questions arise. For example, are there different institutional drivers or formal reporting requirements that influence the evaluation approach taken? Are there differences in the broader policy environment which shape the way in which engagement is understood, for instance the position of indigenous peoples in some communities? Thus rather than assume these approaches are directly transferable, some caution is called for. All that said, some of the organisations mentioned below are genuinely seeking to establish international data on the effectiveness of university public engagement. Many therefore, appreciate requests for membership from UK universities and their community partners, and are keen to share data.

7.2.1 Carnegie Foundation

For three decades, the Carnegie classification has been the leading framework for describing institutional diversity in US higher education. A recent change is the introduction of an 'elective' classification. Unlike classifications based on secondary analysis of existing national data, elective classifications rely on voluntary participation by institutions, permitting analysis of attributes that are not available in the national data. The first elective classification, released in December 2006, focused on community engagement (the 2008 Documentation Framework can be found at www.carnegiefoundation.org/dynamic/downloads/file_1_614.pdf). The framework provides a guide for institutions to develop and document their community engagement efforts, and 'is intentionally designed to support multiple definitions, diverse approaches, and institutionally-unique examples and data'.

By 2006, 89 institutions had submitted full documentation. Those institutions that did not complete applications reported either that the documentation framework was more extensive than they had anticipated or that their approaches to community engagement needed further development before they could meet the requirements (Driscoll, 2008).

Currently the classification is for US colleges and universities only.

Relevant for:

- providing guidance to universities wishing to develop and document their community engagement efforts

- finding out whether a university has institutionalised community engagement in its identity, culture, and commitments

- setting out a clear framework and comprehensive indicator sets for:

  - institutional identity and culture
  - institutional commitment
  - curricular engagement
  - outreach and partnership

- comparing international approaches

Not so relevant for:

- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

- assessing how well universities manage the implementation of their regional development strategy

7.2.2 Campus Compact

Campus Compact is a US coalition of more than 1,100 college and university presidents, representing some six million students, dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service learning in higher education. In 1999 the Campus Compact Presidents produced a Declaration (www.compact.org/resources/declaration/Declaration_2007.pdf) the purpose of which was to articulate the commitment of all sectors of higher education to their civic purpose. It sought recognition of civic responsibility in accreditation procedures, Carnegie classifications and national rankings, and encouraged work with others at state and local level on expectations for civic engagement in public systems. Campus Compact produces regular updates and 'Benchmarks for Campus/Community Partnerships'.

Assessment tools and other publications are available for purchase. See in particular Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. (www.compact.org/publications). Campus Compact has an international membership category. Subscription details available on request (www.compact.org/membership)

Relevant for:

- measuring the impact of service-learning and civic engagement initiatives on students, faculty, the institution, and the community
- providing a comparison of assessment methods, as well as sample assessment tools ranging from surveys to interviews to syllabus analysis guides

Not so relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members
- assessing research impact for community benefit

7.2.3 The Kellogg Commission

The Kellogg Commission has produced a 'White Paper' on benchmarking (Rennekamp et al, undated). The White Paper outlines seven categories of engagement indicators that institutions can use for documenting scholarly engagement, developed by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, an alliance of 'Big Ten' universities plus the University of Illinois at Chicago. They are:

- evidence of institutional commitment to engagement
- evidence of institutional resource commitments to engagement
- evidence that students are involved in engagement and outreach activities
- evidence that faculty and staff are engaged with external constituents
- evidence that institutions are engaged with their communities
- evidence of assessing the impact and outcomes of engagement
- evidence of revenue opportunities generated through engagement

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Relevant for:

- an analysis of benchmarking progress within the context of US Extension Colleges
- identifying problems in relation to reliability, validity, and aggregation of data
- analysing 'inputs-outputs-outcomes' in relation to HEIs trying to measure their engagement with multiple stakeholders
- providing a clear framework and categories of engagement
- Comparing university achievements internationally

Not so relevant for:

- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective
- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

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7.2.4 The Council of Independent Colleges

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) serves more than 580 independent US colleges and universities, including liberal arts, comprehensive, four-year, two-year, and international institutions. In addition, more than 60 national, state, and regional organisations are Affiliate Members. It has a Committee on Engagement. The Council works to support college and university leadership, advance excellence and enhance the institutions' contributions to society. It provides seminars, workshops, and services to assist institutional performance and visibility. CIC have developed benchmarking toolkits, including KIT (Key Indicators Tool) which 'is aimed at improving the capacity of member institutions to gain access to and utilize data to enhance institutional decision-making and improve institutional effectiveness' (see www.cic.edu/projects_services/infoservices/kit.asp). The KIT provides a customised benchmarking report for each CIC member institution with 18 indicators of institutional performance in four key areas: student enrolment and progression; faculty; tuition revenue and financial aid; and financial resources and expenditures.

Services are available to members only. CIC has an international membership category. Subscription details available on request: www.cic.edu/about/membership/criteria.asp#international

> **Relevant for:**
>
> - assessing institutional effectiveness
>
> - an analysis of benchmarking progress within the context of CIC member universities
>
> **Not so relevant for:**
>
> - assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective
>
> - understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

7.2.5 University of Minnesota

In 2002 the Civic Engagement Task Force of the University of Minnesota produced a report which set out the parameters of an engaged university, and recommended developing appropriate measures for assessing the impact of public engagement. The report includes 'possible quantitative indicators' and methods of evaluation (www.engagement.umn.edu/cope/reports/report02.html).

By the establishment of a Council of Public Engagement (COPE), the university hoped to provide 'a linchpin for current and future civic initiatives and activities throughout the university', including it having a role in initiating, facilitating, connecting, monitoring and publicising their engagement activities. In 2006, the Metrics and Measurements Task Force (Sullivan, 2006) produced a report which set the institution's measures in the context of the University's three-part mission: 'research and discovery; teaching and learning; and outreach and public service (public engagement)'. These are related to five action strategies 'that frame the University's strategic positioning efforts' (p.3). The Task Force report recognises that 'assessment measures do not capture the full potential consequences of deepened public engagement' (p.12). The task is seen as ongoing, with the continued development of measures, both University-wide and operational.

> **Relevant for:**
>
> - defining institutional level outcomes for university-community engagement
>
> - a conceptual framework for understanding different types of university-community partnership
>
> **Not so relevant for:**
>
> - understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members

7.2.6 Australian University Community Engagement Alliance

The Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) (see website in resources section below; also Garlick and Langworthy, undated) is in the process of developing benchmarks for engagement activity, in recognition of the need to include engagement as part of the institutional profile assessments made by government and as part of quality assessment exercises. Five overarching goals for community engagement are identified:

- to facilitate and encourage informed dialogue and partnership activities between the university and its community on issues of local and global importance
- to ensure university governance, management and administration processes support effective community engagement
- to ensure the university is accessible, outward reaching and responsive to its communities
- to increase the social, environmental and economic value of research to the university's community partners
- to design and deliver high quality learning and teaching that responds to community needs and fulfils the university's stated graduate attributes

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Relevant for:

- analysing types of assessment
- providing a classification framework and comprehensive set of engagement indicators
- comparing university achievements internationally

Not so relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members
- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective

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7.2.7 Tailloires/Tufts Inventory Tool for Higher Education Civic Engagement

The Talloires Declaration of 2005 established the Talloires Network. Signatory institutions commit themselves to developing civic engagement. It has set up an open electronic space for the exchange of ideas and for fostering collective action (see websites in resources section below).

For further discussion on the history of this assessment tool, see Watson (2007). The toolkit was originally designed for the Association of Commonwealth Universities in 2004.

The benchmarking questionnaire aims to address the following five issues:

- Clarifying the university's historical and mission-based commitments to its host society
- Identifying how engagement informs and influences the university's range of operations
- Describing how the university is organised to meet the challenge of civic engagement and social responsibility
- Assessing the contribution of staff, students and external partners to the engagement agenda
- Monitoring achievements, constraints and future opportunities for civic engagement and social responsibility

Relevant for:

- benchmarking against these five sets of issues
- providing a framework to drive a more detailed institutional baseline audit
- comparing university achievements internationally
- becoming part of a network with a specific programme of activity committed to civic engagement

Not so relevant for:

- understanding the micro-dynamics of public engagement between individual university personnel, students, community groups and community members
- assessing or defining partnership activity from a community perspective

Tool	Dimensions useful for						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HEFCE Benchmarking Tool						x	x
HEFCE Higher Education-Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey						x	x
The Higher Education Community Engagement Model			x	x			x
REAP (University of Bradford)	x	x	x	x			x
Work Foundation	x	x					
SIMPLE						x	
University of Brighton Community Engagement Audit Tool			x	x			x
ACE			x	x			x
UPBEAT						x	
Carnegie Classification			x	x			x
Campus Compact			x	x			x
Kellogg Commission			x	x			x
The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)				x	x		x
Civic Engagement Task Force (University of Minnesota)			x	x	x		x
Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA)							x
Talloires/Tufts Inventory Tool for Higher Education Civic Engagement			x	x			x

Key to dimensions of university public engagement
1. Public access to facilities, 2. Public access to knowledge, 3. Student engagement, 4. Faculty engagement, 5. Widening participation (equalities and diversity), 6. Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement, 7. Institutional relationship and partnership building

8 Case study: Auditing, evaluating and benchmarking public engagement at the University of Brighton

Introduction

This case study presents an historical account of community engagement at the University of Brighton. The case study provides a 'real-life' example of how evaluation of university public engagement has worked in practice and draws out some of the lessons learned.

Community-University Partnership Programme

At the University of Brighton (see www.brighton.ac.uk) a major part of the university's community and public engagement activity is promoted and developed through the Community-University Partnership Programme (CUPP) (www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/). CUPP was founded in 2003, with the objective of tackling disadvantage and promoting sustainable development through partnership working. It has three interrelated aims:

- Ensure that the University's resources (intellectual and physical) are available to, informed by and used by its local and sub-regional communities

- Enhance the community's and University's capacity for engagement for mutual benefit

- Ensure that CUPP's resources are prioritised towards addressing inequalities with our local communities

In addition to supporting partnership projects, CUPP also aims to act as a 'gateway' between the University of Brighton and local community and voluntary organisations, with a reach across the south-east coastal area, including Hastings. It has office space, a full time-equivalent staff of six, runs a Helpdesk service, and through its academic links, can draw on the advice and expertise of 30 plus senior members of staff. Through successfully bidding for funding, CUPP is currently acting as host to two programmes alongside its core work, with an annual budget of £550k, involving over 100 academics and community partners per year (approx 40 academics, 60 community partners). It is overseen by a steering group with strong participation from local community, voluntary and statutory organisations and most CUPP staff members have been, and/or are still involved with running community groups.

Community engagement, as implemented by CUPP, seeks to undertake work that provides some benefit to the community, and at the same time benefit the university. CUPP is responsible for generating only a part of the University's public engagement work (since this can be said to include diverse provision such as student volunteering, access to university facilities, public/open events, and socially oriented entrepreneurial activities etc). The latter initiatives are audited and evaluated in a variety of ways, eg the Volunteering Impact Assessment Framework. However, those involved with CUPP are increasingly taking a lead in supporting, encouraging and developing the University's public engagement and community-engagement activities at all levels within the institution.

'Engagement' in the University Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan includes 'engagement' as one of its five values – 'engagement with the cultural, social and economic life of our localities, region and nation; with international imperatives; and with the practical, intellectual and ethical issues of our partner organisations' (University of Brighton, 2007a). One of the six aims in the plan is that the University will 'become recognised as a leading UK university for the quality and range of its work in economic and social engagement and productive partnerships'.

Putting engagement as a central part of the Corporate Plan had implications for monitoring and evaluation. Included as one of the indicators of success is that the university will conduct 'a baseline and subsequent audit of community engagement in which the data show increased levels of engagement and local benefit from University activities' (University of Brighton, 2007a).

Evaluating the CUPP programme

In the early stages of the CUPP programme, a three-stage external evaluation of CUPP's work was commissioned. Stage 1 was very early on and looked at how internal processes were working; Stage 2 looked at how the supported projects had worked; and Stage 3 attempted to assess impact. All are available at www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/aboutus/evaluation.htm

The evaluation was not on a large scale (accounting for one day per month of the consultant's time over three years), but aimed to take an overview of CUPP projects and activities, focusing on the experiences of those involved. The information was gathered in a variety of ways, including face-to-face and telephone interviews, focus groups, and self-completion questionnaires, with over 50 people involved. A focus of the interviews was key success criteria, although it was evident that there was tension between capturing outcomes and identifying successful practice. Basic audit data on the CUPP Helpdesk function, i.e. basic data on contacts; nature of enquiries; and follow-up actions, was also routinely collated, which enabled the university to monitor the volume and nature of enquiries, and the views of academics and community partners on its effectiveness were also collected. Each project was also expected to conduct a self evaluation, and for the larger Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) projects a framework for this was developed by Peter Ambrose (Ambrose, 2004).

Results of these external and self-evaluations, as well as the Helpdesk audit confirmed that CUPP was a successful mechanism for developing mutually beneficial community-university partnerships. Indeed, CUPP's success contributed to the university taking the decision to develop social engagement as a core part of its Corporate Plan for the period 2007-12. This paved the way for the university core funding CUPP from central university funds once the Atlantic Philanthropies grant had ceased in 2007 (Atlantic Philanthropies being the initial funders of the university's public engagement work). At this stage it was unrealistic to embark on a community audit as the university did not yet have a clear picture of what it was doing itself.

The next challenge for the University of Brighton was to establish an audit tool that would create the baseline to assess whether the social engagement aspirations of the Corporate Plan were being realised. CUPP conducted a literature review of relevant approaches, and two stood out as helpful to work with. The first was the audit instrument (see Talloires/Tufts, above), designed for use by universities signed up to the Talloires Declaration. This required self-scrutiny on a number of dimensions, and the University of Brighton submitted a Talloires audit in 2007 (University of Brighton, 2007b), making it clear that its proper completion would require a more detailed institutional audit, which was not at that time in place.

Working with other universities

In order to undertake a more detailed audit, the University approached the University of Cambridge. Notwithstanding some limitations (see Watson 2007 p.110-111), Cambridge had established what seemed like a viable process for collecting the data and we wanted to learn from their experience. The Cambridge tool both described a range of activities and gave some monetary value to them (see University of Cambridge, 2004). The University of Brighton invited the colleague responsible for the Cambridge audit to the university to present the work and to discuss how it might apply to Brighton, and the University of Brighton's audit tool went live in 2008. It is distributed to Heads of School who are asked to collate data relating to the activity of their staff. Our experience shows that strong support from the Research Officer and Associate Academic Director supervising the project is needed to help Heads of Schools complete the task in a meaningful way, and that senior management backing for the audit is essential – the university's most senior administrator is on the working group for the audit. Undertaking this audit annually should ensure that the University of Brighton is able to assess the extent to which it is achieving the aspirations of the Corporate Plan. However, with the exception of Cambridge, it does not provide the university with the opportunity to benchmark its activity against that of other institutions. Even here the scope of the two is by no means identical. The Cambridge tool measures activity rather than impact and, as the Cambridge Community Engagement report comments:

> This survey did not provide adequate data on the impact of these activities on the community…This is an important area for future development

> (University of Cambridge, 2004, p.26)

The audit then, provides a baseline from which the University is able to make a start with institutional measurement, including measuring impact. The baseline audit data will be examined with a view to establishing what the 'standards' we wish to establish should be, so that we can reapply the tool in five years time and establish what progress has been made.

As well as undertaking our audit work, we wished to develop a process of evaluating partnership processes and their impact incorporating a 'theory of change' approach (Anderson, 2005). The theory of change approach specifies the changes (outcomes) planned by a particular programme or intervention, and tries to spell out the reasons behind the changes. Such an approach provides a 'pathway of change' that can be mapped and indicators defined to measure success at each level. A theory of change approach is useful in community-university partnership work because it helps us to understand whether community-university partnerships are a useful mechanism for achieving desired outcomes, and we can understand whether, and if so, how, university participation adds value.

To help achieve the aim of a more in depth evaluation of partnership activity, the University of Brighton once again turned to the work of colleagues in another UK university who had spent much time and effort thinking through these issues. Colleagues at the University of Bradford have developed a 'metrix' known as REAP (Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007, p.4). One major advantage of REAP is that it is very practical – project workers can collate the data themselves and it is not reliant on having the money available for external evaluation. In this metric, REAP represents Reciprocity, Externalities, Access, and Partnerships (see Section 7 above) and seeks to capture the 'public good' generated by a clear commitment to engagement. The Externalities element in the Bradford tool aims to measure 'the economic value of activities of a societal nature' (Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007, p.5-6).

Our attempts to satisfy funders' and other requirements for measuring economic impact have proved difficult. There are models that can be used (see Nicholls, Mackenzie and Somers (2007)), but this is painstaking and often expensive work. We intend to continue to pursue this but we recognise that it is not easy to establish the economic impact of community university activity that is often preventative in nature.

The University of Brighton has worked closely with the University of Bradford to develop REAP so that partnership activity between all partners is captured. In developing this tool, we were keen to extend its reach, since the Bradford tool originally captured partnership activity in a two-way relationship between the University and its partners, rather than seeking to understand how university-community partnerships are embedded in a variety of networks, in which the university may be just one actor. Working with Bradford, the University of Brighton has also sought to include an explicit theory of change in the model. Lead academics and community partners are attending workshop sessions on the REAP model and support is being given to them by development managers and CUPP's academic directorship.

9 Conclusion

In preparing this briefing we have had the opportunity to reflect further on our own practice and to explore in more detail the many tools and models now available. This is a complex area and we hope that the framework we have developed to assist our own thinking will prove helpful to others.

The history of the University of Brighton's community partnership work has been one of back-and-forth dialogue between practitioners, researchers and community members, as well as close scrutiny of documents produced by colleagues in web or print form. In the process, all of those involved in audit and evaluation have learned as much from what went wrong as from our successes. We have also benefited directly from the experience of colleagues elsewhere and we remain enthusiastic about the potential for developing our evaluative work in the future.

While this is still work in progress, it is possible to set out some of the lessons learned so far from CUPP's experience, since these are an essential part of the reflective practice required in consolidating audit and evaluative tools. These are summarised in Table 4 below. Carefully considering the questions you want to answer, is the first port of call, as this will determine the approaches subsequently taken. Our list in Box 2, Section 7, should help you scope this.

A few trends and conclusions from the initiatives we have presented can be drawn:

The first is that many different organisations have been producing indicators, in particular at the institutional level.

Second, there have been some attempts to develop benchmarking systems, with work by the Russell Group and by HEFCE most notable in the UK context. As we have noted, the more HEFCE see public engagement as part of the core work of universities, the more we will see the development of cross-university benchmarking in this arena.

Third, rigorously and comprehensively incorporating community perspectives in audit and benchmarking is almost entirely absent across the sector, both within the UK and beyond, although some initiatives consult community partners via steering groups etc in developing their frameworks. Evaluation frameworks fare better in this regard - those discussed in Section 7 have made a fair attempt at this difficult task.

Fourth, compared to the development of audit and benchmarking frameworks, there have been few attempts at producing evaluation frameworks in university public engagement, with REAP standing out as the most comprehensive contribution in the UK context so far (Pearce, Pearson and Cameron, 2007).

Fifth, comprehensive inclusion of economic dimensions in audit, benchmarking and evaluation, as well as impact on community wellbeing, are dimensions that merit further development across the sector if we are to successfully demonstrate the worth of public engagement. Examples from other sectors, as we have shown in this Briefing Paper, are worth drawing on in this regard.

Sixth, there is much relevant international work in auditing, benchmarking and evaluating university public engagement, and UK universities would be wise to consider joining wider networks such as Talloires, both to include their own data as part of the international scene-setting, and to learn from the good practice of others.

Given the range of initiatives currently happening, we have fallen short of recommending specific tools or techniques over others. However, we have attempted to indicate the scope and relevance, as we see it, of each specific initiative included. There is undoubtedly much that we could still include, and different interpretations that can be put on the initiatives we have selected. We hope that others will join us in debating the issues, and in pooling knowledge and experience as part of an audit and evaluation community of practice in this area. In particular, we would urge colleagues to write up their own institutional experiences as case studies which we could then compare with our experiences at the University of Brighton.

Table 4   Lessons from the University of Brighton's experience

- Think about what question it is that you want to answer (see Section 7 p.35)

- Ultimately aim to measure impact and change, not just activity

- Don't expect to get it perfect – decide on what pay off you will accept between completing the task and being as comprehensive as you can

- Get pragmatists, not just perfectionists, involved in the work

- Collect basic statistics from the start – the statistics the University of Brighton have built up on the Helpdesk function, for example, have enabled it to closely monitor its use and to understand trends over time

- Before embarking on audit, evaluation or benchmarking it is helpful to know what other models have been successful for other institutions. Seek advice from colleagues in other universities who have overcome similar challenges – meeting in person is invaluable

- Staff and community stakeholders implementing audit and evaluation need to motivate others to understand the importance of collecting meaningful data, i.e. actively chasing up Heads of Schools and Departments; sharing examples of what is being done

- Academics involved in projects need support in evaluating community-university partnerships. Their subject specialism may not give them the expertise to evaluate in this specific way

- Community partners need encouragement and support to sign up to evaluation and to understand its worth if meaningful data is to be collated. Many of them are understandably focused on the outcome they wish to achieve, and mapping the detail of community-university collaboration does not always seem relevant to them

- Support from senior management is vital – in the case of the University of Brighton, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor is part of the audit working group

- Audit and evaluation mechanisms need to be cross-referenced, with transparency attached to procedures, methodology and findings

- Establish a Community of Practice on audit and evaluation to allow staff space to reflect on their evaluative work

- Include community partners in audit and evaluation groups and give them incentives, including payment, to be involved

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Resources via websites

UK websites

http://accenture.com.
For public policy statements, see for example: **www.accenture.com/Global/About_Accenture/Corporate_Governance/CodeProgram.htm**

www.acu.ac.uk
Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is the oldest inter-university network, linking approximately 500 commonwealth universities. The ACU benchmarking programme can be found through: **www.acu.ac.uk/policyandresearch/benchmarking/methodology.html**

www.audit-commission.gov.uk
The Audit Commission: An independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

www.publicengagement.ac.uk
NCCPE: A partnership between the University of the West of England and the University of Bristol, the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement works with the six new beacons, whose task is to find ways to make universities more welcoming and accessible, and to deepen the social impact and relevance of their work.

www.communities.gov.uk/corporate
Provides information relating to all Communities and Local Government sites, including Good Practice and Guidance documents.

www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp
University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme.
See also www.bton.ac.uk/cupp/coastalcommunities/index.html for the South East Coastal Communities projects.

www.demos.co.uk
Demos is the think tank for 'everyday democracy'. Their aim is to put this idea into practice by working with organisations in ways that make them more effective and legitimate.

http://ewds.strath.ac.uk/Default.aspx?alias=ewds.strath.ac.uk/impact
Co-ordinating site for the IMPACT studies (ESRC/HEFCE and various universities)

www.hefce.ac.uk
The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributes public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges. It also plays a key role in ensuring accountability and promoting good practice.

www.i-l-m.com
Institute of Leadership and Management exists to support, develop and inform managers at every stage of their careers.

www.impact.org
A collaborative website which welcomes feedback and discussion on the Higher Education Impact Model (see Library House reference in the bibliography).

www.invo.org.uk
INVOLVE (upper case) is a national advisory group, funded through the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR). Its role is to support and promote active public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research. It produces guides for researchers, members of the public and research funders. All their documents are available to download as pdfs.

www.involve.org.uk
Involve (lower case) is core funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and collaborates with a range of organisations around putting people at the heart of decision making. It produces publications, including guidance briefings. See also **www.peopleandparticipation.net**

www.nao.org.uk

The National Audit Office scrutinises public spending on behalf of Parliament. It is totally independent of Government. If audits the accounts of all central government departments and agencies, as well as a wide range of other public bodies, and reports to Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which they have used public money.

www.neweconomics.org/gen/default.aspx

The New Economics Foundation is an independent 'think and do' tank which aims to build a framework for a new economics which promotes well-being, environmental sustainability and social justice. See also Nicolls et al, 2007, in bibliography above.

www.pdptoolkit.co.uk

A site produced by the General Practice Postgraduate Medical Education in Cambridge, to support GP online services for personal development.

www.peopleandparticipation.net

A site which has arisen from an Involve publication People and Participation (2005), and which is sponsored by Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Justice and the Sustainable Development Commission. Aims to be a central portal for information and inspiration about participation to practitioners across the world.

www.qaa.ac.uk

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education was established in 1997 as an independent body funded by subscriptions from UK Universities and colleges of higher education to safeguard and help improve the academic standards and quality of higher education in the UK.

www.qca.org.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

www.russellgroup.ac.uk/home.html

The Russell Group is an Association of leading UK research-intensive Universities committed to maintaining the highest standards of research, education and knowledge transfer. Russell Group Universities together are committed to the development of a UK Higher Education sector through forming common positions and common understanding around specific issues and concerns.

www.sfedi.co.uk

Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative. Organisation for small enterprise development and support.

www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk

The Social Audit Network (SAN Ltd) is a not for profit company set up to assist social auditors and interested organisations and individuals, with a membership operating throughout the UK.

www.upbeat.eu.com

UPBEAT: Eleven universities in the University Partnership to Benchmark Enterprise Activities and Technologies (UPBEAT) partnership have developed a methodology to assess the progress of university outreach projects against four generic criteria and then drive continuous performance improvement.

www.theworkfoundation.com

The Work Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation, that brings all sides of working organisations together to find the best ways of improving both economic performance and quality of working life.

Other websites

http://aucea.med.monash.edu.au:8080/traction
Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) is an alliance of 34 Australian universities committed to university-community engagement in order to promote the social, environmental and economic and cultural development of communities.

www.carnegiefoundation.org
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is a US independent policy and research centre dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning.

See also
www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213
which is the general link for the Community Engagement Elective Classification. The 2008 Documentation Framework can be found at www.carnegiefoundation.org/dynamic/downloads/file_1_614.pdf.

See also
www.carnegiefoundation.org/files/elibrary/Driscoll.pdf
for an outline of the development of the elective engagement classification (See Driscoll, 2008, in bibliography).

www.cic.edu/about/index.asp
Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of independent US colleges and universities working together to support college and university leadership; advance institutional excellence; enhance private higher education's contributions to society.

www.compact.org
A national nonprofit organisation dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education.

http://depts.washington.edu/ccph
Community Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH).

www.engagement.umn.edu/cope
The Council on Public Engagement, University of Minnesota, brings together people working on public engagement activities, along with representatives of faculty and student governance, colleges, and central administration offices.

Talloires – see Tufts

www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork/?pid=23&c=28
Tufts: The Talloires Network is a collective of individuals and institutions committed to promoting the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education. In September 2005 Tufts University convened the Talloires Conference 2005, the first international gathering of the heads of universities devoted to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education. The Talloires Declaration can be found at:
www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork/?pid=17&c=7

http://tuftstoolkit.pbwiki.com
Entry point for Tufts Toolkit for Advancing Student Engagement in Communities.

www.wkkf.org/Default.aspx?LanguageID=0
WK Kellogg Foundation is a philanthropic grant-giving organisation that focuses on 'improving current and future communities' quality of life in the United States, Latin America, Caribbean, and southern Africa'. Its work on community engagement has been in conjunction with CIC.