Unlocking the Potential of Civic Collaboration:

A review of research-policy engagement between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council

November 2020

Acknowledgements

Foreword

The University of Leeds and Leeds City Council have a long history of working together for the good of our city and its citizens.

From addressing the challenges of climate change to driving innovation in healthcare, the dynamic partnerships between the University's world-class research community and Council employees are already helping boost the prosperity and well-being of people across Leeds.

As the importance of civic partnerships grows, it's vital we take stock and see how we can deepen our relationship even further. That is why we welcome this report – 'Unlocking the Potential for Civic Collaboration' – led by the Leeds Social Sciences Institute in close cooperation with Leeds City Council.

The review maps out previous and existing collaborative research projects between our institutions; how engagement across our organisations benefits the University and Council; and examines the factors that help and hinder successful collaboration between our colleagues.

Importantly, the report also makes recommendations for a future Action Plan including plans for a joint research-policy collaboration strategy, to empower our institutions to work even more closely together in the future.

We thank everyone who took part in and contributed to the *Review* and its recommendations. They provide an excellent basis from which both the University and Council can move forward to shape our future collaborative relations for mutual benefit. We are now looking closely at how we can actively implement the recommendations and we will be working together to realise these over the coming months.

At a time of great challenge and uncertainty – in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, its impact on the economy, Brexit, and following years of cutbacks to local authorities – the value of civic partnerships like ours has never been more important.

We are committed to working together in harnessing the power of the University of Leeds and applying its world-renowned research to local communities, so that innovative councils like Leeds can boost prosperity, lift communities and make Leeds the best city in the UK.

Professor Nick Plant
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
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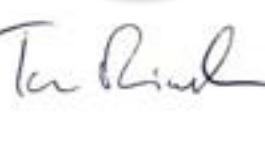
Tom Riordan
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Executive summary

Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds are committed to working together to drive sustainability, prosperity, social inclusivity, health and well-being and have a history of productive relationships. The imperative for civic partnerships in research is now more pressing than ever as a combination of financial pressures, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and devolution present an urgent need for academics and local authority policy-makers to collaborate more closely in responding to unprecedented challenges and in pursuing new opportunities of mutual benefit.

This report presents findings from the *Review* of research-policy collaborations between the University and the Council. *Section 1* begins by establishing the compelling case for unlocking potential for research-policy engagement in the context of changes in higher education and local government. The *Review* was undertaken to: understand the nature and extent of existing bi-lateral collaborations; identify barriers to collaboration; consider ways in which collaboration might be enhanced; and make recommendations for improvements that will accelerate research-policy engagement and foster effective joint working. *Section 2* details the data collection that underpins the *Review*. This includes: a mapping exercise to collate information on collaborative research projects; an on-line survey completed by 147 professionals from both organisations; and semi-structured interviews with a sample of 33 academics and Council officers.

Section 3 provides an overview of 118 collaborative research projects that were identified as either ongoing or completed since January 2015. Of these, 45 projects are currently in operation. Projects vary in scale and type, cover a diverse range of social, economic and scientific issues and span all University faculties and Council directorates. They have an associated value of more than £38m in external funding. Wide-ranging impacts of research collaboration were apparent in contributing to climate change mitigation, flood alleviation, developing a low carbon economy, child poverty policies, services for vulnerable adults, public health improvements and employment in cultural industries in the city, among many other examples. Nonetheless, outcomes and impacts need to be traced more consistently to evidence the significant benefits that derive from collaborative research.

Section 4 discusses perceptions of key benefits of research collaboration. Researchers and council officers were enthusiastic about the value of collaborative working and overwhelmingly positive about its potential for meeting organisations goals and benefitting the city as whole. Six in ten survey respondents had previously been involved in research collaborations and seven out of ten of those without such experience were 'extremely interested' in future engagement. Primary advantages cited by survey respondents were 'co-producing better solutions', 'demonstrating impact' and 'looking at things in a different way'. For researchers, working with the second largest local authority in the country provides a direct pathway to impact, which they found both professionally rewarding and increasingly crucial to meeting Research Excellence Framework (REF) requirements and funding criteria. For council officers, budget reductions have reduced analytical capacity within the authority, making them more dependent on robust academic evidence to inform decision-making, guide expenditure and improve practice.

Section 5 examines factors that academics and council officers found useful in enabling successful collaboration. Survey respondents considered 'pre-existing relationships', 'closely aligned objectives' and 'access to funding' most important in facilitating collaborative working. Interviewees demonstrated the centrality of relationships in initiating and sustaining engagement. They stressed the importance of 'boundary spanning' individuals who can broker collaborations. The significance of trust and goodwill in delivering successful collaborative projects was highlighted. Staff in both organisations stressed that a shared sense of commitment and additional effort were necessary in negotiating inter-organisational issues and overcoming obstacles when working collaboratively.

Section 6 considers various barriers that hamper research collaborations. There was a common view that potential benefits of are not being fully realised because engagement tends to be *ad hoc*, poorly coordinated and without the support of a coherent strategy framework between the two organisations. Difficulty in locating counterparts with complementary expertise within two large, complex institutions was a significant, and related, barrier. 'Not knowing who to contact' discouraged three quarters of survey respondents without prior experience of engagement who wished to collaborate from doing so. Differences in organisational priorities, cultures and timescales were further impediments to collaboration. Council officers described instances of academic interests being incompatible with 'real-world' policy demands. Researchers highlighted tensions in maintaining academic rigour in a politically sensitive environment. Lack of time amidst heavy workloads was

the principal practical difficulty experienced by staff from both organisations, with excessive bureaucracy and lack of resources also major barriers. Significantly, while the Council holds a wealth of data, and examples of services benefitting from academic analysis were evident, data sharing was highlighted as a considerable barrier.

Section 7 explores the findings from the survey and interviews on possible ways of enhancing collaboration. There was a consensus among professionals that a more strategic inter-organisational approach to research-policy partnerships is needed as a matter of some urgency. Many believed this would signal mutual commitment and provide a point of reference in addressing commonly encountered practical barriers. Professionals also suggested measures for developing clearer lines of communication and co-ordination. Ideas for fostering organisational cultures that are more conducive to knowledge exchange included training, secondments, co-location and encouraging 'mature' conversations that promote genuine learning. Suggestions for practical mechanisms to aid collaboration included templates for contractual and data sharing purposes and research clauses in council procurement. Professionals also called for funding to help nurture collaborative projects and recognition of the time required for meaningful engagement in their workloads.

Recommendations

Based on analysis of findings from this *Review*, the following recommendations highlight the principles that should inform the development of a detailed *Action Plan* to accelerate research-policy collaboration and take civic partnership to a new level:

1. A joint research-policy collaboration strategy

The University and the Council should develop a joint commitment and strategic approach to research-policy engagement, which sets out shared priorities for research collaboration. This should: align with and optimise benefits of existing partnerships, roles and resources; be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreements that are sufficiently flexible to encompass further partners as city-wide collaboration expands; and be backed by an *Action Plan* with agreed delivery mechanisms that help address barriers that impede collaboration.

2. Named research collaboration 'Champions'

Both organisations should name 'Champions' to act as contact points around priority themes, promote research collaboration and signpost potential collaborators to appropriate contacts, resources and support.

3. Organisational infrastructure to support research-policy collaborations

Both organisations should support research-policy collaborations through improved inter-organisational co-ordination, infrastructure and communications. This should include: clear inward and outward facing communication channels; an on-line forum enabling researchers and council officers to identify shared interests; an on-line database of projects that traces and evidences their impacts; case studies, advice and information; and networking opportunities.

4. Optimising data analysis

Bi-lateral data sharing arrangements should be established in the first instance, with potential to advance a vision for 'Connected Leeds', where data is shared between public and academic partners to aid decision-making and knowledge generation.

5. Fostering inter-organisational relations among staff

The University and the Council should foster mutual trust and understanding of differences in organisational cultures and arrangements by: recognising effort required for effective engagement in workloads; organising joint training and seminars; and encouraging shared roles, secondments, placements, co-location and cross-organisational spaces.

6. Seedcorn funding

A rolling programme of small funding pots should draw upon existing resources and any dedicated new resources to kick-start collaborative projects. This should capitalises on the value that 'in-kind' contributions can bring through investing staff time and providing access to contacts, assets and data.

7. Fully embed the value of engagement and impact among academic staff

The University should continue to work to reflect the time required for collaboration in workload models.

8. Extension of 'living lab' approaches on campus

The University should expand the role of the campus as a 'living lab' for research activities (in conjunction with Recommendation 11, below).

9. Civic collaboration hub

Building upon the Engaged Research initiative to draw together its impact network, public engagement and Policy Leeds, the University should consider developing an outward-facing hub to bring researchers and council officers together with other public and third sector bodies to co-design research aimed at informing policy.

10. Identify knowledge needs and co-design research priorities

The Council should identify and communicate its knowledge needs and focus areas for collaboration and co-design its research priorities with relevant (academic and non-academic) partners.

11. Expand 'living lab' opportunities in the city

The Council should be committed to providing 'living lab' opportunities for research-driven innovation and supporting research programmes that address complex issues (in conjunction with Recommendation 8, above).

12. Build research into procurement

Council procurement with third parties should include agreed standard clauses on potential collaborative research activities and data sharing in contracts, with benefits of such projects clearly communicated.

It is envisaged that these recommendations could be readily compatible with existing relationships and broader plans for maximising the University's contribution to the city and realising shared visions for social and environmental sustainability. While focused on bi-lateral relations between Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds, it is clear from this *Review* that such collaborations are embedded in, and dependent on, much wider multi-lateral relations. As such, it is anticipated that this *Review* represents an important step in unlocking wider potential for stimulating research-policy engagement that could produce powerful impacts for the city-region and beyond.

▲ Leeds Civic Hall

1 Research collaboration in the current context

The rationale for enhancing collaborative relations between the University and local authority policy-makers and practitioners is now more pressing than ever within prevailing higher education and local government contexts. This section discusses key drivers for local civic collaboration between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council in responding to societal challenges, seizing opportunities and fulfilling organisational goals.

1.1 Common drivers for collaboration

1.1.1 Leeds City Council is acknowledged as amongst the most innovative local authorities in the UK and the University of Leeds is among the leading global higher education institutions for research. As key regional 'anchor institutions', alongside other major bodies,[1] the University and the Council are committed to working in partnership to drive the city's sustainability, prosperity, social inclusivity, health and well-being. Shifts in national policies over the past decade have caused significant changes in the contexts in which both councils and universities operate. The need to consider innovative new ways of working in both organisations has grown as pressures on resources, demands on performance and commitments to stakeholders have increased and changed.

The importance of research-policy collaborations has been further escalated with the publication of the HM Government's *Industrial Strategy* (2017), which has sought to position universities as key actors in stimulating growth, raising productivity and delivering national priorities for artificial intelligence, ageing society, mobility and clean growth. Significantly, the recent UK Research and Development Roadmap[2] recognises the role of a place-based approach to research and development in 'levelling up' regional inequalities. It highlights a need to foster 'greater collaboration and networks between funders, researchers, practitioners and civic leaders to embed a system that delivers stronger local economic benefit and improved quality of life outcomes' (p.6).

1.1.2 The imperative for partnerships that foster mutual learning through evidence informed decision-making has become more urgent of late as both institutions respond to the challenges of Brexit and Covid-19. The Council is at the forefront in protecting communities and businesses during the pandemic and leading the city's recovery, whilst the University is reconfiguring student learning and its academics are among those advising West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), and other public bodies, on recovery strategies as part of the Place-Based Economic Recovery Network. Sub-regional interaction through WYCA and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has also intensified in preparation for devolved powers and budgets under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. Introducing a directly elected mayor for West Yorkshire in May 2021 will increase opportunity for decision-making on issues including housing and transport, requiring robust evidence to inform policy development.

1.2 The case for research collaboration in higher education

1.2.1 The case for enhanced research collaboration between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council has grown increasingly compelling as the higher education sector has undergone dramatic changes during the past decade. The *Nurse Report* (2015) not only heralded significant changes to the national research infrastructure with the establishment of UKRI, it also promoted a greater emphasis on policy engagement through research.[3] This supplemented the wider research impact agenda fostered by research funding bodies and the REF with an increased emphasis on the impact generated from research. The financial rewards and reputational benefits that derive from strong REF performances in impact will be enhanced in the REF 2021 exercise (notably with the increase to 25% in the relative value of 'impact'). More recently, the Knowledge Exchange Framework has added a further institutional driver to research partnerships with its explicit metrics-based emphasis on 'working with the public and third sector', 'local growth and regeneration' and 'public and community engagement'.[4]

1.2.2 Current debates about the civic role of the modern university and its implications for the University of Leeds as a prestigious metropolitan university in a leading UK city are presenting another driver. The Civic Universities Commission (2019) called for a 'step change' in civic engagement and argued that the Industrial Strategy and regional devolution 'create an opening for a place-based approach' (2019: 8). Hambleton (2018) argues that universities need to balance global competitiveness with engagement in place-based leadership. The University of Leeds is responding to this challenge. The latest draft of its *Vision and Strategy 2020-30* is clear as to the need for strengthening its 'roots in the city and region', while also pursuing an 'increasingly international outlook and focus' for teaching and research. The document makes a commitment to 'adopting a more proactive approach to civic engagement', working with the Leeds Anchors Network, third sector and local communities.[5] Encouraging inter-organisational learning through participation in multi-sector networks can help deliver city-wide benefits.

1.2.3 Collaboration with Leeds City Council presents opportunities for researchers at the University to build on administrative and new forms of data available from local partners. New datasets and research methodologies afford researchers novel opportunities to learn from practitioners and co-design evidence-informed public policies. Moreover, the challenges for delivering whole systems approaches - that the Covid-19 pandemic has underscored - provide real prospects for new ways of joint working by linking together existing organisational datasets for research purposes. This is particularly salient as the University has world-class data analytic capacity and skills as well as the cross-disciplinary facilities at the Leeds Institute of Data Analysis (LIDA). This presents considerable opportunities for expert analysis to yield insights for public service delivery.

1.3 The case for research collaboration in local government

1.3.1 The case for collaboration between local authority policy-makers and researchers has also grown increasingly compelling due to dramatic changes in local government over the past decade. National policy has prompted public service reform and efficiency savings along with increased opportunities for devolving power from Whitehall. Metropolitan and unitary councils outside of London have borne the brunt of fiscal austerity, with 34% budget reductions since 2010[6] and demands on services exacerbated by welfare reform.[7] This has required Leeds City Council to find ways of retaining service quality within severely reduced budgets, whilst also decimating its internal research and analytical capacity. The Council has made £300m efficiency savings[8] but is now facing unprecedented financial pressure as austerity is compounded by loss of £200m this year as a result of Covid-19.[9] As the Council leads the city's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, prepares for devolution and responds to even greater financial challenges, its need for productive partnerships and robust research evidence to aid decision-making is greater than ever.

1.3.2 Leeds City Council has established health and well-being, inclusive growth and climate change as the three overarching strategic priorities around which its aspirations for the city and its citizens are centred. The Council's priorities for 2020-2025 are set out in its latest *Best Council Plan*[10] in relation to: health and well-being; inclusive growth; sustainable infrastructure; child-friendly city; age friendly Leeds; culture; housing; and safe, strong communities. The Plan furthermore states that 'these ambitions would not be achievable without close partnership working', with notable examples including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer Leeds and Leeds Academic Health Partnership (LAHP).

1.3.3 The Council recognises the significant contribution the University brings to the city-region, as a major employer, skills developer, source of innovation, force for economic development, driver of social mobility, promoter of sustainability and source of cultural vibrancy. In addition to these advantages, the Council's *Best Council Plan* recognises what it calls the 'brain gain' of having the fifth largest university in the country on its doorstep. Pilot projects in 'Leading Places', a joint Local Government Association and Universities UK programme,[11] demonstrated how councils can work with universities to better understand complex problems when developing local strategies, redesigning services or supporting vulnerable citizens. The need for public service providers to demonstrate evidence informed decision-making has intensified (Bristow et al., 2015) and the requirement for accountability in decision-making has increased (Walker et al., 2019). Devolution will bring greater flexibility on issues such as transport and housing and unlock £1.8bn investment with other councils in West Yorkshire, which will necessitate collective, evidence-informed decision-making. Strengthening collaboration between researchers and policy-makers is therefore vital in developing responses to public service challenges that draw on best practice from around the world.

1.4 Inter-organisational connections

1.4.1 The University of Leeds and Leeds City Council are united in their over-arching commitments to environmental and social sustainability in the city-region and beyond. Strong organisational links between the University and the Council exist at both senior leadership and operational levels through participation in city-wide and regional networks and bi-lateral partnerships. Since its participation in the Commission on the Future of Local Government in 2012, the Council has worked with an ever-expanding network of public, private and voluntary organisations. The University has also geared its resources towards more outward-facing objectives in recent years, notably through the Corporate Relations Team, establishment of the *Business Engagement Framework* and investment in Nexus as a cross-sectoral collaborative hub facilitating relationships between entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs and the academic community.[12]
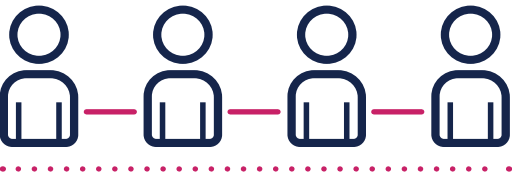
1.4.2 Despite an unfavourable outcome, time and resources invested in planning the European City of Culture Bid 2023 provided a catalyst in building relationships between the two organisations with regard to enhancing the city's cultural offer. The Council, University and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust are working together on ambitions plans for creating an Innovation District at the geographical intersection between the three institutions in the city centre.[13] The LAHP is helping to deliver health and well-being benefits to the people of Leeds by engaging academic capabilities in education and research with the health and care system across the city to speed up adoption of research and innovation.[14] The city's institutional leaders are participating collectively in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme (MIT-REAP) to encourage innovation-driven enterprise.[15] Senior managers from the University and Council are also currently developing a Civic Engagement Strategy, which aims to further harness potential for students to benefit local communities. Additionally, new opportunities to respond to and shape major policy agendas arise where close civic collaboration is essential to maximise the Leeds contribution; examples include preparations for the Conference of Parties (COP26) on global climate change to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

1.4.3 An array of institutional enablers supporting research-policy partnerships exists across the two institutions. For example, the University hosts a series of Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) or similar across the disciplines which provide Research Council resources to foster impact and engagement from research.[16] Its Engaged Research Network and on-line Engaged Research Forum enable academics to share information and opportunities. The University is a member of the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) and Policy Leeds was set up in early 2020, as a university-wide hub to encourage, enable and coordinate more strategic policy engagement at regional, national and international levels. This is complemented by Leeds City Council's introduction of the Policy Network as a forum bringing together some 60 officers to join up policy and practice across services and provide a consistent interface when engaging with partners for policy development purposes. The need to cultivate mutual knowledge exchange between city partners, rather than linear models whereby research is 'applied' to policy and practice, is well-documented, with Chatterton et al. (2018) for example demonstrating the value of initiatives such as Leeds City Lab in promoting the co-production of solutions to complex urban challenges.

1.5 Untapped potential for civic collaboration

1.5.1 Despite the strong case for closer partnership working, evidence from national studies indicates that potential for collaboration between academics and local policy-makers is not being realised at present. For example, Hambleton (2018: 6) argues that while innovative local authorities and universities are 'breaking new ground', engagement is generally 'fragmented and chaotic'. A national survey by Walker and colleagues (2019) found that although policy-makers' need for evidence has grown, policy-oriented research remains low outside of London and the South East. The Civic Universities Commission (2019) found some examples of productive engagement but concluded that a 'systematic and strategic approach' is generally absent across the UK. The Commission's final report recommended a more strategic approach to civic and regional engagement. It proposed a 'clearing house' to match supply of research with demand from organisations, backed by better recognition for impact-oriented scholarship. Central government should acknowledge universities' 'formidable firepower' in addressing problems at local level, it argued, recommending a new 'civic fund', doubling of 'Strength in Places' resources and aligning the Shared Prosperity Fund, which replaces EU structural funds, with locally-focused initiatives.

1.6 Enhancing research collaboration in Leeds

1.6.1 National studies highlight the considerable benefits that derive from robust research-policy collaborations but also acknowledge that delivering this is not easy (Walker et al., 2019; Si, 2019). Locations where connections between academics and local policy-makers are given sufficient import appear limited, with Bristol, Sheffield and University College London cited as examples (Hambleton, 2018; Goddard and Kempton, 2016). Within the city-region, Bradford offers an exemplar in developing strategic links and interconnecting datasets between the council, health services, the university and others. 'Born in Bradford', which is one of the largest research programmes of its kind internationally and includes University of Leeds representation in its executive team[17], is using the collective 'Connected Bradford' repository as a tool for guiding joined-up action to improve children's life-chances.[18]

1.6.2 Senior leaders from the Council and the University have recognised the need to accelerate collaboration. At a meeting in November 2019, they agreed that there is significant potential for stronger, more structured collaboration. They agreed that further mutual effort is required to: promote the benefits of cultural activity in and beyond Leeds; boost the city's economy by promoting innovation; enhance the contribution of students to the city; work together as anchor institutions to pursue organisational efficiencies; and identify opportunities to address strategic city challenges, particularly in relation to inequality. They asserted the value of joint approaches to large-scale issues such as inclusive growth, climate change, demography and transport. With regard to research collaborations in particular, they highlighted potential for: capitalising on LIDA's analytical capacity; and adopting more a focused approach to identifying mutually significant research areas and promoting research activities within the Leeds City Region.

1.6.3 Building on existing partnership relations, the Covid-19 pandemic and regional devolution have brought the need for rapid practical action to maximise the value of research collaboration to the fore. Civic leaders, businesses and the public believe the post-pandemic recovery should be a point at which to develop a 'greener and fairer' economy.[19] Working together, researchers and policy-makers can use this as an opportunity to develop new solutions to inequalities, sustainability and service delivery issues. This *Review* represents a timely new step for future consideration of multi-stakeholder research partnerships across the city-region.

▲ Leeds Climate Commission, which works collaboratively to help meet the city's climate reduction targets, ran a Citizens' Jury. Image: Leeds Media Services

2 Review aims and methods

This section begins by setting out the aims and scope of the *Review*. It then outlines the research design and methods used to collect and analyse the data presented in this report.

2.1 Review Aims

2.1.1 The primary aims of the *Review* are to enhance the value and impact of research and policy collaborations between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council and to foster a strategic bi-lateral partnership infrastructure and processes that maximise the benefits of collaborative working in responding to social, environmental and economic challenges. To guide the *Review,* four core objectives have been established to meet these aims:

- to understand the nature and extent of existing research and policy collaborations between the two institutions;

- to identify existing barriers to collaboration and knowledge exchange;

- to consider ways in which collaboration between researchers and policy-makers might be enhanced;

- to make recommendations for improvement of mechanisms and infrastructure that fosters more effective research-policy collaborations in the future.

2.2 Scope of the Review

2.2.1 The scope of the *Review* is focused primarily on bi-lateral relations between Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds in the realisation that frequently such collaborations are embedded in, and dependent on, much wider multi-lateral relations and plural partnerships. These multiple networks may be locally or regionally based but likewise in other contexts will involve national or international partners given the nature of contemporary global research challenges. This *Review* has concentrated specifically on research collaborations between researchers and policy-makers with an emphasis on knowledge exchange and pathway to research impact. For the purpose of the *Review,* we have included research collaborations related to PhD studies but have excluded from our purview the many productive collaborations that exist in relation to other postgraduate and undergraduate taught programmes (including dissertations).

2.2.2 It is recognised that the scope of this *Review* can only provide a partial picture of the rich collaborations and points of engagement that occur between the two organisations and the complexity of the wider relations in which these are embedded. For example, we are acutely aware of the Council's strong ties with Leeds Beckett University and the various multiple partnerships, such as LAHP, which incorporate both organisations in larger endeavours. Nonetheless, it has been evident from the *Review* that, as large and complex organisations, relations between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council present abundant untapped opportunities to enhance the value and impact of research and policy collaborations. It is intended that this *Review* constitutes a new phase in the development of wider strategies to enhance and harness public and third sector engagement across the city-region, particularly in light of the devolution deal between the government and local authorities in West Yorkshire,[20] which has been approved by the five councils and WYCA.[21]

2.3 Research design and methods

2.3.1 To meet the aims and objectives of the *Review*, a mixed methods approach was taken to provide both an overview of activities and professionals' perceptions and insights based on their experiences of collaboration. This involved three distinct but inter-connected methods of data collection:

1. A mapping exercise to determine the nature and extent of recent (since 2015) and ongoing research collaborations;

2. A survey to gauge perceptions and experiences of collaboration among academics at the University and officers at the Council;

3. In-depth interviews with a sample of staff from both organisations who have experience of working collaboratively to elicit views on benefits, enablers and barriers to collaboration and ways in which collaboration might be improved and accelerated.
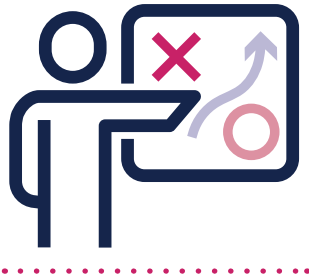
▲ University of Leeds campus

2.4 Data collection and analysis

1. Mapping exercise - The mapping exercise for the *Review* involved collation of information on projects that have taken place since January 2015. This was gathered from: funding bodies and institutional websites; university grant records where available; contacts from a request for assistance that was flagged in, but separate from, the survey (below); and project details provided during one-to-one interviews. Data on projects were arranged into a standard format covering dates, primary contacts, funding sources, aims, activities and outputs. The data were then sent to Faculty research managers and officers for verification. Project data from the mapping were analysed to: determine titles, number and type of collaborative projects; identify prime points of inter-organisational connection; and find clusters and gaps in activity. Challenges in uncovering and systematically collating information were reflected in points made by survey respondents and interviewees and the value of building upon this initial mapping work is referred to in the sections that follow.

2. Survey - The on-line survey was co-designed with colleagues from Leeds City Council's research and consultation team. It was distributed widely to research networks at the University and targeted more selectively to professionals in policy, research and consultation roles within the Council. The survey was completed by 147 respondents, approximately 90% of whom were from the University. Anonymised data from the survey were analysed using SmartSurvey software. The survey highlighted a separate opportunity to provide contact details for those wishing to assist with the mapping exercise.

3. Interviews - Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 33 professionals employed by the Council and University. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, interviews were conducted virtually using on-line video communication tools. The sample was recruited strategically to provide balanced representation across University Faculties, Council Directorates and levels of seniority. Of 17 interviewees from the University, six were senior academics; seven were early and mid-career researchers; and four were in academic support roles. Of 16 interviewees from the Council two were directors; seven were heads of services; and seven were service managers/senior officers. The interviews were conducted on a non-attributable basis to elicit frank and comprehensive information. Transcripts were coded thematically, and the data were managed and analysed using Framework Analysis methods (Spencer et al., 2014). Excerpts from interviews have been anonymised and assigned a participant number and organisational abbreviation (UoL for the University and LCC for the Council) in this report (e.g.: P.1/LCC).

3 Overview of research collaborations

The *Review* identified **118** collaborative research projects involving academics at the University together with policy-makers and practitioners at the Council in the past five years. These projects have an associated value of more than **£38m** in external funding and span all University Faculties and Council Directorates. A total of **45** research partnerships are currently in progress. This section provides an overview of research collaboration activities identified during the mapping exercise.

3.1 The extent of collaborative projects

3.1.1 The *Review* has sought to collate information on partnership projects between researchers at the University and officers at the Council for the first time. The full extent, breadth and depth of projects was not previously apparent as information sources are diffuse and their contents tend to be inconsistent. Despite possible limitations and gaps, the resultant mapping exercise firmly establishes that a strong baseline of recent and ongoing collaborative activities exists, providing a solid foundation to build upon in future.

3.1.2 The data gathered in Summer 2020 covers projects dating back to January 2015 and reveals a high level of research-policy collaboration during this period. A total of 133 partnerships between academics and council officers were identified overall (see *Table 1*). Of these, 15 can be classed as 'strategic' in providing significant infrastructural support for collaboration, rather than being discrete research collaboration projects. LAHP and MIT-REAP were referred to in *Section 1* and other examples include the

Leeds Climate Commission, Leeds ACTS and joint membership of the Eurocities network, along with Leeds Beckett University[22]. While these vital strategic collaborations may encompass research, the focus of this *Review* is on collaborations entailing direct research-policy interface at operational level. The mapping identified 118 such projects. Of these, 45 are currently live. The most recently approved piece of work identified is a multi-site examination of 'Universal Credit In and Beyond Covid-19', involving the School of Sociology and Social Policy and the Council's economic development team.

Table 1: Status of partnerships identified during the mapping exercise

Strategic partnerships	Collaborative research projects since January 2015	Collaborative research projects that are currently live
15	118	45

3.2 Spread of activities

3.2.1 The research collaboration projects identified during the mapping exercise (n=118) encompass a highly diverse range of social, economic and scientific issues. A small sample of diverse topics that are currently being explored includes: 'clean air zones'; support for migrants; breakfast provision in schools; evaluation of a programme using dance to help prevent falls among older people; and iCASP impact translation fellowships applying environmental science to issues such as water efficiency and flood alleviation[23].

3.2.2 Collaborative research projects have been carried out in each university Faculty and council Directorate (see *Figures 1 and 2*). However, quantifying projects in simple numeric terms by no means reflects variations in the scope, duration, financial value or scale of such diverse projects

– nor indeed the level of engagement involved or impact that is ultimately delivered. The 23 projects involving Faculty of Social Sciences staff, for instance, included: a five-year investigation of young fatherhood; one-day conference on young people's pathways to employment; and co-creation of a 'municipal bond' for crowdfunding public infrastructure. While 16 discrete projects were identified in the Faculty of Medicine and Health – such as testing immersive technology for young people's mental health – the LAHP is providing an overarching framework for innovative collaborations. Its latest flagship programmes are the Leeds Health and Care Workforce Academy and Leeds Centre for Personalised Medicine and Health. The 15 projects identified in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences were of high financial value and scientific significance.

Figure 1: Number of collaborative research projects by University Faculty (January 2015-present)

- Social Sciences, 23
- Arts, Humanities and Cultures, 16
- Biological Science, 4
- Business, 7
- Engineering and Physical Sciences, 15
- Environment, 37
- Medicine and Health, 16
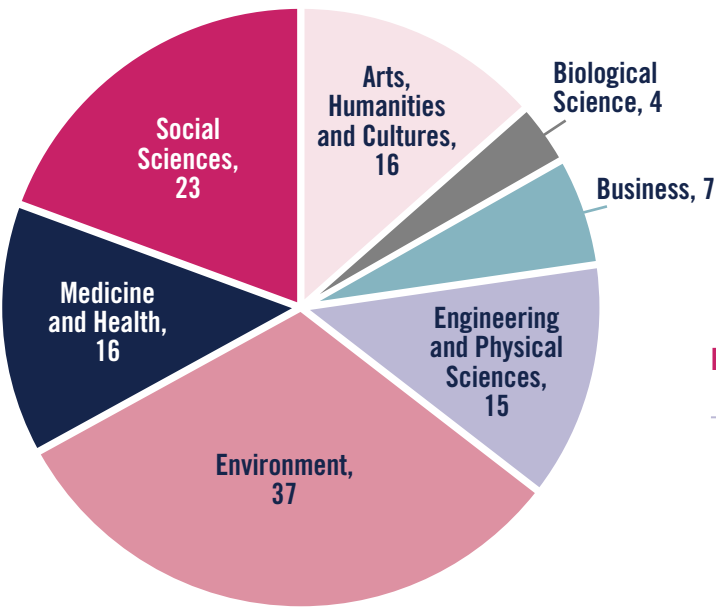
Figure 2: Number of collaborative research projects by Council Directorate (January 2015-present)

- Unidentified, 5
- Children and families, 17
- Adults and health, 15
- Resources and housing, 35
- Communities and environment, 19
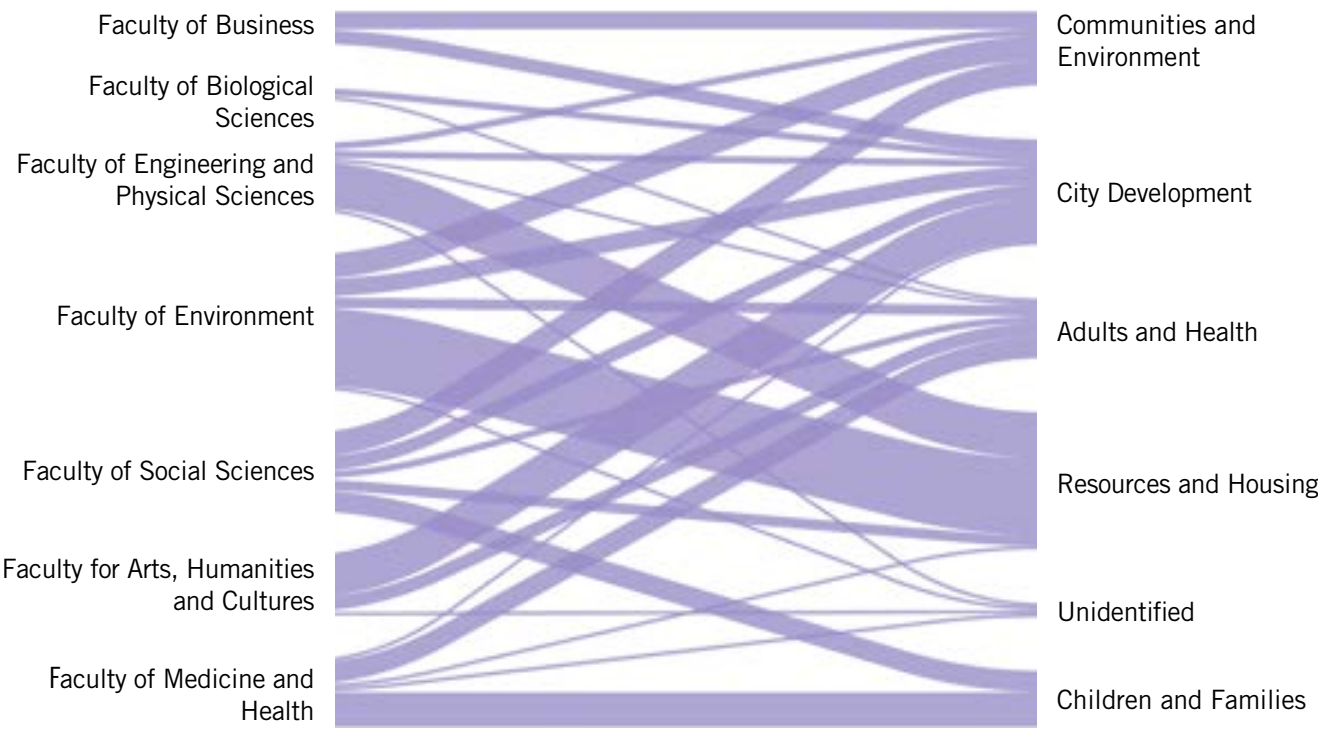- City development, 27
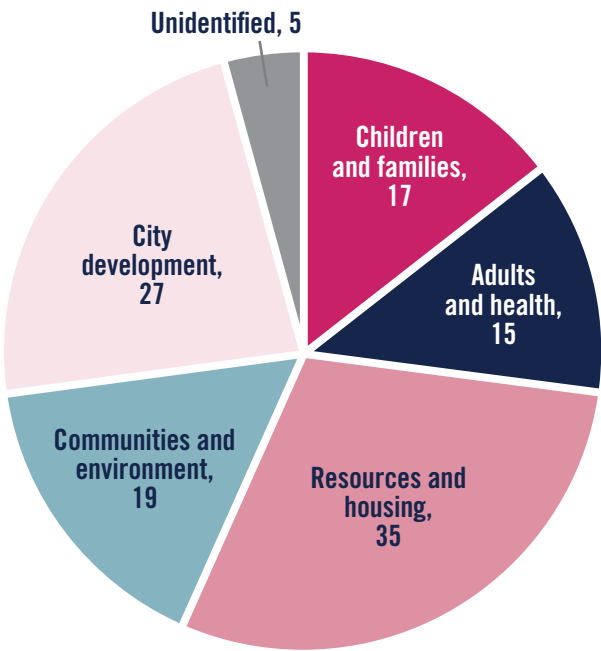
3.3 Points of connection and clusters

3.3.1 Information on the 118 projects was analysed to determine relationships between University Faculties and Council Directorates. Points of connection for each project are represented by a single line in *Figure 3*, with strength of collaborative research relationships between the seven Faculties and five Directorates thus illustrated through thickness of the lines between Faculties and Directorates. As shown in *Figure 3*, concentration of activity was most evident in the relationship between the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, Faculty of Environment and the Resources and Housing Directorate. More fine-grained analysis examined clusters of activities and connections between particular University schools or institutes and Council services or functions.[1] This revealed particularly strong relationships between the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change service, which is part of the Council's Resources and Housing Directorate, and the Schools of Geography, Earth and Environment, and Chemical and Process Engineering (see *Example 1*). The long-standing relationship between Leeds Museums and Galleries and the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures has also created a cluster of collaborations, which are delivering positive impacts with support from the Cultural Institute (see *Example 2*).

3.3.2 Analysis of connections between staff at the University and the Council furthermore reveals that, whilst there are obvious interfaces, such as between the Business School and economic development, points of connection can be multiple and complex. Public health officers, for example, have worked collaboratively with academics from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures on recent projects entitled 'Living with dying' and 'Places of Worship as Public Health Venues', as well those from Environment, Medicine and Health and Social Sciences. Issues that local government practitioners are grappling with do not necessarily conform to disciplinary boundaries and investigation of local 'real world' problems has prompted innovative multi-disciplinary work. An example of this is the £3.56m iBuild programme to improve delivery of infrastructure, which involved collaboration between academics from the School of Civil Engineering and Business School and colleagues at the Universities of Newcastle and Birmingham. Work by LIDA has involved its staff in relationships with several Faculties and Council services (see *Example 3*).

Figure 3: Relationships between Faculties and Directorates

Faculty of Business
Faculty of Biological Sciences
Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Faculty of Environment
Faculty of Social Sciences
Faculty for Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Faculty of Medicine and Health

Communities and Environment
City Development
Adults and Health
Resources and Housing
Unidentified
Children and Families

1   A Sankey diagram that illustrates the more finely grained relationships between University Schools/Institutes and Council Services/Functions can be found in Appendix C

Example 1: Climate change cluster

A commitment to joint action to tackle climate change has resulted in a cluster of projects that position the city and its academics as national leaders in sustainability and low carbon economies. Collaboration has been strengthened through secondment of Dr Tom Knowland, the council's Head of Sustainable Energy and Climate Change, in the role of lead officer in Leeds Climate Commission and broker of partnerships between the authority, University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University. The Commission was established in 2017 to inform policies and foster collaborative projects that help meet climate reduction targets. It is chaired by Professor Andy Gouldson, whose model of partnership between sectors and citizens to explore innovation in low carbon economies has been taken forward with £3.5m ESRC funding for the national Place-based Climate Action Network, along with Edinburgh and Belfast. Investment of a relatively low level of resources, split between parties, has helped to unlock millions of pounds in funding for collaborative research. The University's Institute for Transport Studies is working with the council to: use the city as a testbed for low carbon transport as part of Decarbon8, an EPSRC funded place-based programme across the North of England; and investigate 'smarter travel solutions' through an Innovate UK initiative.

The University's Sustainability Service is using campus as a 'living lab' for air quality mapping as part of a team led by the Centre for Environmental Modelling and Computation, which is developing a 'dashboard' for visualising environmental datasets. Leeds as a city has pioneered hydrogen as a low carbon energy solution and hosted the National Hydrogen Summit in 2019. A collaborative bid to the UKRI 'Strength in Places' fund for work on Future Hydrogen Economy in Teesside-Leeds Corridor, also involving other councils and universities, was successful in the first phase. Another high-profile project is the £4.2m EPSRC 'self-repairing cities' trial of robotics to inspect and maintain highways, utility pipes and other city infrastructure, led by Professor Phil Purnell, Co-Director of the University's cross-disciplinary Cities Theme.

Example 2: Culture cluster

Cultural life in Leeds is benefitting from strategic partnerships between the Council and the University and a cluster of collaborative research projects have sparked public engagement in arts and humanities. The University's Cultural Institute was established to increase collaborations with creative sector partners; widen cultural engagement and build students' skills. Its partnership with the Council includes co-ordination roles in: Eurocities, with Leeds hosting the network's Cultural Forum in 2019; Light Night, the UK's largest arts and light festival; and the forthcoming Leeds 2023 programme of cultural events. The Institute also hosts the city-wide Arts and Health and Wellbeing Network, which has been developed in partnership with the council and other organisations. The Network, which is jointly funded by Leeds City Council and the NHS, aims to connect clinicians and public health bodies with organisations and artists involved in arts and health activities to promote collaboration. Health and well-being, co-creation, public impact civic engagement are major themes of the new AHRC Centre for Cultural Value and Engagement, based at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. The funding bid for the Centre, £2m from Arts and Humanities Research Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England over five years, was related clearly to the city's economy, health and well-being with input from council officers.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the University and Leeds Museums and Galleries service, along with support from the Cultural Institute, were critical factors in developing innovative research collaborations, according to a report on this fruitful partnership[24]. The service was cited in seven REF 2014 impact case studies and a named partner in eight AHRC research awards, with a total value of £784,510. The mapping for this *Review* identified 16 Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures projects in collaboration with the Council since January 2015. These include: 'Engagement of young black Britons with the relevance of the Holocaust' and 'Discovery Days' to encourage young people's participation in the arts.

▼ City skyline from Leeds Dock

Example 3: Using data to address city issues

Collaboration between practitioners at the Council and data experts at the University is providing insights on a range of public service issues.

An innovative example of this is work between LIDA within the University and a number of Council Departments and University Faculties in using local authority data to improve services and support vulnerable people in Leeds. The Adult Social Care Risk Stratification Project entails substantial collaboration as part of the Quanticode programme of work. It involved Adult Social Care and Digital and Information Services at the Council and the University's Schools of Mathematics, Computing and LIDA. The programme, funded through the EPSRC's Making Sense of Data call, has produced tools to manage the data quality of large quantities of data and develop a reliable model to identify people at high risk of going into a permanent residential or nursing placement. This will enable health and social care managers to plan budgets and prioritise the delivery of services more effectively. A successful bid was to the EPSRC IAA has enabled the collaborative work to continue in partnership with Calderdale Council and Leeds Beckett University.

Recent LIDA Data Scientist Internship Programme placements with the Council have also worked on developing a 'road map' for sustainable retrofitting of council housing and investigating factors behind low or zero household recycling rates.

3.4 Types of activities

3.4.1 'Collaboration' was not pre-defined when seeking information for mapping purposes, in order to reflect ways in which it is understood among professionals. The exercise to collate available information on collaborative research projects revealed that their purposes, hence types of activities undertaken, varied greatly, with some geared specifically towards data collection or analysis, whilst others sought to pilot new practices and technologies, to bring fresh thinking to intractable problems or to influence policies. A continuum of activities thus exists. Inter-organisational engagement ranges from letters of support to funders, assistance with data collection, joint conferences and placements, through to full co-production of knowledge, where collaboration is firmly embedded in a programme from its outset. Interviews revealed that interactions that are of a more instrumental can prove significant and projects that are initially small scale often lead to substantial long-term partnerships and successful funding bids (as discussed in *Section 5*).

3.4.2 There is also a record of productive postgraduate research carried out in collaboration with the Council. There were 16 collaborative doctoral research projects identified, with the Council a partner in current PhD studies examining: the aftermath of Brexit; geodemographic classification; and city centre population flows. The most recent round of the LSSI PGR placements has also recruited PhD candidates to work on benchmarking and economic multiplier tools to assist development of Innovation District plans and to evaluate the Children and Families Directorate's 'healthy holidays' scheme.[25]

3.5 Funding sources and value

3.5.1 The mapping exercise identified sources of funding, where available. Research programmes carried out by academics at the University, which name Leeds City Council as a partner, have attracted some £38.76m since January 2015. It should be noted, however, that funding information was not available for some projects and the complexity of multi-partner funding mechanisms for large programmes makes it beyond the scope of the exercise to determine the proportion of external funding aligned directly with council collaboration.[26] Funding for civic research collaboration concentrated within Leeds has been provided predominantly through EPSRC, NERC, ESRC, AHRC and Innovate UK (see *Table 2*). Resources have been specifically geared towards maximising policy impact in recent years, through IAAs. A total of 23 projects involving academics and council officers have been awarded more than £119k through LSSI's ESRC IAA. In addition to external funding, there were instances of match funding between the two organisations and commissioned work. Resources in kind, particularly staff time and office space, were also deemed valuable in facilitating collaborative working.

Table 2: Main sources of external funding related to collaborative research since January 2015

Funding body	Total Value
Engineering and Physical Science Research Council	£13,428086
Natural Environment Research Council	£4,821,201
Economic and Social Research Council	£1,662,952
Innovate UK	£1, 570,791
Medical Research Council	£1,492,000
Arts and Humanities Research Council	£618,035

3.6 Potential collaborative research activities

3.6.1 Survey respondents and interviewees were asked about topics for future collaborative projects. Responses were inevitably skewed towards areas of personal interest and expertise and the need for systematic identification of inter-organisational priorities for research/policy collaboration is discussed in *Section 7* and the *Recommendations*. Broad areas in which most interest was expressed can be grouped as: responding to Covid-19; environmental challenges; health innovation and health inequalities; business support and economic development; creativity and culture; and policies to address poverty and inequality, support vulnerable citizens and promote inclusivity and public engagement. Domestic violence, youth unemployment and urban green space were among topics viewed as requiring particular emphasis since Covid-19.

3.6.2 'Food' was a recurrent research theme, with the increased importance of food access, distribution, sustainability and supply chains since the pandemic highlighted. There were frequent references to seizing opportunities to improve the city's transport and promote digital inclusion and artificial intelligence offered by the University's world-leading expertise and state-of the-art facilities. The opportunities for research to inform Eurocities Forums on key issues facing cities was also suggested. While the value of quantitative data in informing local authority decision-making was widely discussed, survey respondents also pointed to the value of qualitative research by social scientists 'to get underneath problems e.g.: unemployment' (R.99), as one respondent put it. A respondent stressed that a transdisciplinary approach 'is crucial in this process, as is recognising the absolute value of social scientists across campus more broadly' (R.59). Another commented: 'The scale and richness of the opportunity could be amazing but there needs to be a cultural shift' (R.15).

▲ Roundhay Park, Leeds - urban green space was among topics identified as particularly important in light of Covid-19

4 Benefits of research-policy collaboration

This section draws on data from the survey and interviews to firstly explore perceptions of benefits of collaborative working. It then considers the role of research-policy connections in co-producing knowledge and applying research evidence to policy development, which participants regarded as principal advantages of working collaboratively.

4.1 Appetite for collaboration

4.1.1 The survey and interviews indicate that researchers and local authority professionals are keen to undertake collaborative work. A total of 60% of survey respondents had previously been involved in research collaboration between the two organisations. Among respondents from the council, 87% had previous experience of collaboration, whereas 57% of respondents from the University had prior experience, which may be reflective of more targeted circulation of the survey within the Council than at the University. Additionally, there was a strong appetite for collaborating among respondents who had not done so previously, although this may not be representative of views across the organisations as those who took part were, by implication, more likely to be disposed to collaboration. Overall, 71% of this group were 'extremely interested' in collaboration on areas of research and policy in the future, and 25% were 'moderately interested'.

4.1.2 The survey indicated stronger motivation to engage in collaborative activities among university researchers than council officers, which is unsurprising given the importance of the 'impact agenda' in the REF. For the small number of respondents who have not been involved in partnerships and are not interested in collaborating, reasons given were that; it is not appropriate to their role; they are too busy with other things; or they do not have time.

4.1.3 Interviewees from the Council were overwhelmingly positive about advantages that relations with researchers can bring. This is expressed in comments such as:

'We benefit because we get access to cutting edge intellectual capacity to share best practice. We haven't got capacity to employ people with these skills and the University gets access to frontline, real life, socio-economic challenges. So, it should be a marriage made in heaven. We may not have money but we've got data, we've got operations, activity that is ripe for research, evaluation, examination, we've got contacts and we can open doors.' (P.1/LCC)

4.1.4 The notion of a 'test bed' or 'living lab' was used frequently by interviewees from both organisations to describe the application of academic expertise to real world situations:

'The very fact that we have on our doorstep the second largest local authority in the country is an interesting test bed to explore…We can think about how that connects with what's going on elsewhere, place it in a conceptual context and provide feedback on practice.' (P.3/UoL)

4.1.5 There was a common perception that advantages of sharing expertise are being increasingly recognised in both higher education and local government contexts. As one senior academic explained: 'The world's so complicated that you need multi-tasked teams, different styles and different inputs' (P.16/UoL). Interviewees also expressed strong beliefs that the need for research-policy collaboration had become more urgent in light of current national and global challenges. A senior manager at the Council summed up this view:

'We've got no choice but to collaborate… we need to collaborate across the agenda, whether it's health, whether it's climate, whether it's economy, citizenship, it's really important to get this collaboration really deeply embedded… we need to understand the best evidence in what works in terms of the recovery plan from Covid, in terms of the best evidence from across the world about how you protect communities and shape the economy for the future. So, the connections will be ever more important.' (P.26/LCC)
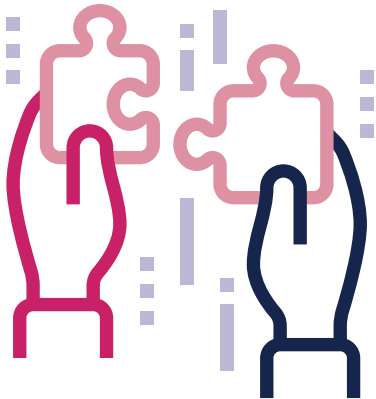
4.2 Perceptions of key benefits

4.2.1 Survey respondents were asked to identify up to three of what they regarded as the main benefits of collaborative working (selected from a list of 11 options or to specify 'other' benefits in an open text box). 'Co-producing better solutions' was selected by more than half of respondents (53%) and cited as key benefit for researchers and council officers alike (see *Figure 4*). When comparing responses of professionals from the Council (n=15) and with those from the University (n=132), a number of differences exist. Notably, 'demonstrating impact' was an important benefit for

researchers, as shown in *Figure 5*, whereas council professionals saw the following as important benefits : 'looking at things in a different way' (62%); access to knowledge to inform policy (46%); 'driving innovation' (23%) and 'access to data analysis skills' (23%), as shown in *Figure 6*. Respondents with prior collaboration experience were more likely to highlight 'other' benefits of collaboration (11% doing so), including 'collaborative bidding' (R.4), 'access to complementary expertise' (R.10) and 'real world experience' (R.8).

Figure 4: Main benefits of collaboration identified by all survey respondents (n=147)

Identified in top three options
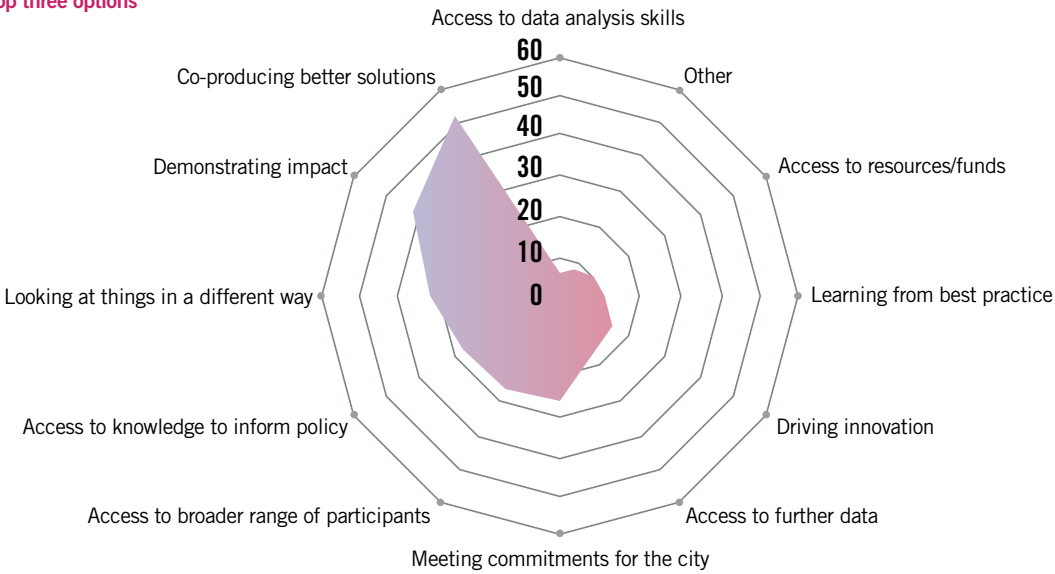
Figure 5: Main benefits identified by researchers (n=132)

Identified in top three options
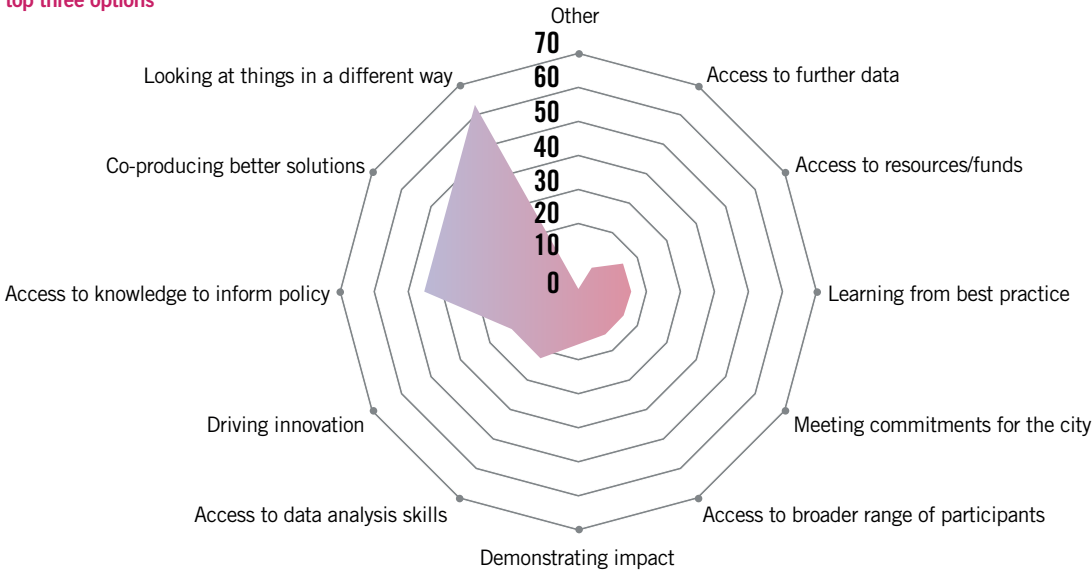
Figure 6: Main benefits identified by council officers (n=15)

Identified in top three options
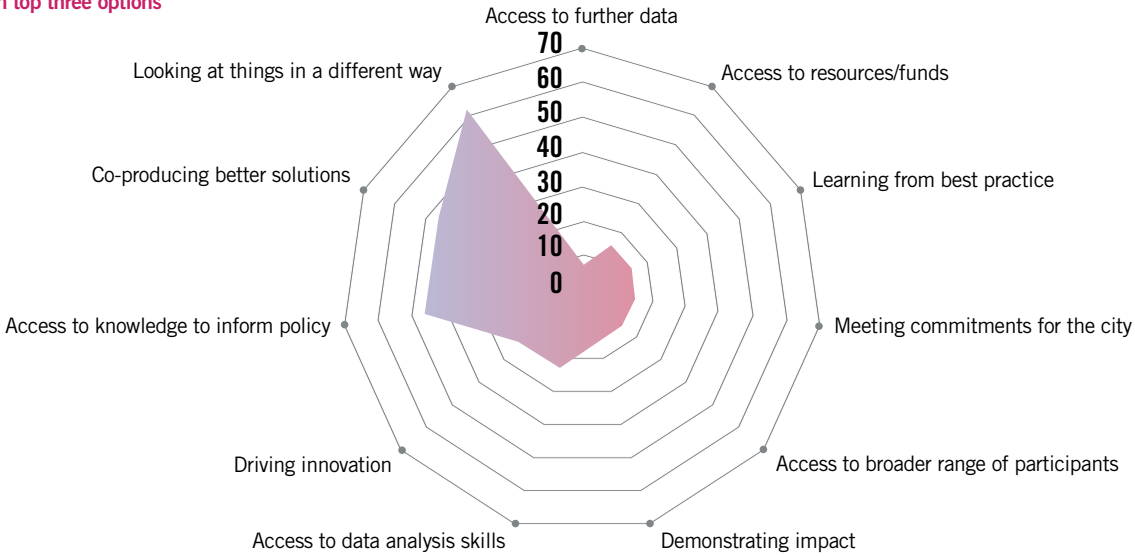
4.3 Co-producing knowledge

Co-production was identified as the most significant benefit of collaboration by survey respondents, as shown above, echoing Si's (2019) emphasis on its value in responding to complex problems facing public organisations. This was supported by interviewees' examples of positive experiences of working collaboratively in areas including community safety, sustainability and skills development.

4.3.1 During interviews, researchers and Council employees commonly pointed out that co-production of knowledge is not just a two-way process between professionals, reflecting a 'quadruple helix' model of co-created knowledge involving citizens, civil organisations, businesses and higher education (Carayannis and Campbell, 2012). Co-producing viable solutions to public service issues means prioritising knowledge from local communities and industry. Council officers spoke of researchers' skills in eliciting views of disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals. Academics welcomed access to officers' broad networks. A researcher whose workshop brought marginalised women together with professionals commented:

'If it wasn't for the work of people in the Council and community organisations, I would have never achieved this result… Women who participated felt incredibly empowered.' (P.7/UoL)

Example 4: Co-production to tackle child poverty

A co-production approach is shaping Leeds City Council's strategy for combatting child poverty. The Council's Children's Services directorate has worked in partnership with Dr Gill Main from the School of Education to ensure policies to address poverty are firmly underpinned by an understanding of subjective experiences of children and families on low incomes. The child-centric research programme began with *Fair Shares and Families* [27], a two-year ESRC funded longitudinal mixed methods study. The ethos of centralising children's knowledge was built upon in *A Different Take* [28], funded through LSSI's ESRC IAA. The research team worked with panels of children, young people and parents, who had training in peer research and media engagement, to identify a shared agenda and produce reports and recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners. These resources have informed Thriving: *A Child Poverty Strategy* [29], which is driving anti-poverty activities in the city around six core themes. New thinking on family social work practices are among changes that have resulted from adopting principles of co-production. The research team had access to research sites, council officers had access to data and both parties have worked closely together to develop interventions.

4.4 Evidence-based policy

4.4.1 The ability to demonstrate research impact was identified by academics as a primary benefit of working collaboratively with the Council, as might be expected given increased emphasis on impact in higher education. Survey findings showed that council respondents valued the contribution of research evidence to policy development, which reflects heightened need for data to inform decision-making and guide public expenditure since austerity cuts (Bristow et al., 2015; Walker, 2019). This complementarity was evident in numerous examples of research evidence impacting on local government policy identified during the mapping exercise (see *Section 3*) and elaborated upon during interviews. Council officers commonly made the point that public service budget reductions have meant reduction of capacity for research within the authority, making it more reliant on up to date, high quality academic evidence.

4.4.2 The quantity and range of data held by the Council and its need for data analysis skills was raised by several interviewees (see *Example 3*). Council officers frequently used the words 'rigour', 'scrutiny' and 'sharing best practice' when discussing academics' contributions to policy-making, as this comment illustrates:

'Having the link to hard academia, you know, the levels of intelligence and research, and modern, current, grounded thinking is really important.' (P.23/LCC)

4.4.3 One senior academic gave examples of the use of his research evidence and contacts to support the Council's lobbying activities at central government level. The view that the statutory role of Councils and localised nature of the connection enables a more direct policy impact was shared by a number of researchers. The following comment illustrates this point.

'Most of my other collaborations with charities and advocacy groups, you might make tweaks to practice or contribute to campaigning activities. But you're that stage removed from actually making a difference. Whereas with the Council that translates into action, which is just fantastic.' (P.21/UoL)

4.4.4 Interviewees firmly believed that being able to demonstrate a collaborative approach was increasingly important in strengthening funding bids. A Council manager explained how academic rigour had helped him secure funding for a multi-agency project whilst his involvement had helped academic colleagues win funding because their research related directly to local priorities and needs.

Example 5:
Policy impact – Leeds4Trees

The University's interdisciplinary Leeds Ecosystem, Atmosphere and Forest centre (LEAF) and Leeds City Council are working collaboratively to increase knowledge about the role of trees in urban areas. The Leeds4Trees[30] collaboration has funding from the United Bank of Carbon and is led by Dr Catt Scott, whose research examines the role of land-use change in meeting climate change targets. Leeds4Trees includes tree canopy cover assessment, the Leeds Forest Observatory sited on Council land and i-Tree Leeds, which worked in partnership with University of Leeds Sustainability service to recruit students and staff to survey more than 1,400 trees on the University campus. Leeds4Trees has helped influence Council policy on woodland creation and replacement of mature trees. The local authority's response to the climate emergency, which references the research, includes proposals to double the city's tree canopy cover by 2050 through an increase in tree planning.

Example 6:
Policy impact - Public Parks

The development of Leeds City Council's Parks and Green Spaces strategy and its related public consultation[31] has been informed by a collaborative research programme led by Dr Anna Barker of the School of Law. *The Future Prospects of Urban Public Parks*,[32] funded by the AHRC, was designed with managers from the Council's Parks and Countryside Service, who were part of the project's steering group. The research team analysed historic data, developed a photographic archive and carried out interviews, a residents' survey and workshops with practitioners. Findings were shared at a national conference, funded through LSSI's ESRC IAA.[33] A further collaboration with the council and other partners, funded by Nesta and the Heritage Lottery's *Rethinking Parks* programme, examined a charitable giving model for parks and informed the establishment of 'Love Leeds Parks'.[34]

5 Collaboration Enablers

The survey and interviews explored what staff from the Council and University identified as critical factors in enabling effective research collaborations. This section firstly outlines survey findings that show how professionals from both organisations viewed pre-existing relationships, closely aligned objectives and access to funding as primary factors enabling collaboration. It then discusses factors including networks, mutual trust, a culture of collaboration and adequate resources, which interviewees saw as crucial for meeting shared objectives. Measures to support and promote these key enablers of collaborative research are proposed in the *Recommendations*.

5.1 Perceptions of key enablers

5.1.1 When asked to select up to three factors that were particularly helpful in enabling collaborative working between researchers and policy-makers, nearly three-quarters of survey respondents (73%) identified 'pre-existing relationships' and more than half (53%) identified 'closely aligned objectives', as shown in *Figure 7*. While there was overall consistency between respondents on the importance of resources 'in kind' and of funding, council staff were more likely to highlight the role of external, as opposed to internal, funding (46% as against 8% respectively), possibly reflecting absence of such opportunities within the Council. These points were articulated during interviews. Among the 16% of respondents who chose to specify enablers other that those listed in the survey, factors cited included: 'shared interests and understanding' (R.2), 'relationships with other third party, external partners' (R.5), 'links to councillors' (R.14) and the University's interdisciplinary Cities Theme (R.13) and LIDA Data Scientists Internship Scheme (R.7).

Figure 7: Key enablers of collaboration identified by all survey respondents (n=147)

Identified in top three options

Enabler	%
Pre-existing relationships	73.26
Closely aligned objectives	53.49
Resources in kind	27.91
External funding	26.74
Internal funding	26.74
Other (please specify)	16.28
Training	2.33
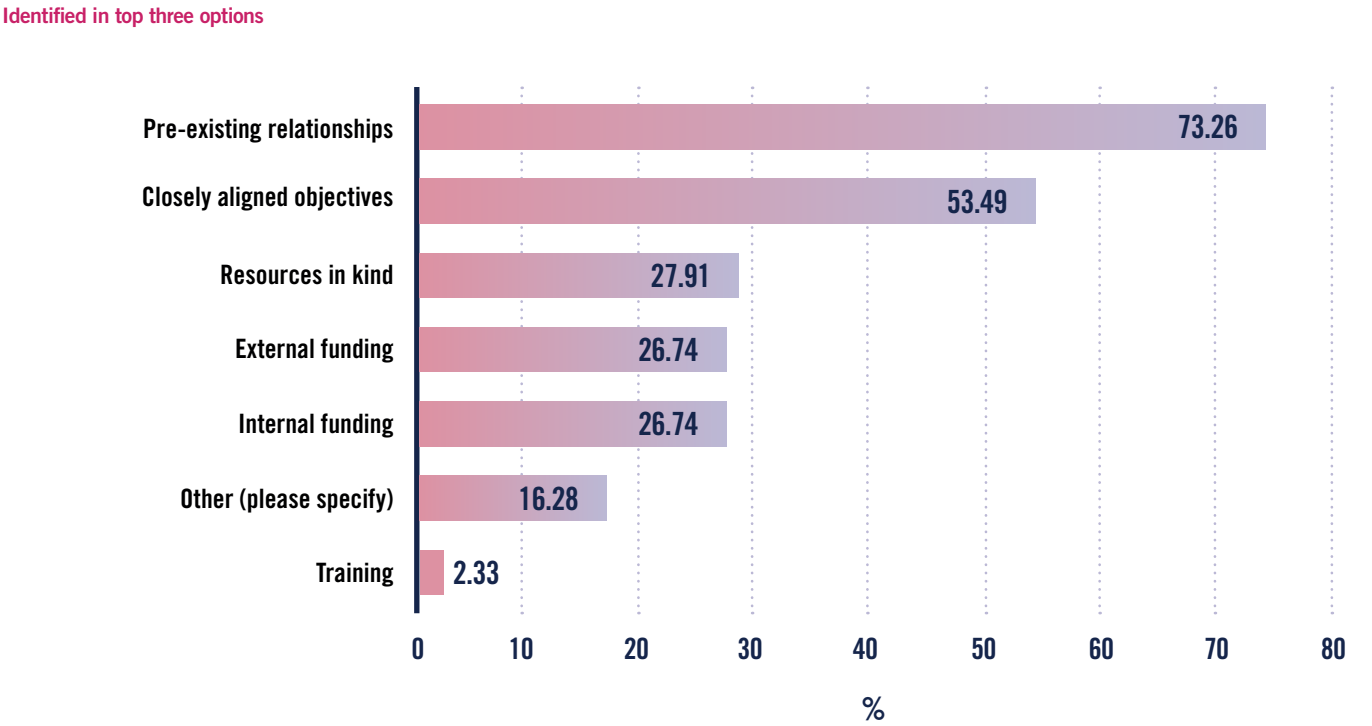
5.2 Relational enablers of collaboration

5.2.1 Analysis of interview data supported findings from the survey in demonstrating the centrality of relationships in initiating and sustaining collaborative working for both academics and council officers. This emphasis on relational factors echoes identification of key enablers during the national Leading Places programme as: developing trust; having 'anchor people' to broker collaboration; and senior leaders' willingness to 'create space for longer term thinking' (2019: 10) Inter-personal communications featured more prominently than external catalysts in interviewees' accounts of ways in which projects had been instigated. The existence of contacts that are known and trusted when wishing to engage in collaboration appeared more pronounced for interviewees from the Council, as this comment illustrates:

'It's always about creating those relationships. So, we're not ringing up a faceless person at the University. We're ringing up somebody who we know and saying, "we're facing a difficulty, what can we do?" ' (P.20/LCC)

5.2.2 The names of key individuals who have been prominent in facilitating research partnerships between the two institutions over recent years were mentioned frequently by interview participants, reflecting the importance of 'boundary spanners' identified during Learning Places pilots (Si, 2019). These individuals act as vital conduits and constitute the 'social glue' that helps cement inter-organisational relations. The pivotal role of Dr Tom Knowland was referred to repeatedly as a facilitator of connections, in part due to the time he has spent in both organisations and working across a range of faculties and departments (see *Example 2, Section 3*). Those interviewees who had moved between sectors believed that professional background makes some people especially adept at establishing and utilising inter-organisational connections. These 'boundary-crossing' individuals bring with them insights and networks, as well as helping to forge relational bridges for others. As well as relationship facilitators, who move between different 'communities of practice', they can become 'knowledge brokers' (Wenger et al. 2002: 154), acting as 'translators' between professional communities and combining knowledge. One such interviewee who had come into academia after years in other work environments explained:

'I came into post with a network of private and public sector partners, environment and economic development partners, so I brought those assets with me, and things I've done have absolutely been contingent on that.' (P.15/UoL)

5.2.3 A number of participants referred to the role of 'serendipity' to explain the important but fortuitous meeting with a counterpart with appropriate expertise at an event or through a mutual contact at a time when they were grappling with a particular issue. There was a belief among officers and researchers alike that building relationships requires 'openness to new ideas' on the part of the former and an 'engaging' and 'adaptable' attitude on the part of the latter. The point was made repeatedly and is exemplified in the following comment:

'The skill is to find a really enlightened local authority officer, and a councillor, and an academic, who can work together really productively, not be threatened by each other, but to say, "you know the science and I know the local authority framework".' (P.20/LCC)

5.2.4 Networking

The role of 'networks' and networking opportunities in prompting and enabling these professional relationships were referred to by a number of interviewees. Events that were cited as being beneficial in nurturing networks included: LSSI seminars and workshops[35], conferences organised around the university-wide Cities Research Theme[36] and Leeds City Council's Policy Network meetings. One academic said she identified and built relations with her council partners as a result of being part of a 'research cluster' of colleagues who had all, 'put out strong messages around the need for change and engaging people who can deliver that change' (P.16/UoL). Long-standing discipline-specific links were referred to. The role of networks, including Leeds Academic Collaboration with the Third Sector, in joining up public and voluntary sector professionals was also cited. Additionally, the value of links created via the University's teaching activities was raised by several professionals. The proximity of civic buildings to the campus, student placements, alumni working at the Council and officers pursuing postgraduate courses and giving guest lectures were all recognised as interactions that stimulate collaboration. As well as boundary spanning roles, referred to above, secondments and co-location were viewed as key facilitators of networking.

5.2.5 Third party organisations

Relationships between both organisations and third parties were also deemed crucial in facilitating links. Private companies, voluntary organisations and other public sector bodies, such as the police, were named as examples of third-party contacts who had facilitated communication at the start of projects. The role of the LAHP in bringing together representatives from the University, local authority, NHS and third sector was referred to. Leeds Open Data Institute and Co Space North were referred to as fora where people from different bodies can connect. Tapping into the region's broader politics and infrastructure was also seen by two researchers as crucial to productive relationships with officers and elected members.

5.2.6 Trust and goodwill

A shared sense of commitment and purpose constitute a prerequisite for effective collaborative working across organisational boundaries. To this end, developing trust across organisational and cultural boundaries is both profoundly important and hugely difficult, particularly where there is a history of mistrust or misunderstanding (Crawford and L'Hoiry 2017). Interviews revealed how relations of trust serve to foster mutual understanding and reciprocity and achieve collaborative project objectives. As an experienced academic put it:

'We're trusted to do things, because they think you're a safe pair of hands, that this won't lead to anything flaring up in [their] faces. And that could be political, but it could be, legally or socially or financially, those kinds of things.' (p.22/UoL)

The shared commitment and goodwill that are required from partners was widely recognised. Interviewees commonly testified that working collaboratively is not easy given the array of organisational, structural and cultural barriers that exist. Interviewees cited examples of findings ways of overcoming obstacles they had encountered. Academics provided pointers on approaches to civic engagement based on their experience (see '*Advice for academics*' box P.25). Where partnerships had proved effective, interviewees were clear that additional effort had been required from both parties to negotiate inter-organisational issues and overcome obstacles they encountered:

'I think it worked because there was goodwill amongst those of us who were most directly involved in the project… It would have been easy for somebody to say: "This is just too difficult".' (P.13/UoL)

5.3 Organisational enablers of collaboration

5.3.1 Establishing and promoting shared values while acknowledging divergent organisational cultures and working practices constitutes the fragile but essential ties that bind the complex set of inter-institutional relationships. Recognising that their organisational functions, skills, resources and knowledge are very different, a number of interviewees referred to 'symbiosis' that can be achieved when professional goals and expertise are aligned to address a particular issue or challenge facing the city. This often necessitates crafting a mutual understanding about the problem and collective commitment to possible solutions. During the interviews, participants frequently spoke about 'commonality' between a 'real world problem' the Council needs to address and an academic's specific expertise to achieve joint outcomes. The following council officer described a 'doable' problem concerning demography and resourcing that required specific analytical capabilities:

'[The council] came up with quite a novel and challenging question, I think something that allowed researchers to really get their teeth into…. We got really lucky, in that we had someone who was really interested in doing that kind of stuff and had done it before… you need to get the right expertise, so there's a dating game almost.' (P.8/LCC)

5.3.2 A culture of collaboration

Interviewees from both institutions identified the importance of having organisational leadership and a culture that promotes collaborative working. Academics and council officers generally felt that organisational leadership encouraged them to work in partnership with other bodies and had sufficient professional flexibility to pursue collaborations, as the following comment exemplifies:

'I think most people, once they get established at the Council, feel enabled to do this sort of thing just off their own back, they don't seek permission which is I think a good strong cultural thing we've got.' (P.1/LCC)

5.3.3 Access to funding

The subject of resources inevitably arose when interviewees were discussing factors that had facilitated collaborative work. They all stressed that their collaborative projects would not have been possible without access to grants from research councils, impact acceleration accounts, occasionally central government resources, or internal financial support. Match funding and resources in kind were also viewed as important. Time for secondments was also referred to frequently. The value that can be derived from relatively small amounts of 'pump-priming' grants was emphasised (see *Section 7*).

5.3.4 Access to research sites and participants

Both researchers and Council offices highlighted the importance of having an enabling environment in which to conduct research. Academics gave numerous examples of the Council facilitating research by providing access to 'real world' settings, and assets such as council-owned housing, parks and infrastructure, along with connections to residents, practitioners and service users for collection of data purposes. A council manager commented:

'While we may not have resources to commission research at present and lack in-house capacity, what we can offer free of charge, as a resource in kind, is a wide array of sites and situations that are prime for investigation and innovation.' (P.2/LCC)

Advice for academics on effective engagement with the local authority

Data from the interviews conducted for this *Review*, notably those academics with significant experience of working in partnership with Leeds City Council, provide advice on research-policy collaborations for researchers unfamiliar with policy engagement. These insights have been summarised below by way of an aphorism illustrated by an extract from the interview:

Understand what motivates policy-makers – 'The core thing is to imagine what their drivers, motivations and interests are… They might need some very bespoke specific advice which has no research value, but it's really important to them.' (P.15/UoL)

Know your audience – 'We learned a lot in terms of when we're preparing something, thinking "okay we might be talking to someone in the Council who knows a lot about this, but they need to pass it on to someone". So write for the person they are going to send it to, to make it really clear.' (P.27/UoL)

Explain the pace and value of robust research – 'The fact that what we produce is robust and is underpinned by scientific information, it's very valuable. Over the years they've come to see that they're not going to get an answer from us immediately, but it will be a decent one.' (P.27/UoL)

Understand the democratic context – 'It's politically led, and that's very different to a university. That sense of skill, support, appropriate deference to the democratic mandate of a lead member and working in that sort of context is important.' (P.14/UoL)

Build trust and manage feedback on practice sensitively - 'I think that's really quite a personal style I've developed, because you start out and people just feel you're criticising them, you've got to get in there and build relationships so what you say is not seen as a criticism but as a productive engagement, that's going to help with their work.' (P.16/UoL)

Relate the local to the global - 'Think about work with the Council in terms of issues it gives rise to… Is what's happening in Leeds different from what's happening in some other city in the UK or other parts of the world? So, build a wider comparative frame or way of thinking about things.' (P.3/UoL)

Make use of academic support staff - 'I realised that I was going to need to engage, and I hadn't done that much before, certainly on a local level, and I thought, "How the hell am I going to do this?" And then I had a meeting with [academic support officer] and realised there was support available. That support is absolutely centrally important.' (P.31/UoL)

Embrace the challenge – 'Something that's important and positive in a way as well, is needing to learn about and to kind of embrace the chaos of working within multiple sets of expectations, working practices, preferences.' (P.21/UoL)

Appoint a steering group - 'It's been helped by the fact that we have had steering groups so we have put in place time to meet, to talk and to make decisions about things… Have an open conversation at the outset about the aims of the research, ideally get them on board with the application and so [the Council's] contribution is set out, which means that managers are committing their time.' (P.9/UoL)

6 Barriers to collaboration

Although staff from both organisations were enthusiastic about the benefits of research-policy collaboration and identified enabling factors in developing and delivering projects, they also highlighted a series of significant barriers. This section provides an overview of barriers identified during the survey and explores interviewees' perceptions of inter-organisational communications and co-ordination issues and differences in priorities, which were seen as major inhibitors to collaboration. It then examines the commonly cited practical impediments of time constraints, bureaucratic hurdles and data sharing.

6.1 Perceptions of principal barriers

6.1.1 The survey asked respondents with experience of collaboration to identify barriers that had been particularly problematic (n=88). It also asked those respondents who had not been previously involved in research partnerships to identify the principal issues that prevented them from collaborating (n=59). Both groups were asked to select up to four possible 'barriers' from ten options. As shown in *Figure 8*, the main barrier cited by those with experienced of research-policy projects was 'lack of time', chosen by nearly half of this group (47%). Findings from this survey reflect national research (Si, 2019), which identify barriers of: lack of time; differences in organisational timescales; cultures; and managing competing priorities. Some of our respondents (8%) chose to specify 'other' barriers, including: a 'lack of co-ordination' (R.117) and the 'lack of a joined-up approach and knowledge sharing across both organisations' (R.82).

Figure 8: Main barriers encountered among respondents who have worked collaboratively (n=88)

Identified in top four options

Barrier	%
Lack of time	46.84
Lack of capacity among staff	35.44
Different paces of working/timescales	35.44
Different organsational priorities	27.85
Different levels of understanding	26.58
Not knowing who to contact	25.32
Different organisational cultures	24.05
Data sharing issues	16.46
Potential reputational/political risk	8.86
Other	7.59

%

6.1.2 Not knowing who to contact in the other organisation was overwhelmingly cited as a barrier preventing professionals without prior experience from pursuing collaboration, identified by 75% of this group of respondents (see *Figure 9*). The 16% of respondents without experience who selected 'other' barriers to collaboration predominantly specified resourcing issues, notably the dual problems of 'no remuneration for my time' and the 'availability of funding'. For example, one university respondent specified that collaboration is 'not valued by my department, no workload allowance is given, and Faculty is discouraging small projects' (R.56). A number of early career researchers stated that they were keen to pursue collaboration but unable to do so, with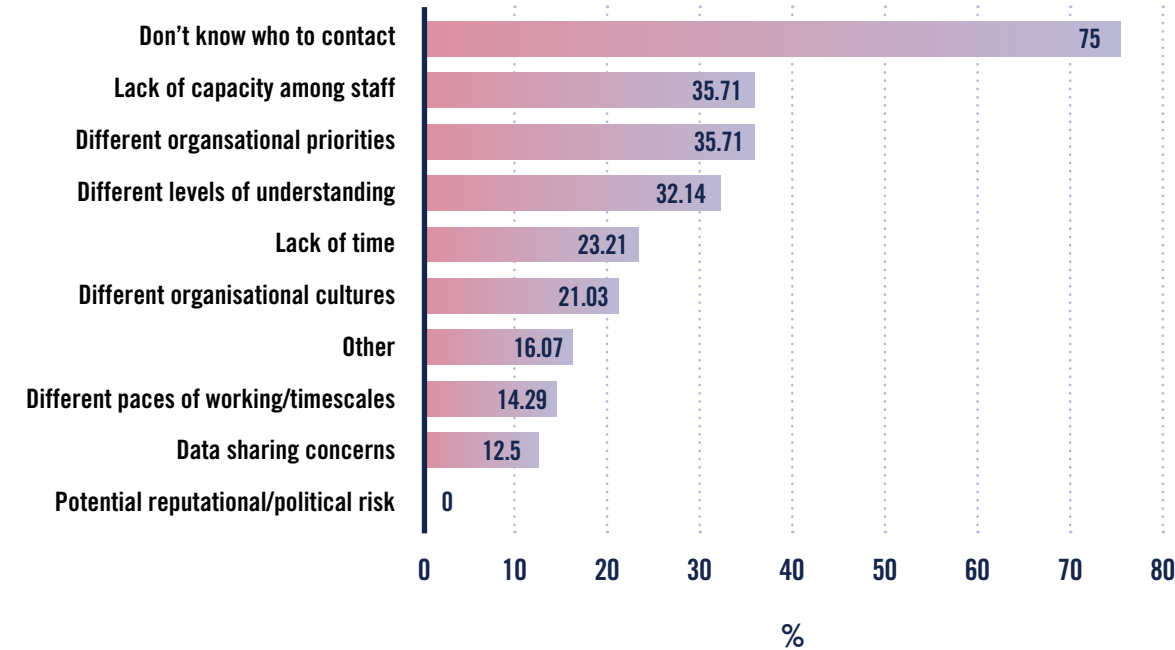 one such respondent commenting: 'I am on a fixed term contract so could not pursue research without a permanent post or grant funding' (R.84). One other set of problems related to a perceived lack of understanding of the Council's research requirements. One respondent stated:

'Don't know Leeds City Council's needs/plans/projects. Don't know how I can be useful to Leeds City Council' (R.32).

Figure 9: **Main barriers preventing respondents without prior experience of collaboration (n=59)**

Identified in top four options

	%
Don't know who to contact	75
Lack of capacity among staff	35.71
Different organsational priorities	35.71
Different levels of understanding	32.14
Lack of time	23.21
Different organisational cultures	21.03
Other	16.07
Different paces of working/timescales	14.29
Data sharing concerns	12.5
Potential reputational/political risk	0

6.2 Contact and co-ordination issues

6.2.1 The issue of uncertainty over who to contact within the partner organisation, highlighted by survey respondents, was echoed resoundingly during interviews with professionals from the Council and the University. Interviewees commonly referred to difficulties in navigating their way through the other organisation's structures to connect with suitable counterparts. They also commonly voiced frustrations about the absence of a strategy for co-ordination of collaboration.

6.2.2 Difficulties with 'navigation'

The absence of clear channels of contact and communication when wishing to engage with partners in the other institution was a recurrent theme during interviews. Navigational complexities were similarly found by Si (2019) to be an issue that impedes civic collaboration nationally. Participants in this *Review* referred to the size and complexity of both organisations as key inhibitors of interaction. Council officers spoke frequently of uncertainty in trying to navigate a path through the University's Faculties, schools and research centres, reflecting what Hambleton (2018) calls 'unfathomable structures' as an inhibitor of academic/ civic collaborations. University interviewees tended not to know which department in the Council to approach. The following comments are typical:

'Something we're struggling with at the moment is getting that engagement with the University and getting the right person. There are so many different links at different levels of seniority and it's impossible to know what's happening, who's doing what and who has links with whom'. (P.11/LCC)

'There's no coherent organisation of how we're communicating with the Council, and that then just means you've got a whole bunch of academics who don't have a clear line in or out of Leeds City Council.' (P.30/UoL)

6.2.3 Reliance on a limited range of contacts

Council officers with long-standing experience of collaboration described strong relationships with specific contacts in the University, built up over several years. They stressed, however, that they would not know how to go about making connections with a broader range of researchers. One officer was concerned that, 'there might be opportunities that I'm really missing' (P.19/LCC). One researcher believed that trying to find an academic with complementary interests deters potential partners, commenting that 'you can't expect people to put that time and effort in if they can't see a clear kind of route' (P.6/ UoL). Examples were given of projects not getting off the ground because an academic with appropriate interests could not be located or the Council had not articulated its

research needs sufficiently clearly. Interviewees believed that over-reliance on a limited number of contacts leaves gaps in communications when those professionals change jobs:

'You can have key figures who can be really helpful and facilitative…If they move on or change their role, then you can sometimes risk having points of failure.' (P.14/LCC)

6.2.4 Lack of coordination

Interviewees commonly related lack of clarity about contact points to a wider issue regarding the absence of a strategic approach to inter-organisational collaboration. The phrases '*ad hoc*', 'un-coordinated', 'unconnected' and 'unsystematic' were used frequently by staff from both organisations when discussing barriers to successful collaboration. Interviewees believed that although there are numerous examples of highly effective collaborative projects across council services and academic disciplines, this was not necessarily recognised corporately nor co-ordinated strategically. One researcher noted the frustration that multiple projects and relations are forged at 'grass roots' but are 'not feeding into this big overall strategy where all this is coherent' (P.30/UoL). One Council officer believed a lack of clarity on a project he had been involved in stemmed from 'lack collaborative infrastructure between the two organisations' (P.10/LCC).

Interviewees from both organisations gave examples of how a lack of co-ordination can impact adversely on the preparation of external funding applications. A number provided examples of being asked to contribute to bids at the last minute before deadlines, leaving insufficient time to develop a more rigorous collaboration to inform the proposal. Participants from both organisations also believed lack of co-ordination can mean multiple meetings take place without resulting in tangible activities. One council manager referred to three specific opportunities for collaboration in his service area that had not come to fruition (P.10/LCC). A senior academic argued that, in his experience, opportunities for collaboration had been lost due to absence of co-ordination mechanisms, elaborating as follows:

'There's no overarching strategic approach… it's all ad-hoc, it's post-hoc, and I'll have a meeting and there's no follow through… none of this stuff is properly joined up.' (P.30/ UoL)

6.2.5 Institutional siloes

A commonly referenced barrier to research collaborations between the University and the Council was identified as a tendency for both organisations to be 'siloed' internally (Teff, 2015). The following exemplify the view that departmental and disciplinary structures in both organisations inhibit collaboration:

'For us to be a good collaborator we need to get a better understanding of our collective policy for ourselves.' (P.1/LCC)

'The University is not designed to support cross-faculty engagement. That's a problem because you don't want multiple people in silos addressing the same stakeholder.' (P.31/UoL)

6.3 Organisational differences

6.3.1 While interviewees were keen to work in partnership and had found practical ways of negotiating obstacles in doing so, they were highly aware of differences in organisational priorities, culture and language that presented barriers to working collaboratively.

6.3.2 Priorities and expectations

Interviewees from both organisations were conscious of inevitable differences in professional priorities, interests and expectations. While each organisation appropriately has its own distinct missions, purpose and priorities to pursue, these differing goals and values can create tensions. An academic pointed to a 'mismatch in expectations' that can sometimes occur 'between academic research and the quick and dirty consultancy type approach which is often needed' by public agencies (P.13/UoL). Furthermore, researchers are frequently curious to identify new areas of knowledge whereas research-policy collaboration is often about applying knowledge in a way that generates new outcomes. One council manager commented:

'Academic interests and practical policy interests don't always coincide… we need measures and indicators that are collectible, comparable and practical rather than theoretical.' (P.1/LCC)

6.3.3 Professional languages

The issue of different professional languages was raised by a number of interviewees. According to a senior council manager whose career has spanned local government and academia: 'The biggest difficulty is when academics and local authority colleagues don't realise they're speaking a different language' (P.20/LCC). As Bristow et al. (2015) point out, research evidence does not flow naturally into

policy and practice but needs to be translated and applied through adaptation. This was reflected by professionals within local government, who described challenges in communicating academic knowledge in a meaningful way:

'We were working with professors on statistics, computer scientists… The audience we were going to land this with ultimately were [practitioners]… There are significant cultural difference between the two, and I had to step in to explain to what's being presented and any implications, which was challenging.' (P.8/LCC)

6.3.4 Theory and practice

Academics who took part in interviews were aware that theoretical insights and innovation can be difficult for the Council to apply in practice. One researcher listed numerous statutory, budgetary and electoral considerations, including accountability to the Council's scrutiny system and responsibility for public funds that can cause innovation to 'get stuck' (P.16/UoL). Hambleton (2018) points out that initiatives can be stalled by middle managers. The following illustrates a researcher's understanding of risks that Council officers face in implementing changes, which academics do not:

'We're not going to end up in front of a public hearing or elected representatives… middle managers are the ones who will get it in the neck… so it's understandable that they come back with loads of reasons why it's not going to work, so that's the sticking point.' (P.16/UoL)

Comments on sensitivities researchers encountered during collaborative projects included:

'One problem was this sense of suspicion and threat, because there were lots of people doing jobs in the Council and a load of smart arses rolled in from the University, so it's really quite a sensitive situation to actually demonstrate that you're going to do something collectively and better.' (P.12/UoL)

6.3.5 Research rigour in a political environment

'Potential reputational/political risks' were regarded as a barrier by fewer than one in ten survey respondents with experience of collaboration and this was not seen as an issue for those without prior experience. Local government professionals did not tend to regard potential reputational or political risks as a significant issue in engaging with researchers. The following comment illustrates the kinds of attitudes associated with, what Si (2009) refers to as, a 'learning council':

'Academics are free to criticise and sometimes the risk of them going public with their findings will not necessarily sit easily with the City Council… However, the risk to the city is relatively small actually because by taking a bigger picture, then we probably have a bigger understanding.' (P.2/LCC)

However, academics were conscious of tensions in balancing research rigour with political sensitivities when operating in the politically-infused environment. Several researchers also discussed complexities involved in engaging with a democratic body with councillors elected in annual cycles who have different interests and levels of receptiveness to change. Some researchers were apprehensive as to how their research might be received or used politically. Moreover, close relationships with local authority policy-makers could be very rewarding and beneficial but might also generate conflicts of interests as preserving the quality of their relations may adversely affect how they present their research. The following reflects a dilemma for researchers:

'If you're developing something that is a more systematic relationship, we produce independent research which may have messages that the Council or others don't like, and I think that is a key challenge.' (P.9/UoL)

6.4 Practical barriers

6.4.1 Despite the strong will to collaborate between local government officers and researchers, a series of practical barriers at the operational level were identified as potentially hampering effective collaboration. They are summed up these two interviewees:

'The worlds of work between an academic colleague and an operational colleague are very different. They work in different timescales, work to different budgets, have very different contracts of work.' (P.17/UoL)

'We're structured differently, our financial accounting systems, IT systems… we have different information governance policies.' (P.4/LCC)

6.4.2 Lack of time

Lack of time in heavy workloads of professionals with multiple competing priorities was identified as a significant barrier to collaboration during both the survey and interviews for this *Review*, echoing national Learning Places pilots (Si, 2019). One interviewee describes difficulties for both parties in trying to deliver projects amidst other priorities:

'You've got a group of academics who are… delivering it at the end of some other funded work… then you've got people at the Council who again are all very, very resource limited and they're all trying to do something that is probably a bit extracurricular for them.' (P.17/UoL)

6.4.3 Incompatible timescales

The different pace at which academia and local government operate - identified as an issue by more than one third of survey respondents with experience of collaboration - was frequently mentioned during interviews. Local government policy development is driven by evolving local economy and community needs and responses to the national legislative and financial framework. Universities, by contrast, organise work programmes around research grants that usually span two-to-five years. Different organisational pressures and cycles can lead to tensions between a short-term orientation of policy and practice as against a longer-term planning and commitment of research. A senior council manager noted:

'There's a challenge around pace and different understandings of things like evaluation and research… [Local government] strategically is trying to look for answers that have an impact of one or two years, to give a report on potential actions that might tip out in the period of two, three, four months. Whereas universities might have a two-year programme and it's appropriate, it's rigorous, it's long-term. But they're different lenses on the world.' (P.14/LCC)

6.4.4 Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic difficulties that arise when establishing and carrying out joint projects between two extremely large and complex organisations were commonly regarded as major inhibitors by academics and council officers alike. These obstacles primarily relate to internal structures and processes associated with governance, administration, human resources, finance, procurement and legal aspects of collaboration. One researcher described how a collaborative project was delayed while contractual agreements were arranged between corporate services in 'two big, bureaucratic organisations' (P.6/UoL). Another commented that, both bodies are bound by strict governance structures, democratic mechanisms

and ethics committees with 'substantial decision-making machineries and they don't always work in harmony' (P.22/UoL). One researcher pointed out that short-term, responsive projects are discouraged by cumbersome 'one size fits all' bureaucratic systems (P.27/UoL). Delays that occurred because the Council was working with a contractor and research collaboration had to be written into separate contractual arrangements were also discussed.

6.4.5 Data sharing

Data sharing was highlighted as a considerable barrier to collaboration by most council officers and researchers who took part in interviews. They commonly pointed out that while Leeds City Council has vast and diverse datasets and the University of Leeds employs internationally regarded data analysts with state-of-the-art facilities, nonetheless, data governance often prevents mutual benefits from being realised. Several interviewees described instances where collaborative projects had been delayed or not progressed due to data sharing issues. One council officer explained why it can become an insurmountable problem for potential collaborators:

'As a council we have strong measures in place to guard individual data clearly. It's often in the collaboration space that you're venturing things, and that's where the risk that you end up pushing against the limits of what the organisation could do.' (P.14/LCC)

6.4.6 Resources

As previously mentioned, access to funding was a key factor in enabling collaboration and its absence was, conversely, identified as a distinct impediment. Interviewees were adamant that projects could not have gone ahead without finance and were often completed on top of intensive workloads, making lack of dedicated funding for their own time and that of their staff a significant issue. After a decade of budget cuts, council professionals were acutely aware of, all too often, being unable to contribute to collaborative projects. From the University perspective, potential conflicts between different schools, Faculties and disciplinary cost centres and competition for external funding reinforced the siloed thinking that impedes collaboration. One local government manager commented that a 'consultancy like' procurement relationship was not an appropriate model for University/Council research collaboration (P.2/LCC). The next section considers ideas from survey respondents and interviewees on how to render financial arrangements more conducive to research-policy partnership development.

7 Unlocking effective collaboration

Previous sections have discussed findings on both the benefits and barriers to collaboration. This section explores possible improvements to overcome existing obstacles. It begins by outlining suggestions on the need to develop a more strategic inter-organisational approach to research-policy partnerships. Strategic considerations are then related to ideas for developing clearer lines of communication. This is followed by views on fostering organisational cultures that are more conducive to knowledge exchange and suggestions for practical mechanisms to aid collaboration. Researchers' and Council officers' suggestions for unlocking the potential of research collaborations are summarised in *Table 9* and inform the subsequent *Recommendations.*

7.1 A strategic approach

7.1.1 As highlighted in the previous section, the absence of strategic direction and leadership with regard to collaborative research was seen as a significant impediment to research-policy engagement. This reflects the Civic Universities Commission's (2019) findings on the absence of strategic approaches to civic engagement among universities nationally. Developing a coherent strategy for fostering and furthering collaboration was proposed by survey respondents and interviewees alike. This aligns with Hambleton's (2018) view on the importance of appropriate institutional structures and mechanisms to deliver civically engaged scholarship. One academic interviewee commented that a joint strategy on collaboration would serve a symbolic as well as a practical function: 'joining up at the top would show that it had some priority' (P.12/UoL). Typical comments from academics on the need for a clearly defined framework included:

'The University… needs to get more behind this and play a more active, concrete, concentrated role in supporting collaborations and impact facing policy relevant work.' (P.22/UoL)

Professionals from the University and Council also argued that developing and maintaining an overview of activities is important when adopting a more strategic approach. They welcomed this *Review* and mapping exercise as an important new step and believed that gaining a comprehensive picture of projects should help raise awareness of the value of collaboration while simultaneously improving co-ordination.

It was suggested by many that a Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement would afford an important framework for setting out core tenets of an organisational partnership. According to one council manager, such a high level agreement would provide 'more legitimacy and a clearer idea of what we're going to put into collaboration and what we're hoping to get out of it' (P.2/LCC). In practical terms, interviewees believed that having a powerful and well-articulated strategy in place could help respond to some of the institutional obstacles and barriers identified in the previous section.

7.1.2 Not too 'top down'

Though favouring a strategic approach to collaboration, interviewees also pointed out that this should not detract from operational work that is already delivering results (as illustrated in *Sections 3 and 4*). One council officer explained that making things more strategic should not introduce a 'layer of governance' that will dampen enthusiasm, inhibit innovation or reduce responsiveness and flexibility (P.2/LCC). Similarly, while advocating for a strategic framework for collaboration, researchers did not want this to be too prescriptive or constrain their academic independence and organic relations. Comments in this vein, which echo insights by Goddard and Kempton (2016), include:

'It's about creating a framework rather than new institutional regulation… I wouldn't want to over-engineer it because that would just create new hoops and obstacles.' (P.16/UoL)

7.1.3 Identifying priorities

Nonetheless, the identification of shared priorities for collaborative research was regarded as an important element of a strategic approach for, what a senior academic described as, 'tapping into areas of academic strength that can benefit the city, with improved mechanisms for doing so' (P.33/LCC). A point that emerged firmly was the need for the Council to identify its drivers, research needs and priorities for collaboration in various policy areas. One survey respondent suggested that council departments should create a 'research wish list' (R.120). A Council interviewee pointed out that identifying shared priorities would enable both parties to focus their energies more effectively (P.8/LCC).

7.1.4 Collaboration 'Champions'

A large number of interviewees believed that 'buy in from senior management' was a vital prerequisite for research-policy collaboration to be given the necessary corporate profile. One interviewee called for, 'key leads who have an overview and can make connections' (P.33/LCC); this recalls Si's (2019) finding on the need for institutional 'anchor people'. Again, parallels with the *Business Engagement*

Framework were drawn as illustrative. Interviewees wished to see named 'champions' who could promote collaboration in their respective organisations. Respondents wishing to pursue collaboration were eager to access named individuals who can facilitate connections. There was agreement that such champions represent core policy areas and academic disciplines. Researchers believed collaborative activities should be led by academics with a track record in engagement, working with academic support staff. Referring to how this function could be fulfilled in the Council, an officer commented:

'You probably need both someone who's supporting it in a very corporate role… who's able to work with people like the Chief Exec and things, but also people who are involved in it in a much more service level, who are able to support it too.' (P.8/LCC)

7.2 Communication channels

7.2.1 Professionals' difficulties in navigating two large, complex organisations and their over-reliance on a limited range of contacts were common barriers to engagement (*Section 6*). Unsurprisingly, therefore, when asked for suggestions for encouraging or enhancing collaborations most survey respondents focused on ideas for creating clearer channels of communication. Ideas about mechanisms for promoting stronger inter-organisational links in survey responses included: 'Central hubs or points of contact for enquiries' (R.132) and 'a clearing house with central contacts in both organisations to help collate and channel collaborative opportunities' (R.27). Similar suggestions were made by interviewees, who used the words, 'contact points', 'signposting', 'filtering' and 'hubs' repeatedly when describing ways of responding to difficulties in connecting up collaborators. Typical suggestions included:

'I think having some kind of clearing house, or ability to broker either research that people at the University want to do, or research that people in the city want to have done would be really useful… we need a central kind of hub to be the co-ordinator for all of this.' (P.22/UoL)

Some felt that the kind of outward-facing approach that the University has developed in recent years with the business community, through its *Business Engagement Framework* and the Nexus Building, might be replicated, perhaps on a smaller scale, with key public sector organisations and local authorities. One senior academic suggested:

'We need almost a portal, almost Nexus-style if you like, that allows us to connect strategically with the Leeds City Council, but with a group of academics that has oversight of that, to make sure there's filtering, so we speak coherently,

along strategic lines, and conversely, Leeds City Council **have a clear place they can go to if they need help or if they want support.'** (P.30/UoL)

7.2.2 On-line resources and communication tools
The creation of an on-line space in which to share information on collaboration was widely recommended as a practical means of improving communications. Survey respondents referred to two functions for web pages of this nature; providing resources for collaborators; and a forum in which professionals can match up research expertise with policy objectives.

Regarding the first function, professionals identified a need for webspace that is specifically targeted towards academics and local government staff who are interested in partnership work to 'capture the learning' on collaboration from existing projects (P.12/UoL). One officer recommended that 'key outcomes, outputs and recommendations' should be shared more systematically (P.2/LCC). Survey respondents and interviewees wanted to access information and advice from experienced collaborators, best practice case studies and evidence of local impact from policy-oriented research. Several people from both organisations proposed that organograms should be available to help them understand organisational structures.

The second function of dedicated webspace relates to views on identifying organisational priorities for research-policy collaboration and facilitating contacts (outlined above). There were also requests for a database of existing collaborations to be made available on-line. Interviewees suggested an on-line 'portal' or 'register' would enable researchers and policy makers to highlight their respective areas of interest. This idea was put forward by numerous survey respondents, with the following typical of their comments:

'It would be great to have an on-line gateway where one can see who is already collaborating on what and where both sides can post requests/ideas others can pick up.' (R.128)

7.2.3 Networking opportunities
The importance of inter-personal relationships and networks in creating and sustaining collaborations was established in *Section 5*. The need to provide opportunities for developing relationships and expanding networks was a prominent theme in the survey and interviews. The following comment was typical:

'The only way you increase understanding is ultimately by bringing people together… to work through shared strategic priorities.' (P.26/LCC)

Types of joint networking events proposed by survey respondents included: 'research-policy stakeholder

workshops in different policy areas'; 'a showcase of what individual researchers are working on… to see potential avenues of collaboration' (R.19); 'a round table discussion to share problems, capabilities and priorities' (R.52); and 'a monthly lunchtime Leeds seminar series' with themed sessions (R.51). Some respondents were eager to build on long-standing relations. While calling for more networking opportunities, professionals stressed that events bringing researchers and council representatives together should be well targeted and action-oriented.

7.3 Cultural change

7.3.1 A number of interviewees argued that collaboration needs to become more firmly embedded in the culture of both organisations. This reflects the 'Leading Places' programme finding on the importance of senior managers' attitudes in 'creating space for long-term thinking' (Si, 2019: 10) Having discussed differences in professional ethos, priorities and timescales, interviewees believed that fostering mutual understanding was a way to overcome these obstacles. Comments included:

'We need to break down the apparent, real or imagined barrier which is between academic research and local authority practice.' (P.20/LCC)

'All this stuff has got to be normalised rather than just add-ons…you've got to create a new institutional culture.' (P.16/UoL)

Survey respondents commented that collaboration needs to be led by senior managers and inculcated at operational level:

'There is sometimes a disjuncture between the support and enthusiasm for research amongst senior managers and those practitioners working on the coal face. It would be helpful if more could be done by senior managers to inform and engage the front-line practitioners who may be primarily responsible for providing data access / research data.' (R.97)

7.3.2 Mature conversations
The significance of trust and openness between collaborators was found to be a critical factor in successful partnerships. A number of interviewees argued that 'mature' or 'honest' conversations must be encouraged for meaningful collaboration to flourish. According to one academic, this means appreciating differences between short-term evaluation and more profound knowledge exchange:

'We're not here just to evaluate… Our role as researchers needs to be not just developing practices but developing knowledge and the broader issues that attend to that.' (P.3/UoL)

Interviewees also wanted more honesty in acknowledging when interests do not align, which one academic commented 'would save a lot of problems later on' (P.15/UoL). A council officer thought the University should be prepared to 'admit what it can't do', rather than claiming expertise in all areas (P.10/LCC). A senior academic stressed that both parties need to be prepared to have 'difficult' conversations when necessary if collaboration is to be meaningful. A culture of genuine knowledge exchange means being prepared to 'learn openly and honestly', according to a researcher, who commented that, 'it's just as good to find out what doesn't work as to what works' (P.26/UoL).

7.3.3 Sustaining collaboration
A clear message that effective collaboration is driven by relationships and culture was prevalent throughout. Consequently, interviewees advocated for moving from project-based arrangements based on one-off funding opportunities to an environment in which partnerships can be sustained over the longer term. Respondents who have collaborated successfully saw it in terms of ongoing relationships rather than discrete projects. These interviewees spoke about overlapping activities, one project leading to another and developing ideas together first and then seeking funding. Typical comments on this point included:

'If you've got a deeper relationship, you can work things up and pursue opportunities more proactively.' (P.1/LCC)

7.4 Practical measures

7.4.1 Analysis of survey responses and interviews found strong convergence in ideas for practical measures to enhance research-policy collaboration from professionals from the two organisations.

7.4.2 Resources
Funding was identified as a key enabler of collaboration and survey respondents and interviewees made suggestions for directing resources to better support collaboration. Their comments referred to organisational infrastructure to facilitate collaboration and funding mechanisms for collaborative work. One senior academic suggested some resources are required to develop infrastructure that will help to improve communications, provide 'bridging between projects and create new opportunities' (P.3/UoL). While acknowledging that local authority budgets are extremely stretched, one council professional commented that, 'both parties would benefit if they could find resources for collaborative infrastructure' (P.10/LCC). A senior manager at the Council recommended investment of resources in 'horizon scanning so we can share information' (P.33/LCC).

Several academics referred to the University's endeavours to encourage interdisciplinarity, which they believe should aid collaboration as 'real-world' issues do not mirror organisational structures. Others raised concerns about the University's faculty-based cost structure as providing counterproductive forces by fostering internal barriers to interdisciplinarity, with one academic calling for this system to be overhauled, so as to transform the institutional culture (P.5/UoL). Despite genuine efforts to lower the internal boundaries between the disciplines, the acerbic aphorism coined many years ago by the OECD (1982) in its report into higher education remains apposite today: 'communities have problems, universities have departments'.

While IAA funding has a quicker turnaround than traditional grants, long timescales that are more common for funding awards can create a barrier for research-policy collaborations. The idea of relatively small pots of 'pump-priming' or 'seed-corn' finance with shorter lead-in times was commonly raised by survey respondents and interviewees as a way of enabling researchers to be more responsive to the Council's needs. An early career researcher commented:

'Obviously, there's not loads of cash sitting around, but having that certain amount per year to spend on projects for the Council… a lot of the work that gets done that has the most impact is through these small collaboration projects… it doesn't have to be much money'. (P.27/UoL)

Numerous other comments in the survey suggested ways in which resources could be used to support collaboration. This included; 'a dedicated fund for early career researchers to pursue pilot projects' (R.62); 'joint funding that could help establish a long-term and continuous research partnership' (R.94); and a 'collaboration fund that seeks additional external funding' (R.17).

7.4.3 Workloads and careers
Lack of time amidst competing priorities was found to be a major barrier to partnership working and professionals argued for collaboration to be properly recognised in workloads and career progression, as recommended by Walker et al. (2019) following their national survey. Comments cited in *Section 6* showed that council officers tend to carry out such activities on top of demanding day-to-day roles. The following were among points made on ensuring on capacity for collaboration:

'Create a budget to pay for the time staff give to collaborative activities.' (R.84)

'Value more highly the work done by researchers in their impact-related activity.' (R.33)

Survey respondents and interviewees commonly called for impact and engagement work to be properly recognised

through allocation of sufficient time in workloads. Typical comments included: 'It's time in your workload model that gets you legitimacy' (P.15/UoL). Researchers believed that policy engagement and multi-agency working should be better recognised in career progression and performance reviews. Some interviewees also referred to a need to develop skills and competencies for collaborative working, suggesting more recognition of professionals with experience in working across boundaries, training and mentoring opportunities for potential collaborators.

7.4.4 Administrative processes
Bureaucratic complexities in both organisations were commonly cited as inhibitors of collaborative activity and professionals believed that the proposal to introduce a strategic agreement between the two organisations, described above, could help streamline administrative processes. A number of interviewees called for a Service Level Agreement or framework covering matters such as contract structures, payment structures, non-disclosure agreements and data sharing arrangements. One researcher explained:

'If we had a framework agreement, like a draw-down contract… that could be a kind of thing that's rapidly applicable in a light touch way, that we have permission to do things without necessarily going through all of the same hurdles again and again and again.' (P.22/UoL)

7.4.5 Research clauses in council contracts
A further aspect of procurement that could facilitate collaboration that was proposed was the inclusion of clauses on research in third party contracts. The Council spends millions of pounds a year on external contracts and a manager explained that incorporating research from the outset would be a means of accelerating the city's potential for 'living lab' collaborations:

'A big opportunity, which the Council can facilitate, is looking at some of our big procurement contracts and writing into the contracts that the contractor will be expected to participate in collaborative research… it's institutionalising it, making it part of the way we do things, that we always have an eye on what research and innovation might be possible.' (P.2/LCC)

7.4.6 Data sharing arrangements
The majority of professionals from both organisations voiced uncertainty over data sharing issues. This was despite those with more specialist knowledge commenting that data sharing agreements exist and both organisations have robust processes in place for protecting and storing data, as well as staff who can advise on data governance and risk management. It was furthermore pointed out that LIDA has made substantial investments to facilitate secure working

with shared confidential data. Interviewees commonly believed arrangements should be clarified and simplified as a matter of urgency. This researcher sums up ways in which attention to data sharing arrangements could enhance research-policy collaborations:

'If you have some kind of formal agreement with the Council where there's set data sharing procedures, and people understand what's expected of them, how their data will be stored and how it can be used… then you might speed up some of the data sharing.' (P.6/UoL)

7.4.7 Joint roles, secondments and placements
As previously discussed, secondments, placements and joint roles can serve well in transferring knowledge and increasing mutual professional understanding. Survey respondents and interviewees commonly thought that measures which enable professionals to work within each other's organisations – and across both organisations – must be encouraged. A council officer thought that bringing in academics with data science skills would be particularly welcomed as an opportunity for skills transfer (P.8/LCC). A senior academic with long-standing experience of

collaboration argued that placement of university researchers in the Council could be a collaborative alternative to the use of private consultancy firms: 'We need to learn from placements to understand one another's cultures in institutions' (P.31/UoL). The value of Dr Tom Knowland's role in facilitating cross-organisational collaboration was reinforced by requests for further joint positions of a similar nature.

Sharing space
Co-locating staff from the two organisations was recommended by some professionals as a means of naturally increasing opportunities for interaction and development of projects collaboratively. Ideas were put forward for encouraging professionals from the Council into the University. A senior academic suggested creation of 'spaces for multi-teams to work, solve problems' on campus (P.16/UoL). He believed having a 'network of city rooms' would help professionals break down barriers and work more productively together by stepping outside of their institutional cultures.

Table 3: Summary of professionals' suggestions for enhancing research-policy collaboration

Strategy	Communications	Culture	Resources	Administration
Strategic commitment	Clear contact points	Encourage mutual understanding of professional cultures	Collaboration support infrastructure	Use a framework agreement to help streamline bureaucracy
Memorandum of understanding/ Service Level Agreement	Signposting and organograms	Move beyond boundaries and silos	Legitimate collaboration in workloads, career progression and performance review	Simplify administrative processes for small scale collaborations
Database of collaborative projects that is kept up to date	Articulate council priorities and university expertise	Encourage mature conversations	Provide seedcorn grants to facilitate collaborative projects	Provide standard documents such as framework contracts and non-disclosure agreements
Co-ordination of collaborative activities	'Filter points' to match researchers, policy-makers and practitioners with shared interests	Sustain collaborative relationships beyond individual projects	Capacity building/ training/mentoring	Clarify and communicate information on data sharing arrangements
Named 'Champions'	On-line web resources and communications tools for collaborators		More secondments, placements, shared roles	Research collaboration clauses in third party contracts
Identification of shared priorities	Networking opportunities		Shared space for cross-professional teams	

Recommendations

This *Review* found considerable appetite and enthusiasm across both organisations for greater inter-organisational collaboration and for concerted efforts to construct robust and effective mechanisms to enhance research-policy partnerships. It is intended that the following recommendations inform a detailed *Action Plan* to be agreed and developed with input from the *Review* Reference Group and relevant others over forthcoming months. The resultant *Action Plan* will sit alongside and complement the work set out in this report and the principles that inform the recommendations. Initial suggestions for aligning this work with existing strategies and relationships are made here, but comprehensive assessment of synergies will be essential when implementing the recommendations. It is also proposed that this report and its recommendations inform a facilitated workshop involving colleagues from the University and the Council to identify priority areas for collaboration.

Recommendations for both organisations

1. A joint research-policy collaboration strategy

The University of Leeds and Leeds City Council should work to develop a joint commitment and shared strategic approach to research-policy collaborations supported by a clear vision statement.

The resultant Strategy should:

- Support shared organisational priorities on: inclusive growth; climate change; demographic changes; inequalities; transport; cultural activities; students' contribution to the city; organisational efficiencies; and Covid-19 recovery.

- 'Join up' relevant roles and resources within and across the two organisations to optimise their benefits for research collaboration.

- Align with existing partnerships including MIT-REAP, Anchor Institutions Network and Leeds Climate Commission and be reflected in the forthcoming Civic Engagement Strategy.

- Be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreements between the two organisations that offer sufficient flexibility for future amendment and expansion to include further partners in a framework for the city's institutions.

- Include details of specific delivery mechanisms and designated leads from both organisations responsible for overseeing implementation in the *Action Plan*.

- Set out shared priorities for research collaboration themes for the year ahead to be reviewed annually in order to: signal ongoing commitment; reflect changing priorities in light of evolving challenges and opportunities for the city and region; and provide scope for expanding the strategy to include other partners.

- Recognise the importance of individual relationships between professionals across organisations, whilst encouraging them to use this framework to underpin collaboration.

- Commit to capturing research collaboration outcomes more effectively and evaluating progress of measures that are introduced to enhance research collaboration.

- Draw on support from Leeds Social Sciences Institute and Policy Leeds at the University and the Policy Network at the Council, amongst others, in implementing the *Action Plan*.

2. Named research collaboration 'Champions'

Research collaboration 'Champions' at senior level in both organisations should be identified and tasked to promote both bi-lateral and multi-lateral research collaborations.

Contact points should be established in Council Directorates and University Faculties around core themes to signpost potential collaborators to resources, filter enquires and bridge introductions. Champions should be supported by appropriate administrative roles and infrastructure. This might be co-ordinated by and sit within the responsibilities of professional support roles relating to impact, external engagement and communications.

3. Organisational infrastructure to support research-policy collaborations

Resources should be directed towards developing and maintaining organisational infrastructure to support research-policy collaboration, facilitate communications and improve co-ordination.

The following mechanisms would encourage and enhance research-policy collaborations:

- Clear inward-facing and outward-facing channels of communication for research-policy engagement across the two organisations and between relevant managers and staff.

- An online forum for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to share interests, research needs and expertise to facilitate collaborations and access resources such as case studies and advice on initiating and carrying out collaborative projects.

- A linked 'portal' to highlight collaborative activities, opportunities and contacts. This should be supported by a regularly updated database of projects, which builds upon data collated for this *Review* and traces and evidences project impacts; and a 'register of interest' enabling professionals from both organisations to identify areas they wish to pursue.

- Ongoing 'horizon scanning' to identify and disseminate funding opportunities for collaborative projects between the two organisations.

- Action-oriented networking opportunities to bring researchers, policy-makers and practitioners together around core research and policy themes, such as a joint seminar or webinar series.

- Support should be considered for the development of a wider on-line 'clearing house' that would help align research interests and expertise with priorities for research in the local authority, public organisations, the third sector and businesses across the city and region.

4. Optimising data analysis

Bi-lateral data sharing arrangements should be established. Information should be made available to researchers and council officers wishing to undertake collaborative research work to enable them to understand legal obligations, notably with regard to what data can be shared and how, as well as requirements for data storage.

The following measures would enable data analysis potential to be optimised:

- Working with LIDA, the Council should be empowered to meet legal obligations to share de-identified data for research purposes.

- Organisational points of contact for information governance advice should be easily identifiable and agreed templates should be made available to aid data sharing, with documentation readily adaptable for future collaboration opportunities.

- Leadership should be provided by both the University and the Council - working with relevant public sector partners - to advance a vision for 'Connected Leeds', where data is joined up to aid decision-making and knowledge generation.

- Realisation of this vision would enable de-identified, administrative and longitudinal, near-to-real-time data from organisations to be brought together into a single database for research use and knowledge generation to inform policy and practice improvements.

- Drawing lessons from 'Connected Bradford', this should capitalise on LIDA's capacity.

5. Fostering inter-organisational relations among staff

Mutual trust and understanding of differences in organisational cultures and arrangements were found to be key enablers in successful collaboration. Mechanisms and infrastructures to foster productive relations and mutual inter-organisational understanding should be developed.

- Time and effort required for working collaboratively should be fully embedded organisationally and recognised in researchers' and council officers' workloads and in performance appraisals where appropriate.

- Joint training and seminars should be available to help professionals understand and navigate differences in organisational cultures, timescales and practices.

- Shared roles, secondments, staff placements, postgraduate placements and projects, co-location and cross-organisational spaces should be encouraged.

Recommendations for the University of Leeds

6. Seedcorn funding

A rolling programme of relatively small 'seedcorn' funding pots should be introduced, drawing from across the variety of existing resources and any dedicated new resources.

The *Review* has demonstrated that relatively small amounts of funding, along with structured support, can unlock significant external investment, as well as abundant human capital, motivation and commitment. An explicitly focused pot would enable early career researchers to pursue small-scale projects and high priority collaborations to be nurtured in their initial stages with the aim of attracting external funding. This would recognise the value of University staff time and the role the Council can play in facilitating access to assets (such as buildings, parks, roads, data or recruitment of tenants, service-users and front-line staff) as 'in kind' contributions in subsequent research funding applications. Introduction of a simple tool for assigning value to in-kind contributions should be considered for use by both organisations.

7. Fully embed the value of engagement and impact among academic staff

The workload implications of collaboration and external engagement should be more fully embedded in academics' workload models and incentivised through career progression processes.

Given the weight afforded to impact in the Research Excellence Framework and implications of the Knowledge Exchange Framework, the University should continue to work to reflect extensive time and effort required for collaborative research, knowledge exchange and engagement in academics' workload models and career progression. Associated benefits collaboration can bring to Teaching Excellence Framework goals, through guest lectures, placements and fieldwork should also be recognised.

8. Extension of 'living lab' approaches on campus

The role of the University campus as a 'living lab' that benefits research activities and strengthens its contribution to the city-region should be enhanced.

9. Civic collaboration hub

Consideration should be given to how achievements of Nexus in developing collaborative partnerships between academics, businesses and entrepreneurs might be built upon and adapted to advance an outward-facing 'civic collaboration hub'.

This could build upon the University's Engaged Research Initiative to draw together the impact network, public engagement and Policy Leeds. It would bring academics, policy-makers and practitioners together with other public and third sector bodies to co-design research aimed at informing policy, responding to challenges and developing best practice. Leeds Climate Commission and LAHP are among examples of models that could be extended to partners.

Recommendations for Leeds City Council

10. Identify research collaboration priorities

The Council should identify and communicate its knowledge needs and focus areas for collaboration and co-design its research priorities with relevant (academic and non-academic) partners.

As well as opportunities for large-scale programmes involving experienced academics, this might include identification of opportunities for early career researchers and short-term projects suitable for postgraduate students. The Council should also help trace and evidence the contributions collaborative research makes to policies and outcomes in the city.

## 11. Expand 'living lab' opportunities

Support should be given to enabling Leeds to be an experimental knowledge 'incubator' or 'living lab' for research-driven innovation and research case study site for wider (international) research collaborations, in ways that encourage synergies between 'acting locally and thinking globally'.

This includes: allowing time in staff workloads for research collaboration; long-term thinking on bigger issues; further application of knowledge to decision-making; making data available to partners; and piloting innovative practices. It also means determining potential for 'living lab' programmes associated with policy challenges such as: adults' and children's social care, health inequalities, transport, housing, community safety and demographic change.

12. Build research into procurement

To facilitate its expanded knowledge 'incubator' role, Council procurement with third parties should include agreed standard clauses on potential collaborative research activities and data sharing in contracts, whereby successful contractors will be expected to participate in research projects. Benefits of such projects should be clearly communicated.

This can be achieved through the Council's Social Value Toolkit, which will apply to all procurements above a minimum threshold of £100k.
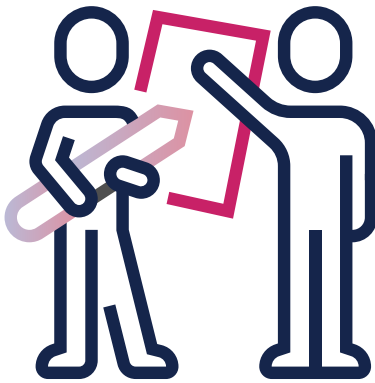
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Footnotes

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14. See: https://www.leedsacademichealthpartnership.org/

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36. Further information on the Cities research theme is available at: https://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130504/global_challenges/169/cities

Appendix A:

The collaboration *Review* reference group

Chair

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Members

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Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing, Leeds City Council

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Andy Gouldson, Director, Policy Leeds, University of Leeds

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Graham Ponton, Senior Economic Development Officer, Leeds City Council

Gareth Read, Economic Development Manager, Leeds City Council

Will Ridge, Integrated Business Intelligence Manager, Leeds City Council

Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services, Leeds City Council

Cat Scott, University Academic Fellow in Biosphere-Climate Interactions, University of Leeds
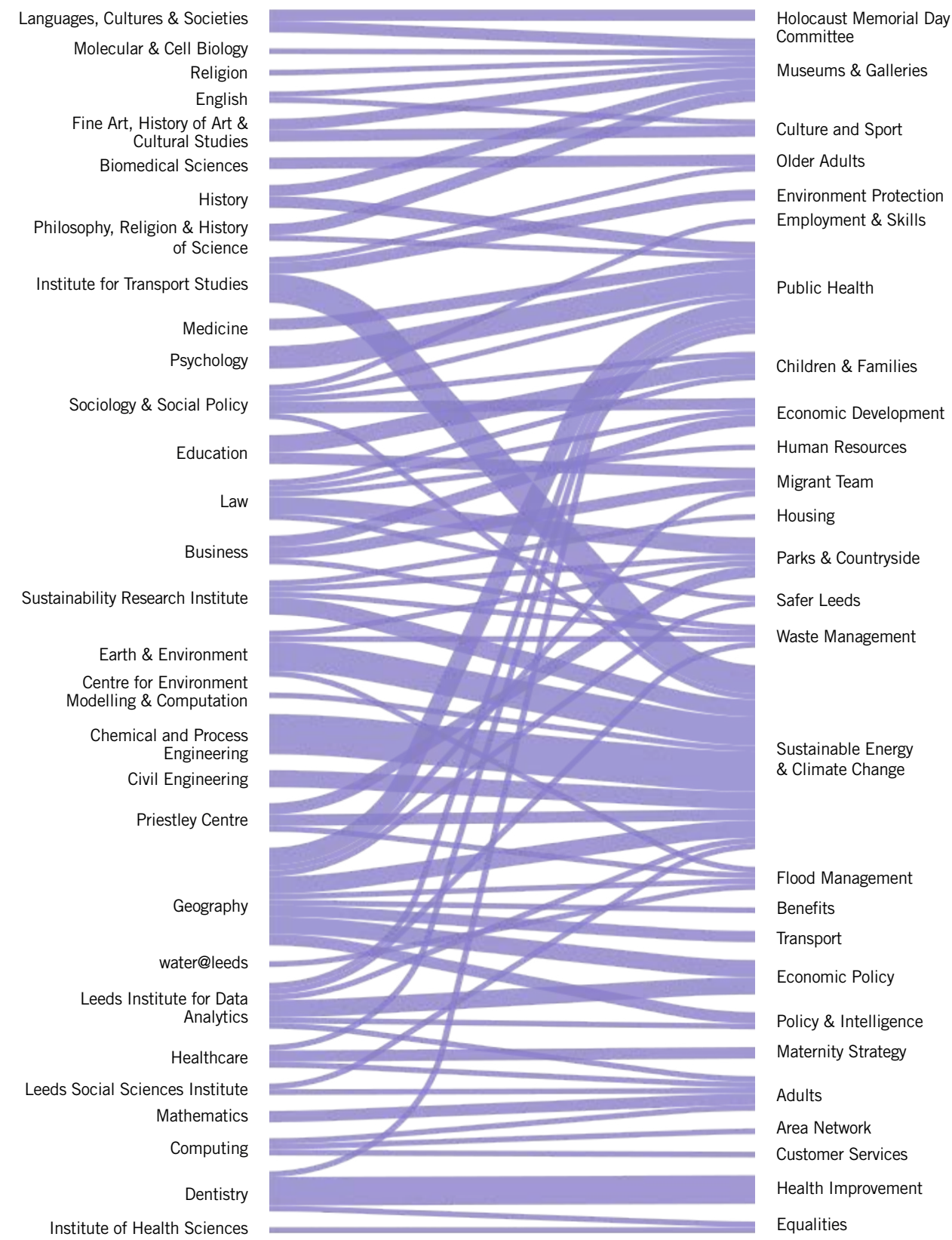
Erick Thomasson, Research & Innovation Development Manager, University of Leeds

Mick Ward, Chief Officer, Transformation and Innovation, Leeds City Council

Sue Wynne, Chief Officer, Employment and Skills, Leeds City Council

Appendix C:

Sankey diagram of relationships between University Schools /Institutes and Council Services/Functions in collaborative reserach projects

▼ Parkinson Building, University of Leeds

Languages, Cultures & Societies
Molecular & Cell Biology
Religion
English
Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies
Biomedical Sciences
History
Philosophy, Religion & History of Science
Institute for Transport Studies
Medicine
Psychology
Sociology & Social Policy
Education
Law
Business
Sustainability Research Institute
Earth & Environment
Centre for Environment Modelling & Computation
Chemical and Process Engineering
Civil Engineering
Priestley Centre
Geography
water@leeds
Leeds Institute for Data Analytics
Healthcare
Leeds Social Sciences Institute
Mathematics
Computing
Dentistry
Institute of Health Sciences

Holocaust Memorial Day Committee
Museums & Galleries
Culture and Sport
Older Adults
Environment Protection
Employment & Skills
Public Health
Children & Families
Economic Development
Human Resources
Migrant Team
Housing
Parks & Countryside
Safer Leeds
Waste Management
Sustainable Energy & Climate Change
Flood Management
Benefits
Transport
Economic Policy
Policy & Intelligence
Maternity Strategy
Adults
Area Network
Customer Services
Health Improvement
Equalities

LEEDS SOCIAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

Leeds CITY COUNCIL

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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For general enquiries, contact **LSSI@leeds.ac.uk**

For further information on the Review of Collaboration, contact:

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