

Unlocking the Potential of Civic Collaboration:

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

WEBINAR 10th DECEMBER 2020



Current context

- The imperative to collaborate is stronger than ever.
- Local government needs robust evidence on which to make policy decisions and shape services in challenging circumstances.
- The impact agenda and the Research Excellence Framework.
- Covid-19, Brexit and devolution are prompting dramatic changes.

We've got no choice but to collaborate... whether it's health, climate, economy, citizenship... we need to understand the best evidence in terms of the recovery plan from Covid... how you protect communities and shape the economy for the future. The connections will be ever more important.

Interviewee #26/LCC



An impressive record

- **118** research collaboration projects since 2015
- **£38m+** associated external funding
- **45** projects are currently live
- Projects very in size and type
- Numerous topics covered include: child poverty; trees; parks; flood alleviation; adult care; health inequality, low carbon economy....

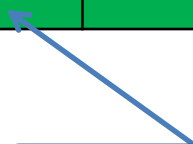
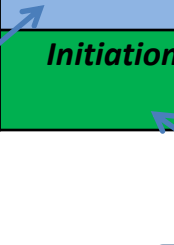
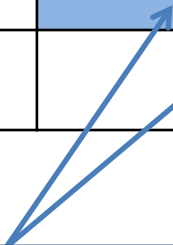
Project Timeline

Report Published

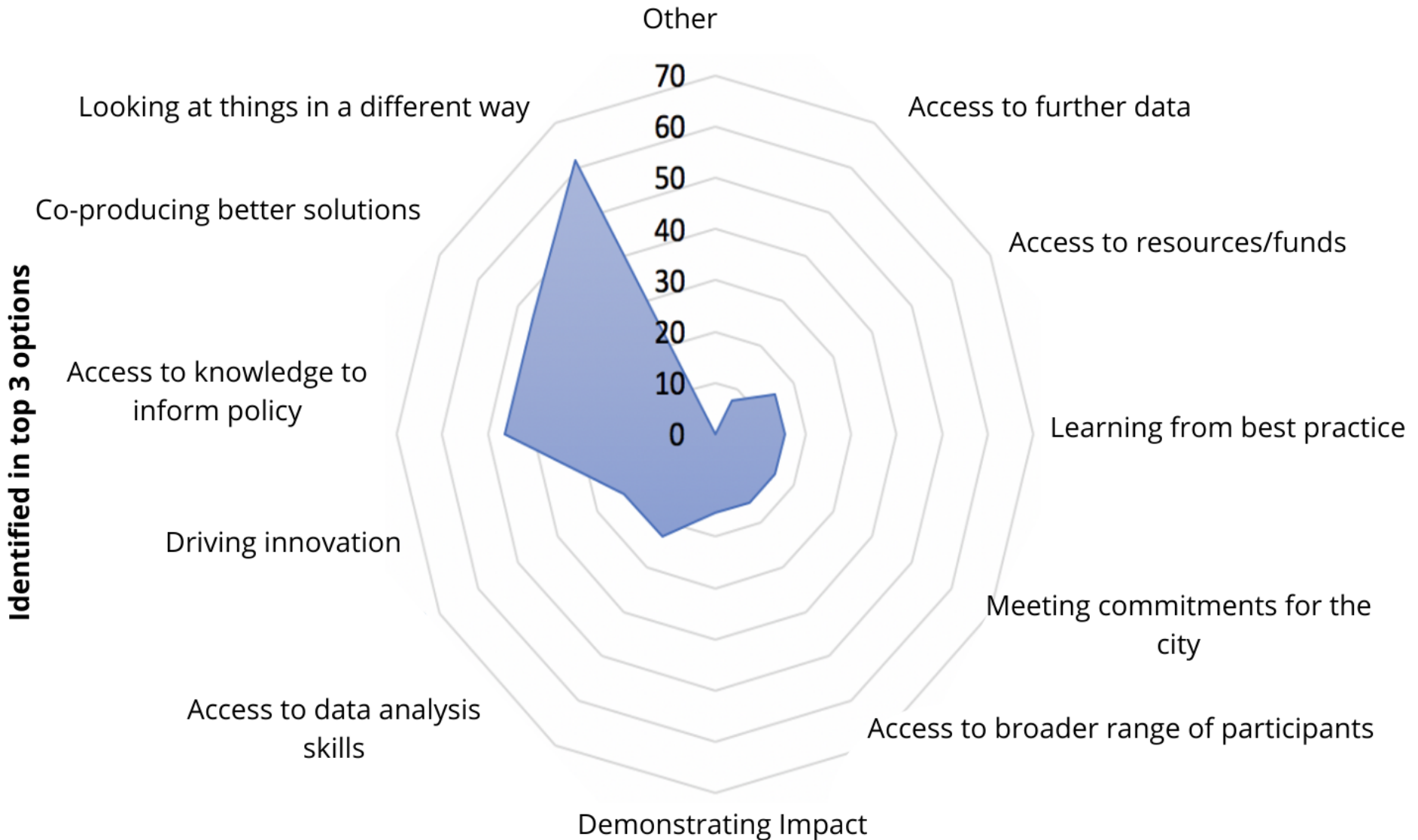
| | Collaboration Review and Implementation | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Jan – March 2020 | April – June 2020 | July – Sept 2020 | Oct – Dec 2020 | Jan – June 2021 | July – Sept 2021 | Beyond Oct 2021 |
| Planning & Mapping Exercise | | | | | | | |
| Data Collection & Fieldwork | | | | | | | |
| Report Writing & Recommendations | | | | | | | |
| Action Plan & Reference Group | | | | | | | |
| Implementation of Action Plan | | | | <i>Initiation</i> | <i>Activation</i> | <i>Consolidation</i> | <i>Expansion</i> |

Reference Group Meetings

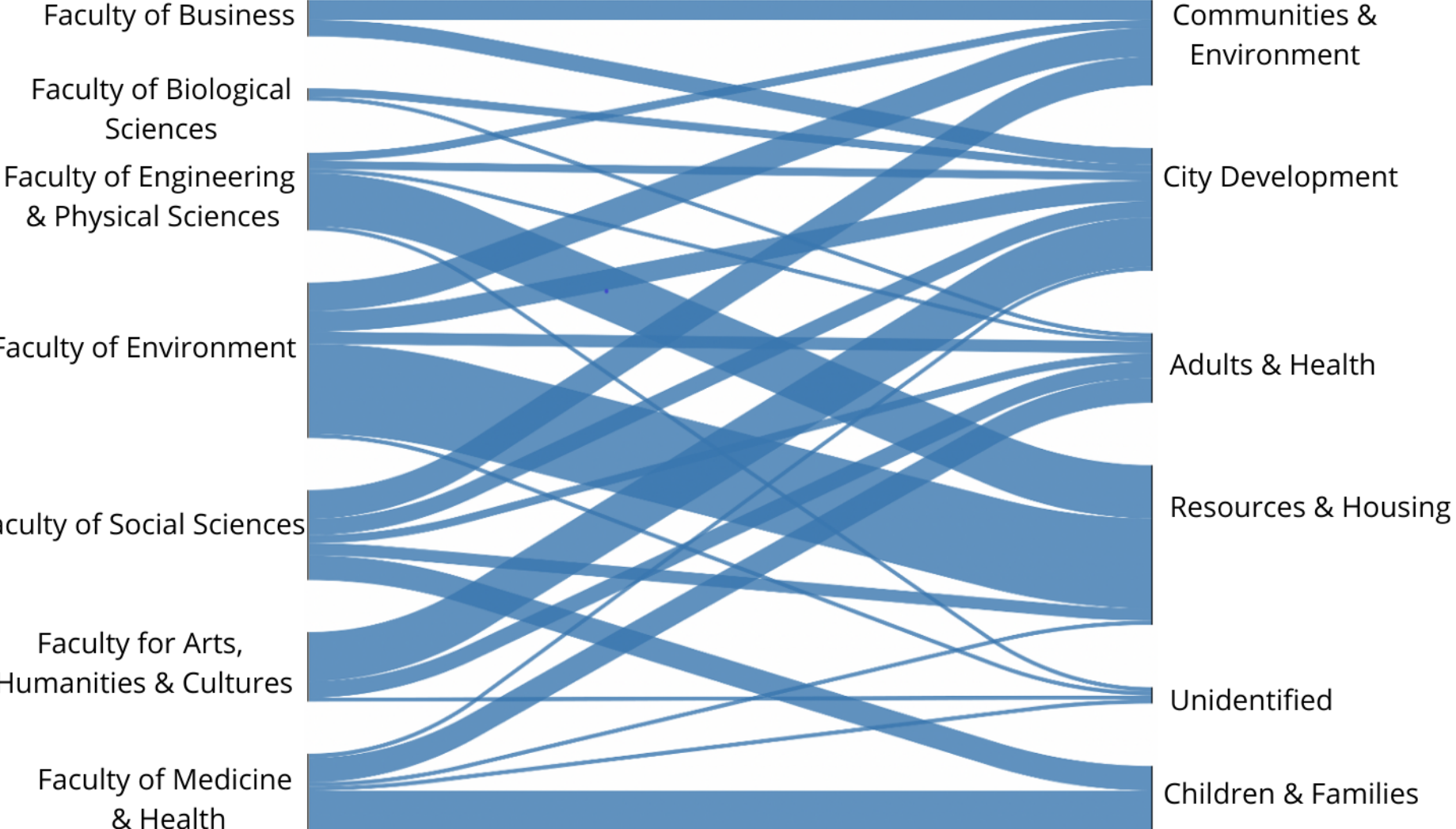
Priorities Workshops

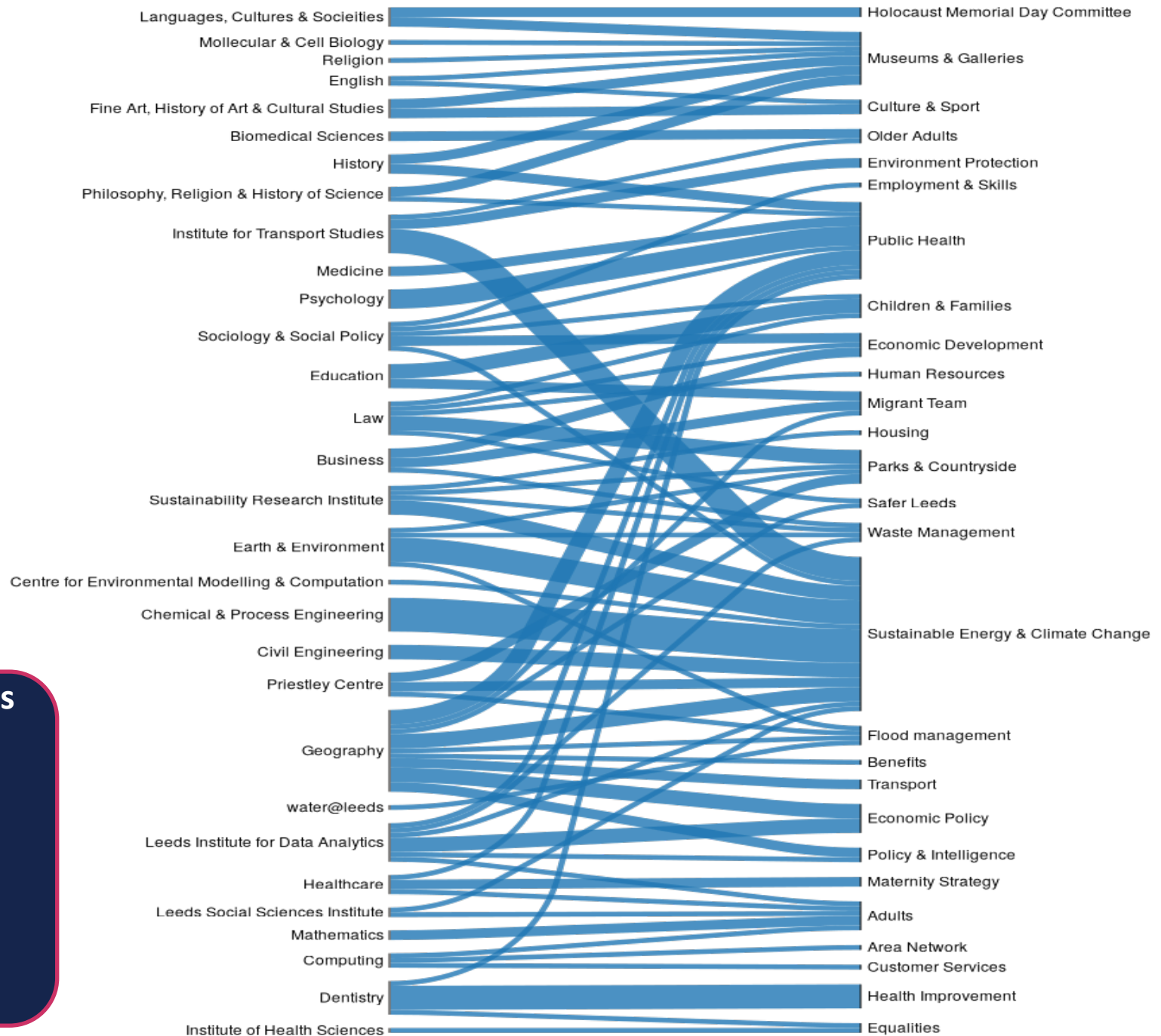


Benefits of collaboration identified by survey respondents (n=147)



Relationships between University Faculties and Council Directorates





**Relationships
between
University
Schools/
Institutes
and Council
Services/
Functions**

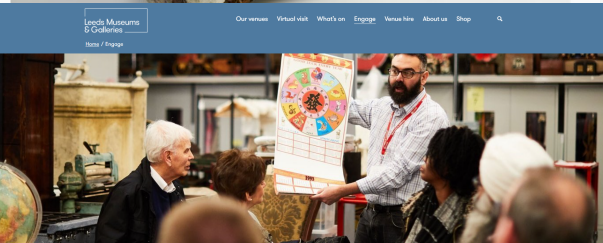


29 July
Coronavirus pandemic



Discovery Days with Leeds Museums

On 13 August 2019 / By Jeremy Morton



Engage with Leeds Museums & Galleries

Learn

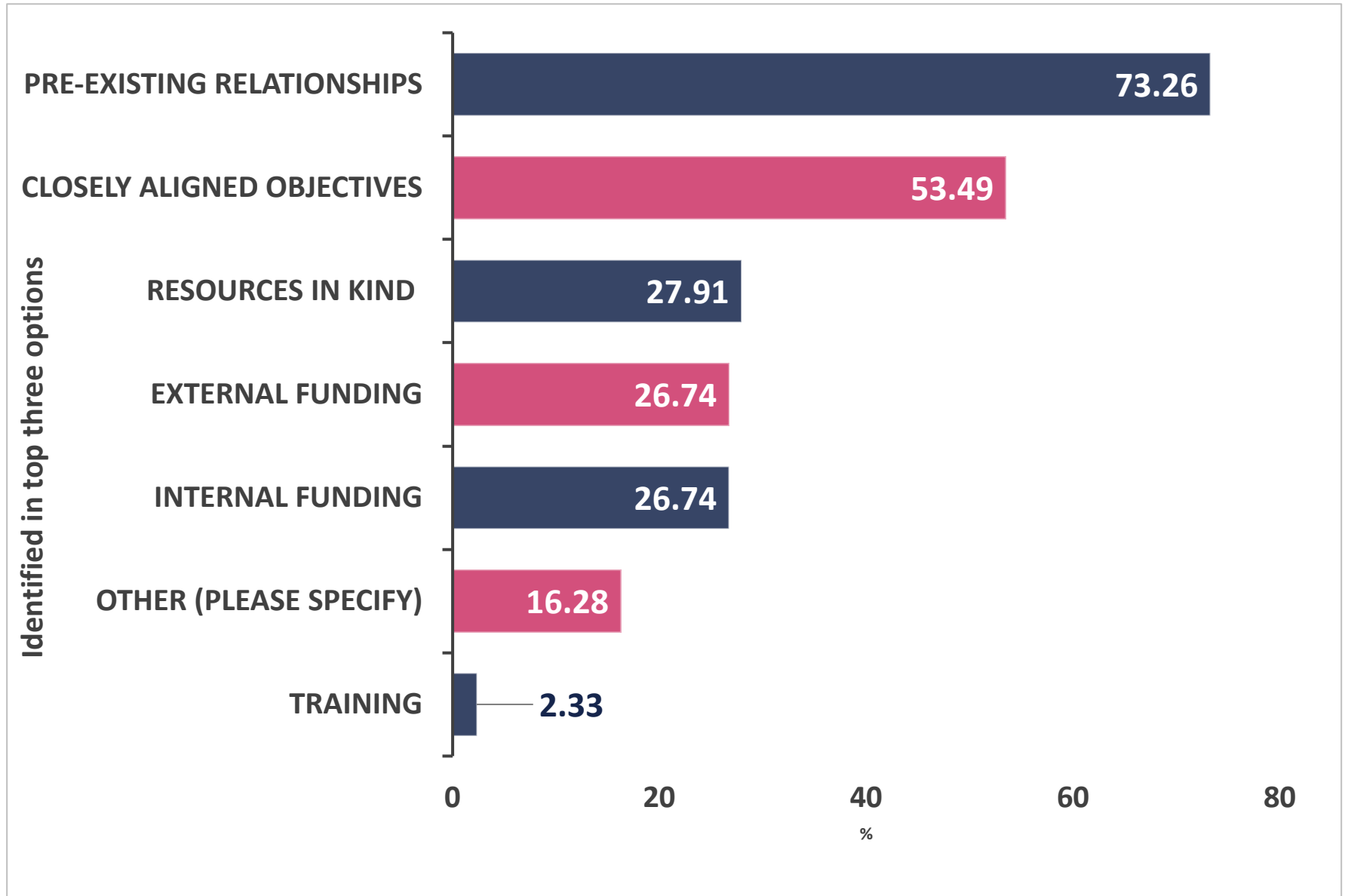
Young people

Volunteer

Building on success

- There is a wealth of experience to build upon with effective collaborations addressing wide-ranging issues
- For example, clusters of activity in climate change and culture show what can be achieved
- The survey and interviews helped identify 'what works' for research collaboration and where obstacles lie, while highlighting rich potential for further partnerships

Enablers identified by survey respondents (n=147)



Understanding the barriers

- Navigation and absence of strategic co-ordination were significant barriers
- 75% of survey respondents who had not collaborated previously (n=59) cited 'not knowing who to contact' as a barrier
- 'Lack of time' was the principal barrier cited by 47% respondents who have worked collaboratively (n=88)
- Differences in priorities, cultures, timescales among academics and council officers were highlighted during the survey and interviews
- Excessive bureaucracy, lack of resources and data sharing were common issues

Supporting and sustaining collaboration

The only way you increase understanding is ultimately by bringing people together... to work through shared strategic priorities.

Interviewee#26/LCC

Both parties need to be prepared to have difficult conversations when necessary if collaboration is to be meaningful.

Interviewee#6/UoL

Some sort of formal agreement where there's set procedures...might speed up data sharing.

Interviewee#26/UoL



Recommendations

Recommendations are based on findings from the *Review*:

- **Develop a joint research-policy collaboration strategy**
- **Appoint collaboration ‘champions’ in both organisations**
- **Co-design research priorities**
- **Organisational infrastructure to support research-policy collaborations**
- **Optimise data analysis**
- **Foster inter-organisational relations**
- **Draw on existing and new resources for seedcorn funding**
- **Fully embed impact and engagement among academic staff**
- **Consider a ‘civic collaboration hub’**
- **Expand living lab opportunities on the campus and in the city**
- **Build research clauses into council procurement**

Report

- The report has received widespread support
- Leaders from the University and Council are committed to implementing the Recommendations and have developed an Action Plan
- The *Full Report* and *Summary* are available at:
<https://lssi.leeds.ac.uk/partnerships/review-of-collaborative-working/>



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Unlocking the Potential of Civic Collaboration:

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

November 2020

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,
Research & Innovation,
University of Leeds



Tom RJordan
Chief Executive
Leeds City Council



Next steps

- A joint Reference Group has been set up with senior representation from both organisations
- An Action Plan has been developed to take forward the Recommendations on a phased basis
- Initial actions include: identifying shared priorities for co-produced research; appointment of collaboration champions; joint training events; and a working group on data sharing
- Principles for fostering bi-lateral research collaboration are readily applicable to working with a broader range of partners from all sectors in the city region

Resources to support civic research engagement are available within the University of Leeds from:

- **ESRC Impact Acceleration Account** managed by LSSI – contact Hannah Crow: h.e.crow@leeds.ac.uk
 - <https://lssi.leeds.ac.uk/esrc-iaa/>
- **Other Translational Research Funding** managed by Research & Innovation Service (RIS) – contact Steph Morris: s.morris2@leeds.ac.uk
 - <https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/innovation-funding/translational-funding/>
- **Policy Leeds** – contact Juliet Jopson: s.j.jopson@leeds.ac.uk
 - http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130600/policy_leeds



Thanks to

- Everybody at the University and the Council who took part in the survey, interviews and helped with the mapping
- Members of the Collaboration Review Reference Group
- The Review was supported by funding from Research England, the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account and LSSI

Question and Answer Session

The future of civic collaboration depends on the appetite and willingness of colleagues to engage in research partnerships and avail themselves of the opportunities afforded to do so.

We welcome your feedback, questions and comments