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Towards a Knowledge Base for University-Public Engagement:
sharing knowledge, building insight and taking action

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

Contents

Executive summary

This paper summarises the findings and recommendations from an AHRC project, 'Researching the Engaged University' (see Appendix 1). It is based on a literature review of research into university-public engagement and consultation with over 90 researchers and professionals in the field (see Appendix 2).

It makes the case that there are important reasons why we would want to research university-public engagement, which include:

- To enhance the ability of those already involved in engagement activities to reflect upon and develop their practice and enable more effective engagement;

- To provide a more robust basis for making decisions about what sorts of engagement activity are likely to achieve different goals and for understanding the different contexts and conditions within which this is possible;

- To produce insights needed to inform the public debate on how universities can best contribute to the public good.

It identifies four key challenges to building a more robust knowledge base:

- **The area is currently poorly resourced**, especially compared with practice and research into university-industry engagement;

- **Moving beyond advocacy and evaluation** – there is a lack of rigorous, robust studies that are able to withstand sustained scrutiny;

- **There are tensions between theory and practice** exacerbated by the tight resources;

- **Research in the field is highly dispersed** – scattered across multiple disciplines, adhering to different values, using different methods and mobilising different research traditions, making it hard for people to discover and draw upon each other's work.

It makes three **key recommendations**:

Recommendation 1: The following **principles** should inform any future investment and activity to build the knowledge base:

- Activity should involve processes and outputs that can be of use to the multiple groups involved in engagement activities;

- It should produce outputs able to support both practical application and build foundational knowledge;

- It should respect the diversity of activity in this field;

- It should recognise the dynamism of university-public engagement;

- It should balance investment in 'stand-alone' research focussed solely on engagement with embedded critical reflection as an on-going part of research projects.

Recommendation 2: Networks should be strengthened by interventions to improve knowledge sharing and learning between the currently disconnected practitioners, partners and academics in the field, in particular by:

- Creating conversations and meta-networks (but not inventing a new 'field');

- Enabling action research – to draw out the extensive tacit knowledge informing practice and policy;

- Addressing the language issue – confusing terminology bedevils the field;

- Creating a resource bank - to make content easier to find;

- Ensuring users/beneficiaries of the research are actively engaged.

Recommendation 3: Investment in the creation of new knowledge is urgently needed, and could be best focused in the following areas:

- Funding for new research;

- Understanding public perspectives;

- Investing in scholarly infrastructure;

- Capturing international perspectives.

The paper ends by outlining some of the **key questions** which could underpin future investment, clustered into three broad areas:

- Understanding engagement processes;

- Exploring quality, value and impact;

- The management of engagement.

There is urgent pressure upon universities to deepen their engagement with wider society, and these topics offer very significant theoretical and practical challenge: addressing them critically and systematically, and in a co-ordinated fashion would make a major contribution to advancing knowledge and practice.

1. Why research university-public engagement?

A university is potentially a powerful resource for the public good. Through its research, its teaching and its administration it has the capacity to produce knowledge, build capacity and create resources that are of significant social, cultural and economic benefit to the people of the UK. How a university might best achieve this contribution to the public good, however, remains highly contested. We only have to look at the debate over the assessment of 'impact' of research to see that there are profound debates about whether and how the public value of university activity might best be understood, recognised, ensured and guaranteed.

This is not, however, a debate that needs to be conducted in a vacuum. Rather, there is a long history of thinking about this topic and a growing wave of activity on the ground, which is creating new patterns of relationship between universities and publics. There are thousands of students learning and researching through practical activity beyond the walls of the university. There are growing participatory and community research partnerships. There are festivals, public lectures, workshops, school partnerships and performances. At the same time, other activities are in decline or changing shape; continuing and adult education courses, for example, are often being dismantled while new forms of co-operative learning practices are being imagined.

This activity on the ground has the potential to serve as a powerful resource for informing our understanding of the potential of the university to contribute to the public good. Even its advocates admit, however, that such activity is poorly researched, highly fragmented and dominated by small-scale evaluation and advocacy. At present, the networks for sharing knowledge about what works and who benefits from these activities are fragmented and the robust, longer term and critically reflective research base is far from secure.

It is becoming increasingly urgent, therefore, for those seeking to conduct an informed debate about the public value of the university as well as for those working to create new university-public relationships on the ground, to find better ways to share and build insight in this area.

Understanding why, how and whether engagement activities produce public benefits is important, for example, for those organisations and individuals who are being asked to give their time, their energy and their resources to these activities. It is important for the public engagement professionals working out how best to develop and promote these activities. It is important for policy makers in universities and beyond who are making investment decisions at a time of increasing competition for resources. It is important for academics being asked to make choices about teaching, research and engagement activities. And it is important for the wider public themselves to whom universities are democratically accountable.

This paper draws on a review of the existing evidence base and upon consultation with over 90 academics and public engagement professionals to propose a number of interventions to enhance knowledge sharing and research in this area. These interventions are intended to:

- Enhance the ability of those already involved in engagement activities to reflect upon and develop their practice and enable more effective engagement;

- Provide a more robust basis for making decisions about what sorts of engagement activity are likely to achieve different goals and for understanding the different contexts and conditions within which this is possible;

- Produce insights needed to inform the public debate on how universities can best contribute to the public good.

The aim of these interventions is to better understand whether and how university engagement is contributing to the public good in all its many forms – social, democratic, cultural, educational and economic – and to change practice on the ground in universities as a consequence.

2. What research and knowledge sharing is already happening?

To understand the existing knowledge base, it is important first to recognise that university-public engagement takes multiple different forms in different universities and different countries. It involves, for example:

a. **a wide range of activities** such as: students acting as researchers in communities; academics giving public talks; the creation of public-facing resources whether books, journalism, broadcasts or websites; the co-production of services, knowledge and goods with community and civil partners; participatory action research; public performances and artworks; adult and continuing education; and others;

b. **a wide range of actors** such as: engagement professionals, academics, civil society organisations, knowledge exchange specialists, public service organisations, public audiences, university management, funding bodies and regulatory authorities; and those actors also play multiple roles in these different activities;

c. It is driven by **diverse and sometimes conflicting purposes**, including for example: regional development, social justice, improved public services, knowledge exchange, social innovation and entrepreneurship, creative inspiration, education, democratic accountability, social responsibility, personal fame; and others;

d. It comprises **multi-directional flows of knowledge**, including: from university to public; from community, civil society and public to university; and the co-production of knowledge between academics and publics;

e. It takes place over **multiple timescales and geographies**, including: one-off events, project based activities, long term relationships; and activity that engages on individual, organisational, local, regional, national and international scales.

This diversity is reflected in the research base for this activity. The way in which knowledge is being built about the processes, benefits and risks of university-public relationships is highly fragmented and located in a wide range of sectors and disciplines. It involves, for example, museum professionals and public engagement specialists' reflections on practice. It includes the reflective analysis of community participants and researchers involved in participatory action research. It involves the tacit knowledge about collaboration built up by community partners. It includes the expert practice developed by science communicators, university leaders, and by 'engaging' academics.

Such knowledge is beginning to be shared in a wide number of forums, from the international (such as the Talloires Network of 247 universities in 62 countries), to the National (such as Campus Engage in Ireland or the Beacons network and NCCPE in the UK). Until recently, there were few forums for community partners to share their experiences, although this is being remedied, for instance within AHRC's Connected Communities programme. In these discussions, common questions relate to: how best to design different forms of engagement for and with different groups for different purposes; how to articulate a rationale for engagement; how best to evaluate and measure the impact of engagement activities; what institutional practices promote and enable engagement; how longstanding issues of power and equity, access and inclusion can be addressed.

This area is also a focus for academic research on (rather than as part of) this practice. Publications appear in a wide range of fields, including: Higher Education studies, Philosophy, Communications and Cultural Studies, Community Arts, Regional Development, Institutional Change, Social Work, Learning Sciences, Science and Technology Studies, History of Ideas, Participatory Design and Community Studies, to name but a few. Journals dedicated to engagement dynamics are also emerging, such as 'Co-Design', which focuses on arts and design based participation, 'Public Understanding of Science', 'Community Engagement' and 'Evidence and Policy', but tend to remain specific to particular disciplines or sectors of the public. New courses are also being established, often mirroring the concerns and research present in these journals. Mapping the whole field is not possible, but Appendix 3 identifies common issues of concern that emerge across this literature. These include, in particular, questions about how knowledge is produced, how people learn, how institutions are changing, how democracy can be ensured, and how publics are created (to name but a few).

The many roles of the Arts and Humanities in researching the engaged university

In preparing the report we have consulted with researchers and explored literature from across the disciplinary spectrum. Many of the recommendations that we have drawn are generic, but there are distinctive potential contributions from the Arts and Humanities. Similar analysis could be provided of other disciplinary areas, for instance the social sciences, but is beyond the scope of this project.

First, Arts and Humanities disciplines are themselves sites for university-public engagement, and there are long traditions of academics in these fields operating beyond the walls of the university. Second, these disciplines offer traditions and methods that at times would be useful to others working on university-public engagement. Third, these disciplines bring theoretical and conceptual tools and knowledge that would be beneficial in building understanding of the history, epistemology, cultures and geography of university-public engagement. These three roles are elaborated below:

Arts and Humanities as methods and motives for engagement

The Arts & Humanities are understood to be particularly well placed to support the search for effective methods of public engagement. This field encompasses the work of museums and galleries, with their long track record in reflecting upon different modes of public engagement. It also embraces arts based, creative media expertise and the creative use of a wide range of modes of communication, from imaginative websites to performance art. The field also encompasses community arts practitioners and researchers with long and important traditions of participatory research methods. It also includes design expertise, with its history of co-creation and user involvement. At the same time, many Arts & Humanities disciplines' attention to beliefs, histories and humanity means that they can provide an important point of interest for a wide public. In this respect, they are already part of rather than separate from the public.

Arts & Humanities disciplines, therefore, offer important methodological resources and points of motivation for the wider engagement field.

Theoretical and conceptual resources

There are a number of areas in which the Arts and Humanities disciplines would usefully make a distinctive contribution to the wider debate on the public value of the university:

1. **The epistemology of the public university** – different modes of university-public engagement are products not merely of competing languages and disciplinary traditions, but different epistemological traditions, with competing understandings of truth, value and reason. Philosophical and epistemological studies, and arguably religious studies would provide a powerful resource for inquiry in this area.

2. **The language of engagement** – given the complexity of different disciplinary traditions and the lack of shared language, it is likely that researchers working with discourse and language analytic perspectives would have much to add to the understanding of the field. This might involve research concerned specifically with the language of engagement between researchers and publics; this might involve research concerned specifically with interrogating the different truth claims that pertain across disciplines and the ways these are manifested in different discourses.

3. **The history and geography of university-public engagement** – the need to understand the dynamics of engagement over time also encourages attention to the historical contexts and traditions within which attempts to unsettle researcher-society relationships are taking place. While the history of scholarship and of universities is an established and respected field, there is relatively little research specifically concerned with understanding engagement that brings a robust historical analysis to bear. In particular, an analysis of recent activity would be very productive, given the very significant developments in policy and practice over the last 10 years.

4. **The 'audiences' for engagement** – the last thirty years of cultural studies and communication studies have already served to productively disrupt the undifferentiated notion of the 'audience' that informed the early phases of activity in public understanding of science. That tradition would continue to add insights to emerging social media, 'viral', dialogic modes of engagement.

5. **Mediating engagement** – the public-university relationship is always mediated, whether by language and gesture or via websites and television production companies. Understanding how these different forms of mediation change the possibilities of engagement is critical and is an area in which Arts & Humanities researchers are particularly well placed to contribute.

3. What are the obstacles to developing a robust knowledge base?

Given this range of activity, there are a number of obstacles to the creation of a robust knowledge base in this area that is capable of helping us to change university practice to enhance its contribution to the public good.

The first challenge relates to the **resourcing of engagement activities**. It is important to recognise that institutional support for different forms of engagement is highly variable. University-Industry partnerships, for example, may be very well resourced in comparison with local community engagement activities. If the activity itself is struggling for resource, then the understanding of its impacts, benefits and disbenefits will be similarly difficult to obtain. This is particularly important in the light of cuts to activities such as continuing and adult education that might previously have been seen as an important part of university public engagement strategies. Such uneven patterns of funding risk producing uneven patterns of practice and therefore research and insight into the consequences of engagement.

The second challenge relates to the issue of resourcing, and concerns **rigour and critical reflection**. Much research in this field is conducted in the form of case study evaluation, often with a desire to prove benefit to funders. Alternatively, where larger studies are conducted, these are often characterised more as advocacy or tools for promoting engagement or its funding than critical and reflective research. An important challenge in this field, therefore, is to find ways of funding research and knowledge building activities that enable its authors to move beyond evaluation and advocacy towards the production of rigorous, robust studies that can withstand sustained scrutiny.

A third important challenge to knowledge sharing and research in this area relates, ironically, to the risk of **a divide emerging between theory and practice**, between those who do engagement and those who conduct research on or about engagement and its related issues. It can, as many of our workshop participants pointed out, be hard enough to generate resource to actually do engagement activities without trying to get resource to reflect upon what its long term impacts are. This can be as true of the public performance as it is of the co-produced community project as it is of the new incubation centre bringing together students and social enterprises. Where there is resource for reflection on the process, it often supports short-term evaluations that are less than adequate for providing meaningful insights into the consequences of these activities. Time pressures, and a focus on delivery, means that those leading such activities are also unlikely to draw on the existing research in related fields and are equally unlikely to contribute to them through written or other tangible outputs. Exacerbating this is the fact that academic systems of reward and publication tend to discourage 'engaging' academics from writing up their work in publications seen as outside their main discipline, and also discourages those academics and researchers who are studying engagement processes from producing outputs that are of use and accessible to those seeking to do engagement.

The final challenge relates to the **highly dispersed nature of the relevant research** in this field. As discussed above, research that might potentially provide useful insights into engagement processes – whether audience and media research in cultural studies, research into communities of practice in education, patient involvement in health, theories of institutional change in organisation theory, histories of knowledge production in philosophy – is scattered across multiple disciplines. This is exacerbated by very different traditions of engagement which adhere to different values, seek different methods and mobilise different research traditions. Contemporary engagement practices, for example, are informed by everything from Public Understanding of Science, to Industrial Design, to the history of the Workers Education Association and Feminist traditions; such traditions also have very different world-views and associated language. This means that there are deeply held views on the use of language and sustained resistance to the use of different terminology. In an era of keyword searches and online resources, such diversity of world-views and language means that researchers working on similar or related challenges may find it hard to discover and draw upon each others' work.

4. Recommendations

Our recommendations address the principles, processes, activities and key questions which might enable the creation of a robust knowledge base in the area of university public engagement.

a. Building the knowledge base - principles

Given these challenges and reflecting the diversity of university-public engagement activities, the following five principles should guide knowledge sharing and research activity in this area:

i. **Building the knowledge base should involve processes and outputs that can be of use to the multiple groups involved in engagement activities**

University-public engagement necessarily involves more partners than academics alone. Consequently, research and knowledge sharing in this area needs, both in its production and in its products, to involve the multiple groups involved in engagement. At a minimum, research into university-public engagement that seeks to benefit the public good needs to be accessible to the public.

ii. **Building the knowledge base should produce outputs able to support both practical application and build foundational knowledge**

Research and knowledge sharing in this area needs to enable individuals to reflect on and develop their practice, needs to support institutions to make good decisions about engagement activities and their development, and needs to make a substantive contribution to the wider public debate on the nature and role of universities in society today. This means that the research and knowledge sharing for this field as a whole needs to produce both practical applications and foundational knowledge.

iii. **Building the knowledge base should respect the diversity of activity in this field**

No single set of research methods and practices will be appropriate for all purposes and situations; the judgement of research quality cannot be driven by methodological dogmatism but by whether the research is appropriate to the specific situation and its aims.

iv. **Building the knowledge base should recognise the dynamism of university-public engagement**

Case studies are important tools for reflection on practice. Large-scale surveys of activity can provide an important snapshot of practice at a particular time. Neither of these approaches is likely on its own, however, to provide insight into the longer-term implications of engagement activities. Research and knowledge sharing in this area needs rather to take account of the dynamic, unfolding and longer-term chains of engagement. It needs, where possible, to connect together multiple studies and experiences. It needs to recognise that engagement chains may comprise both more fleeting and more sustained interactions over time. It needs to take into account and understand the effects of wider contextual factors in counter-balancing, frustrating or mediating activities.

v. **A balance should be struck between commissioning 'stand-alone' research projects which focus solely on engagement, with embedded critical reflection within existing research projects**

Increasingly, researchers should be expected to build critical reflection on engagement processes as part of their on-going research activity. Such reflexive scholarly practice is familiar to many working in the arts and humanities.

b. Building the knowledge base – processes

The knowledge base needs to draw on existing understanding and insight in the field, promote collaboration and knowledge exchange between different participants and produce new insights in areas of particular challenge. To achieve this, we propose:

i. **Creating conversations and meta-networks**: there is little interest in developing a new research field of 'engagement', and indeed there are risks to such an endeavour, including over-professionalisation and boundary maintenance. There is clearly, however, value in creating opportunities for knowledge sharing between researchers, public engagement professionals and public participants in different forms of engagement activity. These conversations (whether through events or online) should support participants to share experiences, learn from each other around particular areas of common interest and address those wider conceptual and infrastructural issues that can't be addressed by academics and community partners alone, in single disciplines or on an individual, case-by-case basis. Issues that might form the basis for such discussions and shared action are outlined in section d below: agreeing focal points or frameworks to provide some structure and focus for these conversations could help to ensure purposeful dialogue across multiple networks.

ii. **Enabling action research:** There is a huge resource of tacit knowledge held by academics, public engagement professionals and public participants in engagement activities, university managers and policy makers and funders of universities. At the same time, a major challenge is the translation of existing knowledge and research into practice. Providing support for programmes of action research by participants in engagement activity (public engagement professionals, academics, partners) alongside and above funding for the 'core' activity as well as providing reflective support for such action research and opportunities to share findings in multiple formats, would be useful starting points for those involved in engagement activities to learn from and contribute to the knowledge base.

iii. **Reflecting on the language issue**: without seeking to obscure important differences in motivation and value in different approaches to engagement, it would be beneficial to many academics and public engagement professionals working in different fields to be able to find research in other disciplines and sectors. To this end, it would be useful to bring together individuals across different sectors and disciplines to explore whether there is a terminology that could be widely used through all publications mechanisms (academic, social media, grey literature, online publications) that might enable such work to be more easily found.

iv. **Creating a resource bank**: at a minimum, it should be possible for academics and public engagement professionals working on rethinking and researching university-public relationships to be aware of the diversity of research, knowledge and practice in this field. This project will take a step towards creating a multi-disciplinary research bank that reflects the multiple traditions of practice and research in this area. More needs to be done, however, to provide and maintain an easily accessible and more comprehensive resource that showcases the wider history of activity and research in this area and that also makes visible the highly diverse practice and research currently emerging around the world.

v. **Ensuring users/beneficiaries of the research are actively engaged**: it is vital to avoid a situation where researchers are only talking to themselves. The research agenda should be regularly refreshed by interaction with those for whom the research has use and value, and whose curiosity, expertise and experience can inform the on-going work. Good examples of such engagement activities have been modelled in the Connected Communities programme, for instance between researchers, members of community-based heritage organisations and museum staff. Equally, strenuous efforts need to be made to ensure that the emerging insights from the research are being effectively shared within and beyond the research community, for instance by ensuring that they feed into the design of professional development and training, or inform emerging higher education policy.

c. Promoting the production of new knowledge

There is also an urgent need for investment into the production of new knowledge about university-public engagement. The following areas seem to us to be particularly fruitful areas for intervention:

i. Ensuring appropriate research funding

- There is a critical need for long-duration funding that recognises the multiple phases of engagement activity, from fleeting encounters to the long-term production of relationships of trust between university and community partners; or that recognises that the consequences of participation in engagement activities are likely to play out over significant timescales, for both public and academic partners.

- There is a need for funding to support research that collates and synthesises evidence from multiple disciplines and sectors in relation to common challenges. Such survey research, which does not involve generating new data, can be difficult to resource and yet it is likely to be of particular use in this field in building knowledge across multiple examples of activity.

- There is a need for funding to support the co-production of research between universities and community partners, of the kind being trialled within the Connected Communities programme. Such research needs to recognise the need for a first phase of collaboration during which trust is established and shared goals identified.

ii. Understanding public perspectives

- As research on creating publics makes clear, it is not possible simply to 'survey' the public to elicit their aspirations for research activity. However, it is important to recognise that the various public partners involved in collaborations and participating in university activities will have an important and probably distinctive take on what is needed in this area. The appropriate response here is not tokenistic recruitment of public representatives to one-off events, but substantive attempts through research, networks and events to:

  - Better understand the experience of the wide variety of those who have already been involved in engagement activities.

  - Explore patterns of existing participation.

  - Explore what different community partners might want from engagement activities.

  - Work with partners to identify what knowledge is available/missing in this area already.

  - Define programmes of activity in partnership with different community partners.

iii. Creating a scholarly infrastructure

- There is a need for new publications mechanisms which are both rigorous and accessible to the multiple groups involved in university-public engagement. Such mechanisms might involve innovation in the way ideas and findings are communicated, looking beyond written texts, for example. They should also involve innovation in the costs of access arrangements.

- There is a need for collaborative approaches to training and development. PhD studentships that are co-supervised between university and community partners are one important step in this direction, although new approaches to communicating the outputs of such research are also required. Equally, all PHD students should be given opportunities to develop their engagement practice, and to critically reflect upon it. The identification of 'Engagement, influence and impact' as one of the four domains in the Researcher Development Framework provides a helpful framing for such professional development.

iv. International perspectives

- The debate on university-public relationships is not restricted to the UK. Rather, there are new models emerging around the world. At present, however, there are few tools to enable UK practitioners, academics and researchers to draw on this evidence. We would propose, therefore, funding for international exchanges of expertise and collaborative international research activities. Such collaborations, however, should not be restricted to university partners alone, but also involve community/public participation.

d. Building the knowledge base – key questions to address

Perhaps the most important issue in building the knowledge base, however, is in determining the key questions that are emerging from multiple different disciplines and sectors.

The following questions provide an important focus for future research and action, clustered in three broad topic areas:

i. Understanding engagement processes

To deepen our understanding of the dynamics of university-public engagement, and to explore the role of the 'public university' in the 21st Century:

What is actually going on in university-public encounters?

To build knowledge about 'what is going on' in the dynamic and diverse encounters when researchers and communities encounter each other; in particular to examine in relation to this:

- how knowledge develops
- how people make meaning
- how publics are constituted
- how change happens
- how knowledge-based institutions develop

What are the ethical issues?

What constitutes ethical engagement activities? How can ethical practice be developed? What are the tensions between ethics and activity? What are the underpinning assumptions framing debates on ethics? How do different disciplines approach ethical issues?

What role do 'place' and 'time' play?

How does place matter in such engagements? How has this changed over time, and what is particular about the present moment? How can 'futures' work inform our understanding?

What is the distinctive role of students?

What roles do students play? How effectively can universities 'teach' social responsibility? Should they play this role?

ii. Exploring quality, value and impact

To develop an understanding of the 'public value' of university engagement, and its distinctive social, cultural and economic logics:

Who benefits from which university-public activities? What is the public good of these activities?

This brings questions such as who is involved in these activities. What publics are being created through these engagement activities? How we measure public good beyond the economic? How do we evaluate these activities over time? What relationships of accountability and governance are being developed? Who is being excluded from these processes?

What are the gains of different methods and processes?

For example, when/where in research and teaching processes does public engagement have most public benefit? What methods and processes are beneficial for which groups? Which methods and processes exclude and encourage which forms of encounter? Why?

iii. Political economy and governance

To inform thinking about how the relationship between 'universities' and 'society' can be managed, to help to distinguish between good and bad reasons for decision-making, and to foreground issues of power and accountability:

What is the political economy of engagement?

How do wider political and economic issues frame engagement activity? What are the processes of regulation, monitoring and management? What sorts of publics and universities are these constructing? How is the relationship between university and society framed and produced through engagement activity? What are the processes of accountability and democracy that are invoked, mobilised and materialised through engagement activities?

How is engagement managed?

What is the role of engagement as part of wider institutional change processes? Who are the actors involved in promoting and enacting engagement? What new structures and systems are produced through engagement? How are the institution, its policy and processes being rethought?

Appendix 1: Background to the project

In order to better understand this disparate research field and to explore how best to support it, the AHRC/Connected Communities Programme commissioned the 'Researching the Engaged University' project from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and the University of Bristol. This project was designed to address four key questions:

1) How and where is public engagement currently being theorised and researched?

2) What are the key questions that might frame a future research agenda for university public engagement?

3) What methods and practices would allow the research community to make substantive progress in addressing these questions?

4) What are the distinctive implications for the Arts & Humanities?

These questions would be addressed through 1) a rapid literature review and 2) interviews and events involving around 90 leading researchers and practitioners from within and beyond higher education.

The audiences for the project were understood to be:

- University managers with responsibility for managing engagement, helping them to make sense of the conceptual terrain;

- External partners / collaborators who want to build deeper 'knowledge-based' partnerships with HEIs;

- Policy makers and funders seeking to stimulate effective engagement between universities and publics;

- University researchers and engagement professionals who are keen to deepen their insight into how to build more effective engagement;

- Capacity building networks and agencies keen to build cutting edge thinking and insight about engagement into their practice.

The following considerations informed the literature review. First, given the wealth of literature that could potentially be drawn upon, the review focused specifically on public engagement with university research. In particular, it focused on identifying those studies and individuals concerned with critically reflecting upon, researching or evaluating this process. Due to time limitations we did not address the important issues of student engagement, engagement with teaching or the use of university resources by communities – except where these provide insight into the methodological and theoretical challenges of the interaction between academic researchers and communities. The initial review of literature was conducted using key word searches of 14 online databases[1] and complemented by grey literature and book recommendations from AHRC, NCCPE and NCCPE networks. The Keyword search looked for papers published since 2000 with the term "public engagement" in the title or abstract. Trial searches in two Arts & Humanities oriented databases with alternative terms such as "engaged scholarship" yielded a small number of non-duplicated relevant sources. Searches in Arts & Humanities journals using broader terms such as 'publics' or 'public scholarship', however, yielded too many results to be useful.

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[1] *Database searches: Bubl:Education, Cambridge Journals Online, Emerald, Ingenta Connect, JSTOR, Oxford Journals, ProQuest, Project Muse, MLA International Bibliography, Sage Online Journals, Springerlink, Taylor & Francis Online, Web of Knowledge and Wiley Online Library.*

Four university-community engagement journals[2] were also targeted for relevant material by reviewing tables of contents since 2000.

All identified abstracts (2350) were rapidly reviewed and approximately 150 papers were identified as potentially relevant. After further assessment, a further 50 of these were selected for detailed analysis on the basis that they were:

• primarily concerned with public engagement with university research;

• they substantively addressed the issues of the theory and methods of public engagement with university research;

• they were concerned with more than describing a single case study and/or were using a case study to contribute more broadly to the development of the field, its theory and methods;

• they were frequently referenced by other papers.

Not included was research that sought to theorise 'the public' and 'community' in itself, as this research has been systematically analysed elsewhere, in particular in the Connected Communities Programme scoping reviews.

A provocation paper was developed from this literature review outlining emerging assumptions from the literature review about the state of the (multiple) fields of research concerned with research/community engagement. This was circulated to 70 attendees of two one day workshops, to a group of Arts and Humanities scholars at the Universities of Bristol and UWE who took part in a special workshop, and to 10 individuals who agreed to participate in a longer interview (see Appendix 2). The paper was also circulated to the NCCPE networks.

The interviews, events and comments led to the identification of important texts for consideration in the project and also led to a number of significant shifts in the thinking of the project which have been recognised in this document: first, these consultations further emphasised the highly divergent opinion on engagement as an activity and the conflicting views about its purpose and methods; second, they clearly demonstrated that it was impossible to separate teaching and research, not least because in many disciplines, student research was a core element of engagement activity by researchers; third, that informing practice would be a critical output for research in this area; fourth, that engagement activities are not yet well established in universities and that any funding for research in this area should not be at the expense of such activities; fifth, that engagement activities need to be understood within a wider context of the discussion on the future of the university, and in particular, the political economy of engagement.

The events and consultation also raised concerns that community partners were not involved in the consultation and workshops and flagged that important insights would therefore be lost. While a limited number of museum and charity groups were involved in the discussions, it is clear that a much wider debate with the full range of university partners would be beneficial in scoping research activity in this area. This is reflected in our recommendations here.

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[2] *Journals addressing University-Community Engagement: 'International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education', 'Journal of Community Practice', 'Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship' and 'Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement'.*

Appendix 2: List of all participants in workshops, all people interviewed and other contributors who offered their feedback on the provocation paper

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Jo	Angouri	Senior Lecturer in Intercultural Communication and Linguistics	UWE (University of the West of England)
John	Annette	President	Richmond University
Kate	Arnold-Foster	Head of University Museums and Special Collections Services and Director of Museum of English	University of Reading
Sarah	Banks	Professor: School of Applied Social Sciences	Durham University
Clive	Barnett	Reader in Human Geography	The Open University
Paul	Benneworth	Senior Researcher at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies	University of Twente
Robert	Bickers	Professor of History	University of Bristol
Josephine	Boland	Senior Lecturer in Education	NUI (National University of Ireland) Galway
Cathy	Bonner	Teaching Fellow, Business School	Birmingham University
Tim	Boon	Chief Curator	Science Museum
John	Brennan	Professor of HE research	The Open University
Georgina	Brewis	Research Officer	Institute of Education
David	Buckingham	Professor of Media and Communications	Loughborough University
Havi	Carel	Senior Lecturer in Philosophy	UWE (University of the West of England)
Jenni	Chambers	HE Policy Adviser	HEFCE
Jason	Chilvers	Lecturer in Environmental Management and Policy	UEA (University of East Anglia)
Jenn	Chubb	Research Innovation Officer	University of York
Sharon	Clancy	Head of Community Partnerships	University of Nottingham
Allan	Cochrane	Head of Department of Social Policy and Criminology	The Open University
Trevor	Collins	Research Fellow	The Open University
Roberta	Comunian	Creative Industries Research Associate	University of Kent

Richard	Courtney	Lecturer in Employment Studies	University of Leicester
Ben	Cowell	Regional Director	National Trust
Steve	Cross	Head of Public Engagement	UCL (University College London)
Geoffrey	Crossick	Professor/ Former Vice Chancellor	University of London
Rob	Dover	Senior Lecturer and Director of Taught Postgraduate	Loughborough University
Jon	Dovey	Professor of Screen Media	UWE (University of the West of England)
Madge	Dresser	Reader in History	UWE (University of the West of England)
Chris	Duke	Consultant	
Sophie	Duncan	Deputy Director	NCCPE (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement)
Robin	Durie	Senior Lecturer	Exeter University
Rebecca	Edwards	Research Development Officer (Public Engagement)	Bournemouth University
Peter	Fleming	Principal Lecturer in History	UWE (University of the West of England)
Lorraine	Gamman	Professor in Design Studies	Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London
David	Gauntlett	Professor of Media and Communications and Co-Director of the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI)	University of Westminster
Daniel	Glaser	Head of Special Projects	Wellcome Trust
John	Goddard	Professor of Regional Development Studies	University of Newcastle
Paul	Gough	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	UWE (University of the West of England)
Patricia	Gray	Hub Leader: Researcher Training and Development	University of Leeds
Roger	Green	Senior Research Fellow Community Studies PACE	Goldsmiths College University
David	Greenham	Associate Head of the Department of Arts	UWE (University of the West of England)
Ian	Grosvenor	Deputy PVC Cultural Engagement	University of Birmingham
Gary	Grubb	Associate Director of Programmes	AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council)
Angie	Hart	Professor of Child, Family and Community Health and Academic Director of Cupp (Community University Partnership Programme)	University of Brighton
Michelle	Henning	Associate Professor in Media and Cultural Studies	UWE (University of the West of England)

Dan	Hillier	Head of Public Engagement, UK Astronomy Technology Centre	Science and Technology Facilities Council
Rick	Holliman	Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Science	The Open University
John	Holmwood	Professor in Sociology	University of Nottingham
Lara	Isbel	Academic Developer - Chancellor's Fellows Institute for Academic Development	University of Edinburgh
Roland	Jackson	Chief Executive	British Science Association
Eric	Jensen	Assistant Professor, Dept of Sociology	University of Warwick
Ursula	Kelly	Consultant	
Emma	Kemp	Information and Communications Manager - EuroStemCell: Europe's Stem Cell Hub	University of Edinburgh
Michael	Kitson	Judge Business School	University of Cambridge
Melanie	Knetsch	Deputy Head of Communications and Public Engagement	ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council)
James	Ladyman	Professor of Philosophy	University of Bristol
Gail	Lambourne	Strategy and Development Manager (Cultures and Heritage)	AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council)
Maggie	Leggett	Head of Public Engagement	University of Bristol
Averil	Macdonald	Director STEM Engagement Centre	University of Reading
Nick	Mahony	Research Associate, Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance	The Open University
Saranne	Magennis	Director - Higher Education Policy Unit	NUI (National University of Ireland) Maynooth
Hannah	Macpherson	Senior Lecturer in Human Geography	University of Brighton
Paul	Manners	Director	NCCPE (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement)
Wayne	Martin	Head of School: Philosophy at Essex	University of Essex
Jodie	Matthews	Research Fellow, Academy for British and Irish Studies	University of Huddersfield
Marjorie	Mayo	Professor	Goldsmiths
Xerxes	Mazda	Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences	British Museum
Morag	McDermot	Senior Lecturer in Law	University of Bristol
Lindsey	McEwen	Professor in Environmental Management	UWE (University of the West of England)
Lisa	McKenzie	Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences	University of Nottingham
Josie	McLellan	Senior Lecturer in Modern European History	University of Bristol

Darian	Meacham	Senior Lecturer in Philosophy	UWE (University of the West of England)
Juliet	Millican	Deputy Director	University of Brighton
Niamh	Moore	Researcher, School of Social Sciences	University of Manchester
Jo	Morrison	Digital Projects Director	Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London
Sarah	Morton	Co-Director at Centre for Research on Families and Relationships	University of Edinburgh
Mike	Neary	Dean of Teaching and Learning	University of Lincoln
Samir	Okasha	Professor of Philosophy of Science	University of Bristol
Sandy	Oliver	Professor of Public Policy & Deputy Director, SSRU	Institute of Education
Kate	Pahl	Reader in Literacies in Education	University of Sheffield
Jason	Pandya-Wood	Research Director	De Montfort University
Richard	Pettigrew	Reader in Philosophy	University of Bristol
Ellen	Poliakoff	Senior Lecturer	University of Manchester
Johanne	Provencal	Editorial and Proposal Development Officer	University of Toronto
Fred	Robinson	Professor of Sociology	Durham University
Tom	Sperlinger	Senior Teaching Fellow and Head of Part-time Education	University of Bristol
Sophie	Staniszewska	Senior Research Fellow	University of Warwick
Elizabeth	Stevenson	Outreach / Public Engagement Programmes Manager and Teaching Fellow	University of Edinburgh
Kathy	Sykes	Professor of Sciences and Society	University of Bristol
Sam	Thomson	Principal Lecturer in Creative Arts	UWE (University of the West of England)
Jennifer	van Bekkum	Career Development Fellow	MRC (Medical Research Council) Social and Public Health Sciences Unit
David	Watson	Professor of Higher Education and Principal of Green Templeton College	Oxford University
Emma	Weitkamp	Senior Lecturer, SCU	UWE (University of the West of England)
Mike	Wilson	Professor of Drama and Dean of the School of Media & Performance	University College Falmouth
John	Wolffe	Professor of Religious History	The Open University
Rhonda	Wynne	Manager, Professional Development - UCD Adult Education	University College Dublin

Appendix 3: Knowledge map from provocation paper

Clusters of questions and theoretical framings into research into researcher/community interactions
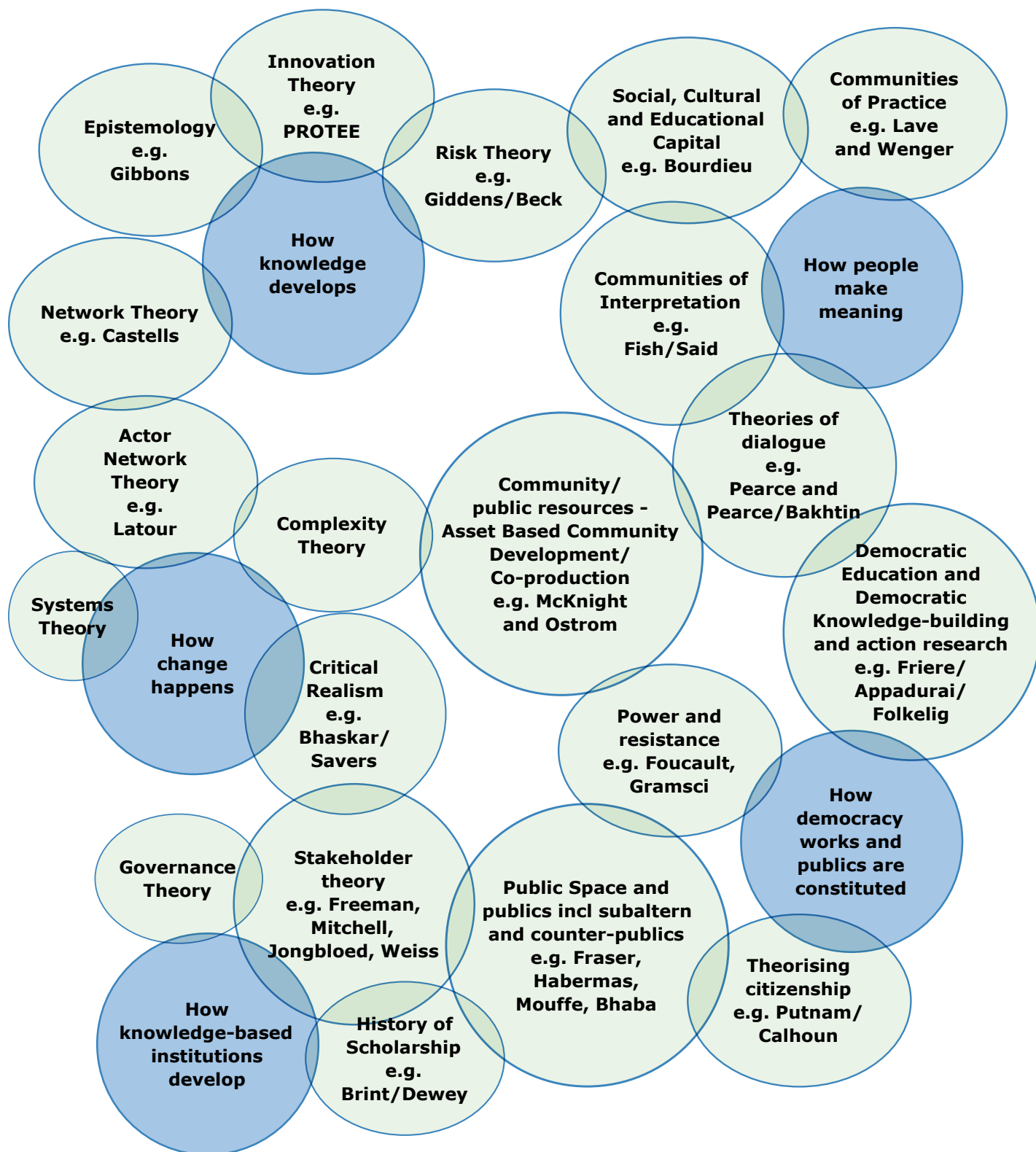
Appendix 4: Papers, books and publications reviewed and identified by participants in the project

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Endnotes

[1] Terminology is a significant problem in this field, with the imprecise use of terms such as 'community' often obscuring profound differences in the groups referred to. For example, many of those advocating for greater 'community' involvement in research design would not want this translated as industry involvement. For the sake of clarity in this paper, and without seeking to close down future debate, the following terminology is used here:

- **Public engagement professionals** – those individuals whose primary function is to promote Public Engagement with universities, with research and with knowledge more broadly, working in universities, museums and galleries, NGOs and civil society associations;

- **Academics** – individuals working in universities whose roles are traditionally defined by teaching and research;

- **Researchers** – those individuals, working across both universities and other organisations, who carry out research;

- **Civil society** – non-governmental and non-commercial associations including community groups, charities, activists groups, social movements, church groups, sporting groups, social enterprises and many more;

- **Community** – where possible we avoid the use of this term in the document given its ambiguous meaning. Where we do use it here, in light of its common use in the Engagement literature, we refer in particular to a geographic definition – to individuals and groups living and acting in the local area of the university. We do recognise, however, that 'community' can comprise much wider definitions (see, for example, the scoping studies conducted for the AHRC Connected Communities Programme);

- **Industry** – commercial organisations producing goods and services for profit;

- **Public** – again, where possible we avoid the use of this term in this document given both its ambiguous meaning and the growing consensus in research literature that 'the public' is never a pre-existing entity, but is always constructed and brought into being by different interventions, agendas and situations (see, for example, the work of the Creating Publics research programme at the Open University; not to mention the rich history of studies of 'the public' from Lippman to Habermas to Fraser). Where we do use the term here we use it to refer to the people of the UK as a whole, in their identity as citizens and setting aside any affiliation they may have to private or governmental or other institutions;

- **Public services** – those organisations that provide services to the public on behalf of the public/government, including health, education, defence, waste management, utilities, broadcasting;

- **Policy makers** – individuals working in government (national and local) and non-governmental public bodies who set regulatory frameworks for universities and research.

[11] See, for example, David Watson's 2011 analysis: 'to date, there has been comparatively little systematic objective description and analysis of these activities. The written material that exists frequently is purely descriptive and often mostly self-promotional. Indeed this field of endeavour is long on rhetoric and short on objective analysis. If in fact the impacts of this work are significant, then it is problematic to have such a limited supply of credible data about it.' (Watson, 2011: 32). Or Chris Duke's observation: 'despite the wealth of qualitative research, narrative and oral history of recent decades, the case for engagement remains poorly valued and ill-defended in government circles' (Duke, 2011: 702)

[111] This is what Eleanor Belfiore calls the production of 'conceptual reason', the knowledge and insight that can provide evidence and challenge assumptions about phenomena and thereby open up new areas for debate and action.

[iv] Indeed, one of the most useful and substantial recent surveys of engaged university work is presently available only in hardback at a cost of £170, making it prohibitively expensive for most engagement practitioners without a sympathetic university library and far out of the reach of many community partners wishing to better understand how the local university might be of use to them.

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