

# Universities as Regional Innovation Hubs

*A case study from Coventry University including success criteria and challenges*

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# Background: regional innovation in the UK

- The UK is currently in a period of national policy change
  - Recently appointed Prime Minister and changes to government structures
  - Development of a new industrial strategy which will have a substantial element of 'place' within it
  - BREXIT and confused rhetoric around immigration
- We do not have consistent regional governance across the country
- Innovation in particular is driven at the national and local level, with some geographies clustering on a larger scale (e.g. Midlands' Engine)
- Disparate innovation ecosystem and significant policy changes presents both opportunities and challenges

# My background

- Career in innovation for over 26 years
- Established the first Industrial Liaison Office at Coventry University
- Secondments to national & regional government as Innovation Advisor
- Board Director of our national body for innovation: Innovate UK
- Board member of the National Growth Board
- HE representative to the regional economic driver: Midlands' Engine
- Board member of the Coventry Local Economic Partnership
- Board member Universities UK and Chair of University Alliance

# 'The Coventry Way'

*Our approach is partnership driven, entrepreneurial and sustainable, both financially and operationally. We are recognised within the higher education and business sectors as leading edge and disruptive through innovation.*

*This confidence and consistency, combined with award-winning delivery and fast-paced implementation is what we describe as 'The Coventry Way'.*



# Coventry University: Our Success

## University of the Year

Times Higher Education Awards 2015

## Modern University of the Year

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2016

## Ranked No.15 UK University

Guardian University Guide 2016

## Top University for Student Satisfaction

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2016

## 95% of graduates are employed or in further study

DLHE survey 2013/14

## The Queen's Awards for Enterprise:

International Trade 2015

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Top University  
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The Times and Sunday Times Good  
University Guide 2016

Ranked No.15  
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Modern University  
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The Times and Sunday Times  
Good University Guide 2016

THE AWARDS  
2015

WINNER  
UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR



# Coventry University: Innovation Hub (1 of 3)



## Business and particularly SME collaboration

- Coventry University Enterprises Limited
- Infrastructure: Technology Park from 1998 onwards. Latest addition, which is building on University strengths to meet industry need:
  - National Transport Design Centre
- Business support services for innovation: Midlands Innovation Relay Centre and now Enterprise Europe Network hub since network inception

# Coventry University: Innovation Hub (2 of 3)

## Research as the catalyst to innovation

- Research that provides 'excellence with impact' with 10 discipline-specific research centres
- Research Institutes which address local economic development priorities and / or business need:
  - Health Technologies Design
  - Serious Games Institute
  - Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Centre (in partnership with Unipart Manufacturing Group)
- Two University Research Centres which address global challenges:
  - Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations
  - Centre for Agroecology and Water Resilience



# Coventry University: Innovation Hub (3 of 3)



## Students as innovators of the future

- Employability embedded throughout the curriculum, with strong links to industry
- Entrepreneurship – Add+vantage modules in every year; CU Social Enterprise; creative enterprise skills in Arts & Design
- Global Graduates: very student offered an international experience: visits, placements, summer schools etc. Also Global Leaders Programme.

# Universities as ‘Anchor Institutions’

The concept “anchor institution” emerged during the 2000s predominantly within the US as a new way of thinking about the role that **place-based institutions** can play in addressing societal problems and in building a more democratic, just and equitable society. Coventry is committed to our role as an anchor institution within our UK locations (Coventry, London, Scarborough).

## ***Anchor Institution Checklist:***

- Does it have a large stake and an important presence in the city and community?
- Is it a centre for culture, learning and innovation with enormous human resources?
- Is it one of the largest employers, providing multilevel employment possibilities?
- Is it among the largest purchasers of goods and services in your region?
- Is it a job generator?
- Does it have economic impacts on employment, revenue gathering and spending patterns?
- Does it consume sizeable amounts of land?
- Does it have crucial relatively fixed assets and is not likely to relocate?
- Does it attract businesses and highly skilled individuals?

# Success criteria: Universities as Innovation Hubs

Clear vision of the University's role as an economic development partner

Long term commitment to building capabilities AND infrastructure

Visionary and committed leaders throughout the University

Commitment to collaboration to create real impact

# Success criteria: Regional innovation players

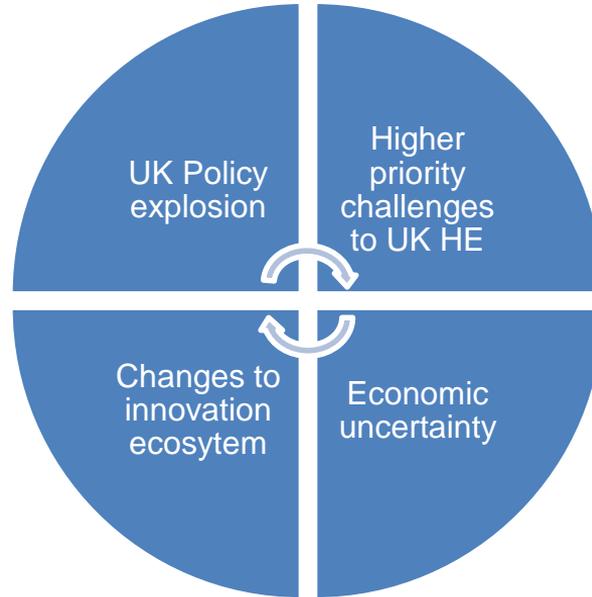
Clear understanding of a University's role as an economic development partner

Long term commitment to utilising the various strengths of universities

Visionary and committed leaders

Commitment to collaboration to create real impact

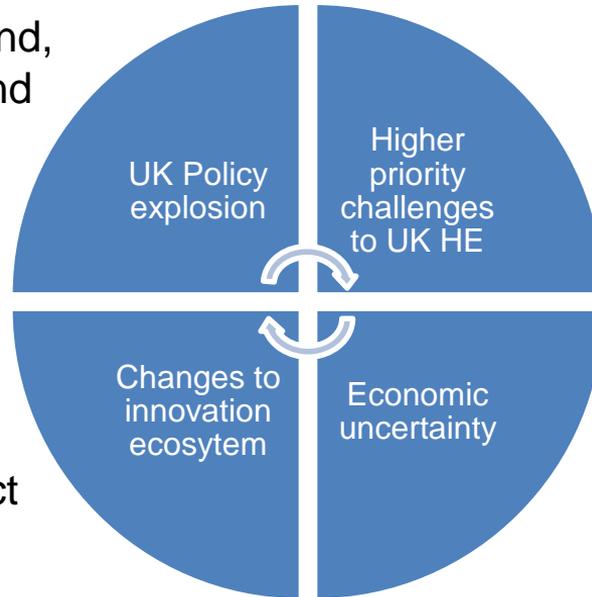
# Current key challenges for Coventry University



# How is Coventry University responding?

Resource staff to understand, translate and implement and ensure the leadership engaged and supported

Increase collaboration within the sector and react positively to change



Maintain long-term commitment to innovation as an economic driver for all

Work closer with current partners and continue to build wider international relationships

# Key recommendations: Universities

1. Commitment to regional innovation as a long-term strategy
2. Commitment to collaboration as a long-term strategy
3. Direct leadership involvement at committee or board level in regional economic organisations and strategy development
4. Communicate and educate innovation partners about key strengths
5. Use infrastructure as key strength to maximise economic impact
6. Build capability and ensure engagement by relevant research and professional support staff throughout the University
7. Increase collaboration within the HE sector

# Key recommendations: Innovation partners

1. Commitment to working with all relevant organisations (including Universities) on regional innovation as a long-term strategy
2. Commit to collaboration with Universities as a long-term strategy
3. Build knowledge of University capabilities, capacity and appetite to get involved in economic development
4. Where possible, embed staff into Universities through committee membership, guest lecturing or as visiting professors
5. Utilise the next generation of innovators by offering student projects, placements and internships

**Thank you. Any questions?**