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LPIP HUB

THE CIVIC 6 FRAMEWORK – THE EVOLUTION OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES IN RESPONSE TO PLACE, POLICY AND GROWTH

LOCAL POLICY INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP HUB

SEPTEMBER 2026

Professor Bec Riley, City-REDI University of Birmingham

UK Research and Innovation

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Executive Summary

This report introduces the Civic 6 Framework: a strategic typology designed to understand how UK universities organise and deliver civic, place-based, and public policy engagement. As universities increasingly act as anchor institutions, their roles in supporting inclusive economic growth, tackling inequalities, and strengthening regional governance have diversified. Yet, these efforts vary widely in structure, mission, and effectiveness. The Civic 6 Framework provides clarity by categorising institutional models, comparing business approaches, and identifying the conditions that support impactful civic engagement.

Drawing on comparative case studies of selected major UK institutes - including City-REDI, the Heseltine Institute, Insights North East, YPERN, the Productivity Institute, Policy@Manchester, and the Bennett School of Public Policy - the analysis benchmarks institutional models against five core evaluation dimensions: mission and scope, funding, governance, outputs, and impact strategy. Institutes were also assessed against ten critical success factors for successful places, such as shared political will, long-term investment, local knowledge, and adaptability.

The review identifies six core models of civic and policy engagement emerging across UK universities:

Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes - Deeply integrated with regional governance, focused on economic development, modelling, and inclusive growth.

Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes - Co-producing policy with communities and public services, with a strong orientation toward social equity and public service reform.

Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives - Multi-university partnerships coordinating regional policy engagement through fellowships, labs, and distributed networks.

Productivity and Economic Performance Institutes - Research-intensive centres addressing national productivity and long-term economic performance.

Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks - High-level, conceptual institutes producing interdisciplinary research on governance, wellbeing, technology, and societal challenges.

Translational Policy Communication Platforms - University-wide initiatives focused on amplifying academic research through accessible policy communication.

The report emphasises that no single model is superior. Instead, the most effective approaches are shaped by local context, funding landscapes, and institutional strengths. Many institutes operate as hybrids, evolving over time and blending features from multiple models to remain resilient and relevant. A review of four Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIPs) shows that even when funded under the same programme, local conditions generate different business models:

- Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP) aligns with the Networked Collaborative model.

- Rural Wales LPIP aligns with the Civic Engagement model.
- EPIC Futures Northern Ireland combines Civic Engagement with Translational Communication.
- Forth H2O blends Interdisciplinary Think Tank characteristics with Civic Engagement.

The analysis also highlights the enabling role of national meta-platforms, including the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), and the LPIP Hub, which strengthen coordination, capacity building, and shared learning across the sector. Overall, the Civic 6 Framework offers a structured foundation for funders, policymakers, and universities to evaluate existing models, design future initiatives, and foster more coherent, impactful civic university ecosystems.

Key Findings

Key Finding: UK universities are adopting increasingly diverse civic and policy engagement models.
Universities are testing and trying approaches and have been for several years. Models change over time and to suit funding and partnership arrangements.

Key takeaway
Institutional approaches vary significantly in mission, funding structure, governance, and engagement style. This diversity reflects both local needs and universities' strategic choices.

Key Finding: The Civic 6 Framework effectively categorises this diversity
This is a broad typology with variation in the detail included. The typology enables universities to test and move through the typology.

Key takeaway
The six models capture the spectrum of activity from deeply embedded regional institutes to communication-led platforms, creating a shared language for comparison and planning.

Key Finding: Effective civic institutes align strongly with critical success factors for places
University-based investments with a civic purpose deliver better on government missions locally.

Key takeaway
Institutes that support shared political will, long-term capacity, robust local knowledge, and evidence-based monitoring deliver more impactful regional engagement.

Key Finding: Hybrid models are increasingly common and advantageous
Hybrid models are sustainable and offer long-term benefits.

Key takeaway
Hybrid institutes pivot in response to funding opportunities, policy windows, and/or institutional restructuring. Flexibility strengthens resilience.

Key Finding: Networked and meta-platforms amplify impact
Various networks exist that can support these different models; however, many are aimed at professional services roles. There is a gap around the academic research leadership networks.

Key takeaway
Organisations like UPEN and NCCPE provide coordination, training, matchmaking, and shared tools that institutional models rely on to avoid duplication and strengthen national capacity. The LPIP Hub has provided networked capacity across academic leadership in thematic areas.

Key Finding: Short-term funding cycles remain a significant barrier
The funding environment for this type of activity which is both building infrastructure and delivering on government missions is very unstable and creates vulnerability in the systems that could deliver UKRI objectives.

Key takeaway
A dependence on a constant cycle of unstable project-based or time-limited funding undermines continuity, capacity building, and sustained regional partnerships. It is noteworthy that in a LPIP event in early 2026 bringing place programmes together it became evident that programmes currently supporting place are coming to an end in 2026.

Key Finding: Monitoring and evaluation practices vary widely
Depending on the model and approach, different structures may or may not capture impact/KPIs. So, evidence of delivery and impact is variable and might relate to specific projects rather than the team/institute.

Key takeaway
Data-rich institutes aimed at achieving REF impact (e.g., City-REDI, the Heseltine Institute) have strong quantitative/qualitative impact measures, while engagement-led models rely more on qualitative or internal ad hoc evidence, making comparison challenging.

Key recommendations

1. Adopt the Civic 6 Framework for strategic planning - Universities, funders, and policymakers should use this framework to map existing models, identify gaps, benchmark against peers, and choose appropriate developmental pathways.

2. Support hybrid and adaptive models - Institutes should be encouraged to evolve and combine strengths from multiple models, responding to local contexts and emerging policy needs.

3. Invest in long-term capacity and infrastructure - Funders should prioritise sustained funding for data tools, modelling, policy fellows, community engagement structures, and administrative support.

4. Strengthen and resource national coordination platforms – National coordinating structures should receive stable investment to provide shared resources, training, and infrastructure across the civic ecosystem.

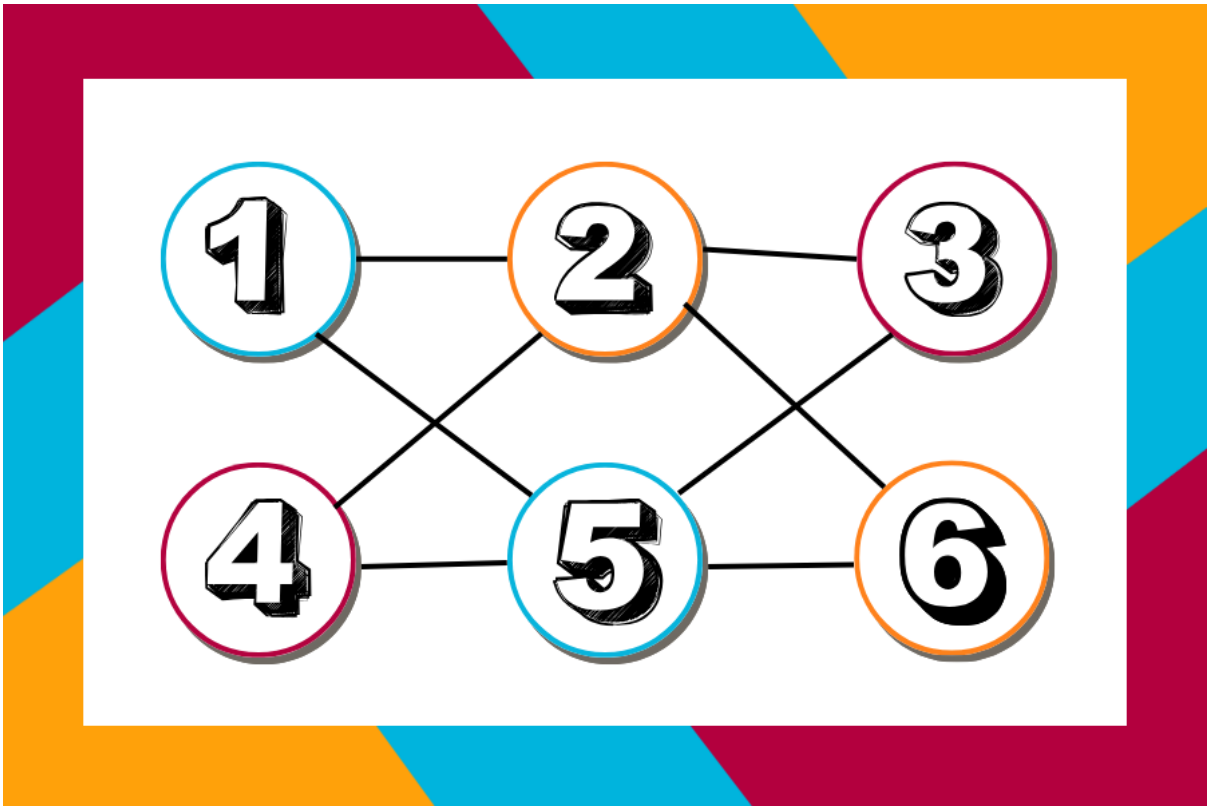
5. Enhance research translation capabilities - All models benefit from strong communications capacity to ensure academic insights reach policymakers in accessible, timely formats.

6. Promote participatory and inclusive approaches - Support institutes to deepen co-production with communities, particularly marginalised groups and underrepresented places, such as rural areas.

7. Facilitate cross-institute learning and evaluation - Create shared frameworks, communities of practice, and joint evaluations to strengthen evidence of what works in civic and policy engagement.

8. Encourage universities to align multiple models strategically - Where several models coexist within one institution, universities should articulate roles clearly to avoid duplication and improve external understanding.

The Civic 6 Framework provides a structured lens for funders, policymakers, and universities to align strategies, foster collaboration, and maximise the civic impact of higher education in addressing place-based challenges.



1. Introduction – The Civic 6 Framework

This report introduces the **Civic 6 Framework**: a strategic typology designed to map and understand the diverse ways in which UK universities address public policy, civic society, local and place development needs, whilst also developing their role as local anchor institutions. The foundational work of Goddard et al (2016) articulates the concept of the civic university and its role in regional development and leadership as well as why universities should be engaging in civic work.

A wide variety of business models have emerged supporting the need for universities to perform as anchor institutions and embedding themselves in local governance. This work sets out a new framework for conceptualising this strategic positioning and activity of universities, it builds on previous frameworks for how universities can adopt a leadership role and moves the thinking into the operational business models which have emerged to demonstrate that role (Goddard & Kempton, 2016). As universities increasingly play a central role in addressing place-based challenges from economic inequality to climate resilience there is a growing need to clarify the institutional models that underpin this work.

Within this report we do not address wider methods of civic impact such as student impact. However, all the models can utilise students as part of the civic assets:

- Student placements, dissertations, and projects embedded in local organisations
- Graduate retention and its relationship to place-based economic strategies
- Civic engagement through teaching and curriculum (e.g., service learning, community-based research methods)
- The role of postgraduate researchers in staffing civic engagement activities

Many of the case studies explored already integrate teaching and research, and many local authority partners already benefit from student projects and placements facilitated by the models in the civic 6 typology. Funding for these types of activities can be far more complex, and no model is dependent on this as a function.

Research Assessment and Knowledge Exchange Frameworks

The current policy landscape is driving more towards impact, as is the UKRI Strategy, demonstrating the value of universities is driving most funding interventions. Along with this are the assessment frameworks, which also set income levels. In practice, thee frameworks drive behaviour:

- REF incentivises institutes to produce documentable impact case studies, which can push them toward certain types of engagement (e.g., policy briefings with traceable influence) and away from others (e.g., long-term capacity building whose impact is diffuse).
- KEF metrics reward certain forms of knowledge exchange but may not capture the full range of civic engagement.
- The tension between REF-readiness and genuine civic responsiveness is real, institutes may prioritise projects that generate "impactable" outputs over those that address the most pressing local needs.
- These frameworks drive behaviours, as funding is a driver of adaption. So they can also affect the choice of civic models adopted, dependent of availability of these funds and how institution want to shape internal behaviour.

A Strategic Typology for University-Based Policy and Civic Engagement

The **Civic 6 Framework** is a strategic classification system that identifies and distinguishes six core models through which UK universities engage with public policy, civic society, and regional development. Developed to support funders, policymakers, and institutional leaders, the framework provides a clear lens for understanding how different types of university-based institutes contribute to place-based innovation, policy impact, and civic responsibility.

Drawing on detailed case studies and comparative analysis of over a dozen UK institutes - including City-REDI (the City-Region Economic Development Institute) at the University of Birmingham, the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool, YPERN (the Yorkshire & Humber Policy Engagement Research Network), Insights NE (Insights North East), the WCPPE (Wales Centre for Public Policy Public Policy) at Cardiff and the Productivity Institute at the University of Manchester and the Bennett Institute, The University of Cambridge - this report explores how these business models differ in mission, funding, governance, outputs, and impact. It is important to note that universities will have more institutions and models at play than the ones reviewed. This report also examines how national coordination platforms such as UPEN, the PRISM (the Professional Research Investment and Strategy Managers) network and NCCPE support and connect these models.

The Civic 6 Framework helps:

- **Funders** identify and support diverse models of impactful engagement.
- **Policymakers** understand how universities contribute to regional/national priorities.
- **Universities** benchmark and evolve their civic and policy engagement strategies.

The Six Civic Models

1

Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes
Deeply integrated with local governance and economic strategy, these institutes focus on regional growth, modelling, and inclusive development.

2

Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes
Centres that co-produce policy with communities and public services, emphasising social equity, participation, and public value.

3

Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives
Multi-institutional partnerships that coordinate academic-policy engagement across regions, often through fellowships, labs, and shared platforms.

4

Performance of Single Policy Issue Institutes
Research-intensive centres focused on a national policy challenge, may have local/regional scope to look at the same challenge.

5

Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks
University-based think tanks that integrate diverse disciplines to address complex societal challenges through conceptual and applied research.

6

Translational Policy Communication Platforms
Although different from the previous five models, this model can co-exist and be easier to establish. These university wide initiatives translate academic research into accessible formats for policymakers, enhancing visibility, relevance, and uptake.

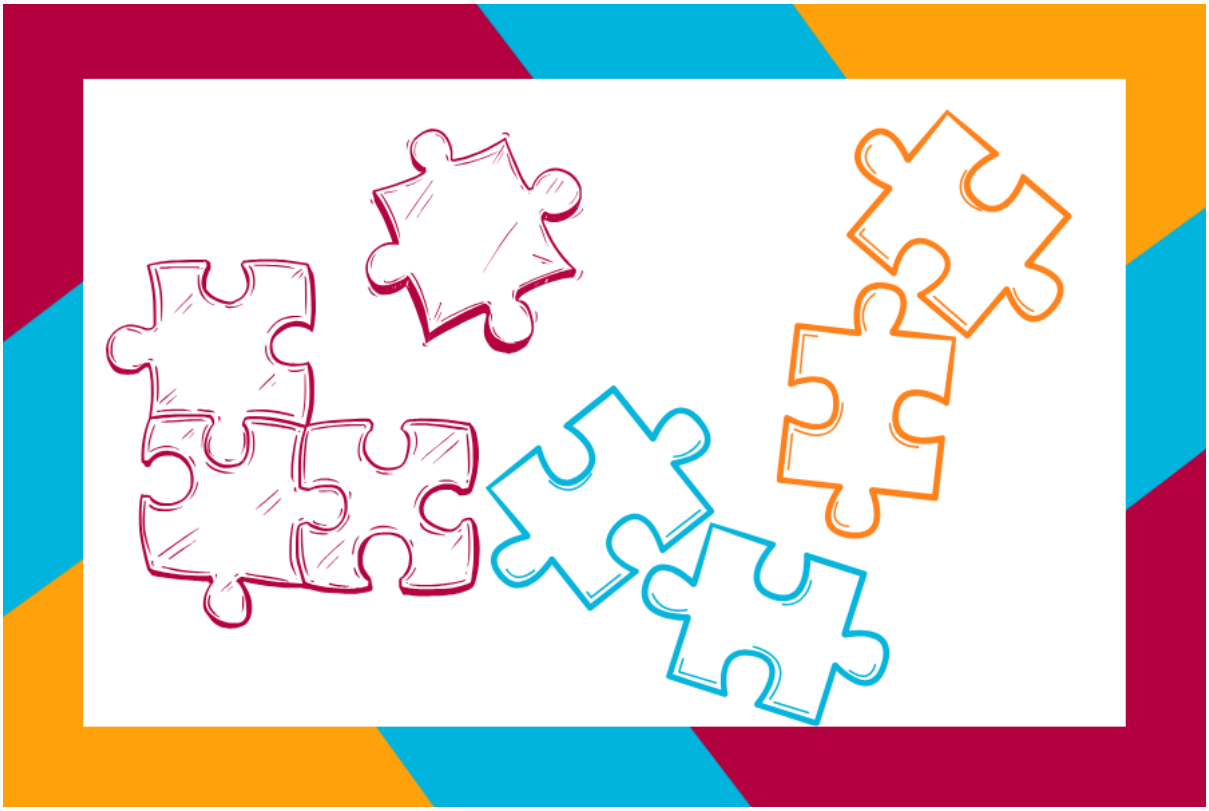
Civic 6 Infrastructure meta-platform models

Institutions like the LPIP Hub, UPEN and NCCPE play a vital role in supporting and connecting some of these models, offering coordination, capacity building, and public engagement infrastructure.

NCCPE has a focus on public engagement and civic infrastructure and is best understood as a meta-platform that supports and enhances the work of Translational Policy Communication Platforms and Civic Engagement Institutes. It does not produce policy content itself but enables

others to do so more effectively through engagement strategies and institutional change. UPEN has a focus on policy and acts as a national coordination and capacity-building platform that supports both translational communication and collaborative policy engagement. It does not produce research or policy itself but amplifies and connects the work of others across the typology. The LPIP Hub is best understood as a meta-platform that supports and connects the Civic 6 models particularly, the Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes and Civic Engagement Institutes rather than fitting neatly into one of them. It has a specific place-based focus and looks at delivery and policy innovation. It plays a critical enabling role, much like UPEN and NCCPE, in the broader ecosystem of civic university engagement.

By offering a structured lens on institutional diversity, the Civic 6 Framework supports more strategic investment, collaboration, and innovation in the evolving landscape of civic university engagement.



2. Methodology

The report introduces the Civic 6 Framework: a typology for understanding how UK universities act as civic and policy actors in place-based development. It moves beyond conceptual models to examine operational business models and their impact.

The key research question addressed is how do UK university-based institutes structure their business models and strategic approaches to deliver civic and policy engagement, and what typologies best explain their role in supporting place-based development and critical success factors for regional growth?

This question requires examination of:

- The structural dimension (business models, governance, funding).
- The strategic dimension (mission, engagement style, adaptability).
- The impact dimension (alignment with success factors for places and policy influence).

Definition: Business Model (in the context of this report)

In this report, a business model refers to the structured way in which a university-based institute organises its mission, resources, partnerships, funding, governance, and outputs to deliver civic, policy, and place-based impact. It describes how an institute creates value, for whom, and through what operational mechanisms, including the mix of research activities, engagement approaches, stakeholder relationships, and tools that enable it to function effectively within a regional and/or national policy ecosystem.

A business model in this context includes:

- Mission & Purpose – the institute's core aims, thematic focus, and the problems it exists to address.
- Funding Structure – how the institute sustains itself financially (e.g. university core funding, UKRI grants, commissions, philanthropy).
- Governance & Accountability – how decisions are made, who provides oversight, and how partners are engaged.
- Organisational Structure – staffing, expertise, and the professional or academic capabilities required.
- Modes of Engagement – mechanisms for interacting with policymakers, communities, business, and other civic stakeholders.
- Outputs & Activities – the types of research, tools, communication products, policy interventions, or capacity-building programmes produced.
- Impact Pathways – how the institute seeks to influence policy, support place-based change, build capacity, or shape public discourse.

In short, a business model captures the practical, operational form of a civic or policy institute, how it converts its resources, relationships, and expertise into sustained, real-world impact for places and policymakers.

Approach

The methodology for developing the Civic 6 Framework was grounded in a multi-step approach. First, a comparative case study analysis was undertaken, reviewing nine major UK university-based institutes such as City-REDI, the Heseltine Institute, YPERN, Insights North East, the Productivity Institute, and the Bennett School. This provided a rich evidence base to understand diverse missions, structures, and impacts.

Building on this, the research progressed to typology development, grouping these institutes into six strategic models. The classification considered factors such as mission, funding arrangements, governance structures, outputs, and styles of engagement with civic and policy actors.

To assess effectiveness, each model was evaluated against ten critical success factors for successful places (Taylor et al., 2024). These included elements such as shared political will, long-term investment, local knowledge, robust monitoring and evaluation, and adaptability to changing policy contexts.

The study also incorporated a business model analysis, examining income streams, staffing profiles, governance arrangements, and associated risks. Alongside this, a meta-platform mapping exercise explored the enabling roles of national coordination bodies such as UPEN, NCCPE, and the LPIP Hub in supporting and connecting these institutes.

Finally, the research applied a hybrid and adaptive lens, recognising that these models are not static. Institutes evolve over time in response to shifts in funding, partnerships, and policy priorities, often blending characteristics from multiple models to remain relevant and resilient.

Evaluation Dimensions

To evaluate the typology and its relevance to place-based, growth-focused institutes, the analysis considered five key dimensions. Mission and scope were assessed to determine whether an institute operates primarily at a local or regional level, or whether its focus extends to national or global policy agendas. The funding model was examined to understand the balance between core university support, competitive research grants from bodies such as UKRI, philanthropic contributions, and commissioned work for external partners. Governance structures were reviewed to identify whether institutes are led by a single university or operate through distributed networks and collaborative arrangements. The nature of outputs was analysed, ranging from technical tools and economic dashboards to policy briefs, blogs, and other forms of public engagement. Finally, the impact strategy was explored, focusing on how institutes seek to influence policy through evidence-based research, capacity building, and knowledge exchange mechanisms.

Typology of Models Identified from this process comprises:

1. Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes

Example: City-REDI – Data-driven, deeply integrated with local governance.

2. Civic Engagement & Public Policy Institutes

Example: Heseltine Institute – Co-production with communities, social equity focus.

3. Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives

Example: YPERN – Multi-higher education institute (HEI) partnership for regional policy innovation.

4. Performance of Single Policy issue Institutes

Example: Productivity Institute – National-scale, research-intensive.

5. Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks

Example: Bennett Institute – Conceptual, high-level policy frameworks.

6. Translational Policy Communication Platforms

Example: Policy@Manchester – Research translation and visibility.

Critical Success Factors for Places

Work by City-REDI and CIPFA (Taylor et al., 2024) has explored whether English Local Authorities could emulate the success of international cities in overcoming significant social and economic inequalities. This work identified 10 critical success factors:

1. Shared political will and partnership
2. Clear strategy and vision
3. Investing for the long term
4. Local knowledge including digital and data infrastructure
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Adapting national frameworks to local needs
7. Diversification
8. Key players
9. Adequate and responsive funding
10. Transferable learning and knowledge exchange

The Civic 6 review looks at how the different institutes support these success factors and play a pivotal role locally, to shape growth and reduce disparities. The report highlights how difficult it is to move away from short-term funding in the context of frequent changes to national policy, and how capacity is a real constraint. By reviewing the business models of the institutes established we can look at how far universities are supporting the delivery of the success factors and establish long term continuity and partnership. We can also look at how successful the different business models are and how different models work in different places.

This report does not go into depth looking at the infrastructure required for each model as this can vary between the models in the typology. Different models may vary in terms of the digital and data infrastructure of instance, where key questions come into play the models are developed or flexed within adaptive structures. Most case studies are looking at AI tools at the moment, but these are very experimental and emergent.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in this Research

This report made structured use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools at several stages of the research process. In the interests of transparency and methodological rigour, this section sets out where and how AI was used, the safeguards applied, and the limitations acknowledged.

The author's approach aligns with the guidance issued by UKRI on the use of generative AI in research funding processes (UKRI, 2024), the UK Research Integrity Office's Embracing AI with Integrity guidance (UKRIO, 2025), the Russell Group's principles on the use of generative AI (Russell Group, 2023; reissued 2025), and leading academic publishers' editorial policies on AI use in research (e.g. Springer Nature, 2025; Nature Portfolio, 2025). However, it should be noted that this is a developing area, and although the use of AI has been used for many years in research the recent rapid pace of change has expanded the role of AI in research and highlighted the challenges of developing consistent guidance.

The UKRIO guidance on Embracing AI with Integrity (2025) is aimed at supporting researchers to use tools responsibly and the development of this research has been exploring this. It highlights two main ways that researchers use AI, as a research assistant, and/or a research tool. The guidance highlights recommendations which have been taken account of in the methodology and report. This guidance has helped set out the following methodological approach taken here.

Purposes for Which AI Was Used

AI tools, principally large language models (LLMs) including Claude (Anthropic) and CoPilot (Microsoft) were used, in a closed University of Birmingham environment as part of a university pilot. This means all work was held securely on university platforms. This report is not an academic publication, but a review to offer practical guidance and cases studies to those establishing research and policy institutes. AI has been used to aid analysis and speed up the review of information and publication of this policy support report. No primary data or interview data was used, and all analysis was carried out on secondary publications widely available. Therefore there were no confidentiality risks with using AI. At all times the approach was to maintain the 'human-in-the-loop' approach (UKRIO 2025); all use of AI was checked and verified by the author, LPIP partners/Board members and experts in the institutions/networks.

- **Literature and landscape review:** AI was used to assist with the initial identification and summarisation of relevant literature on civic university frameworks building on previous City-REDI research on civic impact, as well as identifying policy engagement models, and place-based institutes. This supplemented, but did not replace, traditional searches for relevant Institutes/functions, internet searches and manual reading of primary sources. All sources cited in the report were verified by the author against original publications.
- **Structuring and refining the typology**: The development of the Civic 6 typology involved iterative analytical work in which AI was used as a thinking partner, testing the coherence of proposed categories, identifying potential overlaps or gaps, and stress-testing the dimensions of the business model framework against case study data. The typological categories and their defining characteristics were determined by the author; AI assisted with the process of articulation, refinement, and internal consistency checking. The categories and their defining characteristics are the only new IP created in the work and belongs to the author.
- **Comparative analysis and pattern identification:** AI was used to assist with the systematic comparison of case study institutes across the business model dimensions (mission and purpose, funding structure, governance and accountability, organisational structure, modes of engagement, outputs and activities, and impact pathways). This included drafting initial comparative tables and identifying patterns across cases that were then verified and refined through the author's own analysis. This was also checked with Institute leads where appropriate for accuracy.
- **Drafting and editorial support**: AI was used to assist with drafting sections of the report text, generating initial formulations that were then substantially revised, restructured, and rewritten by the author. AI was also used to aid copy-editing, consistency checking, and identifying gaps or inconsistencies in argumentation across the full document.
- **Framework development:** The diagnostic tools, decision matrices, and evaluation frameworks in Section 5 were developed through an iterative process in which AI was used to

generate initial drafts and structural options, which were then refined through the author's judgement and tested against the case study evidence and expert opinion from the LPIP Hub team and institute leads.

Safeguards and Quality Assurance

The use of AI in research of this kind raises legitimate questions about accuracy, originality, and intellectual accountability. The following safeguards were applied throughout:

- **Factual verification:** All factual claims, statistics, dates, funding figures and institutional details generated or surfaced with AI assistance were independently verified against primary sources, institutional websites, published reports, and official documentation. Where verification was not possible, the claim was removed or flagged as unconfirmed.
- **Source integrity:** AI tools are known to generate plausible but fictitious references (so-called "hallucinations"). No reference was included in this report solely on the basis of AI output. Every cited source was checked for existence and accuracy by the author. The bibliography was compiled and verified manually.
- **Analytical judgement:** While AI was used to support analytical processes, all interpretive judgements, including the definition of typological categories, the identification of critical success factors and failure modes, the assessment of individual case studies, and the formulation of recommendations, represent the author's own conclusions. AI served as an analytical aid, not as a substitute for expert judgement.
- **Iterative human review**: No AI-generated text was included in the final report without substantial human review and revision. In most cases, AI-generated drafts served as starting points that were significantly rewritten to reflect the author's voice, analytical perspective, and knowledge of the field.

Ethical Considerations

The use of AI in academic research is an evolving area with legitimate concerns about transparency, attribution, and intellectual integrity. This statement is intended to address those concerns directly. The author takes full responsibility for the content, analysis, and conclusions of this report. The use of AI tools is acknowledged as a methodological choice that enhanced the efficiency and scope of the research process, but the intellectual contribution, the framework, the typology, the comparative analysis, and the recommendations, is the author's own. It should also be noted that the use of AI in this research is consistent with the emerging norms of major research funders and academic publishers, which increasingly recognise AI as a legitimate research tool provided its use is transparently disclosed and appropriate safeguards are in place.

Limitations

The use of AI tools introduces certain limitations that should be acknowledged:

- **Training data cut-offs**: LLMs are trained on data up to a certain date and may not reflect the most recent developments in the rapidly evolving landscape of civic university engagement. The author mitigated this by supplementing AI-assisted research with direct consultation of recent publications, institutional websites, and where possible direct communication with institute leaders.

- **Bias in training data**: AI tools may reflect biases present in their training data, including geographic, disciplinary, and institutional biases. The author was attentive to this risk, particularly in ensuring that the typology and case study selection were not skewed toward institutions or models that are more prominent in online discourse and rather these were based on the Author's own knowledge of the institutions that exist in current networks and structures due to knowledge as a research institute leader. Consultation was also undertaken with some of the institutes during the course of this research to check the cases studies and findings.
- **Reproducibility**: AI-assisted research processes are not straightforwardly reproducible in the way that traditional systematic review methods are, since LLM outputs vary between sessions and are influenced by prompt design. The author has retained records of key AI interactions to support transparency but acknowledges that exact replication of the AI-assisted elements of the research process would not be possible without the authors/institute leader's tacit knowledge being applied especially around operating models which are not in the public domain.

Despite these limitations, the author is confident that the use of AI tools has enhanced the quality, breadth, and analytical depth of this report, while the safeguards described above ensure that the integrity of the research has been maintained.

3. Analysis

This document provides a case study comparison of selected major UK university-based policy and place-focused institutes, based on publicly available information. The comparison includes their business models, income streams, staffing, founding dates, key projects, and notable impact case studies. The examples were chosen for their diversity, both geographically and in approach. They were also chosen to represent the breadth of differing approaches to similar civic engagement challenges.

Reviewing the cases studies enabled the typology to be developed through assessing characteristics, background and purpose and looking at thematic similarities and differences. This approach applying the success factors enabled the typology to emerge from what already exists.

Case Studies Against Civic 6 Framework

The tables below summarise the case studies, full details of case studies can be found in the appendix, which include case study narratives, full description, evaluation, key projects, business models, limitations and performance against the critical success factors.

The model assignments given below are indicative, this report highlights that most case studies point to needing to be hybrid and adaptive to be successful. Therefore, most institutes/centres/networks combine elements of multiple types (especially over time).

The model assignments below reflect the dominant orientation based on the evidence reviewed.

The critical success factors are the authors assessment based on the case study evidence (and published information of the institutions). The tables are designed to enable a quick comparison rather than precise measurement and enable institutes to review, challenge and assess their own success or direction of travel. A more robust assessment would need standardised metrics and self-reporting by the institutes themselves (a potential direction for future work).

The funding comparison must be treated with caution as institutes report funding in different ways (i.e. total grants s annual budgets), the figures all reflect different timescales and periods. The star rating below gives an indicative relative importance of each sources to the institute's model, not the absolute amounts.

Table 1 Case Study Institutes - Overview and key Characteristics

	City-REDI	Heseltine Institute	Insights North East	YPERN	ICPL
University	Birmingham University (Business School)	Liverpool	Newcastle (lead) + Northumbria	12 Yorkshire & Humber HEIs	Teesside
Established	2015	2013	2022	2022	2023
Civic 6 Model	Type 1: Civic-Embedded Regional Development	Type 2: Civic Engagement & Public Policy	Type 2/6: Translational Platform and Type 2 elements	Type 3: Networked Regional Policy Collaborative	Type 1: Civic-Embedded Regional Development
Mission	Evidence-based research for inclusive economic, social, and environmental development	Bridge research and public policy through civic engagement; sustainable and inclusive cities	Bridge academic research and place-based policymaking through accessible, actionable insights	Transform academic-policy collaboration for inclusive, place-based policies	Catalyse social, cultural, and economic change in regions in transition
Geographic Focus	West Midlands (with UK-wide and international)	Liverpool City Region	North East England	Yorkshire & Humber	Tees Valley
Staff (FTE)	30+ and network of 40+ associates & fellows	9	Small core team + network	15–20 core + network across 12 HEIs	10–15
Core Funding	£4m initial UoB investment (pay-back model); Research England RED funding	University of Liverpool core	£5.5m total (£2.8m Research England Development Fund)	£6m+ Research England Development Fund + institutional contributions	Teesside University strategic investment
Other Funding	ESRC, EPSRC, AHRC, Innovate UK, EU, private sector	UKRI, NIHR, civic partnerships	Partner contributions (universities, NHS, local authorities, Combined Authority)	ESRC, AHRC, Innovate UK; YPIP secured additional £5m	UKRI, NIHR, regional authorities, charitable foundations
Key Partners	WMCA, local councils, government departments (Treasury, DSIT, MHCLG)	Liverpool City Region CA, local councils, civic organisations	Newcastle & Northumbria Universities, NHS trusts, local authorities, NE Combined Authority	Combined Authorities, local councils, civic organisations across region	Tees Valley CA, UK2070 Commission, civic and creative sector
Primary Outputs	Economic dashboards, models (SEIM-UK), policy briefings, evaluations, business cases, academic papers, podcasts, policy advice	Policy briefings, evaluations, co-produced reports, civic lectures, academic papers	Evidence synthesis, policy briefings, expertise-matching tool, Policy Challenge Labs – Defining the challenge workshops	Policy analysis, evidence reviews, toolkits, systems-thinking approaches	Policy advice, evaluations, leadership development programmes, capacity building
Key Impact Examples	WM Economic Impact Monitor; influenced Treasury Green Book; £100m+ attracted to region through Business Cases; 200+ research projects	Influenced LCR devolution/growth strategies; COVID-19 policy briefings; Households into Work evaluation	AI expertise-matching tool; regional policy research ecosystem; health inequalities strategy	Influenced Local Growth Plans for MCAs; £11m+ combined funding leveraged	Skills for Growth Programme; NIHR health policy; UK2070 Commission

Impact Strategy	Real-time monitoring, scenario planning, co-produced policy	Social infrastructure and health equity focus	Co-created evidence for regional policy challenges	Capacity building and regional coordination	Place leadership and community empowerment
What Makes It Unique	Place-first; tool-rich (economic models, dashboards); deep civic integration; multi-modal	Place-based; Community-first; participatory methods; social infrastructure focus; accessible outputs	Multi-university partnership; digital innovation (AI tools); rapid evidence synthesis	Distributed network model across 12 HEIs; "live laboratory" for devolution	Place leadership emphasis; creative/cultural sector integration; UK2070 connection

Table 2: Case Study Institutes — Overview and Key Characteristics

	Productivity Institute	Policy@Manchester	WCPP	PPS (Southampton)	Bennett School
University	Manchester (lead) + 9 UK partners	Manchester	Cardiff	Southampton	Cambridge
Established	2020	2012	2017	2012	2018 (School status 2025)
Civic 6 Model	Type 4: Productivity & Economic Performance	Type 6: Translational Policy Communication	Type 5: Interdisciplinary Think Tank (with Type 6 elements)	Type 6: Translational Policy Communication	Type 5: Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tank
Mission	Improve understanding of UK productivity for better living standards and well-being	Influence policymakers by providing robust, research-informed evidence and ideas	Provide Welsh Government and public services with high-quality, independent evidence and advice	Enhance public policy impact of University of Southampton research	Rethink public policy in an era of turbulence and inequality
Geographic Focus	UK-wide + international	Greater Manchester + national/global	Wales	Southampton/South Coast + national/international	UK (with regional and international work)
Staff (FTE)	Core team + 40+ co-investigators across partners	10–15 core (+ access to 6,000+ UoM academics)	~23	8–12 (est.)	25–30
Core Funding	ESRC/UKRI (£32m)	University of Manchester (social responsibility strategy)	Welsh Government + ESRC + Cardiff University (£9m over 5 years)	University of Southampton	Peter Bennett Foundation + Cambridge resources
Other Funding	Philanthropic (e.g., £1.5m Sir Terry Leahy donation)	UKRI, EU, charitable foundations (via UoM research teams)	UKRI, EU, NIHR	UKRI, NIHR (via university research teams)	UKRI, British Academy, trusts, philanthropic donors
Key Partners	9 partner universities, government, devolved administrations, Regional Productivity Forums	Greater Manchester CA, government departments, MPs, civic leaders	Welsh Government ministers and civil servants, Welsh public Services	Government departments (DWP, MHRA, NDA), local authorities	UK government departments, local authorities, international bodies
Primary Outputs	Working papers, policy briefs, The Productivity Agenda, Productivity Laboratory,	Policy briefings, thematic reports (On Hydrogen, On Critical Technologies),	Rapid evidence reviews, ministerial briefings, policy reports (200+ in 5 years), roundtables, blogs	Consultation responses, policy briefings, fellowship programmes, workshops	Policy reports, frameworks (social infrastructure metrics), MPhil

	National Productivity Week	roundtables, blogs			programmes, conferences
Key Impact Examples	The Productivity Agenda blueprint; 8 Regional Productivity Forums; Productivity Laboratory	Influenced energy/hydrogen/ critical tech policy; Greater Manchester Policy Hub	Influenced Welsh COVID-19 recovery, poverty, Net Zero strategies; ; ESRC Finalist, ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2019	Influenced national consultations (MHRA, NDA); Policy Associates Scheme	Social/cultural infrastructure frameworks; AI regulation debates; Centre for Future of Democracy
Impact Strategy	Long-term economic performance analysis	Bridging academia and policy through accessible formats	Knowledge brokerage: synthesising literature for policymakers	Evidence-informed policymaking at multiple scales	Theoretical and philosophical policy contributions
What Makes It Unique	National scale; large-scale ESRC funding; Regional Productivity Forums; data science hub	Translation function (not primary research); leverages entire university; media-facing	What Works Network member; direct ministerial access; rapid-response capability	Capacity-building focus; fellowships and training for researchers; institutional service model	Philanthropic foundation model; combined research + teaching (MPhil); global governance scope

The analysis above demonstrates that products and services can be very similar across models i.e. academic papers, policy briefings, thought leadership, events, but the method, scale and funding of delivery can be very different. The audiences for the outputs can vary by geography, influence, type and needs, but the core mechanism of activity delivery can appear very similar. This is worth recognising across models, as although they may look the same externally the operating model may vary dramatically and the core purpose/mission might be very different.

Table 3 Funding Model Comparison

Institute	Core University	Research Councils (UKRI)	Commissioned Work	Philanthropy	Other
City-REDI	★★★ (£4m initial UoB)	★★★ (£19m RE Dev Fund, ESRC, EPSRC, AHRC, UKRI)	★★★ (govt depts, CAs)	★	EU, private sector
Heseltine	★★	★★ (UKRI, BA, NIHR)	★★ (LCR CA, civic)	★	Civic partnerships
INE	★★	★★★ (£2.8m RE Dev Fund)	★	—	NHS, LA contributions
YPERN	★★ (12 HEI contributions)	★★★ (£6m+ RE Dev Fund)	★★ (CAs, LAs)	—	Innovate UK
ICPL	★★	★★ (UKRI, NIHR)	★★ (regional)	★ (foundations)	—
Productivity Inst.	★	★★★★ (£32m ESRC)	★	★★ (£1.5m Leahy)	—
Policy@Manchester	★★★ (embedded in UoM)	★ (via UoM teams)	★	—	—
WCPP	★★ (Cardiff)	★★★ (ESRC/NIHR)	★★★ (Welsh Govt)	—	Welsh Government core

PPS	★★★ (UoS core)	★ (via UoS teams)	★	—	—
Bennett School	★★ (Cambridge)	★★ (UKRI, BA)	★	★★★★ (Bennett Foundation)	Trusts, donors

Key: ★ = minor source; ★★ = significant source; ★★★ = major source; ★★★★ = dominant source; — = not evident

The table above demonstrates most of these models have hybrid funding models, and income comes from a variety of sources. However, the diversity might also reflect the age of the institution and the need for adaptability. Older Institutes have a more diverse funding structure beyond initial large investments. The exception being type 6 which are more aligned to university requirements for policy impact and dissemination, where the funding is predominantly the university. Larger institutes are more likely to have philanthropic investments, which may point to greater assurance of success when an individual/foundation is investing in research capability our outputs.

Table 4 Performance Against Critical Success Factors for Places

Critical Success Factor	City-REDI	Heseltine	INE	YPERN	ICPL	Prod. Inst.	Policy @Mcr	WCPP	PPS	Bennett
1. Shared Political Will & Partnership	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●○
2. Clear Strategy & Vision	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●
3. Investing for Long Term	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●
4. Local Knowledge	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●○○	●●○	●●●	●●○	●○○
5. Monitoring & Evaluation	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●○
6. Adapting National to Local	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●○
7. Diversification	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●●
8. Key Players	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●●	●○○	●●○
9. Adequate & Responsive Funding	●●○	●●○	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●○○	●●●
10. Transferable Learning	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●○	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●○	●●●

Key: ●●● = strong alignment; ●●○ = moderate alignment; ●○○ = limited alignment

These ratings are derived from the case study evidence presented in the appendix of the report and reflect the degree to which each institute demonstrably addresses each factor through published documents. They are indicative rather than precisely calibrated; the detailed case studies (Appendix) provide the supporting evidence.

Table 5 LPIP Pilots — Summary Against the Framework

	YPIP (Yorkshire)	Cymru Wledig (Rural Wales)	EPIC Futures (Northern Ireland)	Forth H2O (Scotland)
Lead Institution(s)	12 HEIs (Leeds, York, Hull, Sheffield Hallam + others)	Aberystwyth, Bangor	Ulster University	University of Stirling
Civic 6 Model Fit	Type 3: Networked Regional Policy Collaborative	Type 2: Civic Engagement & Public Policy	Type 2: Civic Engagement (with Type 6 Translational elements)	Type 5: Interdisciplinary Think Tank (with Type 2 Civic Engagement)
Mission	Tackle regional inequalities through academic-policy collaboration	Address rural challenges through place-based innovation and policy co-creation	Build inclusive, participatory, and innovative policymaking in NI	Address water-related challenges through place-based innovation
Focus Areas	Health inequalities, skills, devolution, local growth	Rural economy, Welsh language, connectivity, environment	Youth engagement, democratic innovation, inclusive governance	Water governance, climate resilience, environmental justice
Place Context	Polycentric region; emerging combined authorities; 12 HEIs	Dispersed rural communities; Welsh-language policy; devolved government	Post-conflict governance; unique devolution settlement	Scottish devolution; distinct regulatory frameworks
Engagement Model	Multi-HEI network with policy fellows and regional coordination	Community-embedded; bilingual; co-production with rural stakeholders	Participatory; youth-focused; democratic innovation	Interdisciplinary; cross-sectoral (water, environment, health)
Strengths	Broad institutional collaboration; strong civic/policy engagement; systems-thinking	Deep community engagement; alignment with devolved policy; bilingual capacity	Democratic innovation focus; youth participation; inclusive governance	Complex systems approach; environmental justice; cross-sectoral integration
Risks/Limitations	Coordination complexity across 12 HEIs; variable outputs	Smaller institutional base; less quantitative modelling	May lack economic modelling tools (though has labour observatory)	High coordination needs; outputs may be less accessible to non-specialists

Although the LPIP programme, was one bidding structure under a defined call, the table above shows that the resulting business models reflect the local place circumstances, the structures already in place and the interests and expertise of the leadership team. In terms of the focus, this reflects the needs and challenges being faced by the local area, each having a different emphasis. The chosen structure reflects what already existed locally i.e. YPERN enables the YPIP approach to develop, a partnership model which is difficult to grow quickly. There is also a stronger community aspect to the institutions developed under the LPIP programme which tends to favour type 2 elements of the typology.

Table 6 Key Distinguishing Features Across Models

Dimension	Type 1: Civic-Embedded	Type 2: Civic Engage-ment	Type 3: Networked	Type 4: Policy Issue Led	Type 5: Think Tank	Type 6: Translat-ional
Organising Principle	Place & regional economy	Community & social equity	Regional collabor-ation	National economic performance	Ideas & interdiscip-linary inquiry	Research communic-ation & translation
Primary Audience	Combined Authorities, local govt, business	Communit-ies, civic partners, NHS	Multiple LAs, regional bodies	National government business, devolved administrat-ions	National/ international policy community	Policymak-ers, media, public
Typical Scale	City-region	City/sub-region	Multi-authority region	National (with regional nodes)	National/ international	University-wide
Research Orientation	Applied, data-driven, modelling	Participatory, co-produced	Distributed, capacity-building	Discipline-led, large-scale	Conceptual, interdisciplinary	Translation (not primary research)
Exemplar Case Study	City-REDI	Heseltine Institute	YPERN	Productivity Institute	Bennett School	Policy@ Manchester
Typical Funding Model	Mixed portfolio (university + UKRI + commissions)	University core + project grants	Pooled (Research England + HEI contributions)	Large single funder (ESRC)	Philanthropy + university + grants	University core funding
Key Vulnerability	Funding fluctuations; mission drift from commercial work	Scale constraints; hard to measure impact	Coordination complexity; identity diffusion	Disconnect from local needs; academic orientation	Limited place embedding; resource-intensive	Dependent on policy windows; limited original research

Analysis of the case studies does pull out distinguishing features, although noting that institutes can move around these features over time, and in response to funding options i.e. an institute may move from local provision of research to national due to funding availability at the local level (City-REDI). Some notable distinctions from the analysis is that type 1, 2, 5 and 6 tend to be highly associated with 1 university (host), whereas type 3 and 4 are more likely to have a wider network of collaborators/partners.

The Hybrid or Adaptive Model

While the Civic 6 Framework identifies six distinct models, in practice, university-based institutes rarely remain fixed within a single category. Instead, they often adopt hybrid or adaptive approaches, blending characteristics from multiple models to respond to changing policy priorities, funding landscapes, and partnership opportunities.
Institutes evolve for several reasons:

- Funding Shifts: A centre initially funded for regional economic modelling may diversify into public service reform or translational communication if new grants or commissions emerge.

- Policy Windows: National agendas such as levelling up or Net Zero can prompt institutes to expand beyond their original remit, incorporating interdisciplinary research or networked collaborations.
- Partnership Dynamics: Strong civic partnerships may lead an institute to deepen community engagement, moving closer to a Civic Engagement model, while collaborations with other universities can push it toward a Networked Regional Policy Collaborative.
- Strategic Repositioning: Universities often realign institutes to meet institutional priorities, creating hybrid structures that combine research-intensive functions with communication platforms or capacity-building programmes.

A further, and increasingly significant, driver of adaptation is the shifting institutional landscape of place-based governance in England. Over the past decade, the creation and expansion of combined authorities and directly elected mayors, now covering the majority of England's population, has fundamentally reshaped the partnership terrain for university-based policy institutes. Where institutes once engaged primarily with individual local authorities, they now also navigate multi-tier governance arrangements involving combined authorities, constituent councils, and sub-regional partnerships, each with distinct commissioning priorities and decision-making cultures. The English Devolution Act 2025, which establishes a framework for strategic authorities with new powers over spatial planning, skills, transport, and economic development, is accelerating this process further. For university-based institutes, devolution creates both opportunities, new partners with strategic budgets seeking robust evidence, and challenges, as political boundaries and governance structures shift beneath long-standing relationships.

At the same time, local government reorganisation, principally the move toward unitary authorities in many parts of England, is redrawing the map of local partnership. Institutes that built relationships with county and district councils now face the prospect of engaging with newly constituted unitary authorities whose priorities, capacity, and institutional memory may differ significantly from their predecessors. Combined with wider fiscal pressures on local government, these changes mean that the demand-side landscape for university civic engagement is not static but continuously evolving. Institutes that adopt adaptive or hybrid models, maintaining flexible governance structures, diversified funding, and the capacity to pivot between different modes of engagement, are better equipped to respond to these shifting conditions. This structural turbulence in the place agenda reinforces the argument that rigid adherence to a single model of university-based policy engagement is neither realistic nor strategically desirable; rather, the most resilient institutes are those capable of reconfiguring their partnerships, outputs, and governance arrangements as the wider institutional environment changes around them.

Adaptive models are characterised by:

- Mixed Funding Portfolios: Combining core university support, UKRI grants, commissioned work, and philanthropic contributions.
- Multi-Modal Outputs: Producing both technical tools (e.g., economic dashboards) and accessible policy briefings.
- Flexible Governance: Operating within a university while engaging external advisory boards and cross-institutional networks.
- Responsive Impact Strategies: Shifting emphasis between evidence generation, policy translation, and civic participation as contexts change.
- Entrepreneurial Leadership: individual academic and policy researcher leadership vital in establishing these adaptive approaches.

This flexibility is not a weakness but a strategic strength. Institutes that can pivot between models, for example, from a Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institute to a Translational Policy Communication Platform, are better positioned to maintain relevance, secure funding, and maximise impact in an uncertain policy environment.

The role and skills required in establishing and sustaining these institutes is key. In practice, many civic institutes are closely identified with the founding directors, whose reputation, networks and energy are critical to each model's success. This creates a significant succession risk, what happens when the founders move on, retires or loses institutional support? This links to the key players discussion in this paper, internal leadership and stakeholders are as important as the external.

The models should be interpreted as exemplars. Some institutes may not fit neatly into a single model but rather may incorporate elements of several. No model is perfect and often institutes move through different models depending on funding and partner requirements. As civic-led institutes are responsive to partner need the model must be fit for purpose, but flexible enough to change if the funding model or partnership changes. Those models which adopt flexible practices and have a mixed funding base are more likely to weather changing politics and structures.

Universities may also have a number of these models in existence at the same time, depending on funding and partnerships. Although on the face of it these institutions may all appear to perform a similar function, their business model may mean that they are quite different in purpose and function, as well as what they do deliver and what they do not. To the external audience this can lead to confusion and misunderstandings. Developing a typology can help universities and institutions understand where they position themselves, who their cohort and comparators are, as well as providing a range of alternative developmental pathways to utilise.

The main issue with adaptive models is evaluation of success, with blended funding and changing roles/remits the associated outcomes and impacts can change. However, many institutes are set up with overarching areas of research, based on the expertise and the contracts/income they attract which can create consistency, but attribution of impacts can be problematic for funding. Careful management and capture of impacts against funding is crucial.

The Civic 6 Framework provides some guidance on how we can understand the different structures for partnership working and asses their purpose and impact through these models. In developing the framework, we also utilised the critical success factors (Taylor et al 2024) of shared partnerships, investing for the long term, monitoring and evaluation, diversification, adequate and responsive funding, clear strategy and vision, local knowledge (where relevant to the model) adapting national frameworks to meet local needs and ensure the key players are involved.

Failure, Closure, and Institutional Mortality

The preceding analysis has focused, necessarily, on what makes university-based policy institutes succeed, the conditions under which they are established, the models they adopt, and the critical success factors that sustain them.

But any framework intended to guide strategic decision-making must also deal with the conditions under which institutes decline, contract, or cease to exist. Institutional mortality is not a marginal phenomenon: the landscape of university-based policy engagement is littered with initiatives that flourished for a period and then quietly wound down, were absorbed into other structures, or simply stopped producing.

Understanding why this happens, and identifying early warning signs, is essential for universities, funders, and civic partners seeking to build durable institutions.

Yet failure is systematically under-studied in the literature on university civic engagement (Perkmann *et al.*, 2013). There are obvious reasons for this: institutions that close rarely commission reports on their own demise; the individuals involved move on and have limited incentive to revisit painful experiences; and the evidence base, funding records, partnership agreements, governance documents all tend to dissipate when an institute ceases to function.

The result is a significant survivorship bias in the evidence available to policymakers: the case studies that inform strategic planning are overwhelmingly drawn from institutes that have survived and thrived, not from those that have struggled or failed (Satheesan, 2025). This section seeks to begin correcting that imbalance.

A Taxonomy of Failure Modes

Analysis of institutes that have declined or closed, including several that were considered for inclusion as case studies in this report but ultimately excluded because they were no longer active, suggests that institutional failure rarely has a single cause. Rather, it typically results from the interaction of several vulnerability factors, which can be grouped into six categories.

1. Funding Concentration and Grant Dependency

The single most common proximate cause of institute decline is the loss of a major funding stream, typically a large research council grant, without adequate replacement. Institutes that depend on a single large grant (often from ESRC or Research England) for 50 per cent or more of their operating budget are structurally vulnerable to the cyclical nature of competitive research funding.

When the grant ends and renewal is not secured, the institute faces an abrupt contraction that may be difficult to recover from, particularly if core staff have been employed on fixed-term contracts tied to the grant.

The Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC) at the University of Glasgow provides an illustrative example. The Centre was established with significant ESRC funding and produced substantive research on urban sustainability and education. However, following the loss of its ESRC funding, the Centre's activity declined sharply, the last news on its website dates from 2024, and it has effectively ceased to function as an active research institute.

This pattern, establishment through a major grant, productive activity during the grant period, and rapid decline when funding ends, is common across the sector and represents a structural vulnerability of the grant-dependent model. This is also a risk factor for the LPIP programme, the Hub and the pilots, unless sustainable models are implemented.

The contrast with the Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI) at the University of Strathclyde is instructive. The FAI, established in 1975, has maintained its position as Scotland's leading independent economic research institute across five decades (University of Strathclyde, 2025a), a period encompassing multiple funding cycles, economic crises, and changes in government policy.

Its resilience derives in part from a diversified funding base that combines university core support, commissioned research for government and business, philanthropic investment, and research council funding. No single source dominates to the extent that

its loss would threaten the institute's viability. The FAI's recent expansion into social policy and health equity through the Scottish Health Equity Research Unit (SHERU), established in 2024 and supported by the Health Foundation (Fraser of Allander Institute, 2024; SHERU, 2025), further illustrates how adaptive diversification can sustain an institute across changing policy environments.

Implication for the Civic 6 Framework: Institutes aligned with Models 4 (Single Policy Issue Institutes) and 5 (Interdisciplinary Think Tank), which often depend heavily on large competitive grants, may be more vulnerable to this failure mode than those aligned with Models 1 (Civic-Embedded) and 2 (Civic Engagement), which tend to have stronger university core funding and commissioned income streams.

2. Leadership Dependency and Succession Failure

Many university-based policy institutes are closely identified with their founding directors, individuals whose academic reputation, personal networks, political skills, and entrepreneurial energy were essential to the institute's establishment and early success (Perkmann *et al.*, 2013). This creates a form of leadership dependency that becomes a critical vulnerability when the founding director moves on, retires, or loses institutional support. The risk is compounded when the director's external networks, such as relationships with senior civil servants, combined authority leaders, government ministers, or research council programme directors, are personal rather than institutional, and are not systematically transferred to successors.

Succession failure can take several forms. In the most acute cases, the departure of the founding director triggers a rapid decline in external partnerships, commissioned income, and institutional visibility, leading to contraction or closure within two to three years. In other cases, the transition is managed but the successor adopts a different strategic direction, shifting the institute's focus, model, or partnership base, in ways that alienate existing stakeholders without establishing new ones. A third pattern involves the departure of the director coinciding with a university restructuring that subsumes the institute into a larger faculty or school, eliminating its distinctive identity and autonomy.

Several of the case study institutes examined in this report have already navigated, or are currently navigating, leadership transitions. The experience of those that have done so successfully suggests that effective succession planning requires: early identification of potential successors (ideally from within the institute); deliberate investment in institutional, as opposed to personal, relationships with key partners; documentation of partnership histories and governance arrangements; and a governance structure that provides continuity through an advisory board or steering group whose membership is not dependent on the director.

3. Institutional Restructuring and Strategic Reprioritisation

University-based policy institutes exist within host institutions that are themselves subject to periodic restructuring, strategic review, and financial pressure. When a university undergoes significant reorganisation, merging faculties, closing departments, or shifting strategic priorities, institutes that were established under a previous strategic plan may find themselves orphaned, relocated, or absorbed into structures that do not value their distinctive contribution. The risk is particularly acute for institutes that sit outside traditional departmental structures, as they may lack the institutional protections (such as departmental representation on senate or academic board) that shield established academic units.

The current crisis in UK higher education makes this failure mode especially salient. As of mid-2026, over 100 UK universities have announced redundancy or restructuring programmes (QMUCU, 2026), driven by a combination of declining international student recruitment, the erosion of the real-terms value of tuition fees, increased employer costs, and reduced public funding (Office for Students, 2025; Times Higher Education, 2026). The OfS has warned that 45 per cent of English higher education providers face deficits in 2025–26 (Office for Students, 2025). In this environment, university-based policy institutes, particularly those funded from discretionary budgets rather than ring-fenced external grants, are vulnerable to being cut as part of wider institutional savings programmes.

The University of Dundee provides a cautionary example of how institutional mismanagement can cascade through an entire university's activities. The Gillies Report, published in June 2025 following an independent investigation commissioned by the Scottish Funding Council, identified 'clear failings in financial monitoring, management and governance' including poor financial judgement, inadequate management and reporting, weak governance, and a lack of agility in responding to falling income (Gillies, 2025; Scottish Funding Council, 2025). While the Dundee case relates to the university as a whole rather than a specific institute, it illustrates how governance failures at institutional level can create an environment in which even well-performing research units become collateral damage.

Implication for the Civic 6 Framework: Institutes aligned with Models 4 and 5, which are typically embedded within specific faculties or departments, may be more vulnerable to restructuring than those aligned with Models 1 and 2, which tend to have broader institutional mandates and more diversified internal support. Networked models (Type 3) may have a degree of protection through their multi-institutional structure, as the closure of one partner does not necessarily terminate the network.

4. Partnership Erosion and Governance Change

Institutes whose model depends on deep partnerships with specific external organisations, particularly local authorities and combined authorities, are vulnerable to changes in the governance landscape. Local government reorganisation (the move to unitary authorities in many parts of England), the creation or reconfiguration of combined authorities, changes in political leadership following elections, and the reallocation of budgets within partner organisations can all disrupt relationships that took years to build. The English Devolution Act 2025 and associated local government reorganisation proposals are currently reshaping the partnership terrain for many institutes, as discussed earlier in this report.

This failure mode is distinct from funding loss (though the two are often connected). An institute may retain its funding but lose its primary route to policy influence if its key partner organisation is abolished, merged, or changes political direction. The risk is greatest for institutes aligned with Models 1 (Civic-Embedded) and 2 (Civic Engagement), whose missions are defined by specific place-based partnerships.

5. Mission Drift and Identity Loss

A subtler form of institutional decline occurs when an institute gradually loses its distinctive identity through incremental changes in focus, staffing, or activity. Mission drift typically results from a series of individually rational decisions, accepting a large grant in a tangential area, hiring staff whose expertise does not align with the institute's core mission, or expanding into new geographies without adequate capacity, that cumulatively erode the institute's coherent identity and dilute its brand. Over time, the institute becomes indistinguishable from a generic university research group, losing the distinctiveness that attracted partners, funders, and media attention in the first place.

The concept of 'use-inspired basic research' (Stokes, 1997) provides a useful frame here: the most successful policy institutes occupy a distinctive position that combines academic rigour with practical relevance. Mission drift typically pulls an institute toward one pole or the other, becoming either too academic (and losing its policy partners) or too consultancy-like (and losing its academic credibility). Maintaining this balance requires deliberate strategic management, which is itself a form of institutional capability that not all institutes develop.

6. Sectoral Crisis and the Current Environment

The final failure mode is not institute-specific but systemic: sector-wide financial or structural crises that reduce the capacity of universities to sustain discretionary activities, including civic engagement institutes. The current UK higher education funding crisis represents the most severe such challenge in a generation. Times Higher Education has tracked thousands of job cuts across UK universities since 2024 (Times Higher Education, 2026), while UCU analysis suggests that over 10,000 posts have been

affected (QMUCU, 2026). In this environment, universities are reducing discretionary expenditure, freezing recruitment, and in some cases withdrawing from strategic commitments, including civic engagement activities, that do not generate direct income or meet immediate regulatory requirements.

Notably, even the University of Strathclyde, home to the resilient FAI, announced in November 2025 that it was seeking £35 million in savings from recurring costs, weeks after the departure of a long-serving Principal (QMUCU, 2026). This illustrates that no institution, however well-managed historically, is immune from sector-wide pressures.
For university-based policy institutes, the sectoral crisis creates a compound risk: the host institution may cut core funding (threatening Models 1, 2, and 6, which depend on university investment), while simultaneously the policy environment becomes more turbulent (creating greater demand for exactly the kind of evidence and analysis that institutes provide). The institutes most likely to survive this period are those with diversified funding, strong external partnerships, and the institutional protection afforded by formal governance arrangements that insulate them from short-term budget cuts.

Early Warning Indicators

Drawing on the failure modes identified above, the following indicators may signal that an institute is entering a period of vulnerability:

Table 7 Early Warning Indicators

Warning Signal	What It Suggests
More than 50% of income from a single grant or funder	Funding concentration risk
Founding director approaching retirement with no identified successor	Leadership dependency
Host university announcing restructuring or voluntary severance schemes	Institutional vulnerability
Key external partner undergoing reorganisation or political change	Partnership erosion risk
Significant expansion into areas outside core mission	Potential mission drift
Declining media visibility and partner engagement	Loss of relevance and profile
Increasing proportion of staff on fixed-term contracts	Structural fragility
No independent advisory board or governance structure	Lack of institutional protection

Building Resilience: Strategies for Institutional Durability

The analysis above suggests six strategies that universities, funders, and institute directors can adopt to build institutional resilience:

1. **Diversify funding deliberately.** No single funding source should represent more than 40 per cent of an institute's operating budget. This requires a deliberate strategy of building multiple income streams, combining university core support, commissioned research, research council grants, philanthropic funding, and income from training or consultancy activities, and managing the transitions between funding cycles. The FAI's model, which combines all of these, provides a benchmark (University of Strathclyde, 2025a) and in the case studies City-REDI and the Heseltine Institute both have this model.

2. **Institutionalise relationships.** External partnerships should be held by the institute rather than by individuals. This means formalising partnerships through memoranda of understanding, joint governance structures, and regular institutional (not just personal) engagement. When a director leaves, the partnership should survive because it is embedded in organisational routines, not personal networks (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990).

3. **Plan for succession.** Leadership transitions should be planned at least two to three years in advance, with potential successors given opportunities to build external visibility and partner relationships before they take on the director role. Advisory boards with external membership can provide continuity during transitions.

4. **Maintain distinctive identity.** Institutes should regularly review their activities against their founding mission and be willing to decline opportunities that would dilute their core focus. A clear, distinctive identity is both an academic asset and a form of institutional protection, it makes the institute harder to subsume into generic structures.
5. **Secure structural protection.** Where possible, institutes should seek formal recognition within university governance structures, a named centre with its own budget line, representation on relevant committees, and a mandate that is recognised in the university's strategic plan. Informal arrangements, however well-intentioned, provide inadequate protection during restructuring.

6. **Monitor the environment.** Institutes should maintain awareness of developments in their host institution (financial pressures, strategic reviews), their partner landscape (governance changes, political shifts), and the wider funding environment (research

council priorities, assessment framework changes). Early awareness of emerging threats allows for proactive adaptation rather than reactive crisis management.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: Who Benefits?

The Distributional Question

The preceding analysis has examined the structures, models, and critical success factors of university-based policy institutes, and the term "inclusive growth" appears frequently, both in the missions of the case study institutes and in the policy frameworks they serve. But the report has not yet addressed a more fundamental question: *who actually benefits* from these forms of civic engagement, and who may be excluded? This is not a peripheral concern. If university-based policy institutes are to fulfil their civic purpose, they must reckon with the possibility that their activities, however well-intentioned, may disproportionately serve communities and individuals who are already well-connected, articulate, and organised, while bypassing those who are most marginalised.

The Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) has identified this as a systemic challenge. Its 2021 report, Surfacing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within Academic-Policy Engagement, found that the vast majority of knowledge brokers within universities do not collect EDI data relating to policy engagement; that brokers overwhelmingly prioritise researchers on track for Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact case studies; and that where efforts to identify researchers from diverse backgrounds were noted, significant structural barriers existed (UPEN, 2021). The implication is clear: the academics who are supported to engage in policy work are not representative of the academic workforce; let alone of the communities the engagement is intended to serve.

Power, Participation, and the Ladder of Engagement

At the heart of the distributional question is power. Arnstein's (1969) classic Ladder of Citizen Participation, which ranges from manipulation and therapy at the bottom, through informing, consultation, and placation in the middle, to partnership, delegated power, and citizen control at the top, remains a valuable diagnostic for assessing the quality of civic engagement. Applied to the models described in this report, it prompts uncomfortable questions. Much of what university-based policy institutes describe as "engagement" or "co-production" may, in Arnstein's terms, sit at the level of consultation or placation rather than genuine partnership or delegated power. Citizens are invited to attend events, complete surveys, or provide feedback on research findings, but they rarely shape research agendas, hold decision-making authority, or control resources.

This is not a criticism unique to the institutes examined here. As Cornish *et al.* (2023) observe in their comprehensive review of participatory action research, power inequalities between academic researchers and community participants are inherent in university-community partnerships, and overcoming them requires deliberate redistribution of control, over funding, over research questions, and over the

interpretation and dissemination of findings. The risk, as Alexander (2021) demonstrates in his ethnographic study of co-production on a South London housing estate, is that participatory processes can reproduce existing exclusions rather than challenge them: the habitus of those with greater professional and cultural capital shapes the spaces in which participation takes place, causing those with less capital to disengage.

For university-based policy institutes, this dynamic is compounded by several structural factors:

- **Academic incentives.** Researchers are rewarded through REF for producing documentable impact case studies, which favours engagement with partners who can provide clear evidence of policy change, typically senior officials in well-resourced organisations. Engagement with grassroots community groups, whose influence on policy is diffuse and difficult to trace, is less likely to generate REF-ready outputs (UPEN, 2021).

- **Partner selection.** The report's case studies reveal that the primary partners of most institutes are combined authorities, local councils, government departments, and NHS bodies. These are legitimate and important partners, but they are also *institutional* partners, organisations with their own hierarchies, gatekeepers, and priorities. The voices of service users, residents of deprived neighbourhoods, and communities experiencing structural disadvantage are typically mediated through these institutions rather than heard directly.

- **Geography of engagement.** There is a risk that university civic engagement concentrates its benefits in areas closest to the university campus, the "civic quarter" effect, while neglecting more distant, dispersed, or rural communities within the same region. This is particularly relevant for institutes serving large and diverse geographies, such as YPERN (twelve HEIs across Yorkshire and Humber) or ICPL (Tees Valley), where patterns of deprivation are spatially uneven.

- **Language and accessibility.** Policy briefings, academic seminars, and evidence reviews, the primary outputs of most institutes, are produced in registers and formats that are accessible to policymakers and professionals but may exclude residents with lower levels of formal education, those for whom English is a second language, or those who are not connected to digital platforms.

Who Is Missing?

A candid assessment of the case study institutes suggests several groups whose engagement is limited or absent:

Communities experiencing deep deprivation. Research on civic involvement in deprived communities consistently finds lower participation in voluntary associations and civic activities (Ullrich et al 2024). The mechanisms include social isolation, weaker norms of civic obligation, and the practical barriers of time, transport, and childcare. University-based policy institutes that rely on existing civic infrastructure, community groups, residents' associations, parish councils, to reach local populations will

systematically under-reach the most marginalised neighbourhoods, where such infrastructure is weakest.

Young people. Despite the emphasis on intergenerational equity in several institute missions, young people, particularly those not in education, employment, or training (NEET), are largely absent from the engagement activities described in the case studies. EPIC Futures in Northern Ireland, with its focus on democratic innovation and youth engagement in a post-conflict context, and City-REDI which a catalogue of projects with various partners are notable exceptions.

Disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. The intersections between disability, health inequality, and place are well documented, yet none of the case study institutes reports systematic engagement with disabled people's organisations or with individuals whose health conditions limit their capacity to participate in conventional engagement formats.

Racially and ethnically minoritised communities. The case studies do not discuss whether the institutes' engagement activities reach racially and ethnically minoritised communities, or whether their research agendas reflect the concerns of these communities. In regions where minoritised populations are concentrated in specific neighbourhoods, as in parts of the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, and Greater Manchester, this is an area which should be considered (and promoted where it happens).

The voluntary and community sector. While several institutes list "civic organisations" among their partners, the depth and quality of engagement with small, grassroots voluntary organisations, as opposed to large, professionalised charities, is often unclear. The former are often closer to the communities most institutes aspire to serve, but they lack the capacity to engage in formal research partnerships.

Universities as Anchor Institutions: The EDI Dimension

The concept of the university as an anchor institution, an organisation whose long-term sustainability is tied to the wellbeing of the population it serves, and which is "rooted in place" with significant assets and resources that can influence local outcomes (NHS England, 2024), offers a framework for thinking about the distributional effects of civic engagement more broadly. As anchor institutions, universities affect their localities not only through research and knowledge exchange but also through their employment practices, procurement decisions, use of estates, and environmental footprint. Several of the case study institutes, notably the Heseltine Institute at Liverpool, have explicitly connected their civic engagement work to the university's anchor institution strategy (Jarvis, 2023).

But the anchor institution lens also reveals tensions. Universities are among the largest employers in many cities and regions, yet their workforce, particularly at senior academic levels, is not representative of local populations in terms of race, socioeconomic background, or disability (Advance HE, 2025). Their procurement supply chains may not

prioritise local businesses or social enterprises. And their physical presence, through campus development, student housing, and associated gentrification, can displace the very communities they claim to serve.

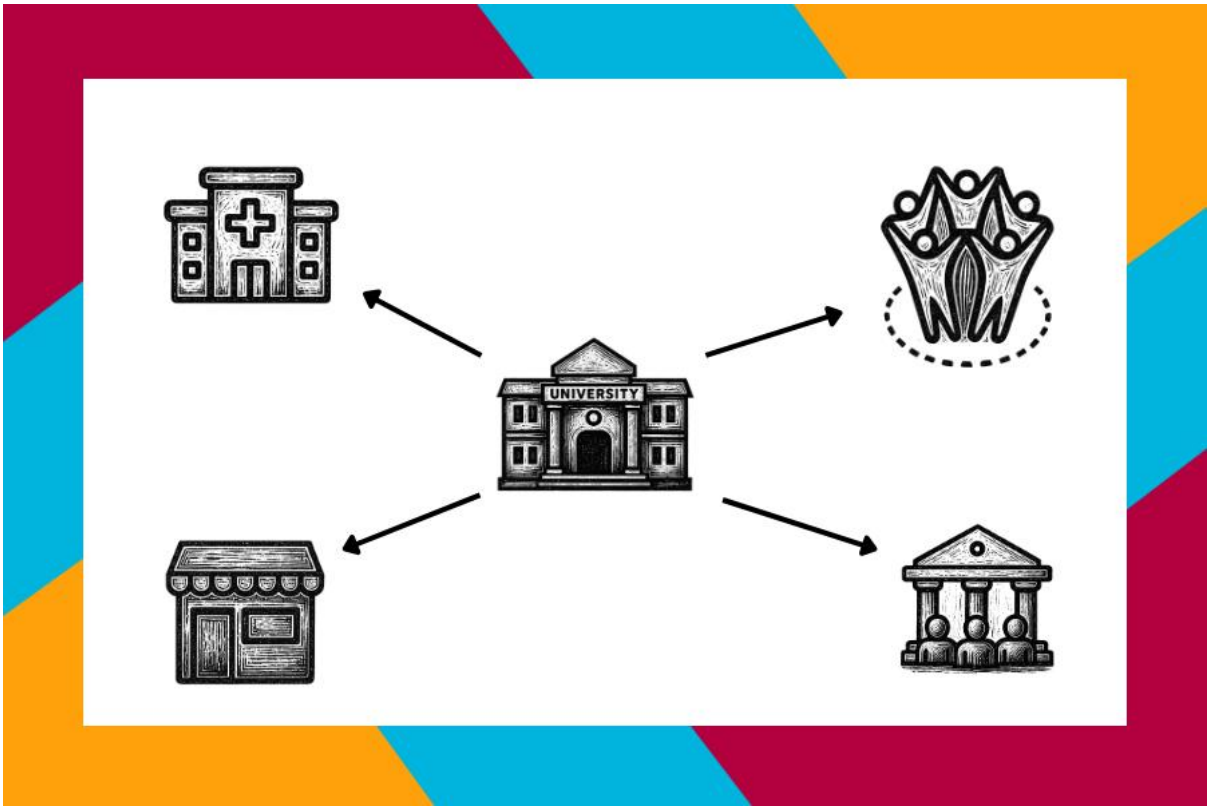
For university-based policy institutes, the implication is that credible civic engagement requires attention not only to what the institute produces (research, briefings, events) but also to how the university operates as an institution within its place. An institute that produces excellent research on inclusive growth while housed in a university that does not pay the real living wage to all its staff, or that has no meaningful engagement with local community organisations in its recruitment and procurement, faces a legitimacy deficit that no number of policy briefings can resolve.

Toward More Inclusive Models

Several of the case study institutes offer examples of practice that begins to address these challenges, though none has fully resolved them:

- **The Heseltine Institute's** community-based participatory research methods, including work in - North Liverpool, demonstrate how research can be designed *with* rather than *for* communities, though the institute acknowledges that scaling these approaches remains difficult.
- **YPERN's fellowship model**, which embeds early-career researchers in partner organisations across the region, creates pathways for diverse academic voices to contribute to civic engagement, though the model's reach into the most marginalised communities depends on the diversity of the partner organisations themselves.
- **INE's Policy Challenge Labs 'Defining the Challenge Workshops'** create structured spaces for co-production between academic researchers and civic partners, with potential to include community voices alongside institutional ones, though the extent to which this potential is realised depends on who is invited to participate.
- **ICPL's emphasis on place leadership and creative sector integration** offers a model for engaging communities through cultural and creative practice, which can reach populations that conventional policy engagement does not.
- **City-REDI role representing the University of Birmingham on the Birmingham Anchor Institutions Network** offering research, advice and guidance as well as playing an internal role influencing the practice and policy of the university.

These examples suggest that more inclusive engagement is possible, but it requires deliberate design, dedicated resources, and a willingness to cede some control over research agendas and outputs.



4. Typology of business models

Using the case study review of the different institutes commonly referred to in place-based working, the following typology has been developed looking at the key characteristics and similarities/differences. The typology is based on similarity of mission and model of delivery. This section develops the typology of business models and also describes how the examples above would fit into this typology, these models can then be utilised by following the approach in the next section.

This Civic 6 framework enables institutions to review the characteristics of different institutes/functions and make strategic decisions on how they want to develop their own options. It helps to think through the positives and negatives of different solutions to working locally.

The typology outlined below encapsulate the broad dimensions of what could be developed in response to local need. They should be used to shape discussion and debate alongside gathering the research and intelligence needs of places and policy requirements. No one size fits all, and some models may be more relevant at particular times and with certain partnership in place. These outlines can be used to assess what an institution currently has, where there are gaps and how the offer could be developed.

1. Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes

Definition: A Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institute (CERDI) is a university-based research and policy institute that is deeply integrated into the civic, economic, and governance structures of a specific region. Its core mission is to support inclusive and sustainable regional development through applied research, policy co-creation, and stakeholder engagement. Key topics are focused on sustainable, local economic growth and could include place-based growth, governance, business growth, innovation, skills and competitiveness.

Table 8 Core Characteristics CERDI

Feature	Description
Mission	Focused on regional economic development, inclusive growth, and place-based policy innovation.
Institutional Base	Hosted within a university but operates with a high degree of autonomy and civic orientation.
Team Composition	Multidisciplinary: economists, geographers, data scientists, policy analysts, and professional services staff.
Governance	Oversight from university leadership, external civic partners, and advisory boards.
Geographic Focus	Strongly place-based, typically focused primarily on a city-region or devolved area.

Example: City-REDI (University of Birmingham)

Key Features:

- **Mission:** Regional economic development and inclusive growth.
- **Funding:** Mixed portfolio (core university support, UKRI, local commissions).
- **Outputs:** Economic dashboards, policy briefings, modelling tools (e.g., SEIM-UK).
- **Engagement:** Deep partnerships with local authorities and civic bodies.
- **Impact Strategy:** Real-time monitoring, scenario planning, and co-produced policy.

Policy Relevance: Ideal for regions seeking data-driven, place-based policy innovation.
Risks: High resource demand; risk of mission drift if policy responsive consultancy for local partners dominates. Vulnerable to regional economic shocks and political changes.

The **Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes** model, exemplified by City-REDI, demonstrates strong alignment with nearly all critical success factors (Taylor et al., 2024). These institutes are deeply rooted in shared partnerships with local authorities,

combined authorities, and civic institutions. Their long-term investment in tools such as SEIM-UK and Economic Monitors reflect a commitment to sustainability and strategic foresight.

Monitoring and evaluation are robust, with real-time data dashboards and scenario planning tools that inform regional decision-making. Funding is diversified, combining core university support, research grants, and commissioned work, which enhances resilience.

These institutes operate with a clear strategy focused on inclusive growth and regional development, and their embeddedness ensures deep local knowledge.

They are particularly adept at adapting national frameworks, such as levelling-up policies, to local contexts, and they consistently involve key players in governance and delivery. These models often have strong digital and data infrastructure and economic models/tools dashboards and monitoring capability.

2. Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes

Definition: A Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institute (CEPPI) is a university-based centre that bridges academic research with public policy through deep engagement with communities, civic institutions, and government bodies. Its mission is to foster inclusive, participatory, and socially responsive policymaking work may go beyond economic into health, education, social care and devolution.

Table 9 Core Characteristics CEPPI

Feature	Description
Mission	Focused on civic engagement, public service reform, and inclusive policy development.
Institutional Base	Embedded within a university, often with strong ties to local government and community organisations.
Team Composition	Researchers from public policy, sociology, geography, health, education, and community development disciplines.
Governance	Guided by university leadership and advisory input from civic stakeholders.
Geographic Focus	Typically focused on a city or region, with potential for broader policy influence.

Example: Heseltine Institute (University of Liverpool)

Key Features:

- **Mission:** Civic engagement and public service reform.
- **Funding:** Core university support, UKRI, NHS, councils.
- **Outputs:** Community-focused research, co-production models.
- **Engagement:** Strong community links and participatory research.
- **Impact Strategy:** Social infrastructure and health equity.

Policy Relevance: Effective for social policy and public service transformation.
Risks: Harder to measure impact; qualitative outcomes dominate. Scaling beyond local context is challenging and funding is often short-term.

Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes, such as the Heseltine Institute, excel in community co-production and participatory research. These institutes foster strong civic partnerships and are highly responsive to local needs, particularly in areas like health equity and public service reform. Their strategies are clear and socially oriented, and they often build long-term trust with communities and public sector partners.

However, they may face challenges in scaling up due to limited investment and availability of funds locally, but they provide collaborative bridges between academic and local communities/authorities to widen the opportunity to access funding.

Monitoring and evaluation tend to be more qualitative, which can make impact harder to quantify but in general they rely on mixed methods approaches and are cross discipline.

Funding is often adequate but less diversified, and while these institutes are highly effective at involving key players, their ability to adapt national funding frameworks may depend on the strength of local governance structures and the ability to apply national frameworks locally (Taylor et al., 2024).

3. Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives

Description: A Networked Regional Policy Collaborative (NRPC) is a multi-institutional partnership that brings together universities, local authorities, and civic organisations to co-create policy solutions for regional challenges. It operates as a distributed model, leveraging the strengths of each partner to build capacity, share knowledge, and influence place-based policy.

Table 10 Core Characteristics NRPC

Feature	Description
Mission	Enhance regional policy impact through academic-policy collaboration and capacity building.

Institutional Base	Hosted across multiple universities, often coordinated by a lead institution or steering group.
Team Composition	Networked teams of researchers, policy fellows, and civic partners from diverse institutions.
Governance	Collaborative governance involving HEIs, local authorities, and regional stakeholders.
Geographic Focus	Regional (e.g. Yorkshire and Humber), with potential for replication in other areas.

Example: YPERN (12 Yorkshire HEIs)

Key Features:

- **Mission:** Academic-policy collaboration across a region.
- **Funding:** Multi-institutional support, Research England.
- **Outputs:** Fellowships, regional policy programmes.
- **Engagement:** Distributed network model with local councils.
- **Impact Strategy:** Capacity building and regional coordination.

Policy Relevance: Suitable for regions with multiple HEIs and shared policy goals.

Risks: Coordination complexity; risk of duplication and unclear accountability. Sustainability depends on continued government support for devolution at the level of the network.

Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives, such as YPERN, are built on the foundation of shared partnerships across multiple higher education institutions and regional stakeholders. These models are particularly strong in capacity building and regional coordination. There also needs to be an independent orchestrator or external board who is not aligned to a single university to provide steer (i.e. Yorkshire Universities), enabling them to adapt national frameworks to local needs effectively. Many networked models have a particular emphasis on training, fellowships and skills development for researchers and policy makers, and this is often a defining characteristic.

Their distributed structure allows for broad engagement and the inclusion of diverse voices, including local authorities and civic organisations. However, the complexity of coordinating across institutions can dilute strategic clarity and make monitoring and evaluation inconsistent (Taylor et al., 2024). Governance structure can be complex and unwieldy in the long term.

While they often benefit from core funding and institutional contributions, long-term sustainability may be challenged without a centralised identity or leadership.

Nevertheless, their collaborative ethos and regional focus make them well-suited to addressing shared policy challenges.

4. Single Policy Issue Institutes

Description: Performance of Single Policy Issue Institutes (PSIPI) is a research centre focused on understanding and improving a policy area nationally across regions and sectors. These institutes typically operate at a national scale, combining academic research with policy engagement to address structural economic challenges.

Table 11 Core Characteristics SPII

Feature	Description
Mission	Advance understanding of the performance of a single policy issue area to inform national and regional policy.
Institutional Base	Usually led by a major research university, often in collaboration with a network of partner institutions.
Team Composition	Large interdisciplinary teams including economists, business scholars, data scientists, and policy experts.
Governance	Academic-led with advisory input from government, industry, and regional stakeholders.
Geographic Focus	National, and often International in scope, with regional nodes or forums to ensure place-based relevance.

Key Features:

- **Mission:** National policy research focus.
- **Funding:** Large-scale Research Council funding.
- **Outputs:** forums, policy briefs and academic research.
- **Engagement:** National and regional academic networks.
- **Impact Strategy:** Long-term economic performance analysis.

Policy Relevance: Supports national strategy and (appropriate) regional policy development.

Risks: National focus may dilute local relevance. Attribution of impact is difficult, heavy reliance on single source funding.

The Single Policy Issue Institutes, such as The Productivity Institute, benefit from substantial long-term investment, often through large-scale Research Council funding. These institutes have a clear national strategic purpose, and they excel in rigorous academic research and monitoring and evaluation through data analysis and modelling. Their partnerships span academia, government, third sector and industry, as

appropriate, ensuring that key players are involved in shaping research agendas, but research expertise is often more narrowly focussed on one policy agenda. However, their national orientation can limit responsiveness to local needs, and they may lack the embedded civic knowledge that characterises more place-based models (Taylor et al., 2024). While funding is typically adequate and diversified, civic engagement is often secondary to academic output, and adapting national frameworks to specific local contexts may not be a core strength. There is also a greater focus on international networks and engagement, often more so than local engagement. Fundamentally their focus is national, but they may have local and regional impacts and networks in order to deliver national policy research.

5. Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks

Description: An Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tank (IPPTT) is a university-based research centre that brings together diverse academic disciplines to address complex public policy challenges. These institutes aim to influence policy through rigorous, often theoretical, research that spans economics, philosophy, political science, and technology studies.

Table 12 Core Characteristics IPPTT

Feature	Description
Mission	Advance public policy through interdisciplinary research on societal progress, governance, and innovation.
Institutional Base	Typically housed in a prestigious research university with strong academic and policy networks.
Team Composition	Academics from economics, philosophy, political science, sociology, and data science.
Governance	Academic-led with strategic input from policy advisors, foundations, and public sector partners.
Geographic Focus	National and international, often with global policy relevance.

Example: Bennett Institute (University of Cambridge)

Key Features:

- **Mission:** Broad public policy research (e.g., wellbeing, governance).
- **Funding:** Philanthropy, UKRI.
- **Outputs:** Thematic research, policy frameworks.
- **Engagement:** Academic and policy audiences.
- **Impact Strategy:** Theoretical and philosophical policy contributions.

Policy Relevance: Best for high-level policy design and interdisciplinary insights.
Risks: Limited applied outputs; less embedded in local contexts. Risk of being perceived as elitist or disconnected from civic priorities.

Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks, such as the Bennett Institute, are characterised by strong intellectual leadership and long-term philanthropic support. These institutes have a clear strategic vision and produce high-level, interdisciplinary research that influences national and international policy debates. While they are effective at involving academic and policy stakeholders, they are less embedded in local contexts and may not prioritise shared partnerships with civic actors (Taylor et al., 2024). Monitoring and evaluation often focus on academic impact rather than civic outcomes, and their outputs are typically conceptual rather than applied. As such, they may struggle to adapt national frameworks to local needs or to engage deeply with local knowledge and community stakeholders.

6. Translational Policy Communication Platforms

Description: A Translational Policy Communication Platform (TPCP) is a university-based initiative designed to bridge the gap between academic research and policymaking through strategic communication. These platforms focus on translating complex research findings into accessible formats for policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

Table 13 Core Characteristics TPCP

Feature	Description
Mission	Enhance the visibility and impact of academic research by making it accessible and relevant to policy audiences.
Institutional Base	Typically embedded within a university's communications or public engagement office.
Team Composition	Small core team of policy engagement officers, communications specialists, and academic contributors.
Governance	Operates under university leadership with input from policy stakeholders and researchers.
Geographic Focus	Local, regional, and national policy contexts depending on the university's research portfolio.

Example: Policy@Manchester

Key Features:

- **Mission:** Translating research into policy impact.

- **Funding:** Internal university support.
- **Outputs:** Blogs, briefings, events.
- **Engagement:** Communication-focused, policy outreach.
- **Impact Strategy:** Bridging academia and policy through accessible formats.

Policy Relevance: Enhances visibility and uptake of academic research.
Risks: Limited original research capacity; impact depends on communication effectiveness. Vulnerable to institutional budget cuts; small teams restrict scalability.

Finally, Translational Policy Communication Platforms, such as Policy@Manchester, are highly effective at translating academic research into accessible formats for policymakers and the public. These platforms operate with a clear communication strategy and are responsive to policy needs, often enhancing the visibility of academic work through blogs, briefings, and events. Their low-cost, scalable model allows for broad engagement, and they support shared visibility across university departments.

However, they typically lack original research capacity and long-term investment in infrastructure (Taylor et al., 2024). Monitoring and evaluation are often anecdotal or media-based, and while they involve key players in dissemination, they may not be deeply engaged in co-production or local adaptation of policy frameworks.

Summary of the positives and negatives of the Models

In summary all models have positive and negative features. The particular circumstances of activities, funders and place dictate the trade-off between these issues:

Table 14 Summary of Positives and Negatives

Model Type	Positives	Negatives
Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes	Strong alignment with local policy needs; Deep civic partnerships; Use of modelling tools; Diverse funding sources; High volume of outputs and stakeholder engagement.	Resource-intensive; Regional focus may limit national or international influence; Complexity of managing multiple partnerships and funding streams.
Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes	Strong community engagement and co-production; Focus on social infrastructure and equity; Flexible and responsive to local needs; Builds trust with civic stakeholders.	Less emphasis on quantitative tools and modelling; scale may limit research capacity; Impact may be harder to measure compared to data-driven models.
Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives	Leverages multiple institutions for broader reach; Promotes regional coordination and shared learning; Flexible structure allows for diverse participation; Strong capacity-building focus.	Coordination challenges across institutions; May lack a centralised identity or leadership; Outputs and impact may vary across partners.
National Performance Institutes	Large-scale funding enables ambitious research; National scope supports broad policy influence; Strong academic credibility and partnerships; Focused on a critical economic issue.	May be less responsive to local or regional needs; Emphasis on academic outputs may limit civic engagement; Risk of being perceived as top-down or technocratic.
Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks	High-level, interdisciplinary research; Strong theoretical and philosophical contributions; Philanthropic funding allows for long-term planning; National and international policy relevance.	Less embedded in local or regional contexts; Limited place-based applied outputs; May be less accessible to non-academic audiences.
Translational Policy Communication Platforms	Effective at translating research into accessible formats; Enhances visibility of academic work; Low-cost and scalable model; Strong media and public engagement.	Limited original research or modelling; Small teams may restrict capacity; Impact depends heavily on communication effectiveness.

Reviewing the LPIP pilots against this framework

The four LPIP pilots have been reviewed using this framework. Although the pilots were all commissioned at the same time and funded by the same programme, the business models which have emerged are different and reflect local circumstances as much as the funding and purpose. The triple helix approach leads to variations in appropriate business models. This supports the need for flexibility in models and approaches to accommodate the triple helix structures. the four LPIPs are distinguished by their emphasis on place partnerships i.e., partnerships shaped by and responsive to specific local geographies, governance structures, and community needs. This is a unifying characteristic that cuts across all four pilots despite their different typology alignments.

Yorkshire and Humber Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)

Lead Institutions: University of Leeds, University of York, University of Hull, Sheffield Hallam University, and others (12 HEIs total) YPIP – Y-PERN.
Mission: Tackle regional inequalities through academic-policy collaboration.
Focus Areas: Health inequalities, inclusive growth, climate resilience.
Engagement: Strong partnerships with local authorities, NHS, and community organisations.
Outputs: Policy fellowships, co-produced research, regional policy labs.
Funding: UKRI LPIP Programme; (YPIP is a sister project to YPERN above).

Table 15 YPIP Typology Fit: Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives

Dimension	YPIP Assessment
Model Type	Networked Regional Policy Collaborative
Positives	- Broad institutional collaboration across Yorkshire - Strong civic and policy engagement - Focus on regional inequalities and co-production - Capacity-building through fellowships and labs
Negatives	- Coordination complexity across 12 HEIs - Potential variation in outputs and engagement across partners - May lack centralised identity or long-term sustainability without continued funding

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales

Lead Institutions: Aberystwyth University, Bangor University Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales - Arsyllfa - Supporting the Welsh rural economy
Mission: Address rural challenges through place-based innovation and policy co-creation.
Focus Areas: Rural economy, digital connectivity, housing, health, and climate resilience
Engagement: Strong collaboration with local authorities, Welsh Government, and rural communities
Outputs: Co-produced research, policy labs, rural innovation frameworks
Funding: UKRI LPIP Programme

Table 16 Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales Typology Fit: Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes

Dimension	Rural Wales LPIP Assessment
Model Type	Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institute
Positives	- Deep engagement with rural communities - Strong alignment with local and devolved government priorities - Focus on co-production and inclusive rural development - Addresses under-researched rural policy challenges
Negatives	- Smaller institutional base may limit research scale - Less emphasis on quantitative modelling or economic tools - Impact measurement may rely more on qualitative outcomes

EPIC Futures Northern Ireland LPIP

Lead Institution: Ulster University Epic Futures NI
Mission: Build inclusive, participatory, and innovative policymaking in Northern Ireland
Focus Areas: Youth engagement, democratic innovation, inclusive governance, and future-oriented policy
Engagement: Strong emphasis on co-design with young people, civic society, and government bodies
Outputs: Participatory policy labs, youth-led research, democratic innovation pilots
Funding: UKRI LPIP Programme

Table 17 EPICNI Typology Fit: Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes

Dimension	EPIC Futures NI Assessment
Model Type	Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institute (with Translational elements)

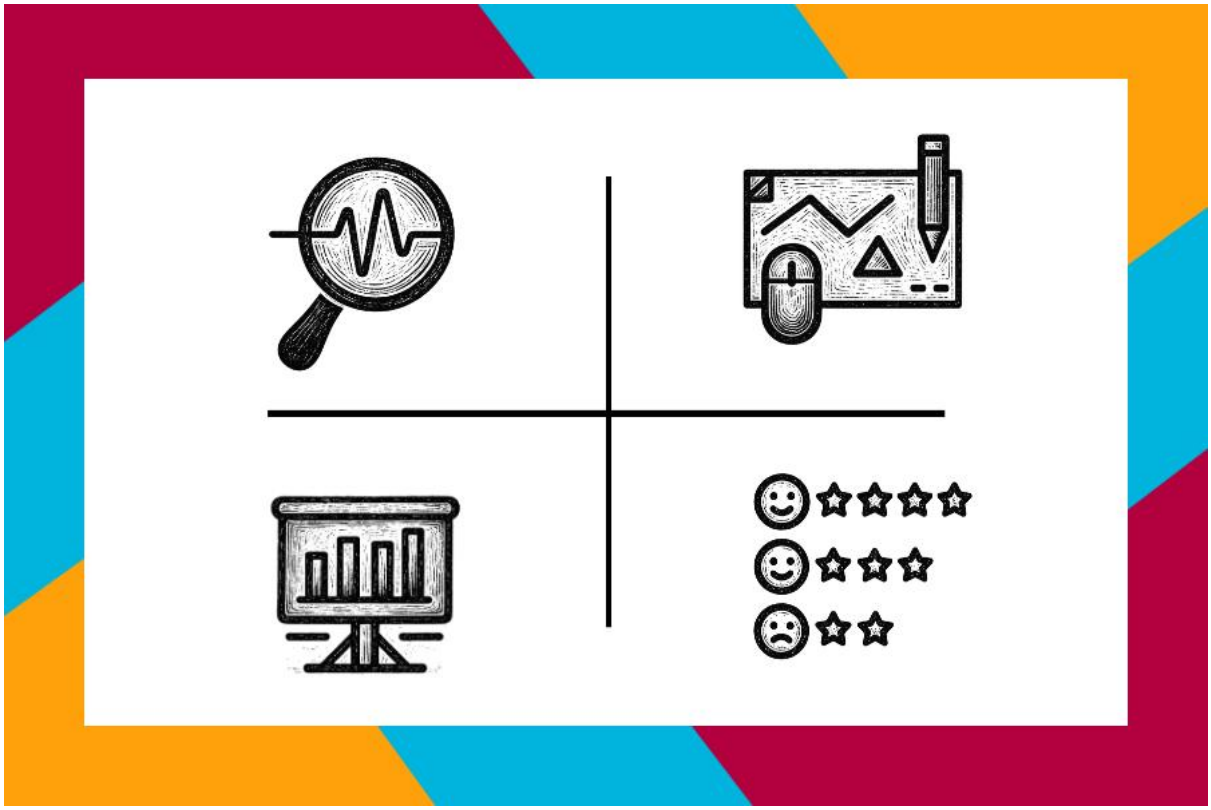
Positives	- Strong focus on democratic innovation and youth participation - Emphasis on inclusive and future-oriented policymaking - Co-design and participatory methods enhance legitimacy and relevance - Builds civic capacity and trust in governance
Negatives	- May lack technical or economic modelling tools, but they do have a labour observatory - Impact may be more qualitative and harder to quantify - Youth-led and economic inactivity focus may require sustained engagement strategies to maintain momentum

FORTH$_2$O Local Policy Innovation Partnership

Lead Institution: University of Stirling FORTH$_2$O Policy Innovation Partnership
Mission: Address water-related challenges through place-based innovation and policy integration
Focus Areas: Water governance, climate resilience, environmental justice, and sustainable infrastructure
Engagement: Collaboration with local authorities, environmental agencies, communities, and industry
Outputs: Policy labs, integrated water management frameworks, community engagement initiatives
Funding: UKRI LPIP Programme

Table 18 Forth H20 Typology Fit: Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tank

Dimension	Forth H2O LPIP Assessment
Model Type	Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tank (with Civic Engagement)
Positives	- Tackles complex, cross-sectoral environmental issues - Strong interdisciplinary approach (policy, science, infrastructure) - Engages diverse stakeholders including communities and industry - Aligns with climate and sustainability policy agendas
Negatives	- May require high coordination across sectors and disciplines - Outputs may be more conceptual or framework-based than operational - Long-term impact may depend on policy uptake and infrastructure investment



5. How to Apply the Civic 6 Framework

Using the Framework for Strategic Planning

The Civic 6 Framework is designed to be used as a practical strategic tool, not merely a descriptive typology. While the six models that follow provide detailed reference profiles, this section offers guidance on how universities, funders, policymakers, and civic partners can apply the framework to their own circumstances. The framework can serve four distinct purposes: diagnosis (understanding where you are), design (deciding where you want to be), benchmarking (learning from comparable institutes), and evaluation (assessing performance and impact).

Step 0: Starting from Scratch: Applying the Framework When You Are Just Beginning

The four steps that follow, Diagnostic Assessment, Strategic Design, Benchmarking, and Evaluation, assume that an institute or initiative already exists, or is at least well advanced in its planning. But the Civic 6 Framework is equally valuable, perhaps more so, for universities that are at an earlier stage: considering whether to establish a civic or policy engagement institute, exploring what form it might take, or taking first steps toward formalising activity that currently happens informally or in scattered pockets across the

institution. For those starting from this position, the framework serves three distinct purposes.

Understanding What Already Exists

Most universities that believe they are "starting from scratch" are not. Academic staff will already be engaged in policy-relevant research, sitting on local authority advisory boards, responding to consultations, or contributing to community partnerships. Professional services teams may be managing civic university agreements, coordinating knowledge exchange returns, or supporting public engagement activity. The first task is therefore not to design an institute but to map what is already happening.

The diagnostic questions in Step 1 can be adapted for this purpose. Rather than asking "where does our institute sit within the typology?", the question becomes: "what civic and policy engagement activity already exists across our university, and which model or models does it most closely resemble?" This mapping exercise will typically reveal that the university already has the raw materials for one or more of the Civic 6 models, but that activity is fragmented, uncoordinated, and often invisible to senior leadership.

Practical starting points include:

- An internal audit of civic engagement activity. This should go beyond formal research centres to include individual academics' policy advisory roles, professional services partnerships, student-facing civic programmes, and informal relationships with local authorities and civic organisations. The business model dimensions set out in the Methodology section, mission and purpose, funding structure, governance and accountability, organisational structure, modes of engagement, outputs and activities, and impact pathways, provide a useful structure for this audit, even where activity is informal.

- A review of existing partnerships and governance relationships. Which external organisations does the university already work with on place-based or policy issues? Are these relationships held by individuals or institutionalised through formal agreements? The distinction matters: as the discussion of failure modes in Section 4 makes clear, activity that depends on individual relationships is inherently fragile. The analysis of leadership dependency and succession failure is especially relevant here, universities should understand from the outset which relationships would survive a change of personnel.

- A funding landscape assessment. What funding currently supports civic and policy engagement, and from where? Is there university core funding, or does activity depend entirely on time-limited grants and individual academics' enterprise? The funding comparison in the analysis (Table 3) illustrates the diversity of funding models across existing institutes and provides a reference point for understanding what is realistic. As the report notes, most successful institutes have hybrid funding models with income from a variety of sources.

- An assessment against the critical success factors for places. Even before establishing a formal institute, universities can use the ten critical success factors identified by Taylor et al. (2024), shared political will, clear strategy, long-term investment, local knowledge, monitoring and evaluation, adapting national frameworks, diversification, key players, adequate funding, and transferable learning, to assess where they are already contributing to place-based development and where the gaps lie.

Choosing an Entry Point

The six models in the Civic 6 Framework are not equally demanding to establish. Universities at an early stage should consider which models offer a realistic entry point given their current assets, partnerships, and institutional context. The decision matrix in Step 2 (Table 19) provides a structured way to think about this, but the following observations may also help.

Lower-barrier entry points include:

- Translational Policy Communication Platforms (Type 6) require the least new infrastructure. They can be established with a small professional services team, modest university investment, and access to the institution's existing research base. As the typology notes, this model can "co-exist and be easier to establish" alongside other activity. For universities that want to signal civic commitment and build visibility with policymakers before committing to a larger investment, this is often the most pragmatic starting point. Several of the case study examples,Policy@Manchester, Policy Bristol, Policy Leeds, began in this way. A Type 6 platform can also serve as a foundation from which to evolve toward more research-intensive or partnership-embedded models as capacity develops.

- Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes (Type 2) can begin at relatively modest scale if the university has strong existing relationships with local civic partners and a nucleus of academic staff committed to participatory and co-produced research. The

Heseltine Institute, for example, operates with a small team (approximately nine staff) while developing its distinctive approach to community co-production and place-based policy.

Higher-barrier models include:

- Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes (Type 1) require significant investment in data infrastructure, economic modelling capacity, and sustained partnerships with regional governance bodies. As the typology makes clear, these are "resource-intensive" and require "large interdisciplinary teams." City-REDI, for example, began with a £4 million university investment. These cannot be established quickly or cheaply, and typically require senior institutional commitment and multi-year funding.

- Single Policy Issue Institutes (Type 4) and Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks (Type 5) usually depend on securing a major competitive research grant (such as the Productivity Institute's £32 million ESRC award) or a substantial philanthropic endowment (such as the Peter Bennett Foundation's support for the Bennett Institute). They are therefore less amenable to institutional planning and more dependent on opportunistic funding success.

- Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives (Type 3) require coordination across multiple institutions and cannot be established unilaterally. As the YPERN case study illustrates, they depend on a pre-existing regional partnership ecosystem and shared willingness among several universities to invest in collective infrastructure.

This does not mean that universities should only aspire to the lower-barrier models. Rather, the framework helps institutions to be realistic about sequencing: it is entirely reasonable to begin with a Type 6 platform or a small Type 2 initiative, while building the partnerships, data assets, and institutional commitment needed to evolve toward a Type 1 or Type 3 model over time. The discussion of hybrid and adaptive models in Section 3 makes clear that such evolution is not only possible but characteristic of the most resilient institutes.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls at the Outset

The analysis of failure, closure, and institutional mortality (Section 4) offers cautionary lessons that are especially relevant for new institutes. Several of the failure modes identified are most acute at the point of establishment:

- Launching without a clear institutional home. The analysis of institutional restructuring and strategic reprioritisation as a failure mode highlights that institutes without formal recognition within university governance structures are especially vulnerable. Even a modest initiative should have a named governance arrangement, a defined reporting relationship, and at least some dedicated resource. The resilience strategy of "securing structural protection" a named centre with its own budget line, applies from day one, not only once an institute is established.

- Concentrating risk in a single funding source. The report's analysis of funding concentration as the single most common proximate cause of institute decline should inform planning from the outset. The contrast between the SHLC (which closed when its major grant ended) and the Fraser of Allander Institute (which has maintained diversified income for nearly fifty years) is instructive. New institutes should plan for funding diversification from the beginning, even if their initial funding comes from a single source. The report's suggestion that no single source should represent more than 40 per cent of operating budget provides a useful target to work toward.

- Over-dependence on founding leadership. The report's discussion of leadership dependency and succession failure is directly relevant. Universities establishing new institutes should ensure from the outset that relationships, partnerships, and institutional knowledge are shared across a team rather than concentrated in a single individual. The current sector environment, with over 100 UK universities announcing redundancies and restructuring, makes this especially urgent, as even well-regarded leaders may move on or be affected by institutional change.

- Neglecting the internal case. External impact depends on internal legitimacy. New institutes should invest early in building relationships with academic colleagues across the institution, demonstrating the value of civic engagement for research (including REF impact case studies), teaching, and institutional reputation. The report's discussion of how REF and KEF frameworks shape institutional behaviour (in the Introduction) suggests that aligning a new institute's offer with these frameworks can help secure internal support.

- Ignoring the demand side. The Conclusions section of this report explicitly acknowledges that the analysis has focused "primarily from the supply side" and notes the importance of understanding, the capacity of local partners, local authorities, combined authorities, NHS bodies, and civic organisations, to absorb and act on research evidence. A new institute should begin not with the question "what research can we offer?" but with "what do our local partners actually need, and what are they able to use?". Time spent listening to potential partners, understanding

their analytical capacity, their policy cycles, their decision-making processes, before designing an institute's offer is never wasted.

- Overlooking who benefits. The report's discussion of equality, diversity, and inclusion (Section 4) raises important questions about the distributional effects of civic engagement. New institutes have an opportunity to address these questions from the start, building inclusive governance, designing accessible engagement methods, and collecting EDI data, rather than attempting to retrofit them later. The diagnostic questions on EDI in Step 1, covering data and monitoring, community voice, reach and accessibility, distributional impact, and power and reflexivity, provide a practical checklist for this purpose.

Using the Framework as a Development Tool

For universities at the beginning of this journey, the Civic 6 Framework should be understood not as a classification to be assigned once and then fixed, but as a development tool that supports iterative progress. A university might begin by:

- Conducting the internal mapping exercise described above to understand its starting position, using the business model dimensions and the diagnostic questions in Step 1 as a guide.
- Identifying the model or models that best fit its current assets and local context, using the decision matrix in Step 2 (Table 19) alongside the contextual factors discussed under institutional, place, and funding context.
- Establishing a modest initial offer, perhaps a Type 6 communication platform or a small co-production project with a local partner, to test the approach and build credibility both internally and externally.
- Using the benchmarking resources in Step 3 to learn from comparable institutes, including by making direct contact with the named examples in this report and those listed in Appendix Two.
- Reviewing progress after 12–18 months against the evaluation framework in Step 4, calibrating the evaluation approach to the model type as that section recommends, and using the findings to make a case for further institutional investment.
- This iterative approach, ***start small, learn, adapt, grow***, is consistent with the hybrid and adaptive model that this report identifies as characteristic of the most resilient and effective institutes. As the analysis notes, "flexibility is not a weakness but a strategic strength." The Civic 6 Framework provides the strategic language and analytical structure to support each stage of that development, from initial scoping through to mature operation.

Universities considering this path are also encouraged to engage with the national meta-platforms described in this report, UPEN, NCCPE, and the LPIP Hub, which offer practical support, peer networks, and shared resources that are specifically designed to help institutions at all stages of civic engagement development, including those at the very beginning. The report's emphasis on the "enabling role" of these coordination platforms applies as much to institutions starting out as to those already established.

Step 1: Diagnostic Assessment: Mapping Your Current Position

The first step in applying the framework is to assess honestly where an existing or proposed institute currently sits within the typology. This is rarely straightforward: as the preceding discussion of hybrid and adaptive models makes clear, most institutes combine elements of more than one type. The diagnostic questions below are designed to help identify the dominant model orientation, while also surfacing secondary characteristics that may indicate a hybrid or transitional position.

Mission and Purpose

1. Is the institute's primary mission defined by a place (a specific region, city, or locality), by a policy domain (such as productivity, health, or environment), or by a function (such as translating research for public audiences)?
2. Was the institute established in response to a specific local or regional need, or does it pursue a discipline-led research agenda that engages with place as one dimension among several?
3. Does the institute's mission statement reference specific geographies, governance structures, or civic partnerships, or is it framed in more general terms?

Partnership and Governance

4. Who are the institute's primary partners? Are they predominantly local and regional (local authorities, combined authorities, LEPs, community organisations) or national and sectoral (government departments, learned societies, national charities)?
5. Is the institute governed or steered by external civic partners, or is governance primarily internal to the university?
6. How many formal partnership agreements or memoranda of understanding does the institute hold with external organisations?
7. Does the institute operate across multiple institutions (suggesting a networked model) or is it housed within a single university?

Funding and Resources

8. What proportion of the institute's income comes from core university funding, competitive research grants, commissioned work, and philanthropic or third-sector sources?
9. Is the funding base diversified or concentrated? Does the institute depend on a single major grant or contract?

10. How many full-time equivalent staff does the institute employ? Is the team primarily academic, professional services, or mixed?
11. Does the institute maintain its own data infrastructure, economic models, or analytical tools, or does it draw on university-wide or external resources?

Outputs and Activities

12. What is the institute's primary output: peer-reviewed research, policy briefings, commissioned reports, public-facing communications, convening and facilitation, or capacity-building and training?
13. Does the institute produce regular monitoring or forecasting products (e.g., economic dashboards, regional indicators) that serve as standing resources for partners?
14. How does the institute balance proactive agenda-setting with responsive, demand-led work?

Impact Orientation

15. How does the institute define and measure its impact? Is impact understood primarily in terms of academic influence (citations, REF case studies), policy influence (evidence cited in policy documents, testimony to select committees), economic outcomes (GVA, productivity gains), or democratic and civic outcomes (public participation, community empowerment)?
16. Can the institute trace a clear pathway from its research to identifiable changes in policy or practice?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion — Who Benefits?

A diagnostic assessment that does not examine who benefits from the institute's activities, and who is excluded, is incomplete. The following questions are designed to surface distributional issues that are often overlooked in strategic reviews. They should be addressed with the same rigour as questions of funding, governance, and impact.

EDI data and monitoring

17. Does the institute collect and report data on the demographics of those who participate in its engagement activities, including ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic background, age, and geographic location?
18. If not, what would be needed to begin doing so, and what are the barriers?
19. Does the institute know whether the communities it engages with are representative of the wider population it claims to serve?

Community voice and governance

20. Does the institute's governance or advisory structure include community representatives, that is, individuals who are not employed by institutional partners (local authorities, NHS bodies, combined authorities) but who bring lived experience of the issues the institute addresses?
21. Where community representatives are included, are they paid for their time? Are meetings held in accessible locations and formats? Is documentation produced in plain language?
22. How were community representatives recruited, and by whom? Is there a risk that the selection process favours individuals who are already well-connected or professionally experienced, rather than those whose perspectives are most absent?

Reach and accessibility

23. If you mapped the geographic distribution of the institute's engagement activities, events, workshops, consultations, co-production sessions, what proportion would fall within 5km of the university campus? What proportion would take place in the most deprived neighbourhoods within the institute's geographic remit?
24. Are the institute's primary outputs (policy briefings, evidence reviews, data dashboards) accessible to audiences beyond policymakers and professionals, including residents with lower levels of formal education, those for whom English is a second language, or those who are not digitally connected?
25. Does the institute use differentiated engagement channels to reach different communities, for example, community events, creative and cultural activities, partnerships with trusted local organisations, or non-digital formats, or does it rely primarily on academic seminars, conferences, and online publications?

Distributional impact

26. When the institute evaluates its impact, does it ask not only whether policy has changed, but whose lives have been affected by those changes, and whether the benefits are distributed equitably across income groups, ethnicities, geographies, and other dimensions of inequality?
27. Can the institute identify specific examples where its work has benefited communities experiencing deep deprivation, or where it has reached populations that are typically excluded from civic engagement?
28. Does the institute's impact reporting disaggregate outcomes by place, demographic group, or socioeconomic status, or does it report aggregate figures that may mask uneven distribution?

Power and reflexivity

29. Where on Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, from manipulation and consultation at the lower rungs, through partnership and delegated power, to citizen control at the top, would the institute place the majority of its engagement activities? What proportion genuinely involves shared decision-making or community control over resources?
30. Does the institute have a regular, structured process for reflecting on power dynamics within its partnerships, for example, an annual review using the UPEN EDI framework, Arnstein's ladder, or an equivalent diagnostic?
31. Has the institute ever changed its research priorities, engagement methods, or partnership structures as a result of feedback from communities, particularly from groups that are under-represented in its current activities?

These questions are not designed to produce a pass/fail assessment. Rather, they are intended to generate an honest map of who the institute currently reaches, who it does not, and what structural factors, incentives, partner selection, output formats, governance arrangements, may be contributing to those patterns. An institute that cannot answer these questions has an important gap in its self-knowledge; one that can answer them but finds the answers uncomfortable has the basis for a meaningful improvement strategy.

Answering the questions across all six categories systematically, ideally through a facilitated workshop involving both academic and professional services staff, and where possible external partners and community representatives, will generate a profile that can be mapped against the six models described below. Most institutes will find that they align primarily with one model but exhibit characteristics of one or two others. This is not a problem to be resolved; it reflects the reality of adaptive institutions operating in complex environments.

Step 2: Strategic Design: Choosing Your Model

Once the diagnostic assessment has established a baseline, the framework can be used to make deliberate strategic choices about the institute's future direction. This involves asking a different set of questions, not "where are we?" but "where should we be, given our context?". The choice of model is not free-standing; it is shaped by a set of contextual factors that vary across institutions and places:

Institutional context

University mission and strategy: A research-intensive Russell Group university with strong disciplinary depth may be well placed to sustain a
Single Policy Issue Institute (Type 4) or an Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tank (Type 5). A post-1992 university with a strong widening participation and civic mission may find a Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institute (Type 1) or Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institute (Type 2) a more natural fit, though these are tendencies, not rules.

Existing assets: What research strengths, data infrastructure, partnerships, and professional services capacity already exist? Building on existing assets is more sustainable than creating new capabilities from scratch.

Internal incentives: How do the university's promotion criteria, workload models, and research strategies reward civic engagement? If civic work is not recognised in career progression, sustaining any model will be difficult regardless of its strategic logic.

Place context

Governance landscape: Does the institute operate in an area with a combined authority and elected mayor, or in a two-tier or unitary local government area? The governance landscape shapes who the key partners are and what kinds of evidence they commission.

Existing provision: Are there already other university-based policy institutes serving the same region? If so, a Networked Regional Policy Collaborative (Type 3) may be more appropriate than a new standalone institute that duplicates existing capacity.
Partner capacity: Do local authority and civic partners have the analytical capacity to commission, interpret, and act on research? Where absorptive capacity is high (as in some of the larger combined authorities with established research and intelligence teams), institutes can operate at a more sophisticated level. Where it is lower, institutes may need to invest more heavily in translation, capacity building, and relationship management, functions emphasised in Types 1, 2, and 6.

Scale and geography: A city-region model differs from a rural or dispersed regional model. The challenges of civic engagement in a polycentric region like Yorkshire and Humber (twelve HEIs, multiple local authorities, emerging combined authorities) are fundamentally different from those in a compact city-region with a single dominant university.

Funding context

Available funding streams: The choice of model is often constrained by what funding is available. UKRI grants, ESRC investments, and Innovate UK programmes each favour

different kinds of activity. Commissioned work from local authorities requires a different kind of relationship and responsiveness than competitive grant funding.

Sustainability horizon: Is the institute intended as a long-term institutional commitment (requiring core university investment) or a time-limited programme (dependent on external funding cycles)? Models that rely heavily on external grants face greater succession risk when funding ends.

The table below provides a simplified decision matrix mapping contextual factors to model suitability:

Table 19 Decision Matrix of Contextual Factors

Contextual Factor	Type 1: CERDI	Type 2: CEPPI	Type 3: Networked	Type 4: Single Policy Issue	Type 5: Think Tank	Type 6: Translational
Strong local authority partnerships	★★★	★★★	★★	★★	★	★
Combined authority / metro mayor	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★
Multiple HEIs in region	★★	★	★★★	★	★	★★
Strong disciplinary depth	★★	★★	★	★★★	★★★	★
Core university investment available	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★
Primarily grant-funded	★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★
Primarily commission-funded	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★	★
Low partner analytical capacity	★★★	★★★	★★	★	★	★★★
High partner analytical capacity	★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★
Rural / dispersed geography	★★	★★★	★★★	★	★★	★★
City-region / metro focus	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★	★
Post-conflict / democratic renewal	★	★★★	★★	★	★★	★★

★★★ = strong fit; ★★ = moderate fit; ★ = weaker fit (but not excluded)

This matrix is indicative, not prescriptive. It is intended to prompt structured conversation about model choice rather than to determine it mechanistically. In practice, many institutes will, and should, combine elements from multiple models, as the hybrid examples discussed earlier in this report demonstrate.

Step 3: Benchmarking: Learning from Comparators

The six model descriptions that follow, together with the case studies and additional examples in each section, provide a benchmarking resource. Once an institute has identified its primary model orientation, it can use the relevant model description to:

Compare core characteristics: Does the institute's current activity profile match the key functions described for its model type? Are there gaps — for example, a Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institute that lacks data infrastructure, or a Networked Collaborative that has not yet established shared governance?

Assess against critical success factors: Each model description includes an assessment against the ten critical success factors identified by Taylor et al (2024). These provide a structured checklist for self-evaluation.

Learn from named examples: The examples listed under each model are not exhaustive but are selected to illustrate different approaches to the same model type. Institutes are encouraged to make direct contact with comparators to explore operational questions (governance, staffing, funding models, stakeholder management) that cannot be fully captured in a typology.

Identify evolution pathways: As the discussion of hybrid and adaptive models has established, institutes frequently evolve from one model type toward another. The benchmarking exercise may reveal that an institute is already in transition. For example, a Single Policy Issue Institute that has begun to take on civic engagement characteristics, as the Fraser of Allander Institute's expansion into health equity illustrates. Recognising these transitions allows for more intentional strategic management of the evolution.

Step 4: Evaluation — Assessing Performance and Impact

Finally, the framework can support ongoing evaluation. Different model types imply different impact logics and therefore require different evaluation approaches:

Types 1 and 4 (Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes and Performance of Single Policy Issue Institutes) lend themselves to evaluation through measurable economic and social indicators, changes in regional productivity, employment, skills levels, or GVA that can be linked to the institute's analytical and advisory work. These institutes often maintain their own monitoring dashboards that provide a continuous evidence base for evaluation to understand how policies are measured and what creates change.

Type 2 (Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes) may be better evaluated through qualitative assessments of policy influence, democratic participation, and stakeholder relationships. Process measures, such as the number and depth of co-production partnerships, the diversity of voices included in policy deliberation, and evidence of policy recommendations adopted, may be more meaningful than purely quantitative metrics.

Type 3 (Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives) requires evaluation at the network level as well as the institutional level. Key questions include whether the network has achieved genuine collaboration (as opposed to parallel working), whether shared governance structures function effectively, and whether the network has generated outputs or insights that no single member institution could have produced alone.

Type 5 (Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks) can be evaluated through conventional academic metrics (publications, citations, grant capture) alongside policy influence indicators (parliamentary citations, media coverage, invitations to provide evidence). The challenge is to evaluate interdisciplinary integration, whether the institute produces genuinely cross-cutting analysis or merely houses disciplinary researchers under a shared brand.

Type 6 (Translational Policy Communication Platforms) should be evaluated primarily through reach and engagement metrics, readership, media pickup, practitioner use of outputs, rather than through traditional academic measures. The key question is whether the platform successfully bridges the gap between academic research and policy/practice audiences who would not otherwise access that research.

In all cases, evaluation should attend to the demand side as well as the supply side: not only "what did the institute produce?" but "what difference did it make to the partners, policymakers, and communities it serves?" This requires building evaluation partnerships with external stakeholders rather than relying solely on internal self-assessment.

6. Using the Framework as a Funder

The Civic 6 Framework is relevant not only to universities but also to funders and policymakers who commission, support, or evaluate university-based civic engagement.

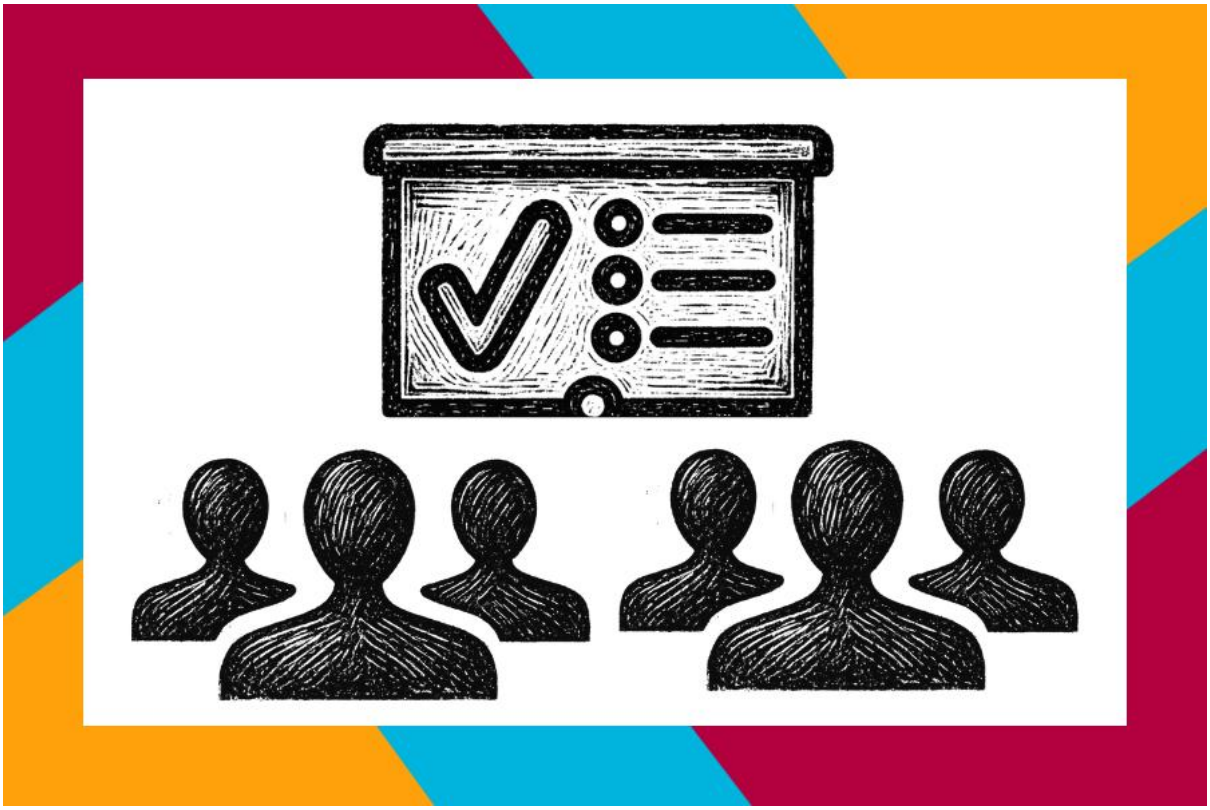
For funders, the framework offers several practical applications:

Programme design: When designing funding programmes for university civic engagement (such as the LPIP programme itself), funders can use the typology to ensure that the programme accommodates different model types rather than inadvertently favouring one. The LPIP experience demonstrates that even identically funded pilots develop along different model lines depending on local context, a finding that funders should anticipate and embrace rather than resist.

Assessment criteria: Evaluation criteria for funded institutes should be calibrated to the model type. Applying the same impact metrics to a Translational Policy Communication Platform and a Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institute will produce misleading comparisons. The framework provides a basis for differentiated assessment.

Portfolio management: Funders supporting multiple institutes can use the framework to assess the overall portfolio, is there adequate coverage across model types? Are there gaps in provision (e.g., a region with strong Type 4 and Type 5 institutes but no Type 1 or Type 3 capacity)? Portfolio-level analysis can inform future funding priorities.

Succession planning: The framework highlights the structural factors that make institutes more or less resilient. Funders can use this understanding to mitigate risks — for example, by encouraging diversified funding, supporting governance development, or requiring succession planning as a condition of continued investment.



7. Conclusions and recommendations

From this assessment of business models, the following recommendations may help universities, institutes, funders, and government understand how to enhance civic role of universities though the six different business models.

Recommendations

1. **Adopt the Civic 6 Framework as a Strategic Tool**

Universities, funders, and policymakers should use the Civic 6 Framework to map, benchmark, and strategically develop civic and policy engagement initiatives. This typology clarifies institutional roles and supports more targeted investment and collaboration. It also helps scope out what might be appropriate given local partners, needs and structures.

2. **Encourage Model Flexibility and Evolution**

Recognise that institutes may shift between models over time due to funding, partnerships, and regional needs. Flexibility should be built into institutional strategies to allow adaptation without losing mission clarity.

3. **Support Hybrid and Networked Approaches**

Encourage the development of hybrid models that combine strengths from multiple typologies (e.g., combining civic engagement with translational communication). Networked collaboratives like YPERN demonstrate the value of distributed leadership and shared learning.

4. **Invest in Capacity Building and Infrastructure**

Funders should prioritise long-term capacity building, including staff development, data infrastructure, and civic engagement tools. Institutes like City-REDI show the value of sustained investment in modelling tools and stakeholder engagement platforms.

5. **Enhance National Coordination Platforms**

Strengthen the roles of UPEN, NCCPE, and similar bodies to provide shared resources, training, and visibility for civic institutes. These platforms are essential for amplifying impact and avoiding duplication.

6. **Promote Inclusive and Participatory Policy Development**

Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes should be supported to deepen co-production with communities, especially in underrepresented or rural areas. Participatory methods enhance legitimacy and policy relevance.

7. **Develop Clear Communication Strategies**

Translational Policy Communication Platforms should be expanded to ensure academic research reaches policymakers in accessible formats. Training researchers in policy writing and engagement is essential.

8. **Encourage Cross-Institute Learning and Evaluation**

Establish mechanisms for institutes to share best practices, evaluate impact, and learn from each other. Comparative studies and joint projects can foster innovation and continuous improvement.

Conclusions

Key Insights

- No single model is superior; effectiveness depends on context.
- Institutes often blend models (hybrid approaches).
- Flexibility and diversified funding enhance resilience.
- Successful models need institutional backing and long-term support and investment.
- Networked and meta-platforms (UPEN, NCCPE) amplify impact.

- Monitoring and evaluation remain challenging, especially for qualitative civic engagement.

The Civic 6 Framework offers a powerful lens through which to understand and support the evolving landscape of university-based civic and policy engagement in the UK. By categorising institutes/structures into six strategic models, the framework reveals the diversity of missions, methods, and impacts across the sector. This model could be further developed by looking at how robust it is as an international comparator. There are various examples globally, such as Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program (US), place-based policy research at scale; Nordic civic university models (e.g., Aalborg University's problem-based learning approach); and Australian university engagement models (e.g., Western Sydney University's place-based strategy).

This typology is not static; it reflects a dynamic ecosystem where institutes adapt to local needs, funding landscapes, and policy priorities. The case studies and comparative analysis demonstrate that no single model is superior each has strengths and trade-offs depending on context.

Institutes like City-REDI exemplify the potential of deeply embedded, tool-rich, and civic-integrated approaches to regional development. Others, like YPERN and the Bennett Institute, highlight the value of networked collaboration and interdisciplinary thought leadership.

Ultimately, the success of civic university institutes depends on their ability to remain responsive, inclusive, and strategically aligned with both academic and societal goals. The Civic 6 Framework provides a foundation for this strategic alignment, enabling more effective partnerships, impactful research, and meaningful contributions to place-based policy and innovation.

It is important to acknowledge that this report examines models of university-based policy engagement primarily from the supply side, that is, from the perspective of what universities organise, fund, and deliver. This framing reflects the report's purpose: to help universities, funders, and policymakers understand the strategic options available for structuring civic and policy institutes. However, as one reviewer has observed, a complementary perspective would examine the demand side, what places actually need from their university partners, and how place-based strategies (as distinct from institutional strategies) might shape the form and function of policy engagement. A place-strategy orientation might, for example, favour inter-institutional collaboration of the kind exemplified by YPERN, where the organising principle is the region's needs rather than any single university's capabilities. It might also foreground questions about how research priorities are set, whose voices shape the agenda, and whether university

provision aligns with the strategic challenges identified in Local Growth Plans, Spatial Development Strategies, or integrated care and public health frameworks.

This distinction between institutional and place strategies has practical implications. Where universities design civic engagement primarily around their own strengths and structures, there is a risk that provision reflects academic supply rather than local demand. Conversely, where engagement is organised around place needs, through mechanisms such as joint commissioning, shared analytical units, or multi-partner policy labs, it is more likely to address the complex, cross-cutting challenges that characterise contemporary local governance. The Networked Regional Policy Collaborative model (Type 3 in the Civic 6 Framework) comes closest to a place-strategy orientation, and the LPIP programme's emphasis on place partnerships provides a further foundation for this approach. However, a university may have all of the models, or versions that flux with policy and demand. Future research could usefully examine the conditions under which place-led, inter-institutional models of policy engagement emerge and sustain themselves, and how the balance between institutional and place strategies shifts as the devolution landscape evolves.

A related and equally significant consideration is the capacity of local partners, local authorities, combined authorities, NHS bodies, and civic organisations, to commission, interpret, and act upon the research that university-based institutes produce. The effectiveness of civic engagement models depends not only on the quality and relevance of academic outputs but also on what the innovation literature terms the 'absorptive capacity' of partner organisations: their ability to recognise the value of new knowledge, assimilate it, and apply it to practical ends (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). This capacity varies enormously across England's local governance landscape. Leading conurbations such as Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, where combined authorities have built substantial in-house analytical teams and benefit from Integrated Settlement funding, are well-positioned to engage strategically with university research. co-designing studies, commissioning evaluations, and embedding evidence in decision-making. Smaller or less well-resourced authorities, particularly those navigating local government reorganisation or fiscal retrenchment, may lack the staff capacity, analytical infrastructure, or organisational stability to engage on equivalent terms.

This asymmetry creates a risk that university civic engagement models primarily benefit already-advantaged places, those with the governance structures, funding, and human capital to make effective use of academic partnerships, while less well-resourced areas remain underserved. Addressing this risk requires attention not only to the supply of university engagement but also to investment in the demand side: building the capacity of local authorities and civic partners to act as effective co-producers of knowledge, rather than passive recipients of academic outputs. Civic universities and intelligent city-

regions need to shift from 'science-push' knowledge transfer to 'demand-responsive' engagement and co-production requires cultural and structural change on both sides of the partnership (McNulty, 2026). Future iterations of the Civic 6 Framework could usefully incorporate demand-side indicators, such as partner analytical capacity, co-commissioning arrangements, and evidence of shared agenda-setting, alongside the supply-side dimensions that currently form the basis of the typology.

Appendices

Appendix One: Deep Dive Case Studies

Case Study One: City-REDI

University - University of Birmingham – Birmingham Business School

Year Established - 2015

Mission - To provide evidence-based, policy-relevant research that addresses inclusive economic, social, and environmental development challenges. City-REDI focuses on improving regional economic growth, reducing inequalities, and supporting sustainable development through engaged research and collaboration with policymakers, businesses, and communities.

Core Funding - Initial £4 million investment from the University of Birmingham on a pay back model; ongoing support from Research England (UKRI) through RED Funding, plus some limited institutional backing from Birmingham Business School.

Research Grants - Secured funding from ESRC, EPSRC, AHRC, Innovate UK, EU, and private sector partners (e.g., Facebook). Research spans regional development, skills, innovation, and productivity.

Commissioned Work - Delivers policy briefings, economic impact assessments, strategic foresight modelling, and evaluations for government departments (Treasury, DSIT, MHCLG), Combined Authorities, and local councils, alongside academic journal articles.

Staff Size - Over 30 interdisciplinary researchers, data analysts, and policy specialists, including professors and senior fellows, and professional services staff.

Impact Examples

- Produced the West Midlands Economic Impact Monitor, widely used by regional policymakers and influenced the Treasury Green Book Guidance and Cabinet Office Magenta Book.
- Established the West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute (WMREDI) to strengthen regional economic development.
- Influenced UK Government strategies on skills, productivity, and inclusive growth.
- Delivered over 200 research projects and numerous policy evaluations for local and national bodies.

Core Foundational Analysis of City-REDI

Establishment (Why): City-REDI was established in 2015 at the University of Birmingham to address the need for evidence-based policy research focused on regional economic development and inclusive growth.

Evolution (How): Over the years, City-REDI has evolved by expanding its research themes to include productivity, skills, and innovation. It has also strengthened its partnerships with local authorities, LEPs, and regional bodies, as well as national government.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include WMREDI, Socio-Economic Impact Model for the UK (SEIM-UK), and the Inclusive Growth Framework. These projects focus on regional economic modelling, socio-economic impact assessment, and promoting equitable growth.

Geographic Focus (Where): City-REDI's work is primarily focused on the West Midlands region, but it also engages in UK-wide policy research and analysis. It also engages in comparative international regional analysis.

How does City-REDI deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - City-REDI works closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority, local councils, and national government departments. It fosters collaboration between policymakers, businesses, and academia, ensuring research aligns with regional priorities and shared goals for inclusive growth.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - City-REDI's vision is to support evidence-based policymaking for inclusive and sustainable economic development. Its strategy focuses on regional productivity, skills, innovation, and resilience, articulated through initiatives like WMREDI and the West Midlands Economic Impact Monitor.

3. Investing for the Long Term - The institute was established with a £4 million investment from the University of Birmingham and continues to secure multi-year funding from Research England, UKRI, national and local partners. This long-term commitment underpins sustained research capacity and policy engagement.

4. Local Knowledge - City-REDI leverages deep understanding of the West Midlands economy through granular data analysis, regional modelling, and stakeholder engagement. Its research reflects local economic structures, social challenges, and governance arrangements.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - City-REDI provides ongoing monitoring through tools like the West Midlands Economic Impact Monitor and conducts evaluations of regional programmes, ensuring evidence informs adaptive policymaking.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - The institute translates national strategies, such as industrial policy and skills frameworks into actionable insights tailored to the West Midlands context, supporting Combined Authority priorities and local growth plans.

7. Diversification - City-REDI's research spans multiple domains: productivity, skills, innovation, health, and sustainability. It partners with businesses, local authorities, and community organisations, as well as other academic partners, to diversify perspectives and solutions.

8. Key Players - City-REDI convenes key regional actors, including policymakers, business leaders, and civic organisations, through forums, workshops, and advisory boards, ensuring collaborative decision-making.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - The institute secures funding from diverse sources - Research England, UKRI, EU programmes, and private sector partners - allowing flexibility to respond to emerging policy challenges.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - City-REDI shares insights nationally and internationally through publications, policy briefings, and events. Its work on regional economic resilience and inclusive growth informs other city-region strategies across the UK.

Business Model

- University-based research institute portfolio funded by UKRI, Research England, EPSRC, AHRC, ESRC, research foundations and commercial contracts with regional partnerships, central and local government.
- Provides economic modelling, foresight analysis, business case assessment and policy evaluation services.
- Embedded in regional economic development agendas (e.g. West Midlands Combined Authority).
- Hybrid model: combines academic research with consultancy-style outputs for local authorities and businesses.

Limitations/Risks

- Heavy reliance on public sector contracts and grants; vulnerable to funding fluctuations.
- Regional focus may limit national/international influence.
- Risk of mission drift if commercial work overshadows academic independence.
- Complexity of systems and economic modelling and forecasting introduces data uncertainty and reputational risk.

Case study Two: Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place

University - University of Liverpool

Year Established - 2013 (initially within the Management School; later moved to Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2018 with cross-institutional remit)

Mission - To lead, convene, broker, and inform evidence-based urban policy by connecting research, policy, and practice. The Institute focuses on sustainable and inclusive cities and city regions, tackling challenges such as regional inequalities, public service reform, and future urban governance.

Core Funding - Supported by the University of Liverpool, with additional funding from civic partnerships and research councils for specific projects.

Research Grants - Secures funding from UKRI, British Academy, NIHR, and other bodies for projects on climate change, health determinants, and local economic development.

Commissioned Work - Produces policy briefings, evaluations, and reports for Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, parliamentary inquiries, and civic partners. Examples include the *Households into Work* programme evaluation and COVID-19 policy briefs.
Staff Size - Small interdisciplinary team (approx. 9 staff), including co-directors, research associates, and policy specialists.

Impact Examples

- Influenced Liverpool City Region devolution and growth strategies.
- Delivered high-profile policy briefings during COVID-19.
- Published evaluations shaping local employment and health policies.
- Hosts annual civic lecture and policy impact training programmes.

Core Foundational Analysis of Heseltine Institute

Establishment (Why): The Heseltine Institute was established in 2013 at the University of Liverpool to bridge academic research and public policy, with a focus on civic engagement and regional development.

Evolution (How): The institute has grown by developing strong community links and expanding its research themes to include public policy, social infrastructure, and health equity.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include Households into Work and Co-Pro Futures Inquiry, which focus on employment support and co-production in public services.

Geographic Focus (Where): The Heseltine Institute's work is centred on the Liverpool City Region, with a strong emphasis on devolution, community engagement and public service reform.

How does The Heseltine Institute deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - The Heseltine Institute works closely with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, local councils, and civic organisations. It acts as a convenor, fostering collaboration between policymakers, academics, and community stakeholders to address urban and regional challenges.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - The Institute's vision is to create sustainable and inclusive cities and city regions. Its strategy focuses on evidence-based policy development, public service reform, and tackling regional inequalities through research and civic engagement.

3. Investing for the Long Term - Supported by the University of Liverpool and external funders, the Heseltine Institute has established itself as a long-term civic engagement hub, embedding policy impact into the university's research mission.

4. Local Knowledge - The Institute leverages deep knowledge of Liverpool City Region's economic, social, and governance structures. Its research reflects local priorities such as employment, health, and regeneration, ensuring relevance and impact.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - Through commissioned evaluations such as the Households into Work programme, the Institute provides robust evidence on policy effectiveness, enabling adaptive decision-making and accountability.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs -The Heseltine Institute translates national policy agendas (e.g., devolution, levelling up) into actionable strategies tailored to Liverpool City Region, ensuring local implementation aligns with community needs.

7. Diversification - Its work spans multiple domains: economic development, health inequalities, climate resilience, and governance. This diversity strengthens its ability to address interconnected challenges.

8. Key Players - The Institute convenes influential actors, including local government leaders, civic organisations, and academic experts, through policy roundtables, public lectures, and advisory groups.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Funding from the University of Liverpool, UKRI, NIHR and civic partnerships enables flexibility to respond to emerging policy challenges and commission timely research.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - The Heseltine Institute shares insights through policy briefings, reports, and events, and academic articles, contributing to national debates on urban governance and regional development. Its work informs other city-region strategies across the UK.

Business Model

- Interdisciplinary research institute focused on urban governance, regional inequalities, and public service reform.
- Works through co-production with local authorities, combined authorities, and civic actors.
- Generates policy reports, thought leadership, and capacity-building initiatives.

Limitations & Risks:

- Co-production approach is resource-intensive and time-consuming.
- Limited ability to scale beyond Liverpool City Region without additional funding.
- Risk of fragmented impact if partnerships weaken or political priorities shift.
- Vulnerable to economic downturns affecting local authority budgets.

Case Study Three: Insights North East (INE)

University - Newcastle University (lead) in partnership with Northumbria University.

Year Established - 2022

Mission - To bridge the gap between academic research and place-based policymaking by producing accessible, actionable insights for North East policymakers. INE focuses on three strategic challenges: health and wellbeing, inclusive growth, and a just transition to net zero, with a cross-cutting emphasis on data and evidence.

Core Funding - £5.5 million total, including £2.8 million from Research England's Development Fund; the remainder from partner contributions (universities, NHS trusts, local authorities, and Combined Authority). The INE is now completely hosted by Newcastle University and building a hybrid model underwritten by the university, they have published a new strategy looking at this.

Research Grants - Funding supports collaborative research and knowledge exchange projects aligned with regional policy priorities. INE also invests in capacity-building for policy engagement and evidence translation.

Commissioned Work - Delivers co-created projects with policymakers, rapid evidence synthesis, and actionable insights to inform local and regional policy interventions. Activities include environment scanning, triage and brokerage, and iterative project delivery.

Staff Size - Small core team led by a Professor, supported by university staff and secondments from partner organisations; operates as a collaborative network rather than a large standalone institute.

Core Foundational Analysis of INE

Impact Examples

- Developed an AI-powered tool with Newcastle University's HaSS Faculty and NICD to improve identification of academic expertise for policy needs.
- Created a regional policy research ecosystem linking universities, NHS, and local authorities.
- Influencing strategies on health inequalities, inclusive growth, and Net Zero transition in the North East.

Establishment (Why): INE was established in 2022 at Newcastle University in partnership with Northumbria University to connect research with place-based policymaking in the North East of England. It builds on a strong tradition of regional research at CURDS (the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies).

Evolution (How): INE has quickly established itself by securing significant funding from Research England and developing partnerships with local government and NHS bodies.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include Policy Challenge Labs which define the challenges and partnerships with NHS Trusts, focusing on health, net zero, and inclusive growth.

Geographic Focus (Where): INE's work is focused on the North East region, aiming to address local policy challenges through collaborative research and innovation.

How does INE deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - INE was created through collaboration between Newcastle University, Northumbria University, NHS trusts, local authorities, and the North East Combined Authority. This partnership ensures alignment between academic research and regional policy priorities.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - INE's vision is to bridge the gap between research and policymaking by focusing on three strategic challenges: health and wellbeing, inclusive growth, and a just transition to net zero, underpinned by data and evidence.

3. Investing for the Long Term - INE secured £5.5 million in funding, including £2.8 million from Research England's Development Fund, to build sustainable capacity for policy engagement and knowledge exchange across the region.

4. Local Knowledge - INE leverages deep understanding of the North East's socioeconomic context through co-created projects with local authorities, NHS partners, and Combined Authorities, ensuring research reflects local needs and priorities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - INE embeds evaluation into its projects, using iterative delivery and feedback loops to assess impact and refine approaches. This includes tracking policy influence and stakeholder engagement outcomes.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - INE translates national policy agendas, such as health inequalities and Net Zero strategies into actionable insights tailored to the North East, ensuring local implementation aligns with community needs.

7. Diversification - INE's work spans health, economic development, and environmental sustainability, integrating social science, data science, and policy expertise to address interconnected regional challenges.

8. Key Players - INE convenes policymakers, academics, NHS leaders, and civic organisations through workshops, advisory boards, and collaborative research projects, ensuring inclusive decision-making.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Funding from Research England and partner contributions provides flexibility to respond to emerging policy challenges and invest in capacity-building initiatives.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - INE shares insights through policy briefings, events, and digital tools (e.g., AI-powered expertise matching), contributing to national debates and informing other regional policy engagement models.

Business Model

- Regional policy engagement platform connecting universities and policymakers in North East England.
- Provides evidence synthesis, policy briefings, and thematic research aligned with regional priorities.
- Funded through UKRI, collaborative university and local authority contributions.

Limitations & Risks

- Fragmented governance across multiple local authorities can slow decision-making.
- Limited long-term funding security; risk of dependency on short-term grants.
- Regional economic challenges may constrain capacity for innovation.
- Vulnerable to political volatility in devolution arrangements.

Case Study Four: YPERN

Institute - Yorkshire & Humber Policy Engagement and Research Network (Y-PERN)

University - A consortium of 12 universities in Yorkshire & Humber, coordinated by Yorkshire Universities (including University of Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, York, and others).

Year Established - 2022 (following the pilot Place-based Economic Recovery Network in 2020).

Mission - To transform collaboration between universities and policymakers by creating inclusive, place-based policies that address regional challenges. Y-PERN acts as a "live laboratory" for evidence-based policymaking, fostering knowledge exchange and capacity building across Yorkshire & Humber.

Core Funding - Over £6 million from Research England Development Fund, supplemented by institutional contributions from member universities.

Research Grants - Additional funding streams include ESRC, AHRC, and Innovate UK through initiatives like the Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP), which secured £5 million for regional policy innovation projects.

Commissioned Work - Provides policy analysis, evidence reviews, and strategic advice for Combined Authorities, Local Authorities, and regional bodies. Projects include Local Growth Plans, childcare strategies, skills development, and female entrepreneurship initiatives.

Staff Size - Operates as a network with a core team **of Policy Fellows,** academic directors, and engagement officers, supported by staff across 12 universities (exact FTE varies but estimated 15–20 core personnel).

Impact Examples

- Influenced Local Growth Plans for new Mayoral Combined Authorities.
- Delivered systems-thinking approaches for regional policymaking in areas like early years education, skills, and entrepreneurship.
- Leveraged over £11 million in combined funding for policy innovation and engagement.
- Recognised as a model for inclusive, evidence-led policymaking during English devolution.

Core Foundational Aspects of YPERN

Establishment (Why): YPERN was established in 2023 as a collaborative network of 12 Yorkshire higher education institutions to transform academic-policy collaboration.

Evolution (How): The network has rapidly grown by securing substantial funding from Research England and building strong partnerships with local councils in the region and combined authorities.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include the Yorkshire Policy Impact Programme (YPIP) and regional policy fellowships, which aim to enhance policy impact and capacity building.

Geographic Focus (Where): Y-PERN's work is focused on the Yorkshire and Humber region, promoting inclusive and place-based policy development.

How does YPERN deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - Y-PERN is built on collaboration between 12 Yorkshire & Humber universities, local authorities, and Combined Authorities. This partnership ensures alignment between academic research and regional policy priorities, fostering a shared commitment to inclusive growth.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - Y-PERN's vision is to create a "live laboratory" for evidence-based policymaking. Its strategy focuses on co-creating solutions for regional challenges such as skills, childcare, and entrepreneurship, underpinned by systems-thinking and inclusive engagement.

3. Investing for the Long Term - With over £6 million from Research England and additional institutional contributions, Y-PERN invests in sustained capacity-building for policy engagement and knowledge exchange across the region.

4. Local Knowledge - Y-PERN leverages deep understanding of Yorkshire & Humber's socioeconomic context through collaborative research and policy innovation partnerships, ensuring solutions reflect local needs and priorities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - The network embeds evaluation into its projects, tracking policy influence and outcomes to refine approaches and demonstrate impact to funders and stakeholders.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - Y-PERN translates national agendas—such as levelling up and skills strategies—into tailored regional interventions, ensuring local implementation aligns with community priorities.

7. Diversification - Its work spans multiple domains: early years education, skills development, female entrepreneurship, and local growth planning. This diversity strengthens resilience and adaptability.

8. Key Players - Y-PERN convenes universities, Combined Authorities, local councils, and civic organisations through policy forums, advisory boards, and collaborative projects, ensuring inclusive decision-making.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Funding from Research England and member universities provides flexibility to respond to emerging policy challenges and commission timely research.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - Y-PERN shares insights nationally through toolkits, policy briefings, and events, contributing to the National Civic Impact Accelerator and informing other regional policy engagement models.

Business Model

- Operates as a network model linking 12 universities and 18 councils.
- Funded by Research England Development Fund and institutional contributions.
- Focus on capacity building, shared learning, and policy innovation partnerships.
- Acts as a "live laboratory" for devolution and place-based policy.

Limitations/Risks

- Coordination complexity across multiple institutions and authorities.
- Risk of duplication or unclear accountability within the network.
- Dependent on continued government support for devolution agendas.
- Measuring impact across diverse projects is challenging.

Case Study Five: Institute for Collective Place Leadership (ICPL)

University - Teesside University

Year Established - 2023 (formally launched as part of Teesside University's People & Place research strategy)

Mission - To catalyse social, cultural, and economic change within regions in transition by bringing together policymakers, communities, businesses, and academics. The Institute aims to become an international beacon for collective place-based leadership, fostering inclusive, sustainable futures through interdisciplinary research and civic engagement

Core Funding - Funded primarily by Teesside University as part of its strategic research investment, with additional support from regional partnerships and charitable foundations.

Research Grants - Secures funding from UKRI, NIHR, and regional authorities for projects on health determinants, workforce development, and community empowerment. Examples include the Health Determinants Research Collaboration and Skills for Growth Programme.

Commissioned Work - Delivers evidence-based policy advice, evaluations, and capacity-building programmes for local authorities, Combined Authorities, and civic organisations. Activities include leadership training, regeneration strategies, and participatory placemaking projects.

Staff Size - Small interdisciplinary team (approx. 10–15 core staff), including director, research fellows, and engagement officers, supported by wider university expertise in arts, humanities, business, and social sciences.

Impact Examples

- Supported Tees Valley Combined Authority through the Skills for Growth Programme, enhancing SME leadership and business growth.
- Embedded research into regional health policy via NIHR-funded collaborations.
- Developed innovative models for placemaking and community engagement, influencing regeneration strategies in the Tees Valley.
- Active contributor to the UK2070 Commission, shaping national policy on regional inequalities.

Core Foundational Aspects of ICPL

Establishment (Why): The Institute for Collective Place Leadership was established in 2023 at Teesside University to focus on place leadership and regional regeneration.

Evolution (How): The institute has evolved by linking its work with the UK2070 Commission and developing interdisciplinary research themes.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include Empowered Places and collaborations with regional partners in the civic and creative sectors.

Geographic Focus (Where): The institute's work is focused on the Teesside region, aiming to support regional regeneration and place-based leadership.

How does Institute for Collective Place Leadership deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - ICPL was established to bring together local authorities, Combined Authorities, businesses, and community organisations in the Tees Valley and beyond. It acts as a convenor for collaborative leadership, ensuring shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable regional development.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - The Institute's vision is to become an international beacon for collective place-based leadership. Its strategy focuses on embedding research and innovation into civic decision-making, fostering social, cultural, and economic transformation in regions undergoing transition.

3. Investing for the Long Term - ICPL is part of Teesside University's strategic investment in its People & Place research theme. This long-term commitment ensures sustained capacity for leadership development, policy engagement, and regeneration initiatives.

4. Local Knowledge - The Institute leverages deep understanding of the Tees Valley's economic and social context, co-designing projects with local stakeholders to ensure interventions reflect community priorities and regional realities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - ICPL incorporates evaluation into its programmes, assessing the impact of leadership training, regeneration strategies, and policy interventions to refine approaches and demonstrate value.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - The Institute translates national agendas, such as levelling up and health determinants, into locally tailored strategies, ensuring national policy objectives are implemented in ways that meet regional needs.

7. Diversification - Its work spans leadership development, health inequalities, skills for growth, and cultural regeneration, drawing on interdisciplinary expertise from arts, humanities, business, and social sciences.

8. Key Players - ICPL convenes local government leaders, civic organisations, SMEs, and academic experts through advisory boards, training programmes, and collaborative research projects, ensuring inclusive governance.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Funding from Teesside University, NIHR collaborations, and regional partnerships provides flexibility to respond to emerging challenges and commission targeted research and capacity-building initiatives.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - ICPL shares insights through policy briefings, leadership programmes, and contributions to national initiatives like the UK2070 Commission, enabling other regions to adopt best practices in place-based leadership.

Business Model

- Anchored in Teesside University's civic mission; focuses on place-based leadership and regeneration.
- Works through interdisciplinary research and partnerships with local authorities, businesses, and communities.
- Funded by regional authorities, charities, and national research programmes.

Limitations/Risks

- Highly localised focus may limit broader policy influence.
- Reliance on regional economic health and regeneration funding.
- Risk of overstretch when addressing complex socio-economic challenges.
- Vulnerable to political and economic shocks affecting Tees Valley.

Case study Six: The Productivity Institute (TPI)

University - Headquartered at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. It is a UK-wide partnership including Cambridge, Cardiff, Glasgow, Sheffield, Warwick, King's College London, Queen's Belfast, NIESR, and ESCoE. The TPI supports regional productivity networks to look at productivity and economy locally.

Year Established - 2020

Mission - To improve understanding of UK productivity and enable evidence-based policies and business strategies that raise productivity for better living standards and well-being. The Institute brings together world-leading experts, policymakers, and businesses to address productivity challenges across regions and sectors.

Core Funding - Funded primarily by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under UKRI (£32m).

Research Grants - Receives ESRC funding for multi-year research programmes and additional support from philanthropic contributions (e.g., £1.5m donation from Sir Terry Leahy for regional inequality research).

Commissioned Work - Produces policy briefs, working papers, and insights for UK Government, devolved administrations, and regional bodies. Organises National Productivity Week and runs Regional Productivity Forums to inform local and national strategies.

Staff Size - Core team based at Manchester with leadership and operations staff, plus over 40 academic co-investigators across partner universities.

Impact Examples

- Published The Productivity Agenda, a blueprint for boosting UK productivity.
- Established 8 Regional Productivity Forums covering devolved nations and English regions.
- Launched The Productivity Laboratory, a data science hub for productivity metrics.
- Coordinated National Productivity Week, the first UK-wide campaign since 1963.
- Influenced policy debates on regional inequality, industrial strategy, and governance.

Core Foundational Aspects of The Productivity Institute

Establishment (Why): The Productivity Institute was established in 2020, led by the University of Manchester, to address the UK's productivity challenges through research and policy.

Evolution (How): The institute was set up through by securing significant funding from the ESRC and building a network of ten partner universities across the UK.

Key Projects (What): Key projects include Regional Productivity Forums and the Productivity Lab, which focus on understanding and improving productivity across different regions.

Geographic Focus (Where): The institute's work is UK-wide and international, with a focus on regional productivity and economic performance.

How does The Productivity Institute deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - The Productivity Institute operates as a UK-wide collaboration involving universities, policymakers, and business leaders. Its Regional Productivity Forums bring together local authorities, combined authorities, and civic organisations to align research with regional priorities. It does not have a specific place delivery focus, although it does have local networks, and the work has implications for understanding place.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - The Institute's vision is to improve productivity for better living standards and well-being across the UK. Its strategy focuses on evidence-based policy and business practices, articulated through its flagship report *The Productivity Agenda* and regional engagement programmes.

3. Investing for the Long Term - Funded by ESRC under UKRI for a multi-year programme, the Institute has secured additional philanthropic contributions to sustain research and policy engagement over the long term.

4. Local Knowledge - Through eight Regional Productivity Forums, the Institute gathers granular insights into regional economic conditions, ensuring that national productivity strategies reflect regional realities. The focus however is improving productivity at a national level.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - The Institute embeds evaluation into its research programmes, tracking policy influence and impact through working papers, policy briefs, and stakeholder feedback.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - It translates national productivity frameworks into region-specific strategies, supporting devolved administrations and combined authorities to tailor interventions to local contexts.

7. Diversification - The Institute's research spans governance, skills, technology adoption, finance, and sustainability, ensuring a holistic approach to productivity challenges.

8. Key Players - The Institute convenes academics, policymakers, business leaders, and civic organisations through forums, advisory boards, and events such as National Productivity Week.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Core ESRC funding and additional donations provide flexibility to respond to emerging challenges and commission targeted research.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - The Institute shares insights nationally and internationally through publications, events, and its Productivity Laboratory, enabling other regions to adopt best practices.

Business Model

- National research initiative funded by ESRC, involving multiple UK universities.
- Provides evidence and policy advice on productivity, business models, and economic growth.
- Operates through regional productivity forums and a national commission.

Limitations/Risks

- Productivity improvements are long-term and hard to measure, creating impact attribution challenges.
- Risk of policy misalignment if government priorities shift and lack of impact at a local level if too nationally focussed.
- Heavy reliance on academic research may limit practical uptake by businesses and local areas.
- Vulnerable to economic shocks that alter productivity dynamics.

Case Study Seven: Policy@Manchester

Institute - Policy@Manchester

University - The University of Manchester

Year Established - 2012 (as the University's dedicated policy engagement institute)

Mission - To influence and challenge policymakers locally, nationally, and globally by providing robust, research-informed evidence and ideas. Policy@Manchester connects academics with decision-makers, nurtures long-term policy engagement, and enhances understanding of pressing policy challenges.

Core Funding - Funded by The University of Manchester as part of its social responsibility and civic engagement strategy.

Research Grants - Works collaboratively with university research teams supported by UKRI, the EU, and charitable foundations; leverages Manchester's research beacons in areas such as energy, health, and global inequalities.

Commissioned Work - Produces policy briefings, thematic reports (e.g., *On Hydrogen*, *On Critical Technologies*), and organizes high-level policy roundtables (e.g., House of Lords events).

Staff Size - Small core team (approx. 10–15 staff) supported by wider University network of over 6,000 academic and research staff contributing expertise.

Impact Examples

- Influenced UK policy debates on energy resilience, hydrogen strategy, and critical technologies.
- Established the Greater Manchester Policy Hub to connect academics with local policymakers.
- Delivered evidence-led recommendations adopted in regional and national strategies.
- Hosted high-profile events including parliamentary roundtables and policy forums

Core Foundational Aspects of Policy@Manchester

Establishment (Why): Policy@Manchester was established in 2011 at the University of Manchester to translate academic research into policy impact, academic led but a corporate role.
Evolution (How): The initiative has grown by embedding itself within the university's communications and policy engagement activities, producing policy briefs and hosting events.
Key Projects (What): Key projects include the Policy@Manchester blog, policy briefings, and events that connect researchers with policymakers.
Geographic Focus (Where): Policy@Manchester's work is focused on Greater Manchester and on translating research into policy impact at both the local and national levels.

How does Policy@Manchester deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - Policy@Manchester fosters collaboration between academics, policymakers, and civic leaders through roundtables, parliamentary events, and partnerships with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This ensures shared commitment to evidence-informed policy.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - Its vision is to translate research into policy impact at local, national, and global levels. The strategy focuses on thematic policy areas—such as energy, health, and technology—supported by targeted campaigns and publications like On Hydrogen and On Critical Technologies.

3. Investing for the Long Term - Policy@Manchester is embedded within the University of Manchester's social responsibility strategy, ensuring sustained institutional investment in policy engagement and capacity-building.

4. Local Knowledge - The initiative leverages deep understanding of Greater Manchester's economic and social landscape, aligning research with local priorities such as health inequalities, energy resilience, and inclusive growth.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - Impact is tracked through engagement metrics, policy citations, and feedback from policymakers. Annual reports and KEF submissions demonstrate influence on regional and national policy agendas.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - Policy@Manchester translates national strategies, such as industrial policy and energy transition frameworks, into actionable insights tailored to Greater Manchester's context.

7. Diversification - Its work spans multiple domains: health, energy, technology, and social policy. This diversity ensures resilience and relevance across interconnected policy challenges.

8. Key Players - The initiative convenes academics, local government leaders, MPs, and civic organisations through events, advisory boards, and collaborative projects, ensuring inclusive engagement.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Core funding from the University of Manchester provides stability, while partnerships and commissioned work enable responsiveness to emerging policy needs.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - Policy@Manchester shares insights through blogs, policy briefings, and thematic reports, contributing to national debates and informing other universities' policy engagement models.

Business Model

- University of Manchester's policy engagement unit; connects researchers with policymakers.
- Produces thematic publications, policy briefings, and hosts events.
- Focus on influencing local, national, and global policy through evidence-based insights.

Limitations/Risks

- Impact depends on policy windows and political receptiveness.
- Limited funding for large-scale interventions; primarily engagement-focused.
- Risk of perceived bias if engagement aligns too closely with local political agendas.
- Hard to quantify long-term policy influence.

Case Study Eight: Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP)

University - Cardiff University

Year Established - 2017 (as successor to the Public Policy Institute for Wales founded in 2014)

Mission - To provide Welsh Government Ministers, civil servants, and public services with high-quality, independent evidence and advice to improve policy decisions and outcomes for Wales. WCPP works collaboratively with experts and is part of the UK-wide *What Works* network.

Core Funding - Jointly funded by the Welsh Government, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and Cardiff University.

Research Grants - Receives multi-year investment (e.g., £9 million over five years) to support research programmes addressing major policy challenges such as poverty, inequalities, Net Zero and transition, and social care.

Commissioned Work - Produces rapid evidence reviews, ministerial briefings, and reports tailored to Welsh Government priorities and Public Services Boards' needs. Often completed within short deadlines (3–6 months).

Staff Size - Approximately 23 full-time staff, including directors, senior research fellows, and research officers.

Impact Examples

- Over 200 reports and policy briefings published in five years.
- Influenced Welsh Government strategies on COVID-19 recovery, tackling poverty, Net Zero transition, and reducing social isolation.
- Finalist, ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2019
- Awarded Cardiff University's *Impact on Policy Award* in 2018.

Core Foundational Aspects of WCPP

Establishment (Why) - The Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) was established in 2017 at Cardiff University to provide independent, high-quality evidence and advice to Welsh Government Ministers and public services. Its purpose is to bridge the gap between academic research and policymaking, ensuring decisions are informed by robust evidence.

Evolution (How) - Since its inception, WCPP has grown by embedding itself within Welsh Government policy processes and expanding its network of academic experts. It has developed a reputation for producing rapid evidence reviews, ministerial briefings, and tailored reports, while strengthening partnerships with universities and public bodies across Wales.

Key Projects (What) - Key projects include evidence reviews on poverty and inequality, Net Zero transition strategies, and social care reform. WCPP has also delivered research to support COVID-19 recovery planning and evaluations of major Welsh Government programmes.

Geographic Focus (Where) - WCPP's work is focused on Wales, supporting Welsh Government, local authorities, and Public Service Boards. Its research also contributes to UK-wide policy debates through its membership in the What Works Network.

How does the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - WCPP was established through a partnership between Cardiff University, the Welsh Government, and ESRC. It works collaboratively with ministers, civil servants, and Public Service Boards to ensure evidence-based policymaking is a shared priority.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - The Centre's vision is to improve policy outcomes for Wales by providing independent, high-quality evidence and advice. Its strategy focuses on rapid evidence reviews, commissioned research, and knowledge exchange to inform decision-making.

3. Investing for the Long Term - WCPP benefits from multi-year funding agreements and institutional support, enabling sustained capacity for research translation and policy engagement over time.

4. Local Knowledge - The Centre draws on deep understanding of Welsh governance structures and socioeconomic challenges, tailoring research to the specific needs of Wales while leveraging expertise from across the UK and internationally.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - WCPP embeds evaluation into its commissioned work, assessing the impact of evidence on policy decisions and publishing annual reports to demonstrate influence and accountability.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - It translates UK-wide policy agendas—such as Net Zero and social care reform—into actionable insights for Welsh Government, ensuring national frameworks are adapted to the Welsh devolved context.

7. Diversification - WCPP's portfolio spans poverty reduction, health and social care, climate policy, and economic development, ensuring a broad approach to interconnected policy challenges.

8. Key Players - The Centre convenes ministers, civil servants, academics, and civic organisations through advisory boards, workshops, and commissioned projects, ensuring inclusive engagement.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Core funding from Welsh Government, ESRC, and Cardiff University provides stability, while commissioned work allows flexibility to respond to emerging policy needs.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - WCPP shares insights through reports, policy briefings, and events, contributing to the UK-wide What Works Network and informing best practice in evidence-based policymaking through academic research.

Business Model

- Funded primarily by Welsh Government, ESRC, and Cardiff University.
- Operates as part of the What Works Network, providing independent evidence reviews and policy advice.
- Focus on knowledge brokerage: synthesising academic and grey literature for policymakers.
- Works closely with ministers and civil servants to co-design research responsive to policy needs.

Limitations & Risks:

- Dependence on government funding may limit perceived independence.
- Geographic remit (Wales) restricts scalability and diversity of policy contexts.
- Risk of implementation gap: evidence may not translate into practice due to resource constraints.
- Vulnerable to political shifts and changes in Welsh Government priorities.

Case Study Nine: Public Policy|Southampton (PPS)

University - University of Southampton

Year Established - 2012 (as the University's dedicated policy engagement service)

Mission - To enhance the sub-national, national, and international public policy impact of research conducted by University of Southampton staff and students. PPS connects researchers with policymakers, builds capacity for policy engagement, and fosters a culture of evidence-informed policymaking.

Core Funding - Funded by the University of Southampton as part of its civic and research engagement strategy.

Research Grants - Works alongside University research teams funded by UKRI, NIHR, and other bodies; supports projects addressing societal challenges such as health, environment, and technology.

Commissioned Work - Delivers consultation responses, policy briefings, and organizes workshops with government departments (e.g. Department for Work and Pensions ARI workshop).

Staff Size - Small professional team embedded within the University's policy engagement structure (exact FTE not published; estimated 8–12 staff).

Impact Examples

- Influenced national consultations.
- Hosted policy engagement events with government departments.
- Developed fellowship and secondment programmes to embed research in policymaking.
- Enhanced recognition of University of Southampton as a leader in policy impact.

Core Foundational Aspects of PPS

Establishment (Why) - Public Policy|Southampton (PPS) was established in 2012 at the University of Southampton to strengthen the impact of academic research on public policy. Its purpose is to connect researchers with policymakers and ensure that evidence informs decisions at local, national, and international levels.

Evolution (How) - Since its creation, PPS has embedded itself within the University's civic and research engagement strategy. It has expanded its activities by developing policy engagement training, supporting consultation responses, and hosting workshops with government departments and public bodies.

Key Projects (What) - Key projects include policy briefings and consultation responses to national bodies such as the MHRA and NDA, the Policy Associates Scheme to build researcher-policy links, and collaborative events with government departments like the Department for Work and Pensions.

Geographic Focus (Where) - PPS focuses on influencing policy at multiple scales: locally within Southampton and the South Coast, regionally across the UK, and internationally through partnerships and contributions to global policy debates.

How does Public Policy|Southampton (PPS) deliver on the critical success factors for successful places?

1. Shared Political Will and Partnership - PPS builds strong partnerships between the University of Southampton and policymakers at local, regional, and national levels. It works with government departments, local authorities, and civic organisations to ensure research informs policy decisions.

2. Clear Strategy and Vision - The initiative's vision is to enhance the policy impact of research by connecting academics with decision-makers. Its strategy focuses on capacity-building, consultation responses, and co-created policy engagement activities.

3. Investing for the Long Term - PPS is embedded within the University's civic and research engagement strategy, ensuring sustained institutional investment and long-term commitment to policy impact.

4. Local Knowledge - PPS leverages the University's expertise in health, environment, and social sciences to address local and regional challenges, tailoring research outputs to the needs of Southampton and the wider South Coast.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation - Impact is tracked through engagement metrics, consultation responses, and feedback from policymakers. PPS reports on its activities to demonstrate influence and inform future priorities.

6. Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs - PPS translates national policy agendas, such as health and social care reforms, into locally relevant insights, ensuring that national strategies are implemented effectively in the regional context.

7. Diversification - Its work spans multiple domains, including health, technology, environment, and social policy, enabling PPS to respond to a wide range of policy challenges.

8. Key Players - PPS convenes academics, policymakers, and civic leaders through workshops, roundtables, and fellowship schemes, ensuring inclusive engagement and collaborative decision-making.

9. Adequate and Responsive Funding - Core funding from the University of Southampton provides stability, while commissioned work and partnerships enable responsiveness to emerging policy needs.

10. Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange - PPS shares insights through policy briefings, consultation responses, and events, contributing to national policy debates and informing best practice in university-policy engagement.

Business Model

- University-based hub for policy engagement and capacity building.
- Offers fellowships, training, and bespoke engagement activities for researchers and policymakers.
- Focus on evidence-informed policymaking at local and national levels.

Limitations/Risks

- No direct funding for research projects; relies on external grants.
- Limited scalability beyond the South Coast without additional resources.
- Risk of low visibility compared to larger policy institutes.
- Dependent on maintaining strong relationships with policymakers.

Case study Ten: The Bennett School of Public Policy

University - University of Cambridge

Year Established - 2018 (as Bennett Institute for Public Policy); expanded into the Bennett School of Public Policy in 2025 as a standalone department.

Mission - To rethink public policy in an era of turbulence and inequality by connecting world-class research in technology, science, and social sciences with policymaking. The School aims to develop sustainable, evidence-based solutions to pressing global challenges such as climate change, technological disruption, and inequality, while training future policy leaders.

Core Funding - Funded primarily by the Peter Bennett Foundation, with additional support from University of Cambridge resources, research councils, trusts, and philanthropic donors.

Research Grants - Secures competitive funding from UKRI, British Academy, and other bodies for projects on productivity, AI governance, social infrastructure, and democratic resilience.

Commissioned Work - Produces policy reports and frameworks for government and civic partners. Examples include: Measuring Social and Cultural Infrastructure (British Academy-funded); Policy papers on AI governance and digital policy; Contributions to UK constitutional review and productivity strategies.

Staff Size - Medium-sized interdisciplinary team (approx. 25–30 staff), including professors, research associates, policy specialists, and operations staff.

Impact Examples

- Developed frameworks for measuring social and cultural infrastructure adopted by national and local policymakers.
- Influenced UK debates on AI regulation and digital policy.
- Hosts Cambridge Public Policy Conference, convening global experts on resilience and governance.
- Established the Centre for the Future of Democracy, shaping discourse on democratic renewal.

Core Foundational Aspects of The Bennett Institute

Establishment (Why) - Created to bridge academic research and policymaking, addressing urgent challenges like technological disruption, climate change, and inequality.

Evolution (How) - Started as an institute within POLIS in 2018; scaled up into a full School in 2025 to integrate research, teaching (MPhil in Public Policy, new MPhil in Digital Policy), and executive education.

Key Projects (What) - Measuring Social and Cultural Infrastructure; AI & Geopolitics Project (AIxGEO); Levelling Up and Townscapes Project; The Productivity Institute; Institutional Memory and Decision-Making in Government

Geographic Focus (Where) - Primarily UK-focused with strong regional work (e.g., East Anglia Productivity Forum), but also engages internationally on global governance, AI policy, and democratic resilience.

How does the Bennett School deliver on critical success factors for successful places?

- **Shared Political Will and Partnership -** Works with UK government departments, local authorities, and international bodies; convenes policymakers, academics, and civic actors through conferences and advisory networks.
- **Clear Strategy and Vision -** Vision: Fair, sustainable, and evidence-based policymaking. Strategy: Interdisciplinary research and training to tackle systemic challenges.
- **Investing for the Long Term -** Backed by major philanthropic funding and embedded within Cambridge's research ecosystem for enduring impact.
- **Local Knowledge -** Leads regional productivity forums and place-based policy research, ensuring relevance to UK spatial inequalities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation -** Publishes policy evaluations and frameworks (e.g., social infrastructure metrics) to inform adaptive governance.
- **Adapting National Frameworks to Local Needs -** Translates national agendas (e.g., levelling up, AI regulation) into actionable regional strategies.
- **Diversification -** Research spans technology governance, climate resilience, productivity, democratic renewal, and wellbeing.
- **Key Players -** Engages leading academics, civic leaders, and policymakers through advisory boards and events.
- **Adequate and Responsive Funding -** Mix of philanthropic, research council, and university funding enables flexibility and innovation.
- **Transferable Learning and Knowledge Exchange -** Outputs include policy briefings, blogs, and conferences influencing UK and global debates.

Business Model

- Interdisciplinary research and teaching hub focused on systemic policy challenges.
- Works through co-production with government, civic organisations, and industry.
- Generates policy reports, thought leadership, and capacity-building programmes. https://www.bennettschool.cam.ac.uk/about-the-bipp/

Limitations & Risks

- Resource-intensive co-production approach.
- Risk of over-reliance on philanthropic funding.
- Vulnerable to shifts in political priorities and economic downturns.
- Scaling international impact requires additional investment.

Appendix Two: The Civic 6 Framework – additional detail and examples

Civic-Embedded Regional Development Institutes

Positives:

- Strong alignment with local/regional policy needs.
- Deep civic partnerships enhance relevance and uptake of research outputs.
- Use of modelling tools supports evidence-based decision-making, strategic performance monitoring and target setting.
- Diverse funding sources reduce dependency on single streams.
- High volume of outputs and stakeholder engagement.

Negatives:

- Resource-intensive (requires large interdisciplinary teams).
- Regional focus may limit national or international influence unless national and international research projects are built into the Institute's portfolio.
- Complexity of managing multiple partnerships and funding streams.

Example Key Functions

1. **Applied Research**
   - Regional productivity, skills, innovation, and inequalities.
   - Socio-economic modelling and forecasting and monitoring of places.

2. **Policy Engagement**
   - Co-production of policy with local authorities, combined authorities, and business groups.
   - Contributions to devolution deals, levelling-up strategies, and regional investment plans.

3. **Knowledge Exchange**
   - Participation in frameworks like the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), and impact case studies.
   - Embedded exchange processes such as secondments, placements, and collaborative projects.
   - Hosting roundtables, workshops, and podcasts to disseminate findings.

4. **Capacity Building**
    - Training and tools for local government and civic institutions.
    - Development of decision-support systems and economic dashboards.

5. **Public Engagement**
    - Accessible publications, media presence, and community-focused research.

Funding Model

- **Core Institutional Support**: From the host university, often matched with external grants.
- **Research Grants**: From UKRI, ESRC, Innovate UK, and regional development funds.
- **Commissioned Work**: Bespoke research for local authorities, chambers of commerce, and government departments.
- **Collaborative Projects**: Joint initiatives with other universities and civic partners.

Example Outputs

- Policy briefings, economic reviews, academic papers.
- Regional economic models and scenario planning tools.
- Podcasts, blogs, and public reports.

Impact Strategy

- Influence on regional and national policy and international comparative learning.
- Real-time economic monitoring (e.g., Economic Impact Monitors).
- Development of inclusive growth frameworks and civic strategies.

What Makes It Unique?

- **Place-First Orientation**: Regional development is the central mission, not a sub-theme.
- **Tool-Rich**: Builds and maintains a range of tools. Methods and approaches for policymaker evidence (ie economic models, evaluation methods etc)
- **Civic Integration**: Embedded in local governance and civic strategy.
- **Multi-Modal**: Combines quantitative analysis, qualitative research, and public engagement.

How does this model meet the critical success factors?

- Shared Political Will & Partnership: Strong collaboration with Combined Authorities and councils.
- Clear Strategy & Vision: Regional economic development and inclusive growth as core mission.

- Investing for the Long Term: Multi-year funding from UKRI and host university investment.
- Local Knowledge: Deep regional data modelling and socio-economic analysis.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Real-time dashboards (e.g., Economic Impact Monitors).
- Adapting National Frameworks: Translates industrial strategy and levelling-up into local plans.
- Diversification: Covers productivity, skills, health, sustainability.
- Key Players: Convening regional actors through advisory boards and forums.
- Adequate & Responsive Funding: Mixed portfolio (UKRI, commissions, university).
- Transferable Learning: Shares insights nationally and internationally.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond City-REDI) also include:

1. Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS)

Institution: Newcastle University

Established: 1977

Focus: Spatial planning, regional development, territorial governance, policy

Civic Integration: Long-standing partnerships with local and regional authorities

Notable Features:
- Started out as this model but now mostly academic research on regional inequalities and governance
- Strong influence on UK spatial policy
- Embedded in North East regional development strategies
- National and international research alongside regional research.

2. Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University

Focus: Housing, regeneration, labour markets, local governance, voluntary and community sector, policy evaluation (local, regional and national)

Civic Integration: Deeply involved in local and regional policy development

Notable Features:
- Applied research for local authorities and housing associations – also government departments and third sector.

- Strong emphasis on social inclusion and regeneration
- Long-term partnerships with civic stakeholders

3. Institute for Collective Place Leadership (ICPL)

Institution: Teesside University

Established: 2023

Focus: Place leadership, regional regeneration

Civic Integration: Works with UK2070 Commission and regional civic partners

Notable Features:
- Emphasis on leadership and governance in place-based development
- Strong civic and creative sector engagement
- Early-stage but aligned with civic-embedded principles.

Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institutes

Example: Heseltine Institute

Positives:
- Strong community engagement and co-production.
- Focus on social infrastructure and equity.
- Flexible and responsive to local needs.
- Builds trust with civic stakeholders.

Negatives:
- Less emphasis on quantitative tools and modelling.
- Smaller scale may limit research capacity.
- Impact may be harder to measure compared to data-driven models.

Example Key Functions

1. **Community-Engaged Research**
    - Co-production of research with communities and service users.
    - Focus on social infrastructure, health equity, and public service innovation.

2. **Policy Development**

- Collaborative work with local councils, NHS bodies, and voluntary sector.
- Contributions to local policy strategies and reform initiatives.

3. **Public Dialogue**
    - Hosting forums, roundtables, and workshops to facilitate civic discourse.
    - Engaging citizens in policy design and evaluation.

4. **Capacity Building**
    - Supporting civic institutions with training, toolkits, and evidence-based practices.
    - Empowering communities through participatory methods.

5. **Knowledge Exchange**
    - Translating academic insights into accessible formats for policymakers and practitioners.
    - Active participation in frameworks like KEF and Civic University Agreements.

Funding Model

- **Core University Support**: Institutional funding for staffing and strategic development.
- **Research Grants**: From UKRI, ESRC, NHS, and local government.
- **Commissioned Work**: Projects for councils, health bodies/foundations, and community organisations.
- **Philanthropy and Partnerships**: Occasionally supported by charitable foundations or civic alliances.

Example Outputs

- Policy reports, community toolkits, co-produced publications.
- Case studies on civic innovation and public service reform.
- Events, podcasts, and blogs aimed at public and practitioner audiences.

Impact Strategy

- Influence on local governance and service delivery.
- Strengthening civic capacity and democratic participation.
- Enhancing trust and collaboration between academia and society.

What Makes It Unique?

- **Community-First Orientation**: Prioritises civic voice and lived experience in research.
- **Participatory Methods**: Uses co-production and engagement to shape policy.

- **Social Infrastructure Focus**: Addresses health, housing, employment, and equity.
- **Accessible Outputs**: Emphasizes clarity and relevance for non-academic audiences.

How does this model meet the critical success factors?

- **Shared Political Will & Partnership:** Embedded in local governance and civic networks.
- **Clear Strategy & Vision:** Focus on social equity and public service reform.
- **Investing for the Long Term:** University-backed with external grants.
- **Local Knowledge:** Strong community engagement and participatory research.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Qualitative evaluations of programmes (e.g. Households into Work).
- **Adapting National Frameworks:** Tailors devolution and levelling-up to local needs.
- **Diversification:** Health, governance, climate resilience.
- **Key Players:** Civic leaders, NHS, voluntary sector.
- **Adequate & Responsive Funding:** University core plus project-based grants.
- **Transferable Learning:** Policy briefings and national thought leadership.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond The Heseltine) also include:

1. Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR)

Institution: King's College London

Focus: Public service reform, governance, policy innovation

Key Features:
- Applied research on health, education, and social care.
- Strong links with London-based civic institutions
- Emphasis on inclusive and responsive policy design

2. Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) (Independent but university-affiliated)

Location: Manchester

Focus: Community wealth building, inclusive economies

Key Features:
- Works with local authorities and anchor institutions
- Co-produces policy with communities.
- Influential in shaping civic economic strategies.

3. Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD)

Institution: University of Westminster

Focus: Democratic governance, public participation, civic innovation

Key Features:

- Research on participatory democracy and civic engagement
- Strong public-facing outputs and events
- Collaborates with NGOs and civil society organisations.

4. Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI)

Institution: University of Strathclyde (Department of Economics, Strathclyde Business

Focus: Scottish economic analysis, fiscal policy, health inequalities, labour markets, and social policy

Key Features:

- Established in 1975 as an economics-focused research institute; celebrating 50 years in 2025
- Holds Scottish Government to account through independent fiscal scrutiny, including the annual Scotland's Budget Report and the FAI Economic Commentary
- Has broadened significantly into social policy and health equity through the Scottish Health Equity Research Unit (SHERU), established in 2024 in collaboration with the University of Strathclyde's Centre for Health Policy and supported by the Health Foundation
- SHERU produces regular policy analysis on health inequalities, poverty, housing, and labour markets, including the annual Inequality Landscape report and Prevention Watch briefing series
- Strong media presence and public engagement, including partnerships with BBC Scotland and regular commentary on Scottish economic and social policy
- Works across the public, private, and third sectors on commissioned research and policy evaluation

The FAI is a particularly instructive example of model evolution within the Civic 6 Framework. Originally established as a Productivity and Economic Performance Institute (Type 4), it has increasingly incorporated characteristics of a Civic Engagement and Public Policy Institute (Type 2) through its health equity and social policy work. This trajectory illustrates the report's central argument about hybrid adaptation: institutes respond to changing policy environments, funding opportunities, and societal needs by

expanding their focus and partnership base, moving across typological boundaries while retaining their core analytical strengths.

Networked Regional Policy Collaboratives

Positives:

- Leverages multiple institutions for broader reach.
- Promotes regional coordination and shared learning.
- Flexible structure allows for diverse participation.
- Strong capacity-building focus.

Negatives:

- Coordination challenges across institutions.
- May lack a centralised identity or leadership.
- Outputs and impact may vary across partners.

Key Functions

1. **Policy Co-Creation**
    - Joint development of policy initiatives with councils and combined authorities.
    - Regional policy labs and fellowships to embed academic expertise in policymaking.

2. **Capacity Building**
    - Training and mentoring for policy professionals and researchers.
    - Development of regional policy networks and communities of practice.

3. **Knowledge Sharing**
    - Dissemination of research across institutions and sectors.
    - Hosting events, workshops, and conferences to foster dialogue.

4. **Collaborative Research**
    - Multi-university research projects addressing regional priorities.
    - Shared data platforms and thematic working groups.

5. **Strategic Alignment**
    - Coordination with regional development strategies and civic university agreements.
    - Alignment with national funding priorities (e.g., Research England).

Funding Model

- **Core Funding**: From Research England or similar bodies, often distributed across partners.
- **Institutional Contributions**: In-kind support from participating universities.
- **Commissioned Work**: Joint projects with local authorities and regional bodies.
- **Grants and Fellowships**: Funding for embedded researchers and collaborative initiatives.

Outputs

- Regional policy briefings, fellowships, co-authored reports.
- Events, webinars, and cross-sector dialogues.
- Shared frameworks for policy engagement and impact measurement.

Impact Strategy

- Strengthen regional policy ecosystems.
- Build long-term relationships between academia and government.
- Foster innovation through distributed expertise and shared learning.

What Makes It Unique?

- **Distributed Model**: Operates across multiple institutions with shared governance.
- **Collaborative Ethos**: Emphasises partnership, co-creation, and mutual learning.
- **Capacity-Oriented**: Focuses on building skills, networks, and institutional readiness.
- **Scalable and Replicable**: Can be adapted to other regions with similar structures.

How does this model meet the critical success factors?

- **Shared Political Will & Partnership:** Multi-HEI and regional authority collaboration.
- **Clear Strategy & Vision:** "Live laboratory" for evidence-based policymaking.
- **Investing for the Long Term:** Research England Development Fund plus institutional contributions.
- **Local Knowledge:** Regional socio-economic context integrated into projects.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Embedded evaluation in fellowships and policy labs.
- **Adapting National Frameworks:** Aligns national agendas with regional priorities.
- **Diversification:** Skills, childcare, entrepreneurship, growth planning.
- **Key Players:** Universities, councils, Combined Authorities.
- **Adequate & Responsive Funding:** Multi-source funding but dependent on devolution support.
- **Transferable Learning:** Toolkits and national civic impact programmes.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond YPERN) also include:

1. EPIC Futures NI

Region: Northern Ireland

Institution: University of Ulster (lead)

Focus: Youth engagement, democratic innovation, inclusive governance

Key Features:
- Participatory policy labs and youth-led research
- Strong civic and governmental partnerships
- Networked approach to policy co-creation

2. Midlands Innovation Policy and Engagement Group

Region: Midlands

Institutions: Universities in the Midlands Innovation group (e.g., Birmingham, Nottingham, Warwick, Loughborough)

Focus: Translating research into regional policy impact

Key Features:
- Collaborative policy engagement across institutions
- Shared events, policy briefings, and regional strategy alignment

3. N8 Research Partnership – N8 Policing Research Partnership

Region: North of England

Institutions: eight research-intensive universities (e.g., Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield)
Focus: Evidence-based policing and public safety policy

Key Features:
- Co-production with police forces and criminal justice agencies.
- Long-term collaborative research and policy engagement

4. Civic University Network (CUN)

Region: UK-wide (with regional clusters)

Institutions: Multiple universities with Civic University Agreements

Focus: Civic engagement, regional development, policy innovation

Key Features:
- Networked model supporting regional civic strategies.
- Shared learning, toolkits, and policy engagement practices

Single Policy Issue Institutes

Example: The Productivity Institute
Positives:

- Large-scale funding enables ambitious research.
- National scope supports broad policy influence.
- Strong academic credibility and partnerships.
- Focused on a critical economic issue (productivity).

Negatives:
- May be less responsive to local or regional needs.
- Emphasis on academic outputs may limit civic engagement.
- Risk of being perceived as top-down or technocratic.

Key Functions

1. **Thematic Research**
    - Investigates drivers of productivity: skills, innovation, infrastructure, institutions, and investment.
    - Produces high-quality academic and policy research.

2. **Policy Engagement**
    - Advises national and regional governments on productivity strategies.
    - Hosts regional productivity forums and stakeholder roundtables.

3. **Data and Analysis**
    - Develops productivity metrics, dashboards, and comparative analyses.
    - Uses large-scale datasets and econometric modelling.

4. **Knowledge Dissemination**

- Publishes working papers, policy briefs, and academic articles.
- Organizes conferences, webinars, and public lectures.

5. **Capacity Building**
    - Supports policymakers and practitioners with evidence-based insights.
    - Offers training and resources for economic development professionals.

Funding Model

- **Core Research Grants**: Often large-scale funding from ESRC or UKRI (e.g., £32M for The Productivity Institute).
- **Institutional Support**: Contributions from lead and partner universities.
- **Commissioned Work**: Occasional projects for government or industry.
- **Philanthropy and Sponsorship**: In some cases, support from foundations or private sector.

Outputs

- Productivity reports, regional diagnostics, academic publications.
- Online tools and dashboards for economic analysis.
- Policy recommendations and strategic frameworks.

Impact Strategy

- Influence national economic policy and regional development strategies.
- Provide evidence to support levelling-up, innovation, and investment agendas.
- Shape public discourse on productivity and economic resilience.

What Makes It Unique?

- **National Scope**: Addresses UK-wide productivity challenges with regional insights.
- **Academic Depth**: Strong emphasis on rigorous, peer-reviewed research.
- **Policy Relevance**: Direct engagement with government and economic development bodies.
- **Data-Driven**: Heavy use of quantitative analysis and economic modelling.

How does this model contribute to the critical success factors?

- **Shared Political Will & Partnership**: National and regional forums with policymakers and business.
- **Clear Strategy & Vision**: Productivity improvement for better living standards.
- **Investing for the Long Term**: ESRC multi-year funding and philanthropy.
- **Local Knowledge**: Regional forums provide granular insights.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**: Data-driven productivity metrics and dashboards.

- **Adapting National Frameworks**: Translates productivity strategies into regional contexts.
- **Diversification**: Skills, technology, governance, sustainability.
- **Key Players**: Government, industry, academia.
- **Adequate & Responsive Funding**: Large-scale ESRC grants ensure stability.
- **Transferable Learning**: National Productivity Week and open-access reports.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond Productivity Institute) also include:

1. Centre for Cities (Independent, affiliated with LSE Cities)

Location: London

Focus: Urban economic performance, city-level productivity

Key Features:
- Annual *Cities Outlook* reports
- Data-driven analysis of city economies
- Influences national urban policy and investment strategies.

2. What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth

Lead Institutions: LSE, Centre for Cities, Arup

Focus: Evidence-based evaluation of local economic policies

Key Features:
- Systematic reviews of "what works" in economic development.
- Provides guidance to local authorities and LEPs.
- Strong emphasis on impact evaluation and policy learning

3. Centre for Economic Performance (CEP)

Institution: London School of Economics (LSE)

Focus: Labour markets, productivity, education, innovation

Key Features:
- Long-standing ESRC research centre
- Influential in shaping UK productivity and skills policy
- High academic output with strong policy relevance

4. Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) – Productivity Research Strand

Institution: Independent, with academic affiliations

Focus: Public finance, productivity, labour economics

Key Features:
- Rigorous economic analysis
- Influences Treasury and public spending reviews
- Productivity research linked to tax, education, and investment.

5. National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR)

Focus: Macroeconomic modelling, productivity, regional economics

Key Features:
1. UK macroeconomic forecasts and productivity analysis
2. Policy engagement with government and business
3. Long-standing reputation for economic performance research

Interdisciplinary Public Policy Think Tanks

Example: Bennett Institute

Positives:
- High-level, interdisciplinary research.
- Strong theoretical and philosophical contributions.
- Philanthropic funding allows for long-term planning.
- National and international policy relevance.

Negatives:
- Less embedded in local or regional contexts.
- Limited applied or tool-based outputs.
- May be less accessible to non-academic audiences.

Key Functions

1. **Interdisciplinary Research**
    - Explores themes like wellbeing, legitimacy, place, productivity, and decision-making.
    - Integrates theoretical frameworks with empirical analysis.

2. **Policy Innovation**

- Develops new conceptual models and frameworks for governance and public value.
- Advises governments and international organisations on long-term policy design.

3. **Thought Leadership**
    - Publishes influential reports, working papers, and books.
    - Hosts high-profile lectures, seminars, and policy dialogues.

4. **Academic-Policy Bridging**
    - Translates complex academic insights into accessible policy recommendations.
    - Engages with think tanks, NGOs, and international institutions.

5. **Public Engagement**
    - Contributes to public debate through media, blogs, and open-access publications.

Funding Model

- **Philanthropic Support**: Often funded by foundations (e.g., the Bennett Foundation).
- **Research Grants**: From UKRI, ESRC, and international bodies.
- **University Support**: Core infrastructure and academic staffing.
- **Occasional Commissions**: Select policy projects for governments or NGOs.

Outputs

- Thematic research reports, policy frameworks, academic publications.
- Public lectures, blogs, and media commentary.
- Conceptual tools for policy analysis and evaluation.

Impact Strategy

- Shape long-term policy thinking and institutional reform.
- Influence national and international policy debates.
- Provide intellectual leadership on complex societal challenges.

What Makes It Unique?

- **Theoretical Depth**: Emphasis on foundational questions of governance, legitimacy, and wellbeing.

- **Interdisciplinary Breadth**: Combines social sciences, humanities, and data science.
- **Global Perspective**: Engages with international policy communities.
- **Thought Leadership**: Positions itself as a source of new ideas and frameworks for public policy.

How does this model contribute to the critical success factors?

- **Shared Political Will & Partnership**: Engages policymakers at national/international level.
- **Clear Strategy & Vision**: Conceptual frameworks for governance and wellbeing.
- **Investing for the Long Term**: Philanthropic and research council support.
- **Local Knowledge**: Limited; primarily national/global orientation.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**: Academic impact metrics dominate.
- **Adapting National Frameworks**: Influences policy design rather than local adaptation.
- **Diversification**: Governance, innovation, public value.
- **Key Players**: Government, NGOs, international bodies.
- **Adequate & Responsive Funding**: Stable philanthropic base.
- **Transferable Learning**: Global thought leadership and policy dialogues.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond The Bennett Institute) also include:

1. Institute for Policy Research (IPR)

Institution: University of Bath

Focus: Health, education, sustainability, governance

Key Features:
- Combines social sciences, economics, and public health.
- Engages with policymakers through accessible outputs and events.
- Strong emphasis on evidence-based policy and interdisciplinary collaboration

2. Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD)

Institution: University of Westminster

Focus: Democratic governance, public participation, civic innovation

Key Features:
- Research on democratic theory, political communication, and civic engagement
- Interdisciplinary approach combining politics, sociology, and media studies.

- Active public engagement and policy dialogue

3. Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR)

Institution: University of Cambridge

Focus: Housing policy, planning, social inclusion

Key Features:
- Interdisciplinary research involving economics, geography, and social policy.
- Strong policy engagement with local and national government
- Applied and conceptual work on housing systems and planning reform

4. UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP)

Institution: University College London

Focus: Mission-oriented innovation, public value, economic transformation

Key Features:
- Interdisciplinary research combining economics, innovation studies, and governance.
- Influential in shaping global policy on innovation and public investment.

5. Blavatnik School of Government

Institution: University of Oxford

Focus: Public leadership, governance, policy design

Key Features:
- Combines political science, economics, law, and ethics.
- Offers academic programmes and policy fellowships.
- Global reach with strong UK policy engagement

Translational Policy Communication Platforms

Example: Policy@Manchester

Positives:
- Effective at translating research into accessible formats.
- Enhances visibility of academic work.

- Low-cost and scalable model.
- Strong media and public engagement.

Negatives:

- Limited original research or modelling.
- Small teams may restrict capacity.
- Impact depends heavily on communication effectiveness.

Key Functions

1. **Research Translation**
    a. Converts academic research into policy briefs, blogs, and summaries.
    b. Focuses on clarity, relevance, and accessibility for non-specialist audiences.

2. **Policy Engagement**
    a. Organises events, roundtables, and briefings to connect researchers with policymakers.
    b. Facilitates dialogue between academia and government.

3. **Strategic Communication**
    a. Uses digital platforms, media, and social channels to disseminate insights.
    b. Builds narratives around research themes to influence public discourse.

4. **Capacity Building**
    a. Trains academics in policy writing and engagement.
    b. Supports researchers in identifying policy relevance and audiences.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
    a. Tracks engagement metrics and policy influence.
    b. Uses feedback to refine communication strategies.

Funding Model

- **University Support**: Core funding from institutional budgets.
- **Project-Based Funding**: Occasionally supported by research grants or external commissions.
- **In-Kind Contributions**: Academic time and expertise provided by affiliated researchers.

Outputs

- Policy briefs, blogs, podcasts, infographics.
- Events and workshops for policy engagement.

- Online platforms highlighting research impact.

Impact Strategy

- Increase uptake of academic research in policy settings.
- Improve public understanding of complex issues.
- Foster a culture of engagement within the university.

What Makes It Unique?

- **Communication-Focused**: Prioritises clarity and accessibility over academic depth.
- **Low-Cost and Scalable**: Operates with small teams and flexible formats.
- **Cross-Cutting**: Works across disciplines and themes to amplify diverse research.
- **Engagement-Driven**: Builds relationships and visibility rather than conducting original research.

How does this model contribute to the critical success factors?

- **Shared Political Will & Partnership**: Builds relationships with policymakers through events.
- **Clear Strategy & Vision**: Focus on research translation and visibility.
- **Investing for the Long Term**: University social responsibility funding.
- **Local Knowledge**: Strong regional engagement (e.g. Greater Manchester).
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**: Engagement metrics and policy citations.
- **Adapting National Frameworks**: Communicates national strategies in local context.
- **Diversification**: Works across multiple policy domains.
- **Key Players**: Academics, policymakers, civic leaders.
- **Adequate & Responsive Funding**: Core university support; limited external funding.
- **Transferable Learning**: Blogs, briefings, thematic reports.

Examples of these types of institutes (beyond Policy@Manchester) also include:

1. UCL Public Policy

Institution: University College London

Focus: Connecting UCL research with public policy

Key Features:

- Policy briefings, workshops, and fellowships
- Supports researchers in engaging with policymakers.

- Offers training and resources for policy communication.

2. Cambridge Public Policy (CPP)

Institution: University of Cambridge

Focus: Policy engagement and research translation

Key Features:

- Hosts the *Cambridge Public Policy Synthesis* series.
- Supports interdisciplinary policy engagement.
- Works closely with the Bennett Institute and CCHPR

3. Policy Bristol

Institution: University of Bristol

Focus: Enhancing the policy impact of research

Key Features:

- Produces accessible policy briefings and summaries.
- Offers training and support for researchers.
- Strong links with local and national policymakers

4. SPRE – Scottish Policy and Research Exchange

Institutional Network: Multiple Scottish universities

Focus: Building capacity for policy engagement in Scotland

Key Features:

- Connects early-career researchers with policymakers.
- Offers workshops, fellowships, and policy writing support.
- Acts as a national translational platform

5. Policy Leeds

Institution: University of Leeds

Focus: Policy engagement and research translation

Key Features:

- Supports researchers in engaging with local and national policy.

- Hosts event and produce policy-focused outputs.
- Works closely with YPERN and regional stakeholders.

6. The Conversation UK (Academic Contributor Platform)

Institutional Network: UK-wide, university-supported

Focus: Translating academic research into public-facing articles

Key Features:

- Academics author accessible articles for a general audience.
- Widely read by policymakers and media
- Strong editorial support for researchers

Appendix Three: Case Study References

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