Overview

This paper sets out how the University of Brighton is mobilising its resources to support local, regional and national efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our communities. It sets out:

- the principles of our approach;
- the main areas of support we are most able to provide;
- the management and coordination model we are employing.

Principles of our approach

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis requiring the collective creativity, inventiveness and generosity of our entire University community to address its many challenges. We are determined to do all we can to support our communities and contribute to regional and national efforts whenever possible. It is our civic responsibility to do so.

Our University values will underpin our approach.

- **Creativity** – we recognise the scale of the challenges we face as an institution, society and world during this pandemic and place value on tackling these in creative and innovative ways.
- **Inclusivity** – our diverse community is key to ensuring we have impact in our response at all levels, and our approach will ensure the widest possible range of stakeholders will benefit from our response to the pandemic.
- **Partnership** – through partnership we will make a difference by sharing and disseminating our resources and expertise for the benefit to our city, our region and the nation.
- **Sustainability** – in taking action, we are protecting the sustainability of our community and key stakeholders. We will look for opportunities to generate a lasting impact for our students, staff and community partners.

We recognise this is a period of crisis necessitating urgency, enthusiasm and selflessness in our response. However, it is right that, as a community, we act responsibly and appropriately. As such, our primary responsibilities underpinning the University’s response are as follows.

- **Coordination** – internally, through senior leads in academic schools and professional services – and externally through key contacts with partners, including the University Alliance and UUK.
- **Protection** – of our staff, students and of the University’s position (eg. appropriate contracts and agreements, inventories, insurance, etc.).
- **Agility** – in certain areas of support, timescales will be extremely tight. We will ensure our reaction to demands will be agile to reflect the rapidly developing nature of the pandemic and stakeholders’ needs. Action will be taken in line with institutional policies and appropriate approvals.
- **Visibility** – ensuring activities undertaken is made be visible internally and externally.
Areas of support

There are four main areas where the University will support the local and regional effort to tackle the virus and support our communities. In focusing on the local and regional effort, the University will be mindful of alignment with the nation-wide response.

Through our research, equipment and research facilities. This includes:

- Requests for consumables, eg. sanitiser gel and personal protective equipment;
- Requests for kit, eg. testing equipment;
- Requests for research facilities, eg. wet laboratories;
- Requests for existing or new research projects focusing on COVID-19 issues, and seedcorn funding by the University to develop research proposals.

Through the use of our estates. This includes:

- Local requests for access to rooms and space for training, meetings and storage;
- Local requests for parking spaces;
- Local requests for accommodation for key workers and vulnerable individuals using recently vacated student accommodation (excluding blocks still being used by students).

Through staff and student and alumni volunteering. This includes:

- Supporting local charities and community groups;
- Supporting the NHS through its Volunteer Responders scheme;
- Staff volunteering during normal working hours.

Through staff and students entering the workforce. This includes:

- Enabling final year students from Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) and the School of Health Sciences to support the NHS and social care sector;
- Facilitating pre-registration students in nursing, midwifery, allied health, pharmacy and other relevant subjects to support the health workforce through extended placements as part of their programme of study;
- Clinically trained staff temporarily moving back into practice in the NHS under secondment agreements;
- Professionally qualified staff who want to work in key support sectors (eg. social work) under secondment agreements with host organisations.

Management and coordination

Since the start of the pandemic, the University’s Incident Response Team (IRT) has met regularly to oversee activity across all areas of the institution. A number of IRT sub-groups have been established to develop further detailed plans to address key areas of concern, including a sub-group focusing on the University’s civic response.

COVID-19 Civic Engagement Group

The COVID-19 Civic Engagement Group is tasked with overseeing the University’s civic response during the pandemic. It meets weekly and will continue to do so until further notice. Its
purpose is to ensure that the University’s civic efforts are **coordinated**, **captured** and **communicated** appropriately (see Terms of Reference in Appendix). In doing so, its intention is to ensure the University’s response is as effective as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary functions are as follows:

- To coordinate the University’s civic response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To ensure opportunities for civic engagement are communicated to staff, students and alumni;
- To capture all University civic response activities and ensure these are communicated via the right channels;
- To report to the University IRT on a regular basis;
- To ensure the university has a shared understanding of external stakeholders’ priorities, ensuring that our response is appropriate.

The Civic Engagement Group expects to deliver these functions as described below. Given the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic, its exact operation and activities will necessarily need to adapt as the situation develops.

**Coordination**

The Civic Engagement Group will seek to coordinate relevant activity across the University. It will do this by:

- Working with management teams in schools and central professional services to identify requests and offers of support, aligned to the four areas of support identified above;
- Receiving requests for civic response (via Group members), proposing appropriate actions to the University IRT, and providing updates on activity, as necessary;
- Working with relevant staff across the University to update or create new guidance and processes relevant to the University’s civic response;
- Liaising with external stakeholders and keeping them informed via an appropriate relationship manager or key contact within the University, avoiding a proliferation of (well meaning) offers from our community;
- Escalating relevant issues to the University IRT, as required.

**Capture**

The Civic Engagement Group will capture relevant civic activity across the University. It will do this by:

- Receiving external requests for support, either directly through Group members, or via referral from colleagues across the University;
- Asking staff to consider the requests they receive, and the ideas they generate, against this framework and to consider flagging activity to the Group as early as possible;
- Maintaining a central register of civic activity, including all activity under consideration and delivered, where it is made aware of the activity;
- Providing Group members with access to the register to allow it to be updated frequently;
• Ensuring Heads of Schools and Heads/Directors of Professional Services are made aware of the Civic Engagement Group and the need to refer proposed civic activity so it can be captured and, if necessary, appropriate safeguards put in place to enable the activity to take place safely with minimal risk to staff, students, and the community.

Communication

The Civic Engagement Group will communicate about the University’s civic response. It will do this by:

• Establishing a Staffcentral page dedicated to information on the University’s civic response, located within the University’s existing COVID-19 Staffcentral information;

• Updating staff, students and alumni regularly about the University’s civic activity through existing channels (e.g. Staff News, Big Picture, social media, Studentcentral, etc.);

• Proactively communicating with local and regional partners to articulate the University’s civic offer and aim to establish a single point of contact about needs and priorities with each;

• Working with higher education partners, including the University Alliance and UUK, to contribute to sector-wide evidence of higher education’s support for the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic;

• Ensuring that positive stories about the University’s response to the pandemic are communicated widely, showcasing the contributions of our students, staff and alumni, demonstrating the pride of our community in its civic engagement.

Roles and responsibilities

Oversight

• COVID-19 Civic Engagement Group Chair: Tara Dean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)

• University Incident Response Team Chair: Stephen Dudderidge, Registrar & Secretary

University leads for cross-cutting work

• Legal: Andrew Wilson

• Health and Safety: Andrew Knight

• Communications: Ken Young

Version 3 (9 April 2020)
Appendix

University of Brighton
C-19 Civic Engagement Group
Terms of Reference

Name
Brighton C-19 Civic Engagement Group

Reporting to
UoB Incidence Response Team

Purpose
The purpose of this Group is to ensure that the University’s efforts in terms C19 civic response are co-ordinated, captured and communicated appropriately.

Meeting Schedule
The group is to meet weekly until further notice.

Functions
- To co-ordinate the University's civic response to the C-19 pandemic
- To ensure opportunities for civic engagement are communicated to staff, students and alumni
- To capture all University’s civic response activities and ensure these are communicated via the right channels
- To report to the University’s C-19 IRT on a regular basis
- To ensure the university has a shared understanding of external stakeholders priorities, ensuring that our response is appropriate

Standing Members
Tara Dean (Chair, PVC Research and Enterprise)
Sue McHugh (Director of Campus Development)
Marnie Middlemiss (Director of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement)
Beth Thomas-Hancock (Student Volunteering Manager)
Laura Greenwood-Pearson (Chief Executive Officer, Student Union)
Ken Young (Communications Manager, Marketing and Communications)
James Bluring (Policy Manager, Evaluation and Policy)
Stephen Maddison (Head of School – SHUM and SASS)
Kirsty Smallbone (Head of School – SET and PABS)