

**University of  
Northampton**

# **University of Northampton Enterprise Priorities 2017 - 2020**



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## **Enterprise Priorities 2017 – 2020**

### **Aim**

The aim of the University of Northampton's Enterprise and enterprise plan for 2017 – 2020 is to deploy our existing, and new, resources in coordinated partnership with key local stakeholders to improve the economic metrics and business environment of Northamptonshire. In achieving this aim we will also improve graduate employability, wellbeing, environmental and other metrics.

### **Objectives**

- To improve graduate employability;
- To increase the number of Northamptonshire businesses engaged in process and product innovation;
- To increase the number of Northamptonshire businesses engaged in exporting goods and services, particularly to countries outside the EU;
- To promote Northamptonshire as an excellent location for business creation and business re-location;
- To transform the delivery of public services through new social enterprise models;
- To develop world-leading entrepreneurial capacity and capability in leather technologies and use.

These objectives are derived from our work with key strategic partners that have, in turn, informed our enterprise and institutional plans.

### **How Northampton's Enterprise strategy relates to the wider institutional mission and individual corporate strategies**

The University of Northampton is the only HEI in Northamptonshire. We recognise that this position gives us both opportunities and responsibilities. In discharging these responsibilities between 2010 and 2016 we have worked very closely with the local LEPs, the County Council, the NHS and the business community to ensure that we add value to the economic, social and cultural life of the county. With the Northamptonshire LEP and the County Council we wrote Northamptonshire's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and set up the Northamptonshire Growth Hub (NGH) in 2013 to help deliver the business goals the SEP specified. We made a significant contribution to the production of Northamptonshire's European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy 2014 – 2020. We made strenuous efforts to ensure that the construction of our new £330 million Waterside Campus contributes to our priority objectives by including social value into

the procurement and contracting process, thus increasing the numbers of local people and businesses, including apprentices, engaged in the construction process.

Our work in the period 2010 – 2015 led us to develop our Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020, Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change. This plan's Vision for the University is that 'by 2020 we are positioned at the heart of Northamptonshire, intellectually, culturally and economically'. The plan details four critical success factors:-

1. Student Experience;
2. Intellectual Capital;
3. Strategic Alliances; and
4. Financial Sustainability which underpin all University strategies, including enterprise.

Crucially, the plan embeds social impact into the heart of the University by setting four 'Changemaker+ Challenges'. These challenges extend our core competencies for the betterment of Northampton, Northamptonshire, and the wider world through our Local2Global initiative. Our local to global outlook provides greater employability opportunities for our students and more expertise and resource for our local partners. Our focus on strategic alliances assumes an international dimension that will drive new revenue schemes and opportunities for enterprise.

One of the Changemaker+ Challenges drives the Enterprise aim of the University. Challenge 4 is 'to make Northamptonshire the best county in the UK to start, build and run a business. The Local2Global element of the strategy highlights that delivering the Challenge does not mean the University only has a local focus, rather we bring learning from whatever source to the issues faced by the county.

Our Enterprise activities do not stand alone. We do not make a rigid distinction between enterprise and many research activities, and additional funding for enterprise outcomes comes from both research and separate fundraising activities. The Senior Manager responsible for Enterprise, the Executive Dean: Research, Impact and Enterprise, is also responsible for devising and directing the University's research plan, our social impact action plan, and our fundraising. These activities are integrated so that fundraising campaigns and events build on research and enterprise and are designed to raise money to support both research and enterprise. We have put increased emphasis on the impact that our research has on the social, economic, cultural and environmental life of the county. The inclusion of the word 'Impact' in the job title of the Executive Dean: Research, Impact and Enterprise makes overt the importance of the translation of our research.

## Key trends and drivers creating opportunities and challenges

Our analysis of the environment for enterprise in the period 2013 – 2016 identified four key trends and drivers, relevant to the University of Northampton and its enterprise plans, that create opportunities and challenges, as detailed below.

### Trend 1

The historic poor performance of Northamptonshire businesses in innovation and export.

Opportunity	Challenge
<i>Recognised need for a new, coherent and long-term growth programme for the county's top 1,000 businesses giving the University new enterprise revenue, IP and research opportunities.</i>	Need for additional resource in an era of austerity.

### Trend 2

The high levels of business creation in Northamptonshire but the relatively low levels of business relocation to the county, despite the low costs of operating compared to London, Oxford and Cambridge.

Opportunity	Challenge
<i>Exploit the county's geographical location and promote it as "the place to do business" to high-growth, high-technology businesses, targeting the Oxbridge – London triangle, thus providing increased opportunities for high-quality graduate jobs and enterprise.</i>	Need to align initiative to innovation and export growth programme, so additional resource required.

### Trend 3

The increasing demands placed upon public (statutory) services with reduced central government funding.

Opportunity	Challenge
<i>Partner with Northamptonshire County Council to ensure our expertise in social enterprise and public sector transformation informs the development of a 'Next Generation Council' while also creating new income and opportunities for student placements and graduate employment.</i>	Scale of transformation makes the initiative the most ambitious of its kind in the UK.

## Trend 4

The world's leather industry has a severe skills shortage, especially management level, and faces increasing environmental challenges.

Opportunity	Challenge
<i>Exploit the University's unique International Centre for Leather Technology to generate new enterprise income, IP and research opportunities.</i>	Additional financial, physical and personnel resources required.

## Likely key barriers and enablers

We have identified the following barriers to achieving our aim and objectives:

- a. The limited numbers academic staff with the experience, ability and time to successfully engage in enterprising activities,
- b. The University is relocating to a new-build campus in 2018. The costs of construction limit the amount of our reserves that can be invested in enterprising activities and support.

Recognising these barriers, we have developed the following enablers to ensure that we are able to achieve our enterprise aim and objectives:

- We deploy a significant proportion of our HEIF to employ a specialist, professional, business support team that deliver the Northamptonshire Growth Hub service (NGH). The 12-strong NGH team, who have all worked in industry, includes business advisors, legal experts, financial experts, and professional project managers. NGH has a CRM system, a call centre, and is based in the University's new Innovation Centre in the centre of Northampton. The team operates as a business and is tasked with generating a surplus.
- The Northamptonshire Growth Hub (NGH), which has operated since 2013, is funded by BEIS (ex-BIS). Managed and delivered by NESE, NGH has developed a very strong profile for business support in the county and has customer satisfaction levels of over 90%. (We are one of the very few HEIs to run a Growth Hub).
- From 2014 – 2016 we put very great effort into securing ESIF for business support activities that would enable us to meet our priority objectives. We have won funding for two ERDF projects (Ready2Grow and Innovate Northamptonshire) and one ESF project (Working Links), with a total value of over £7 million.

- We have developed a new multi-layered training programme for staff to develop enterprising skills. This programme covers the range of staff from Professors to PhD students.
- We have developed new, large-scale, social venture businesses with Northamptonshire County Council.
- We have set up the Northamptonshire International Unit with Northamptonshire County Council.

The development of these enablers means that the University has the personnel and financial resource to deliver its enterprise strategy, and to train new staff in the skills required.

## **The key activities by which we will realise our objectives**

To realise our priority objectives, we will:

- Deliver the ESIF projects 2016 – 2019, using them to generate new income and opportunities for students/graduates and research;
- Work with local partners to gain new funds and investment, especially from outside the EU, to support businesses in the county;
- Work with the LEP and local authorities to promote Northamptonshire as an excellent place to create and run a business, gaining new opportunities for graduate employment;
- With our co-owners, manage First for Wellbeing CIC to deliver its objectives and create new funding for research and enterprise, along with opportunities for student placements, graduate employment and staff development;
- With our partners, create and manage a social enterprise providing integrated transport commissioning in the county, and beyond;
- Develop and operate the International Leather Centre (Vulcan Works) in Northampton so that it is recognised as the world's leading centre for leather technology and uses.

## Target sectors

The University of Northampton has two key target sectors for enterprising activities, and one subsidiary one. These target sectors enable us to focus our enterprise activities in ways that builds on our strengths, responds to the strategic needs of the county, and supports elements of national strategy.

Our first key sector is Northamptonshire-based high-growth potential SMEs, especially in the high-performance engineering (including automotive), food and drink processing, and leather and allied industries. These three industries are identified in the Northamptonshire SEP as current strengths of the county with potential for increased innovation, export and creation of highly-skilled jobs. The NGH business support team has excellent links with these industry groups, and runs a regular series of events for them during the year. Having gained the ERDF funding for the Innovate Northamptonshire Project, the University has the industry contacts, the business support personnel, the CRM system, a network of experts from other HEIs, and the financial resource to support the county's high-growth potential SMEs and achieves the first two of its priority objectives. Our enterprise activity in this key sector supports the work of our key LEP partners.

Our second key target sector is local authorities that are seeking to transform the way they deliver statutory services. Since April 2014 we have been working in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council to assist the Chief Executive and senior leadership team to transform the authority into a Next Generation Council. The Next Generation Council strategy is about redesigning the delivery of statutory services to move from the traditional 'entitlement' model to one based on individual customer-focused services that realise income generation opportunities where possible. These new service models are delivered by social enterprise spin-outs of Council staff and, crucially, include staff and resource from relevant local partners.

The first Next Generation spin-out was launched on 1 April 2016. First for Wellbeing CIC delivers statutory and additional wellbeing services to the c. 700,000 inhabitants of Northamptonshire. It is owned by the Council (51%), by Northamptonshire NHS Foundation Trust (38%) and the University (11%). As a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, First for Wellbeing has to use any surplus to deliver its social objects. These include research and innovative enterprising activities to improve wellbeing outcomes in the county. In its first year of operation First for Wellbeing will have a turnover of c. £29 million and additional contracts have been won that mean in the 2017 – 2018 year the turnover will rise to c. £36 million. The joint owners of First for Wellbeing are in the process of setting up a separate trading vehicle (a company limited by shares) to enable them to realise the commercial opportunities that the new venture has identified.

First for Wellbeing is the first venture of its kind in the UK and Northampton is the only HEI to be involved in such a venture. The initiative transforms the scale and scope of our enterprising activities for the 2017 –2020 and beyond.

The second Next Generation spin out is currently being developed by staff from the University, the Council and staff from the University of Hertfordshire. The Network Northamptonshire Total Transport (NNTT) project, funded by the Department of Transport, is a joint project between Northampton and Hertfordshire universities, Northamptonshire County Council, and seven other local authorities and NHS organisations. It has the aims of:

- Getting better/best value from the public sector money spent on commissioning transport in Northamptonshire through intelligent, integrated commissioning;
- Delivering social impact and reducing social exclusion through the operation of new transportation models;
- Introducing new digital technology to help transform the relationship between the user and transport;
- Changing behaviour to reduce vehicle usage and increase physical activity.

As part of the NNTT project, a new social enterprise spin-out is being developed to be the integrated intelligent commissioner of transport in Northamptonshire. The new business will be established by 31 March 2017 and will be c. 50% owned by the University of Northampton. It has been agreed by the relevant local authorities that the spin out will be a pilot project for a model of transport commissioning for the England Economic Heartland area (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, and (possibly) Hertfordshire).

The NNTT social enterprise spinout is the first venture of its kind in the UK and Northampton is the leading HEI involved in such a venture. Similar to the First for Wellbeing initiative, the NNTT project transforms the scale and scope of our enterprise activities for the 2016 – 2021 HEIF period, and beyond. It gives the University unique and large-scale opportunities for enterprise, research, IP realisation and protection, student and graduate opportunities, and income generation. The estimated annual turnover of the NNTT social enterprise in its second year of operation is c. £30 million.

We believe that our work with Northamptonshire County Council to develop the Next Generation Council model represents a quantum leap in our enterprise strategy and differentiates us from the majority of UK HEIs.

Our work with the County Council has given us unique experiences which we will be exploiting in support of other local authorities in the HEIF period 2016 – 2021.

Our subsidiary target sector for enterprise activities is the community and voluntary sector (CVS) (including social enterprises and charities) in Northamptonshire. Working with a consortium of c. 30 of the larger and more sustainable CVS organisations in the county, we are the lead partners on a successful ESF bid for the 'Working Progress' project. This initiative aims to develop the capacity and capability of the CVS so that it becomes a more effective and viable partner for the public sector, including the Next Generation spin-outs such as First for Wellbeing and the NNTT social enterprise.

## **Geographical focus**

Our primary geographical focus for enterprising activities, driven by the University's Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change five year plan, is Northamptonshire. However, our Local2Global strategy ensures that we do not have a myopic, inward-looking approach to supporting the economic development of our core community, rather we bring learning from whatever source to the issues faced by the county.

To help ensure the effectiveness of our Local2Global approach, and gain the support of key partners, we established in April 2016 (before, it should be noted, the result of the Brexit referendum!) the Northamptonshire International Unit (NIU). The NIU is a formal joint venture between the University and the County Council that deliberately sets out to move away from an over-reliance on EU funding. The NIU is a shared resource between the University and the Council. Its aim is to establish Northamptonshire as a European and Global centre of excellence in 'place-based' commissioning, delivery and learning, and 'smart city' development.

The objectives of the NIU are to:

- Secure funding to enable the NIU partners to deliver key strategic priorities;
- Explore innovative commissioning and delivery of place-based services;
- Attract new research and innovation-based opportunities;
- Develop and maintain a shared research platform and capacity;
- Learn from and share best practice;
- Align resources and planning on research and innovation activities.

Our clear enterprise focus on areas of the county's industrial strength makes Northamptonshire an attractive partner for other countries with similar strengths, and those wishing to develop expertise in these areas. Local2Global is a key feature of our enterprise plan strategy and the NIU is currently exploring links with other countries in Asia, South and North America, and Africa.

Based on our five priority objectives, the University of Northampton's enterprise plan in the period 2016 - 2021 has the following intended outcomes and impacts:

## **Business (public and third sector benefits)**

Benefits to start up/spin-out businesses: growth in surplus produced by Next Generation Council spin-out social ventures, enabling increased social and economic benefit to be provided to population of Northamptonshire.

Improved innovation, the development of technology and IP through testing and application to products and processes: at least 100 Northamptonshire businesses engaged with HEIs and/or research institutes; at least 50 product or process innovations reaching the market place; exploitation of at least 20 new IP registrations.

Improved business performance: at least 40 SMEs in Northamptonshire to increase sales, graduate employment opportunities, value of exports, and profit.

## **Social and community group benefits**

Greater understanding of issues and solutions for organisations, local community groups, and clients: introduction of new digital technology to enable service users to communicate with and receive personalised service from social enterprise spin-outs

Development of services to meet the needs of local groups and residents: introduction of at least 8 new services to meet wellbeing and/or transport/travel needs of the population of Northamptonshire.

## **Wider economic and social benefits**

Shaping and developing regional partnerships, such as LEAs, local authorities, business groups: delivering the Growth Hub service within Northamptonshire, and beyond; successfully piloting and introducing integrated intelligent commissioning of transport within (potential) England Economic Heartland/Oxford-Cambridge axis region; developing and maintaining international links for Northamptonshire key sector businesses, leading to increase exports, innovation and profitability.

Strengthening the innovation system through businesses and regional agencies: extending the Innovate Northamptonshire model to new businesses and regions.

Labour market benefits: increasing the number of graduate employment opportunities in SMEs in Northamptonshire.

## **Monitoring progress**

We have significantly changed, and improved, the way we monitor and evaluate the activities of the University of Northampton for the period 2017 – 2020. Planning and monitoring systems have become more formal, more systematic and objective and managers are held more accountable throughout the organisation. Therefore, we have great confidence in our ability to deliver our enterprise plans.

The University's Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020, Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change, has four critical success factors (CSFs). We use the Balanced Scorecard model to identify metrics for each of the CSFs. Senior managers are responsible for developing five-year Operating Plans for each key area. The five-year plan for enterprise is part of the Operating Plan for Research, Impact and Enterprise (RIE), which is the responsibility of the Executive Dean: Research, Impact and Enterprise.

Enterprise activity is monitored through three mechanisms:

1. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system records all interactions with external contacts by date, individual, progress, and income. This CRM system is managed by the NGH team and is constantly updated.
2. The Finance department produces monthly reports of invoices requested, invoices sent and invoices paid.
3. Using data provided by both the CRM and Finance systems, the relevant line manager of staff involved in enterprising activities holds, as part of the performance review system, meetings to review progress against personal performance and development objectives.

We monitor and report enterprise activity against eight KPIs: income (by University, by Faculty/Department, by individual); number of KTPs; number and type of client (SME, PLC, public sector, community and voluntary sector); location of client (UK and abroad); percentage of staff involved in enterprise; type of service/product provided; partnership with other HEI or centre of excellence; students/graduates involved.

S Denny  
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