



Community Gateway, Cardiff University

Response to Paul Davies, Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee letter of 28 November 2024 to Ali Abdi, Community Gateway Partnerships Manager

17 December 2024

Cardiff University formally launched the community partnership platform Community Gateway (<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/community/our-local-community-projects/community-gateway>) at the Senedd in 2014 as one of five 'flagship' engagement projects in the *Transforming Communities* program, alongside *Healthy Places, Healthy People* (Rhondda and Cardiff) *City Region Exchange* (Cardiff Capital Region), *Community Journalism* (Wales) and the *Pheonix Project* (Namibia) (<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/52405-transforming-lives-through-universitys-most-ambitious-community-plan-ever>)

Community Gateway's proposal that Cardiff University should commit to long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with geographically defined local communities was developed through a *Cardiff Futures* staff development program (2012-2013) within which eight multi-disciplinary staff members had been allocated seed funding of £5000 to develop a project proposal. The team (McVicar, Anstey, Buchaillard-Davis, Coulman, Day, Gale, Whitmarsh, Pullin) carried out a two-year scoping and listening exercise to develop a 2014-2017 Business Case. This was presented to the University Executive Board in December 2013.

The selection of Grangetown as a pilot area to launch Community Gateway was based on the team's scoping research which identified Grangetown as one of Wales' most ethnically diverse wards, one of Cardiff's largest wards, and a ward which faced significant challenges identified in Wales' Multiple Deprivation Index. Grangetown's diverse urban conditions, its proximity to Cardiff University for a pilot scheme, and resident feedback regarding perceptions of Cardiff University's lack of presence in Grangetown also supported the justification for launching the platform in Grangetown.

Listening exercises were held in Grangetown between December 2012-May 2013 through focus group workshops, public open evenings, and 1-1 conversations to identify community interest in and priorities for partnering with Cardiff University. A scoping *Report to Highlight Community Problems, Solutions and Potential University Engagement in Grangetown* was also developed through an on-campus research internship in May-August 2013. The listening exercises and Report supported the development of the 2014-2017 Business case, which summarised:

It is important to note that the Community Gateway initiative is more correctly termed a platform than a project. This is a model for engagement projects that could be replicated elsewhere.

The overarching aim of the project is to forge closer connections between the University and the city, and hence to re-establish the University's historic role as a civic institution of Cardiff. In the first instance it sets out to develop an engagement model to be piloted in Grangetown, with the aim of promoting community engagement and regeneration.

The 2014-2017 Community Gateway Business Case proposed an initial period of pump-priming initial engagement projects, and longer-term objectives of creating a ten-year plan of wellbeing, social and economic initiatives.

A 2017-2022 Sustainability Plan, and the current 2022-2028 Business Case similarly highlighted Community Gateway's intent that the partnership platform pilot in Grangetown be repeated elsewhere. The 2022-2028 Business Case includes objectives for *Milestone 9*: presenting a case for formalisation of a 99-year commitment, and *Milestone 10*: presenting a case for expansion to other geographic communities. Community Gateway is currently partnering with Cardiff Council's Planning Department and community charitable organisations in Caerau and Ely, Grangetown, Splott and St Mellons on *Community Engagement in Local Development Plans*. This work is contributing to evidence building for geographic expansion of the platform.

In addition to our work in Grangetown, Cardiff University Civic Mission projects have developed long-term, ongoing relationships with other geographical communities, including Caerau and Ely in Cardiff, where we have developed CAER Heritage in partnership with ACE – Action in Caerau and Ely, and Abercynon, where we have promoted green social prescribing.

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