



## **‘New CAPE Regional Development Fellow with Yorkshire Universities’**

**Wednesday 25 May 2021**

Yorkshire Universities (YU) is delighted to welcome the appointment of Dr Richard Whittle, as the first Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE) Regional Development Fellow. Starting on 1 July, Richard will work with YU, the Place-based Economic Recovery Network (PERN) and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, to lead an innovative project tasked with strengthening the use and application of university research to inform public policy in West Yorkshire.

Commenting on his appointment, Dr Richard Whittle said:

“The Universities in Yorkshire produce outstanding insights that could, and should, help shape the effective evidence-based policy, vital for post-pandemic recovery and growth. As a CAPE Policy Fellow, I look forward to working with Yorkshire Universities to help develop this evidence base.”

On behalf of YU, Executive Director, Dr Peter O’Brien, said:

“I look forward to working with Richard as he takes up this important post. The research our universities in the region undertake, is wide-ranging, of high-quality and of real significant value to policy-makers and communities. The Fellowship is designed to strengthen and solidify the relationships between academia and the individuals and institutions responsible for supporting Tracy Brabin in her role as the new Mayor of West Yorkshire.”

Speaking about the new Fellowship, Professor Andrew Brown, from the University of Leeds and PERN, said:

“PERN academics are delighted to welcome the appointment of Richard as the CAPE Fellow. Richard’s appointment marks a significant step forward for the model of academic-led regional engagement that PERN is pioneering in West Yorkshire. He brings unique skill and experience across disciplines, sectors and scales, making him perfect for the role and we look forward to successful collaboration in meeting the challenges of post-pandemic economic recovery.”

The Co-Director of CAPE, Sarah Chaytor, said:

“We are thrilled to be supporting this innovative fellowship which will be closely embedded with key academic and policy stakeholders in West Yorkshire. The Fellowship provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen links between the academic and policy communities at the regional policy level and enhance the application and use of evidence and expertise to address regional challenges.”

Welcoming the news, Alan Reiss, Director of Strategy, Communications and Policing at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, said:

“We are looking forward to working with Richard and CAPE to support our ongoing programme of policy development, strengthening our links with the fantastic universities in West Yorkshire and beyond. Richard’s appointment comes at an important time for the Combined Authority as we welcome Tracy Brabin the new Mayor of West Yorkshire and look to build on our work to support a recovery from Covid-19 that benefits all our communities.”

## Notes

Yorkshire Universities (YU) is a regional partnership with a shared commitment to strengthen the contribution of universities and higher education institutions to the economic, social and civic well-being of people and places in Yorkshire. The members are: Leeds Arts University; Leeds Conservatoire; Leeds Beckett University; Leeds Trinity University; Sheffield Hallam University; University of Bradford; University of Huddersfield; University of Hull; University of Leeds; University of Sheffield; University of York; and York St John University.

The Place-based Economic Recovery Network (PERN) is an academic-led network, formed in 2019 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Initially, PERN was invited by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to support the preparation of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan. This exercise saw academics across the region’s universities present analysis and policy recommendations on the following themes: the future of the West Yorkshire’s towns and cities; supply chains; entrepreneurial-led growth; and climate change and the net-zero economy. Reports from each of the webinars were used as evidence to inform the Recovery Plan, which was submitted to government in November 2020.

Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE) is a partnership between University College London (UCL) and the universities of Cambridge, Manchester, Northumbria and Nottingham, in collaboration with the Government Office for Science, the Parliamentary Office for Science & Technology, the Alliance for Useful Evidence, and the Transforming Evidence Hub, funded by Research England. It is a five-year collaboration created to support effective and sustained engagement between academics and policy professionals across the higher education sector.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority brings together local authorities and businesses to build a strong, successful economy where everyone can build great businesses, careers and lives. Partnership underpins the efforts to achieve this vision, so that everyone in West Yorkshire can benefit from economic prosperity supported by a modern, accessible transport network, housing and digital connections.