Edinburgh Innovation Park

City Region Deal will fast-track creation of vibrant sustainable communities for generations to come

Professor Petra Wend, principal, Queen Margaret University

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When Queen Margaret University (QMU) upped sticks and moved from a residential area on the West side of Edinburgh, to new purpose built facilities in East Lothian, we published our vision of a 'sustainable community for learning and life'. We set ourselves targets based around: enhancing biodiversity; improving health; supporting the community; minimising pollution; and improving resource efficiency.

This vision became the key driver behind the campus masterplan, and has remained at the heart of the University's activities ever since. It informed the design and fit out of our new 'green' buildings, ensuring they achieved the highest possible environmental assessment certification. We adopted a green transport plan and developed new working, teaching and learning practices. The Musselburgh campus has as low a carbon footprint as possible and is a model of biodiversity.

This is just one example of many that highlights the pivotal role Universities play as a driver of innovation in the future prosperity of the region and the wider Scottish economy. Working together not only with key partners in education, but those in business, tourism and government to secure funding to help unlock the existing constraints to growth gives us an unrivalled opportunity to help create vibrant, sustainable communities. It's an opportunity we need to embrace so we can fulfill our shared vision for Scotland's capital city region and build a place where investment, intellect and culture will fuse to create new ways of doing things.

Eight years on, we are now looking towards the next stage of developing our vision for QMU which will see us share the University's knowledge and resources to foster enterprise, create valued employment and build world class businesses.

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Media contact:
Maggie Wright
0131 226 3622
maggie.wright@mwa.co