

### Overview and Scrutiny - University of Brighton Hastings

#### Making the most of being a university town

## 1 Background

### 1.1 Why did University of Brighton choose Hastings?

University Centre Hastings (UCH) was opened in September 2003 as a key element in the Hastings and Bexhill Regeneration Project (HBRL) to increase participation in Higher Education within the local community.

The initial concept was of a university centre managed by the University of Brighton as a “serviced university facility” that others (including Brighton) could use to expand their course offerings and participation. The University of Brighton took the lead on the project because of their long-standing commitment to HE delivery in the town. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in December 2002 with local politicians and Hastings College of Art and Technology now Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH). To support the establishment of the UCH, the university made a bid to the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund (SDF) to provide start-up funding. A total grant of £3.53m was awarded by HEFCE including a capital element (mainly for fitting out) of £1.4m.

The original SDF envisaged a number of other HE institutions delivering HE programmes in the facility. Initially these included the University of Sussex, the Open University, Canterbury Christ Church University and University of Greenwich. In practice this involvement was always limited and ceased altogether by 2009. The University of Brighton is now the key provider and in recognition of this UCH was renamed the University of Brighton in Hastings (UBH) and is formally recognised as the fifth campus of the university.

### 1.2 What courses does UBH offer and how has this changed/developed since opening?

The vision of the university has always been to provide a range of courses in Hastings to allow local people the opportunity to access Higher Education who would not otherwise be able or willing to do so for many and complex reasons. The original aims of the project were to:

- stimulate demand for higher education in the Hastings and Bexhill region and raise the aspiration of school leavers and non-traditional students to access higher education
- grow the provision of higher education within the region of Hastings and Bexhill and the wider region and to build-up a critical mass for the development of both higher education and further education facilities
- grow the current base of the higher education student population in Hastings and Bexhill
- secure funding for the higher education objectives and targets

- develop a curriculum responsive to the needs of business and the wider community

The shape of the curriculum at UBH is the result of a deliberate decision from the outset to provide as broad a range of subjects in the local area as possible. With reference to the data on student profile (see section 2.2 on local students) it is worth noting that different courses attract different constituencies. Increasingly, for instance, the suite of Broadcast Media courses attracts a mix of local students and those from further afield. A growing reputation for innovative provision and an offering that is distinctive to the University at Hastings and also to the town itself has resulted in the curriculum reflecting an ability to attract students to Hastings, as well as to provide appropriate courses for students already in Hastings.

The first courses offered from September 2003/04 were in computing and business studies. The computing courses included HNC/D Computing and Access to Computing. The business courses at that time were the Certificate/Diploma of Management Studies, and AAT. These vocational awards in business and computing originally offered by SCCH and education were at the core of the original provision.

The university was keen to establish high quality HE provision at the Hastings Campus with full honours degrees being offered. The BA Applied Social Science was validated in 2005 and has been highly successful in attracting students from the local area. But it was evident from early on that UBH needed to attract students from beyond the local area if it was to succeed and grow.

The introduction of the suite of media production Foundation degree courses started in 2006-07. There are now four Fds - Broadcast Media, Digital Post Production, TV Production and Radio Production. These awards have been enormously important for the development of UBH. Media production has achieved a reputation nationally and this has been reflected in student recruitment with students now coming from a far wider catchment area.

The start of the Joint Honours Programme in 2007 with academic strands initially in Education, English Literature, Media Studies, History and Sociology was an important step in providing full honours degrees in Hastings. 2011 saw the introduction of a joint honours science programme with strands in Biology, Mathematics, Computing and Business.

The BA Broadcast Journalism began in September 2010. In its first two years the course has achieved Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) 'accreditation pending' status. This is the highest category of this prestigious external accreditation that a new course can achieve and given the small cohort size and the early staffing challenges, it was a remarkable and satisfying achievement so early in the life of the course. The BJTC 'kitemark' brands the degree as one which is vocationally relevant; well taught and likely

to facilitate and enhance graduate employability. Full accreditation is confidently anticipated this year with the graduation of the first cohort.

All our courses offer students the opportunity for engaged learning with local organisations. Many of our students take modules that require them to undertake 50 hours of practical work within community organisations which provides them with credits towards their degree.

The curriculum is still developing. This year a new problem-based Business with Enterprise degree was validated and the School of Nursing and Midwifery relocated its nurse training from the Conquest Hospital to Priory Square.

| <b>Academic Year</b>      | <b>2006-07</b> | <b>2009-10</b> | <b>2012-13</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Honours degrees</b>    | 2              | 12             | 23             |
| <b>Foundation degrees</b> | 7              | 8              | 5              |
| <b>Other</b>              | 1              | 4              | 3              |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>10</b>      | <b>24</b>      | <b>31</b>      |

**Figure 1 UBH course numbers**

### **1.3 What sites does UBH use?**

£7m was provided by SEEDA to design and fit out the former telephone exchange in Havelock Road as the first university site. This work was done to a very high standard, part of the regeneration objective to deliver urban renaissance in the heart of Hastings. The renovation work and clever use of space transformed the uninspiring former BT premises into high quality and beautifully designed working spaces, including light and airy study and seminar rooms, a modern Learning Resource Centre, tiered lecture theatre, computer teaching rooms and drop-in areas. A grant of £245k from SEEDA in 2006 enabled the development of a state-of-the-art broadcast media centre with radio studios, edit suites, TV studio and digital post production facilities.

The Havelock Road building has a floor area of 3800 sq. metres including the basement area with a capacity of 500 students. In 2010 pressures on space made it necessary to take over part of the first floor of Lacuna Place to provide three additional teaching rooms. A second new building in Priory Square was approved with funding provided by SEEDA and the University. It opened in September 2012 with a floor area of approximately 3400 sq. metres. The building has significantly enhanced the profile of the university in the town with additional student facilities, a lecture theatre, a purpose-built science laboratory, classrooms, creativity suite and Student Union accommodation. The space in Lacuna Place was vacated in summer 2012 and nurse training has also moved from the Conquest Hospital. All learning and teaching has therefore now been consolidated in the centre of Hastings.

## 1.4 The university campuses

The University of Brighton has over 21,000 students studying on programmes from foundation degrees to doctoral research programmes with 2,600 academic, professional and support staff. The Strategic Plan 2012-2015 affirms its commitment to social and community engagement and “five distinctive campuses in Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings.” The university is extremely supportive of staff and students based in Hastings and works strenuously to ensure no disadvantage is experienced because of location and distance from Brighton.

Specifically the university on its Hastings campus provides an innovative approach to higher education with a significant focus on widening participation and a key aim of raising the participation rates in higher education in an area of severe economic and social deprivation. Historically levels of education attainment in Hastings and Bexhill have been below the national and regional averages for many years. The University of Brighton is committed to working with the local schools and colleges and is the lead partner in the two new academies which opened in September 2011 in the town.

## 2 Students

### 2.1 Numbers studying at UBH

The table shows the increase in students since 2004 and numbers are still growing. It is important to note that this is in a context of very significant sector-wide change. Early planning for the Hastings campus took place in a context of steady growth in controlled student numbers and student demand. Both demand and permitted recruitment have now changed. Student numbers have been cut across the sector and universities are having to make hard choices about where to target recruitment. The only scope for unlimited recruitment at the undergraduate level is of students with very high entry qualifications (for 2013 entry A levels at ABB or equivalent). At the same time both demographic changes and significant changes in fees and funding have had an early impact on student demand. Accepted places dropped by 54,000 in 2012 and early signs are that demand will fall again for 2013.

Although the very early signs suggest that so-called “WP” recruitment has not been hit any harder than average it is too early to know what the knock-on impact will be, for instance on demand for Foundation Degrees. To achieve our growth targets future planning for UBH will need both to be creative and carefully targeted, with careful estimations of potential pools of students in terms of location age and preferred modes of study.

| Entry year           | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Total Numbers</b> | 73   | 95   | 150  | 196  | 239  | 393  | 500  | 606  | 730* |

**Figure 2 Student numbers**

**\*includes an estimate for Semester 2 nursing numbers**

## 2.2 Local students

Initially the majority of students studying in Hastings were from the local area. In 2004-05 80% of students were from Hastings, Bexhill and Rother, 10% from the wider Sussex Catchment area and 10% from outside Sussex. They were studying on the BA Applied Social Science and the computing and business foundation degrees.

In 2007 research was carried out on behalf of the university and Seaspaces by Curved Thinking “to gain a greater understanding of the target audience at UCH... local, national and international... and to examine the match between expectations prior to enrolment and the actual experience.” Overall the research showed that the experience of students was very positive. In response to the question “Would you recommend to someone else in a similar position to yourself that they come here to study? 95% of the respondents said that they would and this was borne out by the findings from the qualitative stage of the project. The research concluded the “experience of the vast majority of UCH is overwhelmingly positive, both academically and in terms of the wider support they feel is available to them. Comments included “were it not for UCH, they would be very unlikely to be studying at this level.”... “I’m really grateful for the opportunity. It feels a bit of a privilege to be able to do this.” Local access to HE is critical in Hastings. It is a low wage economy and many of the students are in receipt of benefits or have caring responsibilities. Travelling any distance to access HE is just not possible. Curved Thinking found that location was by far the most important reason for students studying in Hastings. Family ties (especially child care responsibilities) and difficulties with travelling made it seem impossible to study elsewhere. “If UCH wasn’t here I wouldn’t be able to go to university” was a typical response.”

This local market although relatively small remains critically important but the makeup of the student body has changed over the past few years. A postcode analysis of UBH students shows that between 2009 and 2011 the percentages with TN postcodes dropped from 43% to 37% (of whom most, but not all, will be local to Hastings itself) with the remaining 63% of other entrants including 15% coming from BN postcodes. Certainly any development of the campus and its portfolio must be based on an understanding of this mix.

| Postcode Area    | UB Hastings Campus |              |              | University of Brighton |              |              |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                  | 2009/10            | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2009/10                | 2010/11      | 2011/12      |
| <b>TN</b>        | 42.9%              | 38.3%        | 36.7%        | 10.1%                  | 9.7%         | 9.3%         |
| <b>BN</b>        | 12.1%              | 14.7%        | 15.6%        | 28.3%                  | 27.7%        | 27.0%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b> | <b>55.0%</b>       | <b>53.1%</b> | <b>52.3%</b> | <b>38.4%</b>           | <b>37.4%</b> | <b>36.3%</b> |

**Figure 3 Student numbers by postcode**

It should be noted that this varies considerably across courses, for example 90% of students studying BSc Internet Computing and 70% of Applied Social

Science come from the TN post code compared with only 20% on TV Production and 10% on Radio Production.

## 2.3 Student profiles

### 2.3.1 Age

The age profile for students at Hastings reflects closely the profile of the university as a whole. Although Applied Social Science continues to attract a higher proportion of older students – 50% are aged 30 or over. In contrast the media courses attract a very high proportion of younger students; only 20% of the cohort is over 21 years.

**Figure 4 Age on entry**

| Year        |     | 2008/9   |        | 2009/10  |        | 2010/11  |        |
|-------------|-----|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
|             |     | Hastings | UoB    | Hastings | UoB    | Hastings | UoB    |
| Under 18    | No. | 0        | 124    | 0        | 109    | 0        | 110    |
|             | %   | 0.0%     | 0.59%  | 0.0%     | 0.51%  | 0.0%     | 0.51%  |
| 18-20       | No. | 113      | 8928   | 192      | 9112   | 261      | 9535   |
|             | %   | 47.28%   | 42.79% | 48.85%   | 42.79% | 52.2%    | 44.37% |
| 21-24       | No. | 36       | 3600   | 61       | 3640   | 78       | 3705   |
|             | %   | 15%      | 17.25% | 15.5%    | 17%    | 15.6%    | 17.2%  |
| 25-29       | No. | 22       | 2431   | 36       | 2463   | 44       | 2468   |
|             | %   | 9.2%     | 11.6%  | 9.1%     | 11.5%  | 8.8%     | 11.4%  |
| 30 and over | No. | 68       | 5736   | 104      | 5923   | 117      | 5661   |
|             | %   | 28.4%    | 27.4%  | 26.4%    | 27.8%  | 23.4%    | 26.3%  |
| Not known   | No. | 0        | 48     | 0        | 49     | 0        | 9      |
|             | %   | 0.0%     | 0.23%  | 0%       | 0.23%  | 0%       | 0.04%  |
| Total       |     | 239      | 20867  | 393      | 21296  | 500      | 21488  |

### 2.3.2 Disability

The proportion of students declaring a disability at Hastings has remained consistently above the university levels. In 2010/11 the level of declared disability was still almost double the university level. There are no exceptions to this, all areas of study at Hastings present with above average levels of declared disability. The level of support from learning mentors has been increased over the past year together with the regular presence of the disability liaison tutor on site on a weekly basis.

**Figure 5 Disability**

| Year                   |     | 2008/9   |       | 2009/10  |        | 2010/11  |       |
|------------------------|-----|----------|-------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
|                        |     | Hastings | UoB   | Hastings | UoB    | Hastings | UoB   |
| Disability declared    | No. | 48       | 1962  | 75       | 2173   | 89       | 2081  |
|                        | %   | 20%      | 9.4%  | 19%      | 10.2%  | 17.8%    | 9.68% |
| No disability          | No. | 190      | 18417 | 316      | 18824  | 408      | 19348 |
|                        | %   | 79.5%    | 88.2% | 80.4%    | 88.39% | 81.6%    | 90%   |
| Not known/not declared | No. | 1        | 488   | 2        | 299    | 3        | 59    |
|                        | %   | 0.42%    | 2.3%  | 0.5%     | 1.4%   | 0.6%     | 0.27% |
| Total                  |     | 239      | 20867 | 393      | 21296  | 500      | 21488 |

### 2.3.3 Ethnicity

The number of students from an ethnic minority background has also moved in line with the university profile. The CUPP Help Desk team continue to work with the council and the local BME community to promote equality and diversity. The Hastings campus was delighted to be invited to be a signatory of the Hastings Equality Charter on behalf of the university at the Hastings Town Conference in 2011.

**Figure 6 Ethnicity**

| Year                |     | 2008/9   |       | 2009/10  |       | 2010/11  |        |
|---------------------|-----|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|--------|
|                     |     | Hastings | UoB   | Hastings | UoB   | Hastings | UoB    |
| White               | No. | 178      | 15711 | 310      | 16146 | 400      | 16356  |
|                     | %   | 74.4%    | 75.2% | 78.8%    | 75.8% | 80%      | 76.12% |
| Minority ethnic     | No. | 46       | 3231  | 60       | 3244  | 72       | 3381   |
|                     | %   | 19.2%    | 15.4% | 15.2%    | 15.2% | 14.4%    | 15.7%  |
| Information refused | No. | 14       | 1401  | 22       | 1550  | 28       | 1640   |
|                     | %   | 5.8%     | 6.7%  | 5.6%     | 7.2%  | 5.6%     | 7.6%   |
| Not known           | No. | 1        | 524   | 1        | 356   | 0        | 111    |
|                     | %   | 0.42%    | 2.5%  | 0.25%    | 1.67% | 0%       | 0.52%  |
| Total               |     | 239      | 20867 | 393      | 21296 | 500      | 21488  |

### 2.3.4 Gender

In contrast with the other cohort data the gender balance is moving away from balance with the university as a whole. The proportion of male students has increased from 36% in 2009/10 to 44% in 2010/11. This reflects the increasing numbers of students on computing and media production awards which traditionally attract more male students.

**Figure 7 Gender**

| Year   |     | 2008/9   |       | 2009/10  |       | 2010/11  |       |
|--------|-----|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
|        |     | Hastings | UoB   | Hastings | UoB   | Hastings | UoB   |
| Female | No. | 145      | 13053 | 249      | 13240 | 279      | 13194 |
|        | %   | 60.6%    | 62.5% | 63.3%    | 62.1% | 55.8%    | 61.4% |
| Male   | No. | 94       | 7814  | 144      | 8056  | 221      | 8294  |
|        | %   | 39.3%    | 37.4% | 36.6%    | 37.8% | 44.2%    | 38.6% |
| Total  |     | 239      | 20867 | 393      | 21296 | 500      | 21488 |

### 2.4 Accommodation

For the first few years the majority of students studying in Hastings were from the local area and lived at home. The increasing number of students coming to Hastings from outside the local area led to demands for student halls of residence. Roost, a local property developer converted the former Adelphi Hotel in St Leonards, Warrior Square as a hall of residence. The Robert Tressell Halls of residence opened in October 2008 with accommodation for 60 students.

This year 2012-13 there are 227 students in accommodation arranged through the university. 120 are in university managed accommodation and 107 with private landlords arranged through the university's database "Studentpad". It is important to note that this does not include any students that seek accommodation independently and do not use our services, nor does it include those Hastings students that may have used our services to secure accommodation in Eastbourne or Brighton.

We are working hard to try and reduce the number of students moving to either Eastbourne or Brighton in their second year. Students have told us this is because of a real or perceived dissatisfaction with student life in Hastings. A Student Experience Working Group was established in 2011 by the Council with representation from key stakeholders, including the Students' Union to explore ways to improve the student experience.

## 3 Staff

There are now over 90 staff based at the Hastings campus. This includes support staff, technicians and academic staff but not casuals or hourly paid

lecturing staff. Individual data is limited but indications are that 54 university staff live in Hastings and St Leonards. A number of staff are officially based in Brighton and travel to Hastings on a part time basis.

Some of our academics work on high profile international research projects based in Hastings, with current projects linked to the Fisheries industries and the local aquatic ecology. We are also providing support to the redevelopment of the Pier.

We have also hosted a number of PhD students whose work has focused exclusively on the Hastings area. These have included an ethnographic study of the impact of students in Hastings, a study of Tourism in Hastings, work on the Old Town and the impact of the London diaspora, and an ethnographic case study of Hastings regeneration governance landscape and community.

## **4 Links**

### **4.1 Links with businesses**

The University of Brighton in Hastings support businesses to employ students and graduates, find student placements and also offer part time degrees for businesses to invest in their staff. The University also looks to align its provision to the needs of local employers. However, as the majority of businesses are SME and Micro in size this does pose a challenge. The University have tended to take a sectoral approach in its engagement and have links with IT, Creative, Manufacturing, Fisheries and Hospitality and Tourism Industries. The University employs a dedicated Economic and Social Engagement Manager to facilitate knowledge exchange with businesses and the community.

The University has been actively working with the business community in Hastings and Rother for ten years, around knowledge transfer and business support. This engagement has led to the development of ProfitNet, a highly successful business development and support programme that began in Hastings, funded by Area Investment Fund and Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. ProfitNet enables small and medium-sized enterprises to learn from each other and gain access to the expertise of a University or Business Support Partner as well as receiving input from practitioners from other businesses. This business engagement model was rolled out regionally and has a network of over 1000 businesses who have taken part in the programme, just over 100 of which are based in Hastings and Rother. ProfitNet proved to be so successful that the University subsequently invested in a franchise model.

The University of Brighton also led a project to develop a Product Development Centre (PDC), co-financed by the European Regional Development fund, Seaspace and the University of Brighton. This was based in the Innovation Centre in St Leonards, staffed by members of the South East Knowledge Exchange. The centre worked with local businesses and entrepreneurs to produce creative designs, drawings and prototypes. It also

provided training for all areas of product development. This facility and the equipment was transferred to Sussex Coast College Hastings to run.

Knowledge Transfer Programmes have also been very popular in Hastings and Rother. This national government funded scheme provides up to 67% grant funding to enable companies to become more innovative, competitive and profitable by engaging in knowledge transfer with university academics. These programmes typically result in a subsidised post graduate member of staff being employed on a strategic project for two years. The majority of the companies that benefitted from this scheme were either a ProfitNet member or had benefitted from the PDC.

The University of Brighton, Hastings is committed to supporting the Creative industries in the local area. The Media Enterprise Centre provides creatives with access to resources and business skills workshops and inspirational industry speakers, for a yearly fee. This programme was funded by Area Based Grant funding and provided critical data and catalyzed clustering amongst the digital creative businesses in the town.

## **4.2 Links with the local community**

The community in Hastings and Bexhill is characteristic of those identified in the HEFCE Strategic Plan where “HE seems beyond reach, not for any lack of potential, but often for reasons of family or community tradition.” We have been consistently highlighted since the outset as an exemplar of what can be achieved in a community suffering from generations of under achievement and multiple deprivations. The view commonly expressed amongst local people has been that university is “not for people like us”. This is the belief we seek to change. Our Widening Participation team have established close links with community groups such as Horizons, Hastings Trust, Hastings and Rother Adult Learning Forum and the Bridge encouraging individuals to believe that university is not an impossible dream but an aspiration toward which they can aim.

The OAK project has run since 2008 with approximately 12 learners each year undertaking an in depth piece of research with the support of academic supervisors. The fifteen week programme is based on a residential course originally developed at Ruskin College, Oxford called *Ransackers* which enables older people (over 50) who have never had access to HE the opportunity to explore learning opportunities. Establishing a similar, albeit non-residential programme in Hastings has been valuable in building confidence and breaking down barriers which can leave older people feeling isolated and restricted in their communities. The programme includes the opportunity for intergenerational learning which encourages students to feed into and benefit from one another’s learning experience. Since the programme began five OAK students have enrolled for a degree in Hastings.

Typical of feedback from students is the following:

*“It’s a personal journey...it’s the process of working together, of learning new skills...the fact we are in a lecture hall, with other students, and just the*

*process of being a student, of having that chance, for me that is the joy. I will look back on this as an opportunity, not as a test”*

The programme achieved national recognition as one of the projects shortlisted for the University Award for Lifelong Learning in 2010.

The University is committed to supporting community focussed research and knowledge exchange activity among staff and students at the Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton campuses. The development of the Coastal Regeneration Research Centre, recently rebranded the Knowledge Exchange, is a result of rapidly expanding and innovative community and research activity that is supporting teaching and learning at the Hastings campus. Current university research projects examine key issues facing Hastings and Bexhill, such as changing aspirations towards education, the students’ community in Hastings, migration into Hastings, tourism and the fisheries, the role of the cultural and creative industries and sustainability in the urban regeneration process.

Our Community University Partnership Programme has run a help desk within the university for the past five years responding to requests for support from local community organisations. This is often in the form of academics supporting research projects or practical support towards evaluations etc. Notable projects have included work with The Bridge Community Centre and Education Research work in Ore Valley.

One example of how this operates in practice can be seen in our work with the LGBT community in Hastings, working with the Rainbow Alliance and Hastings & Rother LGBT Wellbeing Group. The project aims to improve the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) people in Hastings, Rother and East Sussex by creating strategic networks between academic institutions, students, local communities and services. LGBT equalities in Hastings, Rother and East Sussex are complex. Thus, the project offers a timely intervention into the local context of Hastings, Rother and East Sussex as a whole, where traditionally interaction between LGBT communities and local services and providers has not necessarily resulted in positive action for change or response to identified needs. This project aims to begin affecting the awareness and decision-making of local elected representatives, suppliers of services and employers. These recent events have already prompted an agreed amendment to the Hastings Borough Council’s policy that now ensures ‘equality for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Community ... Hastings Borough Council will include objectives to accept LGBT issues within the Single Equalities Scheme and Action Plan’.

In 2009 we were delighted to be shortlisted for the Times Higher Education *Widening Participation Initiative of the Year*.

### **4.3 Links with local schools and colleges**

We work very closely with all local schools and colleges at primary, secondary and FE level. Our Widening Participation Co-ordinator visits local schools and colleges throughout the year to support students through the university

application process. Last year she assisted 2263 people. The main activities include UCAS talks, personal statement help and student finance talks. The team also run an evening event for parents on the financial implications of university. Each year we identify a core group of student ambassadors many of whom live in the area and attended local schools and colleges. The role of the student ambassadors, as elsewhere in the university, is to assist with Open Days, conduct tours and provide specific course information to applicants and parents. UCAS applicants are offered an ambassador as a "buddy" who contacts the applicant and provides help, advice and support as required both before and on arrival at the university. In addition we identify the school or college our ambassadors attended and alumni are matched into schools for recruitment days, taster visits and other events to provide role models for pupils and to cement links with teaching staff.

We have run numerous special projects with local schools. To give a flavour of the range of this work these include the Easter Spring School for *Looked After Children*, a group which is very underrepresented in Higher Education, "Young Minds Working Together" – providing support to pupils in local schools in after school clubs; the Hastings College enrichment programme for 14 – 16 students who have been excluded from school; the mentoring scheme for Looked After Children providing short term support. "Create the Future a two day creative careers festival for 180 students from nine schools held for a number of years in partnership with Creative Partnerships and Helenswood School. We have supported Year 5's to raise aspirations through the Professor C Gull programme, revision days, programmes for the Gifted and Talented and taster events in media production, business, sociology and computing.

The University has also begun to build effective and far-reaching links with local schools via a placement module on the Joint Honours Degree. Each year this module requires students to undertake a fifty-hour placement. In a number of cases the placement, which is linked to a student's degree, has facilitated research requested by the school where it can be put to useful effect. This year for example, a group of young male students studying Education have been working with a group of disaffected boys in a local primary school encouraging their learning and reading.

The University of Brighton is the lead sponsor, together with British Telecom and East Sussex County Council in the St Leonards and Hastings Academies. One recent example of the way the Hastings Campus staff and students are working with the academies is the University's 'On Your Doorsteps' scheme. The 'Bridge Project' enabled the University to collaborate with third-sector professionals and teaching staff from Hastings Academy to work with a group of disaffected pupils from the Academy to organise an event at the Adventure Playground in Ore for local primary school children. This has cemented effective and powerful partnerships between the academy, The Bridge Community Centre and the University of Brighton in Hastings.

## **5 The Future**

The University's 2012-15 Strategic Plan sets out the following aspirations in relation to Hastings:

- We will ensure that partnership activity is focused to achieve the most impact and the greatest yield in terms of university objectives – economic, social and educational. There will be a particular focus on our work in Hastings ... and on opportunities for developing partnerships in the digital economy and the cultural and creative industries
- We will achieve further growth in our Hastings campus to 1,000 students by 2015. The campus will continue to serve the needs of the local community and economy, and develop a distinctive academic identity that reflects local industries and cultural developments. It will remain at the heart of a holistic academic strategy for the area working with two academies that are sponsored, and closely supported by, the university, and with local schools and Sussex Coast College Hastings.

The University is in the process of developing its strategy for UBH in order to achieve these aspirations and welcomes this timely opportunity to engage with the Borough Council. Clearly our future plans have to take account of the context described in this paper, both local and national, and the need to develop an offer that is both internally and externally focused. Understanding the nature of future demand from the local community – both in terms of building demand and capacity from qualified 18/19 year old students from local schools, academies and SCCH, and also in terms of the demand from older learners – is a critical early task. Changes to the portfolio, and also to modes of study and opportunities for other forms of engagement, need to be based on sound market intelligence and it is our intention to do some early work on this, in close discussion with local partners and stakeholders.

**Margaret Wallis**  
**January 2013**