

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Thursday, 28 September 2017 at 6.00 pm

Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3UY

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2017

Present: Councillors Webb (Chair), Howard, Bacon, Charman, Cooke, Rankin, Turner, Atkins and Cartwright

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Davies and Dowling

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Chowney	14 – Corporate Plan 2017/18 Retrospective Report Back on 2016/17 and Performance Targets 2017/18	Personal – he has been appointed as the council's Director of the Business Improvement District (BID)
Forward	14 – Corporate Plan 2017/18 Retrospective Report Back on 2016/17 and Performance Targets 2017/18	Personal – she leases a property to the social lettings agency

13. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 February 2017 be approved as a correct record of the meeting

14. CORPORATE PLAN 2017/18 RETROSPECTIVE REPORT BACK ON 2016/17 AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2017/18

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance presented a report which updated members of the committee on year-end performance.

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance explained that, although the year-end performance target for sickness days per person had not been met, performance had improved compared to this time last year. Also, she had been advised through the recent Local Government Association peer review process, that the council continued to perform well in this respect, compared to other local authorities.

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Discussion took place regarding the freedom of information requests the council receives. Members were mindful that the council was keen to maintain a culture of openness and transparency throughout all its activities. However, the process of dealing with freedom of information requests generates a significant additional workload across the organisation. Some of the requests received are not in line with the original principals of the scheme. The committee recommended carrying out further research to compare the number of FOI's the council receives with those received by other authorities. The committee noted that the My Hastings online system would allow for more accurate recording of time spent responding to requests.

The committee were pleased to note that the year-end targets for the revenues and benefits service had been met. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance commented that there had been significant changes to the working practices of this team, following the introduction of Universal Credit earlier this year. Members were keen to understand how many households had been affected by the benefits cap, which had also been introduced recently. The Revenues and Benefits Service Manager was due to hold a briefing meeting for all members later in the year to update them on the changes.

Discussion took place regarding the roll out of My Hastings online. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance added that a key aim of the system would be to help create additional capacity within the community contact centre. By making a number of transactional enquiries available online, it was intended that staff in the contact centre would be able to deal with more complex enquiries and respond to the increasing demand in some service areas, such as housing advice. A marketing campaign would take place in the autumn to promote the My Hastings online service. In the meantime, members were encouraged to continue reporting any issues with the service to the team to ensure they could be addressed as part of the ongoing development of the service. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance also agreed to circulate additional customer contact monitoring information to keep the committee updated on progress with the channel shift to online services.

The committee noted the additional workload for the electoral services team, organising both the East Sussex County Council elections in May and the UK Parliamentary election in June. Discussion also took place about options to increase voter registration in the town. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance replied that the team had a limited amount of resources to carry out these activities, however, they continued to participate in existing events, such as the university's fresher's fair and promoting the annual canvass period each year. The committee requested an update on the number of votes who registered between the East Sussex County Council election and the UK Parliamentary election, which the Director of Corporate Services and Governance agreed to provide by email.

The Director of Operational Services presented a report on year-end performance. He commented that it was pleasing to note the improved performance across the planning services team. Members acknowledged that the year-end target to determine 85% of minor planning applications within 8 weeks, had been missed by a very narrow margin of 1%. He added that the team were confident the year-end target for 2017/18 for affordable homes built will be met.

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The committee were updated on progress to develop a masterplan for the White Rock area. The draft plan would be shared with Lead Members before being circulated more widely for comment. The council was continuing to work closely with East Sussex County Council on potential traffic calming options for the A259, which would also help to improve the area.

Discussion took place regarding the ongoing rise in homelessness in the town. The Director of Operational Services advised that this increase reflected national trends. The committee recommended carrying out research on the figures reported in other similar coastal towns, such as Margate, to compare with Hastings. The Director of Operational Services agreed to circulate this information by email to the committee. The council had recently hosted an event for a wide range of partners to continue to develop a co-ordinated approach to reducing homelessness. The Lead Member for Housing and Leisure added the requirements for recording homelessness preventions had changed and the statistics could no longer include preventions which had been secured using discretionary housing payments. Moreover, the council was also engaging with households who were at risk of becoming homeless at an earlier stage, before a formal notice of eviction was served. These interventions were also not included in the homelessness prevention statistics. Members requested information about the number of tenants evicted as the result of county court judgements, compared to high court judgements.

Members were advised that the social lettings agency had been affected by the recent changes to the funding arrangements for temporary accommodation made by the government; a report on the future proposals for this initiative would be brought to Cabinet shortly.

Members received an update on the development of 38 new beach huts on the seafront at Hastings and St Leonards. The Director of Operational Services advised that a tendering exercise had recently been completed. Although the quotes received had been higher than the projections set out in the original budget, it was considered that the scheme was still viable; he would therefore be seeking delegated authority from the Cabinet and Charity Committee to proceed.

The Director of Operational Services advised that staff in the council's waste team continued to work closely with the waste and street cleaning contractor to monitor performance. The team were also considering future arrangements for the service; the Director of Operational Services commented that the council would need to develop a responsive solution for street cleansing. The committee expressed some concern at litter bins overflowing on the seafront. The Director of Operational Services replied that an additional 49 litter bins had been installed on the seafront during the summer season. Members were encouraged to continue reporting overflowing bins via the MyHastings online system. The committee were also keen to ensure that appropriate enforcement action was taken to address street cleaning and fly tipping issues outside the town centre, including on the social housing estates around the town.

The committee were advised that the original property identified for phase 3 of the Coastal Space Project was no longer considered to be suitable; however, a replacement property had now been found which would enable the initiative to

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continue. The scheme had been recognised for a national award and complimented as part of the Local Government Association peer review process.

The Director of Operational Services advised that the council and its partners were in the process of developing a package of support and enforcement measures which would help to address anti-social drinking in the town. The installation of new retail kiosks in the town had also helped improve the situation. Members may also consider requesting an update from the District Commander on community safety issues as part of their 2017/18 work programme.

Consideration was given to efforts to secure the economic regeneration of the area, and in particular the work of Locate East Sussex to attract new business to the area. The Director of Operational Services advised that Locate East Sussex report their activities in each district and he agreed to share this information with the committee by email. The committee also received an update on plans for the Business Improvement District (BID). Members considered the impact of assisted area status in attracting new investment to the area. The Director of Operational Services said that whilst many partners had been disappointed the assisted area status had not impacted on decision making by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), it was nonetheless a useful tool in securing funding to encourage businesses to relocate to the area.

Discussion took place regarding the development of a cultural strategy. Members were keen to explore options to encourage and develop the local music scene, including new music venues. The Director of Operational Services added that consideration would need to be given as to what type of venue would suit the local music scene best, this matter was also being explored as part of the development of a master plan for the White Rock area.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed performance indicator targets for 2017/18.

The Director of Operational Services explained that the performance indicator target regarding attendances at the White Rock Theatre had been removed because the day to day running and organisation of the theatre was managed by a contractor, and therefore achieving the target was largely outside the council's control. However, a member of the committee proposed reinstating the target, as the contractor received a subsidy from the council. This proposal would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Members of the committee thanked staff across the organisation for their efforts during the past year.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thank staff for their hard work in achieving those key activities set out in the corporate plan;**
- 2. The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2017/18 be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 10 July 2017, and;**

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3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to assist the council enhance performance and review arrangements

The reason for this decision was:

To assist with the approval process for the corporate plan and assist Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to undertake their performance management role.

15. REVIEWING CURRENT SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented a report following the recent review of the council's current scrutiny arrangements. Following the recommendations of a task and finish group undertaken as part of the 2015/16 work programme, the council had adopted a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2016. Members had also committed to review the effectiveness of the new arrangements one year after their implementation.

Councillor Howard, as Chair of the review, presented the teams recommendations to the committee. Many of the review team's recommendations focused on exploring opportunities to increase the capacity of members across the overview and scrutiny function and optimise the officer support available. This included piloting new ways of delivering work programme activities, based on good practice from other authorities, and planning key lines of enquiry at committee meetings.

The review team were mindful of the key role overview and scrutiny plays as a critical friend to Cabinet decision making and also exploring areas of local concern. Members had made recommendations about changing the way the recommendations of overview and scrutiny reviews and task and finish groups are processed after their adoption by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve the recommendations set out in paragraphs 60 to 66 of the review team's report

The reason for this decision was:

Recommendations have been made with a view to continuously improve the HBC scrutiny in line with the council's transformation intentions.

16. YEAR-END UPDATE ON THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented a year-end update on the key work programme activities for 2016/17.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 8.07 pm)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2017

Present: Councillors Webb (Chair), Howard (Vice-Chair), Bacon, Charman, Rankin, Turner, Cartwright and Davies

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Cooke, Atkins and Dowling

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Charman	2 – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017/18	Personal – she is a member of East Sussex County Council
Webb	2 – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017/18	Personal – he is a member of East Sussex County Council

2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017-18

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager updated the committee on progress with the 2016/17 overview and scrutiny work programme. An update on green initiatives would now be scheduled for autumn 2017, as part of a broader piece of work on income generation. An update item on block chain technologies and the implications of this for local authorities had been postponed as the use of this technology is still in its infancy. Members had completed all of the remaining pieces of work they had identified as a priority for their 2016/17 work programme.

Members had also undertaken a review of the council's scrutiny function, following a move to a single overview and scrutiny committee in May 2016. The review had recommended exploring ways to make the best use of member and officer capacity. As part of their work programme for 2017/18, members will pilot the use of inquiry days to examine a topic in detail.

The committee considered prospective ideas for the 2017/18 work programme. Scrutiny Steering Group had met recently to prioritise the ideas received. Income Generation, Education and Regeneration and Housing had been identified as priority review areas. Members were invited to volunteer to join these groups by email. An initial meeting of each of the reviews would then be scheduled to scope out key lines of inquiry and areas for consideration and identify potential stakeholders and interest parties. Members noted that the review of Regeneration and Housing could include an inquiry day on the subject of homelessness.

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Members were keen to retain capacity within this year's work programme to participate in a cross-committee working group, after an all member briefing has taken place on the local implications of the Grenfell tragedy.

The Post Office is currently undertaking a public consultation on the future arrangements for the St Leonards Crown Post Office. Overview and scrutiny members have a longstanding interest in this matter and may wish to draft a collective response to the consultation.

RESOLVED that the committee agree the key lines of inquiry proposed for the scrutiny work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year

The reason for this decision was:

It is the responsibility of members serving on the overview and scrutiny committee to set their own work programme for each municipal year at the annual meeting., whilst taking into account the advice of officers.

3. **INVITATION TO LEAD MEMBERS 2017/18**

The Chair proposed that lead members be invited to attend overview and scrutiny committee meetings in 2017/18.

RESOLVED that lead members be invited to attend overview and scrutiny committee meetings in 2017/18

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.05 pm)

Agenda Item 5

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28th September 2017

UPDATE – HIGHER EDUCATION IN HASTINGS

I have been asked to give members a brief overview of developments around higher education in Hastings. For this purpose I have divided this into three parts:

- The operation of the University of Brighton in the town.
- The development of the University Centre and Sussex Coast College.
- Continuing contact with the University of Sussex.

Members will also be aware that Sussex Coast College is in the latter stages of considering a merger with Sussex Downs College, which is based in Eastbourne with other premises in Newhaven and Lewes. No formal decision has been taken whilst an extensive process of due diligence is undertaken. The move comes as a result of a review of Further Education in Sussex undertaken as part of a national process led by Government. The review process will lead nationally to mergers and restructuring and a fund has been set up to help colleges with the costs of merger and reorganisation locally. It is intended that this should ultimately lead to the establishment of an East Sussex group of colleges and academies delivering 6th form and vocational studies for young people alongside adult, Higher Education and apprenticeship delivery. This might be an item which members would also like to consider as proposals emerge. The process is managed through a transition board which includes the colleges, East Sussex County Council Chief Executive, University of Brighton and the chair of Team East Sussex which is the local devolved structure for the Local Economic Partnership and a business representative.

Operation of the University of Brighton

The University continues to work at a number of different levels. In terms of student numbers they are anticipating 350 to 375 for 2017/18 and c.150 for year 2018/19. The University is working to provide personalised plans for students who are unable to progress through their degrees at the normal pace.

Lacuna Place is now empty and the University anticipates tenants moving in shortly alongside developments involving SeaChange premises also. The college has a potential 3 year option on the Havelock Road premises if its numbers would support this but it is not possible to know if this will ever be taken up. There is nothing I can report about the fate of this or the main university site. The University report that satisfaction rates remain high amongst students. I will attempt to get feedback from the Students' Union to supplement this information for your meeting.

The University remains active in the local academy schools and the Brighton University and Hastings Academy Trust have merged to become the University of Brighton Academies Trust which now contains 9 schools in Hastings and St Leonards and a further 6 schools across East Sussex (this breaks down as 2 infant, 10 primary and 3 secondary). The Trusts website can be accessed at www.brightonacademiestrust.org.uk

The University is aware of significant issues relating to the alley down the side of Priory Square being a focus for the using of drugs and intend to gate the alley shortly.

University Centre Hastings

Sussex Coast College has concluded agreements to provide degree and other courses with the University of Brighton and has agreed the formal use of the name University Centre Hastings for the college's HE provision. Where Brighton cannot provide accreditation the University Centre can seek this elsewhere. With some financial assistance from the University and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) they have developed the substantial unused part of the college 5th floor to house new provision and have also remodelled a floor in the Ore Valley campus to provide dedicated HE space for Engineering, Computing and Access to HE courses. The University also has similar arrangements with Sussex Downs College. The courses currently on offer are:

BA Designer Maker	BA Fine Art Practice
Level 6 Health Care Management	PGCE/CERT ED FE and Training (F&P time)
Cert TESOL	BA Visual Communication (Graphic Design)
BA Visual Communication (Illustration)	BA Visual Communication (Philosophy)
HNC/HND Business	AAT Accountancy
HNC/HNC Computing / Systems	HMC Mechanical Engineering
HNC/HND Manufacturing Engineering	HND/HNC Electrical Engineering
HNC/HND Social Care	City & Guilds Catering Management
HNC Construction	HMD Art & Design (Animation)
HND Creative Media (Film) (Delivered in Brighton via Brighton Film School)	
BA Business (top up)	BSc Computing and Systems Development
BA Animation Arts & Practice (top up)	
BSc Mechanical & Manufacturing (top up)	

Seven of these are new offers for 2017/18.

The University Centre's offer can be seen via the new dedicated website:

www.universitycentrehastings.ac.uk

The new term starts on 25th September. The college report that their application level has held up compared to a 4-5% decline nationally. This is an achievement given that the setting up of the university centre has meant they have not been able to market through a full recruitment cycle.

The college has obtained funding from the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) to develop a widening participation activities for young people to encourage greater take up of higher education.

Members will be aware that the university centres development is a long-term initiative. In the 2018/19 year the university centre will be developing a Foundation Degree in early years education and six new higher level apprenticeships aimed at the specific needs of employers and residents in East Sussex.

University of Sussex

Members may recall that the Council has had informal contacts with the University and these continue. Sussex runs a medical school in conjunction with Brighton University and is seeking

expansion of numbers. This is a competitive process for funding and the council would obviously support any expansion on the placements made here or if an opportunity existed for other growth. However this is early days and the University will need to plan in line with its long-term vision for its development.

The Council does have opportunities for expansion of higher education, potentially at White Rock as part of the master planning there or even the Harbour development if this concept is advanced. The key is to remain positive and seek materially beneficial opportunities as and when they arise.

General

It is worth saying that the higher education market is rapidly changing. The type of campus concept that predominated previous thinking is no longer universal. In the main government does not finance capital expansion, which universities must now mainly finance through earned income. Collaboration with business development and Government is often international and IT has meant much learning can be remote (which in itself is an interesting development with different aspects). Therefore our thinking and ambition will need to reflect these changes. Members may wish to revisit the study commissioned by Hastings Borough Council/East Sussex County Council/Rother District Council into the potential of higher education in the area which was produced at the time of the University of Brighton's decision to end its direct delivery. This is attached as Appendix 1.

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Future of Higher Education in Hastings and Rother

A report to
Hastings and Rother Task Force



26th October 2016

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hastings and Rother Task Force, the strategic private-public-community partnership, which oversees and supports economic growth and regeneration activity, commissioned BiGGAR Economics to undertake a study into the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother.

1.1 Context

Higher education has an important role in advanced economies and the proportion of young people participating in higher education has increased in the last two decades in all advanced economies. This is because knowledge and innovation are fundamental to economic growth, since it is productivity growth that drives economic growth, and productivity growth is in turn driven by knowledge and its diffusion.

In the UK as a whole, the number of annual entrants to higher education has increased by 75% in the last two decades, and there are now around 2.5 million students in the UK including full-time and part-time undergraduates and postgraduates in universities and colleges.

The role of higher education in regeneration has been recognised in Hastings and Rother for sometime, with University Centre Hastings, an initiative involving a number of university partners opening in 2003. By 2009, the other partners had withdrawn and the centre was replaced by the University of Brighton's fifth campus, with aspirations to increase student number to 1,000 by 2015 and further ambitions to raise this to 2,000 (although this was later revised to 1,500).

The last few years have seen significant changes in the market and policy environment that universities operate in with developments including increases in the tuition fees that could be charged to domestic students and the removal of the caps on student numbers allocated to institutions. Further changes proposed in a Bill currently progressing through Parliament would see greater competition and choice in the sector and a new system for assessing teaching quality.

1.2 Demand for Higher Education

In 2015/16 around 680 students were based at the University of Brighton's Hastings campus, approximately 3% of the University of Brighton's total student population. There were a further 120 higher education students at Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH). This falls well short of the ambitions and the target for a sustainable higher education model in the area.

The University of Brighton accounts for only a minority of the demand for higher education that might be expected from a population of the size of Hastings and Rother. If the area had levels of demand that were similar to the average for the UK as a whole, this would imply demand at around ten times the level that the University of Brighton has experienced.

This order of magnitude difference reflects both lower than average participation rates in Hastings and Rother and a history where those from the area wishing to participate in higher education expected to commute or leave the area to do so. Even taking account of lower local levels of participation would imply a potential local demand of more than three times that currently supplied locally.

While these numbers must be treated with caution, they indicate both the scale of the challenge in attracting even local students to study in the area and the scale of the long-term market opportunity should models for higher education provision be developed that are attractive to potential students.

1.3 Future of Higher Education in Hastings and Rother

In early 2016 the University of Brighton commissioned a review of the Hastings campus to help identify a sustainable model for future operations, which concluded that the current model was unsustainable. The University decided to close its Hastings campus in its current form and is in discussions with SCCH to continue to provide higher education in the area by validating higher education delivered by SCCH at a designated University Centre in Hastings. A consultation on the implementation of this model was on-going at the time of writing this report. It was envisaged that the new University Centre would open in September 2017 and aim for an initial cohort of up to 300-400 students with this growing over time.

During the consultation programme undertaken for this study, it was clear that the focus of discussion on the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother was on the decision made by the University of Brighton and opinions on actions that could have been taken that might have led to a different outcome. While lessons for the future must be learned, it is now imperative that the focus of attention shifts to the actions required to secure future higher education provision.

If some consensus cannot be reached on a strategy for higher education provision in Hastings and Rother, it is not difficult to see a scenario where there could be very limited or no higher education provision in the area. All that would need to happen for that to occur would be for the University of Brighton and SCCH to agree a model that works for both parties and for SCCH then to be unsuccessful in identifying other validation partners.

The economic strategies relevant to Hastings and Rother recognise the role that higher education can play in transforming the local economy.

It is reasonable to take the view that the proposed University Centre Hastings model does not meet the scale of the strategic ambitions, at least given the initial proposed scale. However, it could do much to meet the immediate higher education demand and the partnership approach could deliver both quality higher education and retain a “university” brand (of sorts) in the area.

The preferred option emerging from the options appraisal was an innovative blended learning campus with another university partner. If feasible, this option would meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area by meeting and raising the demand for higher education, meeting the skills needs of local employers and helping to attract others and supporting wider regeneration efforts.

These two options might be seen as competing models. However, that is not necessarily the case, since they could target different markets with different higher education propositions. There is also the issue of timing. It should be possible to reach agreement on a University Centre model within a few weeks and plan for it to be operational in time for the autumn 2017 student intake. On the other hand a campus for a new university partner would take longer to develop and deliver.

There is therefore merit in the Hastings and Rother Task Force supporting both of these options. In doing so the provision of higher education in the short term and in the medium term could be ensured and thereby deliver a much more extensive provision that would very much meet strategic aspirations.

2 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a study undertaken by BiGGAR Economics in the summer and autumn of 2016 into the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother on behalf of the Hastings and Rother Task Force. The Task Force is a strategic private-public-community partnership, which oversees and supports economic growth and regeneration activity across Hastings and Rother.

2.1 Background

Education led regeneration is seen as a key element in the sustainable regeneration of Hastings and the surrounding Rother district. With this in mind, University Centre Hastings was developed with investment and support from the South East England Development Agency. The Institute opened in 2003 and allowed students to gain a degree from a number of universities working in partnership, including the University of Brighton and the University of Greenwich.

By 2009, 95% of provision at the Centre was being delivered by the University of Brighton as other partners withdrew. The University of Brighton in Hastings was established in 2009/10, replacing the original centre and becoming the University's fifth campus. With aspirations to increase student numbers on the Hastings campus to 1,000 by 2015 and further ambitions to raise this to 2,000 moving forwards, a second building was opened by the University in Hastings.

Aspirations to increase student numbers proved more difficult to realise than expected and in 2016 the University of Brighton undertook a review of the continuing viability of maintaining a presence in Hastings. This review recommended that the University evolve its approach to higher education in Hastings by developing a new University Centre in partnership with Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH). In March 2016 the University of Brighton Management Board unanimously endorsed this recommendation.

The development of the University Centre Hastings and its evolution into the fifth campus of the University of Brighton was a major strategic gain with regard to regeneration in the area. The impact of losing this physical presence and driver of regeneration on Hastings and the wider area is therefore regarded as fundamentally important to the economic future of the area.

For this reason the Hastings and Rother Taskforce was keen to investigate what other deliverable options might be available to maintain and strengthen higher education provision in Hastings and Rother and appointed BiGGAR Economics to assist with this task.

2.1.1 Study Objectives

The overarching aim of the study is to provide the evidence base for decisions on the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother. The key objectives of the work are to:

- identify what is deliverable to maximise the contribution of higher education in the area;
- explore whether there is a viable business option to deliver a university for the area that delivers long-term economic benefits on a sustainable basis;
- research/analyse what it would take to deliver a true higher education experience for all students (including undergraduate, postgraduate and

research students) not just in terms of higher level apprenticeship delivery or a model of further education college delivery of higher education;

- analyse the higher education offer in terms of student living and lifestyle, employment places and other factors that would affect the student experience and consider what potential deficits need to be addressed;
- understand what physical infrastructure is needed to support the various business models proposed, in terms of accommodation, flexible lab/teaching space and research facilities. This is in order to clarify what partners in the taskforce can put in place to attract a high level, sustained HEI provision; and
- understand the staffing recruitment and retention issues in the context of delivering services in Hastings/Bexhill.

Through the course of the work programme, particularly the consultations, it became clear that there were certain recurring emerging issues and these were therefore focused on as the most important. As a result not all of the study objectives were necessarily addressed through the course of the study, since the focus was on the overall aim.

2.2 Work Programme

The starting point for this study was a detailed review of the strategic and economic context within which Hastings and Rother exists. Following on from this, information was gathered on the local education context to ascertain the potential demand for higher education. In order to place Hastings and Rother in the wider context of higher education policy, high-level analysis of current higher education policy and provision was also undertaken. In addition, research was undertaken to identify examples of alternative models of higher education delivery elsewhere in the UK.

A comprehensive consultation programme was undertaken in tandem with the desk research in order to gain an understanding of the local socio-economic context, current and future provision of higher education in Hastings and Rother and demand for higher education in the area. As well as this, the consultations supported the development of options for higher education provisions as well as shaping the criteria used to appraise the options.

A list of those consulted as part of this research is provided in Table 2-1. BiGGAR Economics is grateful to these individuals for taking the time to participate in this exercise.

Table 2-1 – List of Consultations

Name	Organisation/Position
Shabana Bayjou	Hastings Borough Council
Christian Brodie	Chair of University of Sussex Council and Chair of the South East LEP
Marie Casey	Hastings & St. Leonards Local Strategic Partnership and Chief Executive of SEAP Advocacy Service
Cllr Peter Chowney	Leader of Hastings Borough Council
Victoria Conheady	Hastings Borough Council
Professor Paul Frost	University of Brighton
James Harris	East Sussex County Council
Dr Julie Hope	University of Kent
Simon Hubbard	Hastings Borough Council
Ed Hughes	Higher Education Council for England
Tony Leonard	Rother District Council
Professor Claire Mackie	Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Sussex
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Voluntary Action
Tracey Masters	UK Trade and Investment
Cllr Carl Maynard	Leader of Rother Council
Huw Merriman MP	Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle
Graham Peters	East Sussex Growth Board Chair (South East LEP)
Professor Chris Pole	Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Brighton
Amber Rudd MP	Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye
John Shaw	Sea Change Sussex
Dan Shelley	Sussex Coast College Hastings
Katy Thomas	East Sussex County Council

These tasks were interdependent as several of the consultations highlighted issues that required further research to determine whether the evidence base supports what was said in the consultations. Additionally, some of the desk research helped to identify further consultees.

The outputs from the desk research and consultations were then used to identify the strategic options that should be considered and to define the criteria used to appraise these options. An options assessment was then undertaken by scoring the options against the criteria.

2.3 Report Structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- chapter three describes the current provision of higher education provision in Hastings and Rother and outlines the current proposals for future HE delivery in the area;

- chapter four outlines the strategic objectives of key regional and local stakeholders for Hastings and Rother;
- chapter five provides contextual socio-economic information about Hastings and Rother;
- chapter six summarises relevant developments in higher education policy and in the market;
- chapter seven describes the market context for higher education in Hastings and Rother;
- chapter eight describes and assesses the options for higher education provision in Hastings and Rother; and
- chapter nine includes recommendations and next steps, including implementation issues.

3 HIGHER EDUCATION IN HASTINGS AND ROTHER

This section describes current higher education provision in Hastings and Rother, as well as outlining the proposals for future higher education delivery in the area.

3.1 Current Higher Education Provision

The University of Brighton has been involved in providing higher education in Hastings since 2003. At present around 680 students are based at the Hastings campus, approximately 3% of the University of Brighton's total student population.

According to the University of Brighton's on-line course directory, 30 different undergraduate courses were being delivered at the Hastings campus in 2016/17. The majority (28) of these were full time honours degree courses (five were also available for part-time students) but two foundation degree courses were also delivered on-site. The subjects available included digital and broadcast media, education, design and illustration, journalism, literature, health, biology, business, computing, mathematics and social science.

Over the past few years the University has invested almost £15 million in developing an academic hub at the Hastings campus and moving successful courses to Hastings from other campuses. As a result of this activity the economic impact that the University generates within the town has grown.

A study from 2014¹ estimated that in 2012/13 the expenditure of the University of Brighton and its students generated over £27 million of economic output in Hastings and supported 280 full-time-equivalent (fte) jobs, including 88 fte University jobs (106 people) based at the Hastings Campus. At the time it was estimated that this represented around 1% of all jobs in Hastings.

Despite this the number of students based at the campus (c.680) is significantly lower than the number required (c.2,000) to make the current operational model sustainable. As a result the Hastings campus currently runs at an annual loss of around £1.2 million. This position is not only financially unsustainable for the University but is also potentially damaging for the region as a whole since it indicates that scarce educational resources are not being utilised as efficiently as they could be.

3.2 Future Higher Education Provision

In early 2016 the University of Brighton commissioned a review of the Hastings campus² to help identify a sustainable model for future operations.

The review notes that, as it stands there is a limited 'draw' to Hastings as a university town when compared to other locations and other universities. In particular, there is a lack of a renowned high quality longstanding academic faculty and therefore a strong academic reputation is absent. The review also highlights that although teaching facilities are good quality (albeit not particularly differentiated from other university campuses), student facilities are lacking. In particular, there is a lack of a formal space for a students union and student accommodation is of poor quality and limited capacity. The University of Brighton's student accommodation in Hastings currently only has 87 student

¹ Viewforth Consulting Ltd (July 2014), The economic impact of the University of Brighton

² BDO LLP (11th February 2016), Strategic Review: University of Brighton in Hastings

rooms. In order to make the campus a long-term viable option, there is a requirement for investment in student accommodation and other student services.

The remit of the review was to objectively appraise the options identified by the University for the future development and operation of the Hastings campus; identify and appraise other options for the campus; and present clear recommendations concerning the future of the campus and actions to be taken.

The review considered four alternatives: a satellite campus, a specialist institute, a local campus or withdrawal. The review found no compelling evidence to support any of the first three of these options but highlighted the potential social impact and reputational risks associated with the fourth option, withdrawal. To help address this the review recommended a fifth option, which would involve the University continuing to provide Higher Education in Hastings in partnership with the local Further Education College.

The University of Brighton Management Board unanimously endorsed the recommendation to evolve the offer in Hastings. Based on the recommendations of the review, the University of Brighton will therefore close its Hastings campus in three years. However, the University intends to continue to work with Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH) validating higher education provision via a designated University Centre in Hastings.

The University of Brighton has been clear in its public statements and in consultations undertaken to support this study that the decision to close its Hastings campus in its current form has been taken and there is little prospect of that decision being reversed, given the financial implications that would have for the University. There is therefore little value in focusing too much on the reasons for the decision, other than to learn lessons to ensure that any past mistakes are not repeated in the future.

The University of Brighton has invested significant sums in the Hastings campus (as have economic development agencies and other public sector organisations) and has worked to find a sustainable model over a 12 year period. A number of different strategies and academic offerings have been tried over that time. The University has not attracted the level of demand required for a sustainable campus, which would have required meeting targets of 1,500 to 2,000 students. There are both underlying demand and underlying supply issues that help explain this situation.

On the demand side, the University of Brighton was not able to attract enough students to the courses it offered from either the local area or from further afield. Attracting students from outside the local area has proven difficult in the absence of an established academic reputation for the courses offered and a perception that Hastings as a location is less attractive than other options that students may have, including Brighton.

The demand and supply issues are interrelated. Due to the scale of demand that was experienced, the University of Brighton found that it was not financially feasible to base large numbers of academic staff permanently in Hastings. As a result much of the provision has involved staff visiting Hastings from other campuses, which has presented both management challenges and questions about whether the student experience of teaching has been equivalent to that experienced at other campuses.

It is possible that these underlying issues could be addressed by further investment, for example, by moving a School to Hastings, investing in a significant

new area of provision and in supporting facilities such as halls of residence and a student union. However, this would require further investment in the tens of millions and require perhaps as long as ten years to realise the full benefits, during which time further financial revenue deficits would be incurred. Should such funding be available, the University of Brighton would likely be able to identify other investments that could deliver a greater return within a shorter timescale.

A consultation process on the University Centre is underway, with the University of Brighton seeking the views of students, staff, local businesses, local stakeholders and wider members of the community. The consultation process consists of an online survey and a series of focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including staff and students at the Hastings campus. The online survey asks for consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal for a University Centre as well as suggestions on whether there are any other economically viable options for the University. It also seeks suggestions on developing the shape and content of the Centre, including the types of courses it should offer and the types of students it should focus on.

4 REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section places Hastings and Rother within the wider strategic objectives of the South East Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and the growth priorities of the East Sussex local authority. It also highlights the key challenges and therefore strategic priorities for Hastings and Rother.

4.1 South East LEP Strategic Economic Plan

The South East LEP encompasses East Sussex, Kent & Medway, Essex and Thames Gateway South Essex. The Strategic Economic Plan³ for the area sets out growth ambitions for the region, with a target for the creation of 200,000 sustainable private sector jobs over the decade to 2021, an increase of 11.4% on the 2011 figure.

The Plan recognises that economic activity is not evenly spread across the LEP area with unemployment tending to be higher in more peripheral parts of the LEP, particularly coastal communities. In addition, the demographic characteristics of the coastal communities reflect many decades of selective migration whereby relatively cheaper housing to buy or rent and a large private rented sector encourages in-migration of retired people, the economically inactive and benefit dependent households.

A low income population results in weak demand for services, deters investment and in-migration of higher income groups leading to a lack of jobs, low wages and outmigration of younger and skilled residents. This leaves a low base of resident skills making it difficult to attract high value jobs and leading to relatively low demand for housing, creating a vicious cycle. Hastings is cited as an example of an area with particularly high rates of unemployment as well as a town where this vicious cycle has been at work.

In addition, the Plan notes that many parts of the South East LEP economy are over-reliant on the public sector for employment and relatively more reliant on wholesale, retail, accommodation and construction jobs. These sectors generally provide lower value employment than other, more knowledge intensive, sectors and therefore there is a lower proportion of employment in high value or 'knowledge economy' sectors. The South East LEP however sees significant opportunities to rebalance the economy in favour of high value added manufacturing and services and to reduce the reliance on low value sectors. A number of priority sectors that have high growth potential have been identified including:

- advanced manufacturing;
- transport and logistics;
- life sciences and healthcare;
- environmental technologies and energy; and
- creative, cultural and media and the visitor economy.

It is also recognised that there is a skills challenge at both ends of the spectrum - insufficient volume and focus of higher level skills as well as low levels of basic

³ South East LEP (2014), South East LEP: Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan 2014

literacy and numeracy and employability skills. Enabling the skills system to be more employer-led is regarded as vital to addressing this.

4.2 East Sussex Growth Strategy

East Sussex comprises the coastal boroughs of Eastbourne and Hastings and the more rural districts of Lewes, Rother and Wealden. The Growth Strategy⁴ for the region sets a vision for 2020 to have a more dynamic, productive, innovative and fast growing economy built on an expanding thriving private sector. In order to achieve this, the following targets have been set:

- increase GVA per capita by 20% by 2020;
- maintain the employment rate for East Sussex at a higher level than the English rate to 2020;
- maintain the JSA claimant rate for East Sussex at below the English rate to 2020;
- increase the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with a NVQ4 (degree) qualification to at least 35% by 2020; and
- reduce the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with no qualifications and qualified only to NVQ1 to below the English level by 2020.

Key challenges for the region include low productivity, with GVA per hours worked being lower than at the regional level. This partly reflects the high concentration of employment in sectors that are generally lower paid, such as hospitality, leisure and social care. East Sussex also has relatively fewer jobs in finance, insurance, business services, and professional, scientific and technical sectors, which tend to generate higher income per head. The Strategy highlights that there are pockets of deprivation, economic inactivity and high unemployment, particularly in coastal towns.

In order to achieve its targets and overcome the key challenges facing the area a number of strategic priorities and supporting actions underpin the Growth Strategy. These are outlined in Table 4-1.

⁴ Shared Intelligence (2014), East Sussex Growth Strategy - Doing Business Brilliantly 2014-2020

Table 4-1 – Strategic Priorities and Actions

Strategic Priority	Supporting Actions
Business – enabling business growth, particularly of high value businesses	Capitalising on current and emerging sector opportunities
	Supporting more business start-ups and business growth
	Enabling the delivery of an appropriate pipeline of suitable business premises
Place – a significantly valued asset to the East Sussex economy	Improving and promoting the quality of the built environment
	Enhancing and promoting the visitor offer
	Enabling the provision of a choice of high quality homes of different types and tenure
	A better connected county
	Promoting East Sussex as a 'brilliant place to do business'
People – meeting the skills needs of business and supporting residents to reach their full potential	Achieving better alignment of skills provision to meet local employer needs
	Increasing higher level skills in the workforce
	Improving work readiness, including soft and basic skills

Source: Shared Intelligence (2014), *East Sussex Growth Strategy - Doing Business Brilliantly 2014-2020*

The Strategy identifies a number of sectors where there is a base of businesses and employment on which to build and enhance prospects for growth. In addition, 'Innovate East Sussex', produced by East Sussex County Council, sets out the opportunities for fostering innovation in East Sussex. This stresses the importance of embedding innovation across the whole economy through a collaborative approach but also highlights some sector specific opportunities.

For example, East Sussex is considered an attractive retirement destination, which could present opportunities to adapt and respond to the challenges of an ageing population. Healthcare is already a major area of employment for East Sussex, with care the largest sub-sector within this. More people across a range of occupations will therefore be required to support this elderly population. There are also research opportunities around age-related illnesses such as dementia with the University of Brighton and Sussex Medical School developing specialism in this area. All of these factors present an opportunity to make the most of the demographics by making East Sussex a centre for excellence and test bed for innovation around the ageing population.

At the port of Newhaven there is also an emerging environmental and clean technologies cluster with plans for an offshore wind farm at Newhaven and the recent establishment of Newhaven University Technical College (UTC), which will specialise in marine and environmental engineering ('Clean Tech'). The UTC will provide technically oriented courses for 14-19 year olds to support the growth of businesses in the sector.

East Sussex has a small but significant high tech manufacturing sector, with some niche clusters in the vacuum and pump industries and concentrations of employment in electronics and optical equipment. There are, for example, a cluster of businesses in vacuum technologies, photonics and precision instruments focused around Hastings/Bexhill, which includes companies such as Torr Scientific, Kurt J Lesker and Photek. The Strategy emphasises the need to create a supportive environment for these companies, including tailoring skills provision and raising awareness of employment opportunities. As well as this, high tech manufacturing is dependent on a continuous cycle of innovation in order to compete internationally.

There are many SMEs in the business and professional services sector and a few larger ones, such as Hastings Direct and Saga. Over the next few years, new commercial floor space will be made available in the region creating an opportunity to attract and retain more professional services companies.

4.3 Hastings and Rother Task Force Strategic Priorities Six Point Plan

The Hastings and Bexhill Five Point Plan was developed in 2002, in order to address the severe levels of economic and social deprivation in Hastings and the surrounding area. The Plan consisted of five interlinked priorities with a number of initiatives and projects within each. Building on this, in 2013 a six point plan was developed setting out the key priorities for the Hastings and Rother Task Force.⁵ These six priorities are detailed below:

- urban renaissance – a lack of appropriate employment space inhibits the creation of new jobs, business expansion and inward investment. To this end the Task Force will continue to develop new commercial and industrial space to support business diversification and growth and continue to regenerate the seafronts and town centres at Bexhill and Hastings;
- connectivity – continued improvement to the areas' roads and rail connections and networks are critical to long term economic growth for the area. For local companies to compete in a global market the development of a digital infrastructure fit for the 21st century is also required. This includes promoting virtual networks between colleges and local business to improve collaboration, supporting local businesses to use e-commerce, ICT and broadband as strategic business tools and reducing digital exclusion;
- skills – local employers continue to find it difficult to recruit employees with the right skills from the local working age population. This is because many of the local working age population are not work-ready and there are a high number of young people who are not in employment, education or training. An additional factor is young people leaving the area to pursue careers elsewhere. To tackle this the Task Force will ensure the development of further and higher education curricula that are relevant to the workforce skills required by local employers and increase the number of businesses engaged in work-based training and apprenticeships;
- enterprise growth – in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable economy across Hastings and Rother diversifying the local employment base is key. At the moment the area is overly dependent on the public sector and low wage and seasonal employment. To overcome this, the development of key

⁵ Hastings and Rother Task Force (2013), Strategic Priorities (Six Point Plan)

employment sectors will be supported by the Task Force, targeting advanced manufacturing and engineering; creative, leisure and hospitality; and emerging technology industries. The area will also be promoted as a centre of excellence in the vacuum technology sector, building on the core of innovative and global leaders in this field that are based in the area;

- culture led regeneration – culture can deliver economic benefits in its own right but can also help generate the skills and confidence needed for many jobs or entrepreneurial activity. The Task Force aims to work with partners to promote the area, under the Visit 1066 Country banner, as a centre for cultural excellence and develop programmes and new approaches to support the development of creative and cultural businesses. In addition, they will work with schools, colleges and other education providers to use culture to increase the potential of the culture sector in providing entry level employment and long term career paths and to support socio-economic inclusion; and
- image – the area suffers from a poor perception with Hastings viewed as a dilapidated seaside resort, Bexhill is seen as a place to retire and the rest of Rother is primarily seen as a rural locality from which to commute to other places. The poor and inaccurate image of the area discourages the inward investment that is vital to economic growth. Negative perceptions are particularly ingrained within residents themselves. The Task Force will create brand identities for Hastings and Bexhill that promote the towns as desirable places to live and work..

4.4 Skills East Sussex

Skills East Sussex (SES) is the strategic body for employment and skills in East Sussex. It aims to drive improvement in local employment and skills in order to increase economic prosperity in East Sussex. Based on research into the skills needs of East Sussex, it has identified nine priority economic sectors⁶, including:

- engineering and advanced manufacturing;
- construction;
- health and social care;
- creative, cultural and media;
- agriculture, forestry and fishing;
- visitor economy;
- financial, professional and business services; and
- low carbon & environmental goods and services.

Within these sectors, there are a number of particular issues that SES are aiming to address. One of these is to improve the quality and relevance of careers information advice and guidance for people of all ages. The SES also aims to help young people become ready for the world of employment, ensure the curriculum is shaped by employers where possible and stimulate the uptake of Apprenticeships.

⁶ Skills East Sussex and East Sussex County Council (2015), Introduction to East Sussex, East Sussex Sector Skills Evidence Base

5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

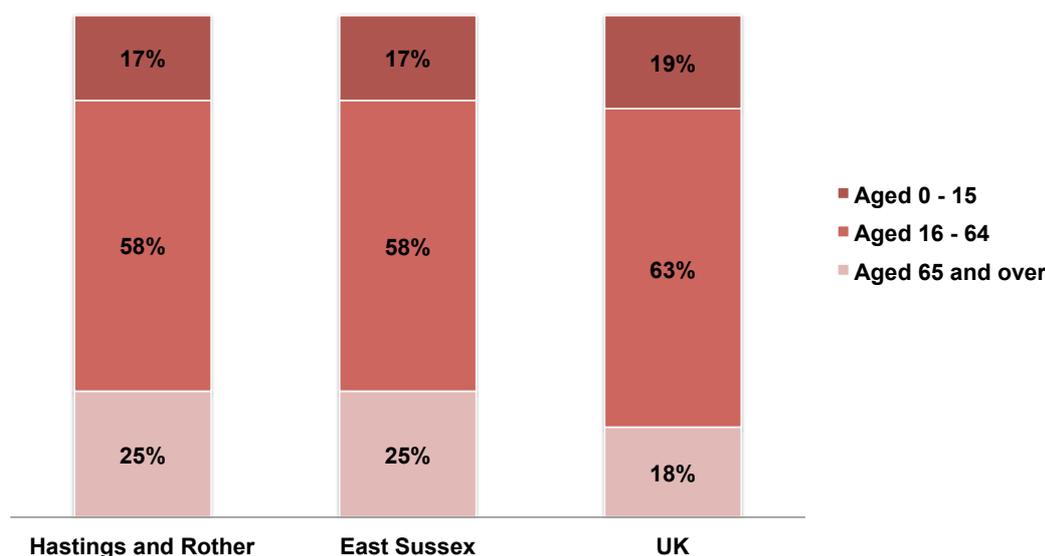
This section presents contextual socio-economic information about Hastings and Rother, including demographics, economic activity and structure of the economy.

5.1 Population

Hastings and Rother have a combined population of 184,400, around 34% of the total population of East Sussex. Figure 5-1 shows that the overall age profile of Hastings and Rother is similar to that of East Sussex as a whole. However, when compared to the UK as a whole it is evident that Hastings and Rother (and East Sussex more generally) are characterised by an ageing population.

A quarter of the population in Hastings and Rother is of pensionable age, which is significantly higher than the average across the UK (18%). Hastings and Rother also have a lower proportion of working age people (58% compared to the national average of 63%).

Figure 5-1 – Population by Age



Source: ONS (2016), Population Estimates 2015

In 2015, there were 13,400 18-24 year olds in Hastings and Rother, around 35% of the total 18-24 year old population in East Sussex (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1 – Young Population

	Hastings and Rother	East Sussex	United Kingdom
15 year olds (2012)	2,258	6,441	769,825
18-24 year olds	13,400	38,500	5,878,500

Source: ONS (2016), Population Estimates - Local authority based by single year of age, 2015 and 2012.

5.2 Economic Indicators

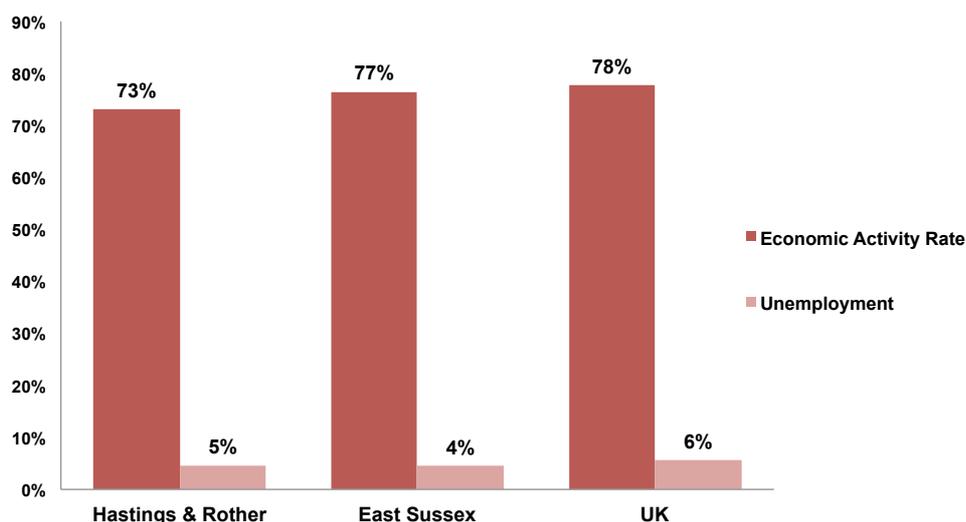
This section analyses the economic performance of Hastings and Rother against the wider East Sussex region and the UK as a whole. A number of economic indicators are considered including employment, economic activity, income, skills and the structure of the economy.

5.2.1 Economic Activity

Figure 5-2 illustrates the proportion of the working age population who are economically active as well as the unemployment rate. It is clear that economic activity in Hastings and Rother is significantly lower (73%) than East Sussex (77%) and the average for the UK as a whole (78%).

Of those who are economically active, 5% of the working age population in Hastings and Rother are unemployed compared to a national average of 6%. However this masks the fact that Hastings experiences higher unemployment than Rother. On average across the last five years, 7% of the population were unemployed in Hastings, with the unemployment rate as high as 11% in 2014/15.

Figure 5-2 – Economic Activity and Unemployment Rate



Source: ONS (2016), Annual Population Survey (economic activity rate data from Apr 2015-Mar 2016. Unemployment rate is average of available data over last 5 years).

The claimant count (the number of people seeking Job Seekers Allowance and those who claim Universal Credit who are out of work) provides an alternative measure of economic activity. In July 2016, 2.3% of the working age population in Hastings and 1.1% of the population in Rother were claimants. The proportion of claimants in Rother is lower than the average for East Sussex and the UK as a whole. In contrast, the proportion of claimants in Hastings is higher than Rother, East Sussex and the UK as a whole.

Table 5-2 – Claimant Count (as a proportion of residents aged 16-64)

Sector	Hastings	Rother	East Sussex	United Kingdom
July 2016	2.3%	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%

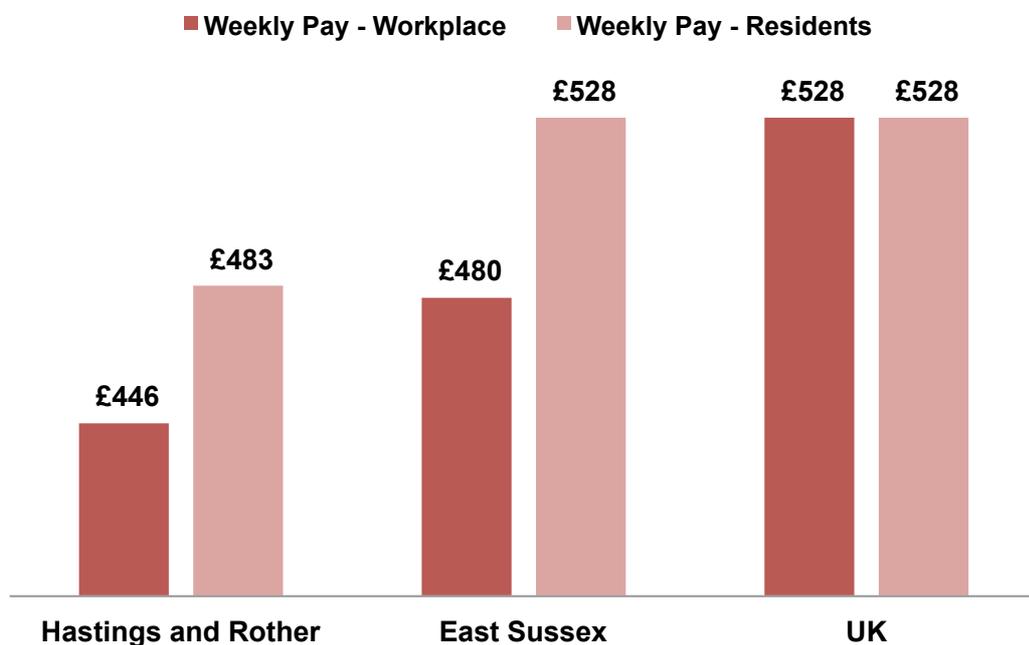
Source: ONS (2016), Claimant Count by Sex and Age, July 2016.

5.2.2 Income

Figure 5-3 presents two different measures of income; gross weekly income by workplace and gross weekly income by residence. People who work in Hastings and Rother earn on average £446 per week, compared to an average of £480 in East Sussex and £528 across the UK as a whole. Workplace-based weekly pay in Hastings and Rother is therefore 15% lower than the UK average and 9% lower than the average across East Sussex.

Residence-based pay is 8% higher than workplace-based pay in Hastings and Rother. This suggests that residents are able to achieve a higher wage by commuting out of the area. This is a pattern that is mirrored across East Sussex more generally, most likely due to the proximity of large centres of economic activity like London.

Figure 5-3 - Gross Weekly Pay by Workplace and Residence

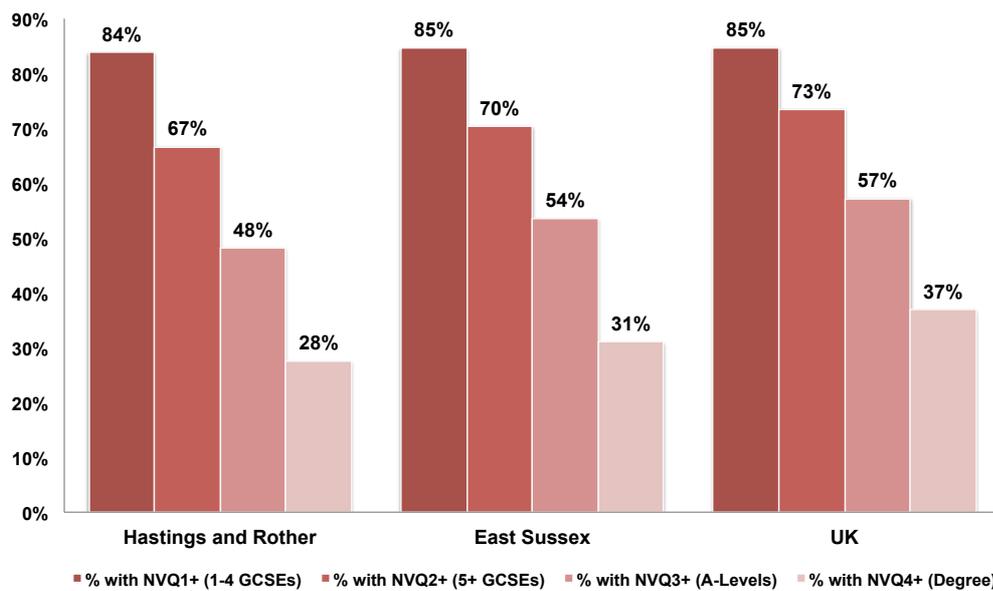


Source: ONS (2016), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2015, Resident and Workplace Analysis

5.2.3 Education and Skills

The economic prosperity of an area is often linked with the level of education of the local population, as a highly qualified population often means higher paid jobs which in turn has knock-on effects for unemployment and average wages. Figure 5-4 indicates that for every qualification level beyond NVQ1 there are fewer people qualified in Hastings and Rother than the average for East Sussex and the UK. For example, 28% of the working age population in Hastings and Rother is qualified to degree level significantly lower than the average for East Sussex (31%) and the UK as a whole (37%).

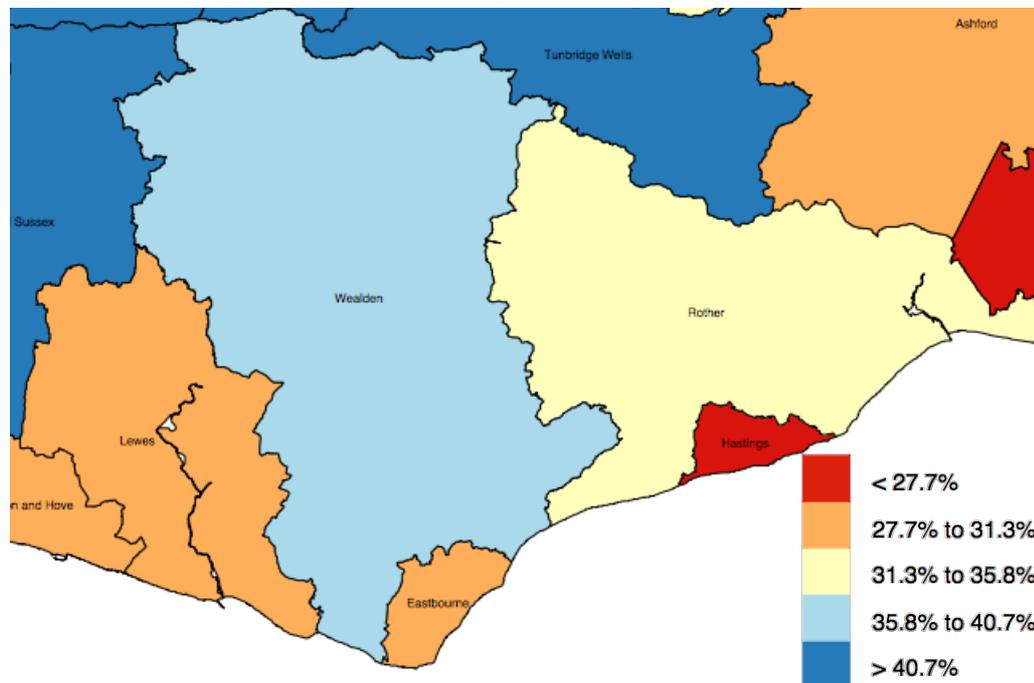
Figure 5-4 – Qualification Levels (% of 16-64 Population)



Source: ONS (2016), Annual Population Survey Jan 2015-Dec 2015

The young participation rate is the proportion of young people who enter higher education at ages 18 or 19.⁷ Hastings has the lowest young participation rate in East Sussex with only 21% of young people entering higher education at ages 18 or 19. Hastings also has the fourth lowest young participation rate of all local authorities in England. In Rother, the young participation rate is 33%, in line with the average across England of 34%.

Figure 5-5 – Young Participation Rates by Local Authority (East Sussex)



Source: HEFCE

⁷ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/POLAR3,data/>

5.2.4 Key Economic Sectors

There were 57,456 jobs in Hastings and Rother in 2014, accounting for 33% of jobs in East Sussex. More than a third of these (34%) were in the public sector (the health, education and public administration and defence sectors), significantly higher than the UK average of 26%. The largest public sector component is the health sector, accounting for a quarter of employment in Hastings and Rother compared to the national average of 13%. Hastings and Rother is therefore over represented in the public sector.

The most important private sector industries in Hastings and Rother are retail and accommodation and food services, comprising 12% and 11% of total employment in the area respectively. These two private sector industries combined with the public sector together account for 57% of employment in Hastings and Rother. When compared to the sources of employment across the UK as a whole, employment opportunities in Hastings and Rother are therefore concentrated in just a few sectors.

Hastings and Rother are also under represented in important growth sectors such as professional, scientific and technical services, which accounts for 5% of employment in the area, compared to the UK average of 8%.

Table 5-3 – Key Economic Sectors

Sector	Hastings and Rother	East Sussex	Great Britain
Health	20%	18%	13%
Retail	12%	12%	10%
Accommodation & food services	11%	10%	7%
Education	10%	10%	9%
Manufacturing	7%	6%	8%
Construction	5%	6%	5%
Professional, Scientific and Technical	5%	7%	8%
Business Administration and Support Services	5%	5%	9%
Public Administration & Defence	5%	4%	4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4%	5%	4%
Financial & Insurance	4%	2%	4%
Transport & Storage	3%	3%	4%
Wholesale	3%	4%	4%
Property	2%	2%	2%
Motor Trades	2%	2%	2%
Information & Communication	2%	2%	4%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0%	0%	2%
Mining, Quarrying & Utilities	0%	1%	1%
Total Employment	57,456	176,130	28,989,324

Source: ONS (2015), Business Register and Employment Survey 2014

As highlighted in the strategic context, there is a significant vacuum technology sector in Hastings and Rother. Around 1,860 people are employed within the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector (AME)⁸ in Hastings and Rother. The largest specialism, accounting for 46% of AME employment, is in the manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products.

5.2.5 Deprivation

The socio-economic characteristics described in this chapter manifest themselves in the levels of deprivation experienced within Hastings and Rother.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation⁹ ranks each small area in England across seven weighted domains of deprivation: income (22.5%); employment (22.5%); education, skills and training (13.5%), health deprivation and disability (13.5%), crime (9.3%), barriers to housing and services (9.3%) and living environment (9.3%).

⁸ As defined by East Sussex County Council (2015), Defining Our Economy April 2015. AME covers SIC Code 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33 and 7112.

⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2015), English Indices of Deprivation 2015

According to this measure 30% of lower layer super output areas in Hastings are in the most deprived 10% nationally. By this measure, Hastings is therefore the most deprived local authority in East Sussex and the 13th most deprived local authority in England.

In contrast, only one of the 58 lower layer super output areas in Rother is in the most deprived 10% nationally and Rother as a whole is 178th out of 326 areas in England in terms of deprivation.

6 HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND SECTOR CONTEXT

This chapter highlights key recent developments in higher education policy and describes important trends and developments in the sector that may be relevant to the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother.

6.1 Widening Participation in Higher Education

In October 2010 the UK government published an independent review of the higher education funding system in England (the Browne report), which recommended increasing access to the UK's top institutions for students from low income backgrounds¹⁰. To help achieve this the Browne report recommended that any university that charges higher tuition fees should increase financial support for students from low income families.

Following a public consultation plans were then developed to increase financial support for students from low income families so that:

- students from families earning £25,000 or less would receive a full grant to help with living costs; and
- universities and colleges would provide extra financial help to eligible students from disadvantaged backgrounds through the National Scholarship Programme, which ran for 3 academic years from 2012/13 to 2014/15).

In implementing the recommendations from the Browne report the Government also stipulated that in order to charge the highest amounts for tuition (between £6,000 and £9,000 for full-time students) universities must first have an access agreement in place approved by the independent Director of Fair Access. Such access agreements outline what universities will do to attract and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Institutions with access agreements typically offer bursaries and other financial support and carry out outreach work such as partnering with schools in disadvantaged areas of the country.

In March 2014 the UK government published a 'National strategy for access and student success', which considered how funding for widening access might be used more effectively. The main action proposed in the strategy was to develop a national network of collaborative outreach partnerships.

6.1.1 National Collaborative Outreach Programme

The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) aims to support the UK Government's goals of:

- doubling the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020;
- increasing the number of students in higher education from ethnic minority groups by 20%; and
- addressing the under-representation of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education.

¹⁰ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (12th October 2010), The Browne report: higher education funding and student finance.

The Programme will support consortia of higher education providers, schools, colleges and other organisations to deliver programmes of collaborative outreach in specific local areas where higher education participation is low overall and lower than expected given GCSE attainment levels.

The Programme will run from 2016/17 to 2019/20 but because of the time that will be required during 2016 to develop and approve proposals and for successful consortia to establish their infrastructure outreach activity it is not expected to start until January 2017. The programme will therefore run in calendar years.

Funding will be provided for two years in the first instance, from January 2017 to December 2018. Funding for a further two years, to December 2020 will be subject to consortia making satisfactory progress towards meeting the Government's goals. Several wards within the Hastings and Rother area have been identified as NCOP target areas, these include:

- Sidley, St Michaels, St Leonards and Hollington to the west of Hastings;
- Baird, Tressell and Ore to the east of Hastings; and
- Eastern Rother and Rye.

6.2 Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide a way for people to combine paid employment with academic study, enabling them to gain valuable workplace skills and enter the labour market without the debts associated with a traditional degree programme. Over the past decade policy makers and government have increasingly recognised the potential role of apprenticeships in helping to resolve skills gaps in important sectors of the UK economy.

The redevelopment of the apprenticeship system in the UK began in 2009 when the UK Government introduced new Higher Apprenticeships as a response to the need for higher level skills and academic achievement within the engineering and information technology sectors. At that time higher apprenticeships incorporated academic training that was broadly equivalent to a foundation degree. (This was subsequently amended to enable higher apprenticeships to study up to degree level.)

In 2011 the UK Government committed a further £25 million to the apprenticeship system via the National Apprenticeship service. In the same year the Government also invited businesses to bid for a share of a new £250 million fund that was designed to enable employers to invest in the training they need by getting involved in the design and development of vocational training¹¹.

In March 2015 the UK Government announced another significant development in the apprenticeship system when it launched the roll out of the new Degree Apprenticeships programme¹². Degree Apprenticeships are designed in close collaboration with industry and are designed to enable apprentices to gain a full bachelor's or master's degree while earning a wage and getting real on-the-job experience in their chosen profession.

¹¹ Guardian Careers (9th December 2011), Can higher apprenticeships fill the STEM skills gap?

¹² Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (12th March 2015), Government rolls-out flagship Degree Apprenticeships

The new apprenticeships go further than Higher Apprenticeships because they incorporate a degree as an integral component. As a result, from 2015/16 universities are expected to play a significant role in the delivery of apprenticeships for the first time.

6.2.1 Funding for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

As with other apprenticeships, apprentices are not expected to pay for their training or assessment and are therefore not charged student fees. This means that apprentices can earn a full bachelors or even masters degree without paying any fees. As well as being suitable for school leavers as an alternative route to gaining a degree, the new qualifications are expected to strengthen the vocational pathway and be suitable for existing apprentices looking to progress in their career.

All apprenticeships, regardless of the level or the age of the apprentice, can be fully funded by an employer. Alternatively, the cost of delivering apprenticeships can be covered jointly by employers and the government (via the Skills Funding Agency). Under the current funding model the UK Government contributes two-thirds of the total agreed cost, up to a cap, and employers contribute the other third in cash with all payments paid directly to the lead provider.

The amount of government funding available varies depending on the programme and the age of the apprentice at the start of the programme. At the time of writing all classes of apprenticeships were allocated to one of six funding caps¹³. In addition to this some employers may be eligible for additional incentive payments for taking on a 16-18 year old, for small businesses and for successful completion.

6.3 Higher Education and Research Bill 2016

In May 2016 the UK Government presented a new Higher Education and Research Bill to the House of Commons. The Bill seeks to bring forward a range of measures to increase competition and choice in the higher education sector, raise standards and strengthen capabilities in UK research and innovation. The Bill includes several important proposals but perhaps the most relevant to this study are those relating to new higher education providers and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

6.3.1 The Teaching Excellence Framework

The TEF is a system for assessing higher education providers on the quality of teaching outcomes they achieve, taking into account factors such as student satisfaction, employment outcomes and retention rates. It will put in place incentives that the UK Government expects would drive up the standard of teaching in universities and give students clear information about where teaching is best and what benefits they can expect to gain from their course. The Higher Education and Research Bill is expected to pave the way for the implementation of TEF across England by giving a newly created Office for Students (OfS) power to administer the TEF and designate a body to perform assessment functions.

Implementation of the TEF would for the first time make a direct link between the quality of teaching at English universities and the level of fees that institutions are allowed to charge (for details of the proposed changes see Table 6-1). This is likely to result in universities across the country reviewing areas of provision where teaching may not currently be up to standard.

¹³ Skills Funding Agency (March 2016), Apprenticeship standards funding rules 2016 to 2017

Table 6-1 – Implications of TEF for Financial Incentives

Timescale	Arrangements	Financial Incentives
Year 1	Providers with a satisfactory quality assessment would automatically be deemed to have “met expectations”.	Providers that meet expectations would be allowed to raise their fees in line with inflation.
Year 2	Providers would be invited to take part on a voluntary basis and three levels of assessment would be awarded: “meets expectations”, “excellent” and “outstanding”.	Providers that are successful at any level will keep their award for a maximum of three years and would be allowed to increase their fees in line with inflation on top of any year one increase.
Year 3 onwards (2018/19)	This would be the first full year of assessment. Awards would be made at three levels as in year two.	Providers deemed to be “meeting expectations” would be allowed to increase fees by 50% of the inflationary uplift and providers that achieve higher awards would be allowed to increase fees by 100% of the inflationary uplift.

Source: House of Commons Library (30th June 2016), briefing paper number 7608

6.3.2 Alternative Providers

The Higher Education and Research Bill 2016 also contains a number of proposals designed to open up the higher education market in England to greater competition by making it easier for new providers to enter the higher education market. It is intended that this would help to drive up teaching standards, increase capacity and improve social mobility. The new system would involve:

- replacing the multiple separate higher education regulatory systems with a single route into the sector for all providers, which would be operated by a new market regulator, the Office for Students (OfS). The OfS would be formed by merging the Office for Fair Access with the learning and teaching functions of the Higher Education Funding Council for England);
- allowing new providers to offer their own degrees from the day that they open, on a probationary basis, providing they participate in on-going monitoring and annual reviews;
- allowing new providers to apply for full degree-awarding powers after three years and to apply for university title three years after that;
- allowing new providers that want access to state student loans to charge tuition fees of up to £9,000, rather than £6,000 as is currently the case, if they have an access agreement in place; and
- reducing the size threshold (currently 1,000 students) required for applications for university title.

6.4 Potential New Entrants to the Higher Education Sector

The publication of the Higher Education and Research Bill has led to much speculation in the media about the types of companies that could seek to enter the English higher education market in the future. This speculation has been fuelled in part by comments made by government ministers such as Jo Johnson,

who speaking to the Times Higher Education (THE) shortly before the publication of the white paper commented that “If a Harvard or a Google or a Massachusetts Institute of Technology or an Indian Institute of Technology wants to come and set up and offer their own degrees, we want them to be able to do so”. An article published in the THE in May however cast some doubt on the likelihood of either of these scenarios.

The THE contacted both Google and Facebook, highlighting the media reports and asking whether the companies might consider offering degrees and neither company expressed any interest. The THE also contacted MIT for the same article and a spokesman confirmed that MIT “does not establish branch campuses and has no plans to do so in the UK”. While it is possible that another established overseas provider could decide to enter the market, commentary published in the THE suggests that the costs of doing so are likely to be a significant barrier to this.

A potentially more likely scenario could involve providers already operating within the UK seeking to expand their provision. In May 2016 the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) published research on the market for alternative higher education providers, which included the results of a survey of 276 alternative providers currently operating in England.

This research showed that although 64% of the alternative providers surveyed planned to expand their student intake and number of courses offered within the next five years, just 12% had plans to acquire degree awarding powers during this period. Moreover the study also showed that the number of alternative providers that had already acquired degree awarding powers fell significantly short of the number that said they were planning to acquire such powers at the time of the previous study in 2012. This suggests that in the past providers may have been over-optimistic about their ability to acquire degree awarding powers.

All of this suggests that, although the Higher Education and Research Bill has opened the door to the English higher education market for a variety of potential new entrants, it is likely to be a number of years before these opportunities are realised.

Furthermore, if new entrants do emerge with ambitious proposals to develop new university campuses, it would be reasonable to expect them to take an approach to business planning more akin to private sector businesses than universities. Universities have generally considered broader social and economic issues as well as financial feasibility, but new providers will need to focus more on financial issues.

For this reason factors such as population size, catchment area and existing supply would all be of interest to any prospective new provider because they would all make a contribution to expected demand. Hastings and Rother could be an attractive location if it became apparent that higher education supply in the area was going to be limited but there are other larger towns in England that do not currently have a university presence that are likely to be more attractive. For example, the Centre for Cities think tank identified ten large towns with populations of between 200,000 and 350,000 that did not have a university (including Wakefield, Southend, Milton Keynes and Swindon). These towns may be the first locations that alternative providers would consider, particularly those with a large catchment population in the wider region.

6.5 Alternative Providers Currently Operating in England

The research published by BIS in 2016 referred to above¹⁴ identified six broad categories of alternative higher education providers operating in England. These categories included:

- **Publicly-funded Style Providers** – this group incorporates a small number (11) of relatively large (500+ students) institutions whose offering essentially mirrors that of the bulk of publicly-funded universities in England. These offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and do not specialise in a single area. An example of this type of provider is BPP University, a case study of which is provided in Figure 6-1.
- **Catch-up' Colleges** – these providers represented around a quarter of all alternative providers covered by the research and focused exclusively on delivering sub-degree level courses, such as HNDs, HNCs and foundation degrees.
- **Small Specialists** – this was the largest group of providers identified in the survey, accounting for around a third of all alternative providers. These organisations were generally smaller institutions (typically with <250 students), which were relatively well established and specialised in a single subject area. These providers offer both first degree and/or postgraduate level qualifications and were more likely to offer part-time degrees.
- **Exclusively Postgraduate** – this group was a sub-set of the Small Specialists, notable for only offering postgraduate level courses. They were amongst the more established of the small specialists and typically had between 26 and 100 students.
- **Importers** – these providers were often based in London and the South East. Most operate for profit and cater to international students. They were more likely to offer full-time courses and were generally newer institutions.
- **Exporters** – these were providers that delivered higher education outside of the UK as at least part of their offering and were operating for a profit. Some providers delivered higher education overseas via distance learning and others had established sites overseas.

¹⁴ IFF Research (May 2016), Understanding the market of alternative education providers and their students in 2014

Figure 6-1 – Case Study of BPP University

BPP University is a private university specialising in professional education and offering degree programmes in law, business, accountancy, finance, psychology and health studies. It is part of the US owned for-profit education company Apollo Group and operates sites in several UK cities, particularly London.

The University was founded in 1976 as Brierley Price Prior to provide exam training to accountancy students. In 1992 it joined forces with the newly formed BPP Business School under the name BPP College. In 2007 BPP College was granted degree awarding powers, becoming the first private company in the UK to do so. In 2010 BPP College was granted university college status and changed its name to BPP University College and in August 2013 BPP University College was awarded university status and changed its name again to BPP University.

At the time of writing BPP University was one of only seven private degree awarding bodies in the UK. It receives direct funding from tuition fees. In 2014 tuition fees for domestic full-time undergraduate students were £6,000/year.

Source: BiGGAR Economics based on BPP University website

In addition to the six types of alternative higher education providers identified in the BIS research it is also possible to identify a further category of provider, that might be described as international pathway providers. These providers include companies such as Study Group International (a case study of which is provided in Figure 6-2), which specialise in providing international study opportunities for international students.

Figure 6-2 – Case Study of Study Group International

Study Group International is a global company that prepares international students for university degree programmes and teaches high school education and English language courses. The origins of the company date back to 1989 when the Embassy Language School in Hastings was acquired by two businessmen and became the first international language school within the group. Today Study Group International operates in 85 campuses around the world and in 2015 73,000 students from 185 different countries were enrolled in Study Group programmes.

Study Group provides English language training through a network of 18 permanent schools in the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It also provides on and off-campus education through a network of international study centres delivered in collaboration with universities all over the world. The study centre approach is designed to enable students to gain the language, academic and social skills required for university progression and for university partners to create successful pathways for international students. At the time of writing the company's website listed partnerships with 17 universities and colleges in the UK.

Source: BiGGAR Economics based on Study Group International corporate website

6.6 University Centres

In order to maintain provision of higher education in Hastings and Rother the University of Brighton proposes to develop the existing Hastings Campus into a new university centre in collaboration with SCCH. As part of this assessment it is therefore helpful to define what a university centre is.

The term university centre has been used by a number of different institutions across the UK to describe models of delivering higher education in collaboration with a local further education provider. Although the term is an informal designation it is possible to identify a number of common features between different institutions.

University centres provide a model for university partner (or partners) to validate degree level courses delivered by the further education partner. In some cases the university partner(s) provides the quality control procedures for assuring academic standards and students remain college students. At other centres courses are sub-contracted to the college partner and students are students of the university. Usually the type of higher education available at university centres is a natural extension of the type of A-level and vocational provision provided by the college partners.

In general (but not always) the physical assets that comprise university centres are owned by the further education college involved in the partnership. Existing university centres also usually provide no (or limited) dedicated facilities for the use of higher education students. The student cohort at most university centres is also usually highly localised and for this reason university centres rarely own their own student accommodation.

A report published by the University of Brighton¹⁵ in 2016 considered the key characteristics of a number of university centres in England. The key features of the university centres considered in this report are summarised below.

Table 6-2 – University Centres in England

Institution	HE students	Level of HE provision	Number of university partners	Tuition fees
Solihull College & University Centre	530	Undergraduate and postgraduate	5	Various
Blackburn College	3,000	Undergraduate only	5	£7,500
Doncaster College	1,170	Undergraduate and postgraduate	2	£6,500
North Lindsey College	900	Undergraduate only	5	£5,995
University Campus Suffolk	5,000	Undergraduate and postgraduate	2	£9,000
University Centre Peterborough	1,200	Undergraduate and postgraduate	1	£7,500

Source: University of Brighton and providers own websites

6.6.1 Threshold for Financial Viability

The data presented above can be used to provide some insight into the minimum number of students that might be required in order for an autonomous higher education institution to achieve financial viability.

Although the number of higher education students enrolled at the university centres identified above varies significantly, with the exception of University Campus Suffolk and the University Centre Peterborough, higher education students at these institutions only form part of a much larger student body. Both Solihull College and University Centre and North Lindsey College for example have a total student population of around 10,000.

At the time of writing around 1,200 higher education students were enrolled in the University Centre Peterborough and around 5,000 were enrolled at the University

¹⁵ University of Brighton (28th April 2016), University Centres in England as examples for a future University Centre in Hastings

of Suffolk. It should however be noted that, although both institutions are housed in dedicated buildings, both are also located in very close proximity to the further education partner involved. University of Suffolk is for example located just five minutes from the main Suffolk College campus while University Centre Peterborough is housed in a dedicated building opposite the main campus of Peterborough Regional College.

It is therefore likely that both institutions benefit to at least some extent from efficiencies (for example in areas such as facilities management) that are only possible because of this colocation. For this reason it is likely that, in order to be financially viable, an autonomous higher education provider would almost certainly require in excess of 1,200 students.

6.7 Other Models of Provision

To help inform the development of options for the Hastings Campus a number of alternative delivery models that have been implemented elsewhere in the UK were considered. These models include:

- the Universities at Medway;
- University Campus Suffolk (now the University of Suffolk);
- the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI);
- Combined Universities in Cornwall; and
- Durham University's Queen's Campus in Stockton.

Further details about each of these models is provided below.

6.7.1 Universities at Medway

The Universities at Medway is a collaborative initiative involving the University of Greenwich, the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and Mid Kent College based on a single campus at Chatham Medway in Kent. The campus is located within what was once HMS Pembroke, a historic naval barracks dating back to 1878.

The original rationale behind the initiative was to widen higher education access to as many people as possible within the region. Another important objective was to help stimulate economic regeneration in Medway.

Work to develop the Medway campus began in the late 1990s and the first phase of construction started in late 2004. The first phase of the project involved the complete refurbishment and redevelopment of the grade II listed Drill Hall building to provide a state-of-the-art learning resource centre and teaching space as well as library and ICT facilities.

Between 2005 and 2006 various additional buildings were developed by each of the partners including a new four storey academic building for the University of Kent and Mid-Kent College. Today each of the four partner institutions now offers its own range of full and part-time courses at the campus, drawing on their own individual academic strengths.

The new campus became fully operational in September 2006 but investment has continued since then as the partners have continued to develop the range of facilities available on-site. For examples, a brand new £4 million student centre

was due to open in September 2016 that will provide the new focus of student social activity on campus.

It is estimated that total investment in the campus to date amounts to around £120 million. This investment has enabled student numbers on-site to increase from around 3,000 in 2002/3 to around 6,000 by 2008/9 and around 10,000 by 2012/13.

Today the shared campus provides an economic, social and cultural focus for the Medway region and is at the heart of the strategy to bring renewed economic prosperity to Medway.

One of the distinctive features of the Universities at Medway initiative is the innovative use of blended learning options, which enable partners involved in the project to deliver exactly the same course content in multiple locations. For some courses this is achieved by recording lectures delivered at the partner institutions main campus and broadcasting them via a live screen link at Medway. Lectures are then made available to all students via the course website and complemented with regular face-to-face seminars.

The University of Kent has made particular use of this blended learning approach in the delivery of law courses at Medway. This experience is worth highlighting because a survey undertaken by the University revealed, although the course content was identical in Medway and at the University's main campus in Canterbury, levels of student satisfaction at the Medway Campus were 10-15% higher.

6.7.2 University Campus Suffolk/University of Suffolk

Until recently Suffolk was one of only four counties in England that did not have its own independent University. Efforts to address this began in 2003 when Suffolk County Council established a stakeholder group to investigate the possibility of establishing a university in the county. The steering group was made up of representatives from the University of East Anglia, the University of Essex, Suffolk College, the East of England Development Agency, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Suffolk Learning and Skills Council, Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk Chief Executive's Group and the Suffolk Development Agency.

Together the partners developed proposals to create University Campus Suffolk (UCS). In 2004 funding pledges to help establish UCS were secured from Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. In 2005 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) committed £15 million of funding to the project and in 2006 a further £12.5 million grant was secured from the East of England Development Agency.

UCS was officially launched on 1st August 2007. UCS was established as a private company limited by guarantee owned by the universities of East Anglia and Essex, which acted as the joint validating authority for UCS programmes. This meant that between 2007 and November 2015 students at UCS received degrees awarded jointly by the two universities.

From the outset UCS operated as a separate entity with its own executive team but the institution was not granted taught degree awarding powers until November 2015. UCS was then awarded university status in May 2016 and was renamed the University of Suffolk in August 2016.

The University of Suffolk's main campus (University Campus) is in Ipswich. In addition to this the University also has five Learning Network Centres, which are located within and owned by regional further education colleges.

The University of Suffolk currently charges £9,000 for an undergraduate course. During the University's first five years of operations total full-time equivalent (FTE) student numbers grew by around a third, from just over 3,000 in 2007/08 to around 4,650 by 2013/14.

6.7.3 University of the Highlands and Islands

The idea of establishing a university for the Highlands and Islands has a very long history but the first concrete steps to achieving this objective were taken in 1990. From the outset it was accepted that the geography of the Highlands and Islands, which covers an area the size of Belgium, meant that a traditional campus university would not be the best model for the area. Instead the favoured model was of a collegiate university with several smaller partners and learning centres linked by computer technology.

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) project became a reality in 1993 with the support of the local development agency, Highlands and Islands Enterprise. In 1996 the UHI project secured a funding of £33.4 million from the Millennium Commission to progress the project to the next stage and in 1997 the Executive office of UHI was created in Inverness and the first Chief Executive was appointed.

In 1998 UHI entered into an academic partnership agreement with the Open University, which allowed the validation of UHI degree programmes through the OU Validation Services. Ten years later UHI was granted taught degree awarding powers and in 2011 it achieved university status. By this time it was estimated that more than £160 million had been spent on the project and expected that a further £100 million would need to be spent over the next decade,

Today UHI is a federation of 13 different colleges and research institutions and around 70 learning centres that deliver training and undertake research across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The University currently has around 40,000 students, of whom around 8,000 are studying higher education programmes.

Over the past decade the range of facilities and courses available at UHI has continued to develop. Of particular note has been the establishment of the new Centre for Health Sciences, which is co-located with Raigmore Hospital (the largest hospital in the Highlands and Islands) and brings together research, education, training, patient care and business development.

The success of UHI to date can be attributed, at least in part, to the institution's ability to develop a distinctive offering that reflects the unique characteristics and heritage of different parts of the region. UHI was for example the first university in the UK to offer a degree in golf management, a course which is based at a UHI site close to Royal Dornoch Golf Club, one of the top ranking golf courses in the world. UHI has also built on the status of Lochaber in the western highlands as the "outdoor capital of the UK" to develop a course in adventure tourism management and used the distinctive cultural heritage of the area to develop a strong reputation in areas such as archaeology and Gaelic language.

6.7.4 Combined Universities in Cornwall

According to figures published by the Office for National Statistics, gross value added per head is lower in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly than in all but two other regions of the UK. Like other peripheral parts of the UK, opportunities for young people are limited in Cornwall and retaining talented young people has become an important and on-going challenge for the region.

Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) was established in 2000 to help address this challenge by enabling young people to study closer to home and providing opportunities for mature students to undertake part-time or work-based university-level study. The initiative, which was established using £260 million funding from the European Commission and the UK Government, was intended to help transform the Cornish economy by generating direct economic activity and providing local businesses with a supply of skilled and creative recruits.

CUC is not a university and does not currently have any aspiration to become a university. As such it does not have its own students or buildings and does not have the power to award degrees. Rather it is a partnership made up of the University of Exeter, Plymouth University, Truro and Penwith College and Cornwall College. (A fifth partner, Falmouth University, pulled out of the initiative in 2016). CUC is managed by a steering group, which includes representation from each of the educational partners as well as Cornwall Council and HEFCE.

Over the past 16 years CUC has helped to secure more than £315 million investment¹⁶ in higher education in the region. The number of students studying at the CUC has increased from around 2,500 in 2000 to around 8,000 by 2011¹⁷. The initiative has also helped to reverse the trend of young people leaving the region for work and education and has also made an important contribution to the level of business innovation in the county.

6.7.5 Durham University Queen's Campus

Durham University's Queen's Campus is located in Stockton, around 25 miles to the south east of Durham just outside Middlesbrough. In 2014/15 the campus had around 300 staff and over 2,100 full time students, which represented around 12% of the University's total student population.

The Queen's Campus was established in response to the then Conservative government's regeneration agenda. The site was originally conceived as a way to help regenerate the economy of Stockton-on-Tees by attracting businesses to the local area and improving educational attainment among mature and other non-traditional student groups.

The original concept for Queen's Campus was to create a new university college, which was to be a joint venture between Teesside Polytechnic and Durham University. At that time it was expected that the new university college would need to attract a minimum of 1,500 students by the end of its first three years in order to be academically and financially viable. Land and buildings for the project were provided by the regional development corporation in partnership with Stockton Borough Council with the intention that it would provide an anchor for a new business park that was planned for an adjacent site.

¹⁶ West Briton (May 25th 2016), Why has Falmouth University pulled out of the Combined Universities Cornwall?

¹⁷ Online interview with Dr Sue Brownlow (May 19th 2011)

In 1993 the joint college was officially opened as University College Stockton. Later the same year Teesside Polytechnic was itself granted university status and by 1994 the new university had pulled out of the venture and Durham University had assumed full responsibility for and ownership of the college.

During the early years the Queen's Campus achieved some success in widening access to higher education in the region through the provision of foundation degrees. As competition from other providers increased during the early 21st century however it became increasingly difficult for Durham University, which has a higher than average tariff entry requirement, to compete in this arena. Today, although the University still maintains a Foundation Centre at the Queens Campus, widening access is no longer a significant focus of activity.

As the original focus of activity at the Queen's campus gradually eroded, the rationale for maintaining a separate campus became increasingly weak and activity gradually began to migrate back toward Durham. This created a number of important challenges for the University not least of which is the difficulty of delivering the same quality of student experience at the two very different campuses. In order to address this in May 2016 Durham University announced that it would be relocating most of the academic activity delivered at Queen's Campus to Durham.

6.7.6 Conclusions

The Universities at Medway and University Campus Suffolk/the University of Suffolk both started with around 3,000 students and the Combined Universities of Cornwall had around 2,500 students. To date all three institutions have performed well. In contrast, Durham University's Queen's Campus, which started out with the aspiration of recruiting a minimum of 1,500 students, has not proved to be financially viable over the long-term. Although student numbers are not the only factor at work here, this does provide some evidence to suggest that the minimum threshold for financial viability is likely to be somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000 students.

All of the initiatives described above have taken several years if not longer to come to fruition and have required a sustained commitment and substantial financial investment from multiple partners. Establishing some model of autonomous higher education provision in Hastings would therefore almost certainly require a similar level of commitment and investment.

While there is precedent for establishing an autonomous higher education institution specifically in order to widen participation in higher education within a given community, Durham University's experience suggests that this rationale may not be sufficient to ensure long-term financial viability. In order to maintain demand from students in the longer term it would therefore be important for any new institution to develop a distinctive offering linked to the economic needs of the local area.

7 HIGHER EDUCATION DEMAND

This chapter outlines the demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother.

7.1 Current Levels of Supply

In 2015/16 around 680 students were based at the University of Brighton's Hastings campus, amounting to around 3% of the University's total student population. There were a further 120 higher education students at SCCH. Together, this amounts to around 800 higher education students in Hastings.

The University of Brighton's original target for the Hastings campus was 2,000 students and more recently, 1,500 indicating that the supply of higher education is not constrained.

7.2 Context for Demand Analysis

In recognition of the importance of higher education, all advanced economies have sought to expand participation rates over the last two decades or more, and this is a pattern increasingly seen also in developing countries.

Based on data from UCAS, for the UK as a whole, the number of applicants increased by 60% and the number of acceptances by 75% between 1995 and 2015, with the number of acceptances now approaching half a million per year (Table 7-1).

Table 7-1 – UK Applications and Acceptances via UCAS¹⁸

Year	Applications	Acceptances
1995	369,701	265,536
2005	444,630	360,244
2015	592,025	463,715
Change %	Applications	Acceptances
1995-2005	20%	36%
2005-2015	33%	29%
1995-2015	60%	75%

Source: House of Commons Library (September 2016) SN/SG/2629 Applicants and entrants to Higher Education (from UCAS data)

Participation rates vary considerably across the UK and there are many reasons for these differences, including demographics and socio-economic conditions. However, to set the context for the demand analysis summarised below, it is interesting to consider what the acceptances via UCAS would have been had Hastings and Rother matched the UK national average.

The population of Hastings and Rother (184,400) represents 0.28% of the UK population. So a per capita share of 2015 acceptances via UCAS would be around **1,300**.

¹⁸ In addition to acceptances from UK students, there were a further 29,300 acceptances from applicants from elsewhere in the EU and 39,000 from non-EU countries.

Similarly, the UK has a total of almost 2.5 million students including full-time and part-time undergraduates and postgraduates in both higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education institutions (FEIs), as shown in Table 7-2. A per capita share of this for Hastings and Rother would be around 4,000 full-time undergraduates, 1,300 part-time undergraduates and 1,500 postgraduates, a total of **6,800 students**.

Table 7-2 – Total UK Student Numbers in HEIs and FEIs in UK, 2014-15

Year	Part-time	Full-time	Total
Undergraduates in HEIs	336,185	1,391,705	1,727,890
Undergraduates in FEIs	119,470	67,115	186,585
Postgraduates	235,290	305,940	541,230
Total	690,945	1,764,760	2,455,705

Source: HESA

However, these numbers should be treated with great caution since there are widely recognised differences in higher education participation across the UK and the supply of higher education is not evenly distributed across the country.

For example some cities and regions in the UK are large net importers of students and succeed in attracting large numbers of students from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. By definition this implies that other cities and regions in the UK (such as Hastings) must be net exporters of students. The cities and regions that are net importers are often well-established centres of higher education, with ancient globally-known universities and/or universities that may have received full university status in more recent times but are based on institutions with decades or hundreds of years of history.

The per capita estimates provided above are of a much higher order of magnitude than the demand levels that the University of Brighton and SCCH have experienced, reflecting:

- lower than average participation rates in Hastings and Rother (see below for further analysis); and
- a history where those from Hastings and Rother wishing to participate in higher education expected to commute or leave the area to do so.

While these numbers must therefore be treated with caution, when set against the levels of demand experienced by the University of Brighton, they help to illustrate both the scale of the challenge in attracting even local students to study in the area and the scale of the long-term market opportunity should models for higher education provision be developed that are attractive.

7.2.1 Comparisons

Comparisons can also be made with other coastal towns that have universities. The comparator 'university towns' considered here include Brighton and Eastbourne, Bournemouth and Poole, Plymouth, Portsmouth, St Andrews and Aberystwyth.

Table 7-3 provides key information about each of these university towns, including the size of the 18-year old population and the young participation rates in each area.

Table 7-3 – University Towns

University Town	15 Year Olds (2012)*	18-24 year olds*	YPR**
Brighton and Eastbourne	3,930	49,407	30%
Bournemouth and Poole	3,465	34,883	31%
Plymouth	2,932	33,739	25%
Portsmouth	2,221	31,768	24%
Ceredigion	748	12,450	39%
St Andrews (Fife)	4,235	33,512	39%

Source: *ONS (2016), *Population Estimates - Local authority based by single year of age, 2015 and 2012*. ** HEFCE, Available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/POLAR3,data/>

Table 7-4 summarises the number of students at each of the universities in these university towns.

Table 7-4 – Comparator Universities

University	Number of Students	% of International Students
University of Brighton	20,685	14%
University of Sussex	13,535	31%
Bournemouth University	18,225	1%
Plymouth University	25,895	10%
University of Portsmouth	21,625	18%
Aberystwyth University	9,835	14%
University of St Andrews	10,660	47%

Source: *Higher Education Statistics Agency, Headline Statistics 2014/15*

As Table 7-3 and Table 7-4 indicate all of these university towns have a net inflow of students. In each town the local year group is significantly smaller than the total population of the University.

For example, the local pool of potential students in Brighton and Eastbourne is only around 4,000 but the Universities (Brighton and Sussex) have a combined student body of 34,000 students.

The data also suggests that this is not solely due to international students being attracted. Only 1% of Bournemouth University's student body is from outwith the UK, yet its total student population is significantly greater than the local pool of students. Plymouth University is a further example of this.

As well as this, the data suggests that a low young participation rate is not a hindrance for the establishment and success of a university. For example, of all the comparator towns Portsmouth has the lowest young participation rate with only 24% of 18-19 year olds entering higher education. Despite this, the University of Portsmouth attracts 25,900 students and has a lower proportion of its student body from overseas, suggesting that it also attracts students from other parts of the UK.

7.3 Potential Demand for Higher Education in Hastings and Rother

One of the important factors that the review undertaken by the University of Brighton considered in assessing the likely viability of each of the options was the potential scale of demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother both now and in the future. The review highlighted two factors in particular as limiting the potential demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother:

- the area does not have a ready supply of new higher education students as the population of 16-17 year olds is forecast to decrease by 6.0% in Hastings over the five years to 2021 and by 11.1% in Rother; and
- the area has saturated the potential market for adult learning over the last 12 years.

The current supply of higher education in Hastings and Rother amounts to around 800 students (University of Brighton and SCCH higher education provision).

As discussed above, the UK has a total of almost 2.5 million higher education students and the population of Hastings and Rother represents 0.28% of the UK population. So a per capita share of the UK higher education student population would be around 4,000 full-time undergraduates, 1,300 part-time undergraduates and 1,500 postgraduates, a total of 6,800 students.

However, this does not take account local higher education participation rates. As discussed in Section 5.2.3, 21% of 18 and 19 year olds in Hastings proceed to higher education. In Rother, the young participation rate is higher, with 33% of students participating in higher education. Applying these participation rates to the number of 15-year olds indicates existing local annual demand for higher education of 600 students from each cohort of young people.

In addition, 28% of the working age population in Hastings and Rother are qualified to degree level compared with the national average of 37%, as discussed in Section 5.2.3. The gap between the proportion of the working age population qualified to degree level nationally and the proportion qualified to the same level in Hastings and Rother represents the latent demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother. Currently, 29,600 people (out of a working age population of 107,500) are educated to degree level in Hastings and Rother. If the proportion qualified to degree level was to rise from 28% to match the national average of 37%, 39,775 people would be educated to degree level. The difference, 10,175, represents the latent demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother.

So, if there were zero net flows, i.e. students are drawn from the local population only and no students left the area, then demand would be around 3,000 higher education undergraduate students. This estimate includes 1,800 school leavers (600/year X 3 years) and more than 1,000 adult learners to help meet the latent demand from those already in the workforce.

Demand for higher education in Hastings and Rother could be higher than this if the currently low participation rate could be increased or if students could be attracted from outwith Hastings and Rother.

7.4 Factors That Attract Students

The order of magnitude of the difference between the demand for higher education that might be expected from the Hastings and Rother area and that experienced by the University of Brighton (and SCCH), raises the issue of what factors attract students to choose a particular programme of study at a particular location and the implications of that for Hastings and Rother.

During the consultation programme undertaken in support of this study, the need for high quality halls of residence (particularly for first year undergraduates) and the need for social facilities such as a student union were regularly identified as issues that had influenced demand in the past and that would need to be addressed in future.

The factors that influence the choices that potential students make on courses, universities and locations is a well studied topic. Although there are variations on how studies have been undertaken and the issues that they have focused on the research generally finds that there are a range of academic and extra curricula activity factors that are important. Research of 2014 applicants to universities, undertaken by YouthSight for Which? University, identified the following top five factors:

- course content (important for 73% of applicants);
- overall academic reputation of the university (60%);
- graduate employment rates (58%);
- quality of the academic facilities (58%); and
- links between the university and employers (50%).

Other research undertaken for Which? University has focused on the student experience, with rankings for each institution (but no separate analysis for multi-campus institutions), including issues such as nightlife, the student union, the sports scene, the creative scene and the political scene.

A deeper understanding of the important factors requires qualitative research. For example, focus group research undertaken by Oxford Brookes¹⁹ in 2004 based on recent starts at universities ranked more than 20 factors (Table 7-5). This also finds that academic factors are the most important, although issues related to the location and student experience do also have a role.

¹⁹ Paul Catley (2004) "Which University? Which Course? Undergraduate Students' Reflections on the Factors that Influenced their Choices", Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching, volume 1 issue 1

Table 7-5 – Factors that Influence Choice of Course

	Factor	Ranking	% Very Important
1	The reputation of the course	4.58	66.1%
2	The position of the course in league tables	4.30	51.5%
3	The quality of teaching	4.29	50.2%
4	The reputation of the university	4.18	43.8%
5	The teaching methods	3.95	31.7%
6	The 'A' level or equivalent grades demanded	3.94	41.9%
7	The position of the university in league tables	3.87	30.7%
8=	University library & computer facilities	3.77	27.8%
8=	Attractiveness of the city/location	3.77	29.1%
10	Good transport links	3.64	32.2%
11	Flexibility of courses	3.51	22.8%
12	Proximity of the university to home	3.30	31.7%
13	The attractiveness of the university campus	3.26	15.2%
14	Nightlife	3.21	20.5%
15	Student support facilities	3.07	11.6%
16	Recommendations from friends & family	3.01	15.8%
17	Other university facilities	2.98	9.8%
18	Recommendations from school & careers service	2.96	12.9%
19	The Students' Union	2.93	12.3%
20	University clubs & societies	2.90	8.3%
21	University sports facilities	2.53	7.5%

Source: Catley (2004), based on focus groups

A 2012 study commissioned by The Higher Education Academy and the National Union of Students²⁰ included a review of the research into the important factors that influence student choice. It noted that while the issues discussed above are commonly identified, there are some groups of students where different factors are also important. For example, for students from disadvantaged areas academic reputation was very important but other factors such as location and distance from home were also important.

The implications of these findings for Hastings is that while halls of residence and student union facilities would increase the attractiveness of the town as a location for students, they would be insufficient to make a considerable difference to the level of demand. Rather that will be determined by the quality of the academic offering, including building a reputation for courses offered and the quality and nature of teaching.

²⁰ Abigail Diamond, Tim Vorley, Jennifer Roberts and Stephen Jones (December 2012), "Behavioural Approaches to Understanding Student Choice"

8 OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

8.1 Role of Higher Education in Hastings and Rother

The starting point for an assessment of the options for the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother should be a consideration of the role that a sustainable model could play in the area.

Higher education plays an important role in advanced economies and the proportion of young people participating in higher education has increased in the last two decades in all advanced economies. This is because in advanced economies, knowledge and innovation are fundamental to economic growth, since it is productivity growth that drives economic growth, and productivity growth is in turn driven by knowledge and its diffusion.

A sustainable higher education model has the potential to fulfil a number of roles in Hastings and Rother:

- higher education demand:
 - meet demand for higher education from the local population; and
 - help to raise aspirations and thereby increase local demand for higher education.
- skills demand:
 - meet the skills needs of employers in the area:
 - meet the skills needs of potential inward investors making Hastings and Rother a more attractive place to invest;
- wider economic development objectives:
 - acting as a driver of regeneration in Hastings and Rother; and
 - attracting new people to the area.

Together with feasibility considerations, these roles provide a basis for identifying the advantages and disadvantages of different options.

8.2 Options

Based on the consultations undertaken to inform this study and a review of the current situation in terms of the current and proposed future provision of higher education in Hastings and Rother, an initial options appraisal was undertaken that considered a range of possible models.

These options included:

- No HE provision: which could arise if the University of Brighton Hastings campus was to close as planned, no University Centre agreement was reached and SCCH found that it was not feasible to deliver higher education without support from a partner;
- College only HE provision: this would imply that SCCH was able to continue offering higher education provision as it does currently, but without the extent of partnership that would be involved in a University Centre;

- University Centre (SCCH & UoB): the model on which the University of Brighton is currently consulting, where the University would validate higher education provided by SCCH at a designated University Centre in Hastings, opening in September 2017, with 300-400 students initially and then growing over time;
- University Centre (College & multiple HE partners): a variation on the proposed University Centre model would be an arrangement that would allow SCCH to partner with other higher education providers to validate provision (for example, in areas that the University of Brighton might not wish to develop);
- University branch campus: a branch campus model has been operated in Hastings by the University of Brighton since 2009, but given recent decisions, this would require a new university to be identified that was interested in developing a campus in the area;
- University campus with innovative/ blended learning model: an alternative to the 'traditional' branch campus would be a model where a university made use of innovative blended learning models, with links to delivery of lectures at other campuses combined with high quality local provision and learning support. This could facilitate the delivery of a broad curriculum but at a lower cost than a branch campus, learning lessons from Medway and elsewhere;
- Campus with multiple HE partners: a variation on the branch campus or the campus with an innovative blended learning model would be a campus that involved more than one university, as was the position in Hastings when the original University Centre Hastings opened in 2003 and the model used elsewhere (such as at Medway);
- Campus for new entrant HE provider: the new higher education Bill aims to increase choice and competition in the sector in a number of ways, including by attracting new entrants. This option would require the attraction of one or more new entrants to invest in Hastings and Rother;
- University of Hastings: a new institution with full university status could be developed, either evolving from a branch campus involving more than one partner (as happened at the University of Suffolk) or based on investment from a new entrant provider. While the new Bill aims to make this process simpler than in the past, it would most likely take a decade or more to deliver this, even if willing partners and investors were identified and so would be a long-term project.

The inclusion of these options does not necessarily imply that they would be feasible in Hastings and Rother; rather they are intended to assist in understanding the potential advantages and disadvantage of a range of models that operate elsewhere in order to focus on those that might be most appropriate to the local circumstances.

8.3 Qualitative Options Appraisal

A qualitative appraisal of the options was undertaken to provide an assessment of the potential impact and benefits of each option. This is a qualitative options appraisal and the process that provides a 'preferred option' at the end is subject to judgement. It is the process that is important because it allows us to present a

structured rationale for considering the different options and whether they will deliver on the objectives of the institutions involved.

A set of qualitative criteria with which to judge each option was derived from the study objectives, desk research and from the consultations undertaken. A ‘weighting and scoring’ approach was then used to assess the extent to which each option met the criteria. This involved weighting each criterion to reflect its relative importance and scoring each option against the set of criteria.

8.3.1 Appraisal Criteria

The criteria used for undertaking the appraisal are explained in the table below. They have been weighted to balance fit with strategic objectives and feasibility issues.

Table 8-1 – Appraisal Criteria Weighting

Criteria	Description	Weight
Strategic Objectives Criteria		
Meets higher education demand	Will the option meet demand for higher education from the local population? Will the option contribute to raising aspirations and thereby increasing local demand for higher education?	20
Meets skills demands	Will the option meet the skills needs of employers in the area? Will the option meet the skills needs of potential inward investors making Hastings and Rother a more attractive place to invest?	15
Wider economic development objectives	Will the option and the associated investment required act as a driver of regeneration in Hastings and Rother? Will the option contribute to attracting new people to the area?	15
Feasibility Criteria		
Level of interest from partners	Has there been interest from the partners that would be required to implement such an option? Does the contextual and market research suggest that such partners may emerge if the option is pursued?	25
Timescales, risks & apparent feasibility	Based on the demand assessment and history of higher education provision in the area, or experience of the model elsewhere, might the option be feasible? Would it be possible to deliver the option within a timeline that would secure continued provision in the area? Is there a risk that the option would not proceed?	25
Total		100

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis

8.3.2 Scoring

Every option was scored against each criterion on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = ‘fails to meet criterion’ and 10 = ‘meets criterion entirely’.

Table 8-2 shows the score for each option against each criterion and Table 8-3 provides the weighted scores for each criterion.

Table 8-2 – Unweighted Option Scores

Options	Criteria (Unweighted Scores)					
	Strategic Objectives Criteria			Feasibility Criteria		
	HE Demand	Skills Demand	Wider Ec Dev	Interest	Feasible	Total
No HE provision	0	0	0	0	10	10
College only HE	2	2	2	9	8	23
University Centre (SCCH+UoB)	5	7	3	9	8	32
University Centre (SCCH+multiple HE)	6	8	3	8	7	32
University branch campus	8	6	9	1	2	26
University blended learning model	8	7	9	7	8	39
Campus with multiple HE partners	8	7	9	2	2	28
Campus for new entrant HE provider	8	5	6	2	3	24
University of Hastings	8	7	9	1	1	26

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis

Applying the weighting given to each criterion (Table 8-1) to the scores in the table above, shows that the preferred option that emerges (based on criteria that encompass strategic objectives for higher education in Hastings and Rother and potential feasibility) is a university blended learning model, followed by the University Centre options. These findings are discussed further below.

Table 8-3 – Weighted Option Scores

Options	Criteria (Unweighted Scores)					
	Strategic Objectives Criteria			Feasibility Criteria		
	HE Demand	Skills Demand	Wider Ec Dev	Interest	Feasible	Total
No HE provision	0	0	0	0	250	250
College only HE	40	30	30	225	200	525
University Centre (SCCH+UoB)	100	105	45	225	200	675
University Centre (SCCH+multiple HE)	120	120	45	200	175	660
University branch campus	160	90	135	25	50	460
University blended learning model	160	105	135	175	200	775
Campus with multiple HE partners	160	105	135	50	50	500
Campus for new entrant HE provider	160	75	90	50	75	450
University of Hastings	160	105	135	25	25	450

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis

8.3.3 No HE Provision (Rank 9 of 9)

The situation where there is no higher education provision in Hastings and Rother was the least preferred option, meeting none of the strategic objectives. However, this outcome is certainly feasible since it is the default position that would arise if no action were taken to secure a sustainable higher education model for the area.

8.3.4 College only HE (Rank 5 of 9)

The option where the only provision would be provided by SCCH without a partnership with a university had a weighted ranking in the middle of the options assessed. This is because, while it would only meet strategic objectives to a limited extent, this would be amongst the easiest of the options to deliver.

8.3.5 University Centre, SCCH+UoB (Rank 2 of 9)

The University Centre option proposed by the University of Brighton and SCCH ranked second in the weighted options assessment. This option scored very highly in terms of feasibility, since discussions are already on-going between the University and SCCH and so it is the most advanced of options that would secure a sustainable model for higher education in the area.

In terms of meeting the strategic objectives for higher education in the area, it was given a lower score than the University related options both because of the relatively low scale of provision proposed compared with demand and in recognition of the importance of established reputation in influencing student choices of courses and locations.

8.3.6 University Centre, SCCH and Multiple HE (Rank 3 of 9)

The University Centre option involving other university partners as well the University of Brighton was ranked slightly higher than an exclusive partnership in terms of delivering strategic objectives since it could allow for a broader range of provision but slightly lower for feasibility, since it would add to the complexity of the partnership arrangement that would need to be negotiated.

8.3.7 University Branch Campus (Rank 6 of 9)

The University branch campus option could, in theory, do much to meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area and so scored highly for these criteria. However, the scores for the feasibility related criteria of this option were low. This was because the University of Brighton has indicated that it will not continue with a branch campus model and it seems likely that any other university that wished to operate on a similar basis would encounter the same problems that the University of Brighton did, with lower levels of demand than required to make such a model financially feasible.

8.3.8 University Blended Learning Model (Rank 1 of 9)

The option of a university campus using an innovative blended learning model was scored as the preferred option because of its potential to meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area. From a feasibility perspective, there is uncertainty about this option since detailed feasibility work would be required to develop a model that learns lessons both from the University of Brighton's experience in Hastings and from other models, including the Medway campus.

8.3.9 Campus with Multiple HE Partners (Rank 4 of 9)

An innovative blended learning campus could also involve more than one university, as is the case at Medway. This option was also scored highly because of its potential to meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area. However, it was scored lower for feasibility since no other potential partners have yet been identified (although others may emerge during any feasibility study of the preferred option).

8.3.10 Campus for New Entrant HE Provider (Rank 7= of 9)

The new entrant option was scored below those with established universities in terms of strategic objectives, since a new entrant provider would most likely focus on a narrower range of courses. The feasibility was also scored low since the response to the provisions of the new higher education Bill were uncertain at the time of writing (since they will not come into force until 2018) and it is possible that new entrants will initially favour larger towns and locations with larger catchment populations.

8.3.11 University of Hastings (Rank 7= of 9)

A new institution with full university status could also meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area and so scored highly for those criteria. However, such an option is unlikely to be feasible unless educational partners and investors

can be identified and, even if they were, it would take some years to realise this option.

8.4 Shortlisted Options

8.4.1 No Provision of Higher Education

While the option of no provision of higher education is the least favoured option and would fail to meet local aspirations, it is not difficult to see a scenario where there could be no or very limited higher education provision in the area. All that would need to happen for that to occur would be for the University of Brighton and SCCH to agree a model that works for both parties and for SCCH then to be unsuccessful in identifying other validation partners. Given that this is the potential default outcome if no agreement is reached on the University Centre, it should therefore be included in the shortlist of potential future options.

8.4.2 University Centre

The University of Brighton intends to continue to work with SCCH validating higher education provision via a designated University Centre in Hastings. The new University Centre would open in September 2017 and aim for an initial cohort of up to 300-400 students with this growing over time.

The University Centre will initially offer a range of higher education courses drawn from existing provision from the Hastings Campus SCCH. This will then be developed into a growing range of part-time and full-time part-time and full-time higher education courses including degrees and higher apprenticeships, linked to local employment needs and skills gaps. Higher education courses taught at the University Centre will be validated by the University of Brighton in order to ensure the quality of teaching and student experience.

Whether this option could also allow for SCCH to deliver higher education validated by other universities or quality assurance providers is uncertain at the time of writing. While it would be understandable for the University of Brighton to seek to avoid any competing providers free-riding on its investment in the University Centre partnership, a potential alternative to an exclusive arrangement would be to allow SCCH to reach agreement with other partners in courses that the University of Brighton did not wish to validate.

8.4.3 New Campus for Established University

In recent years the introduction of blended learning programmes in which students learn, at least in part, via digital and online media and have some control over the time, place, path or pace of their studies, has been an important development in the delivery of higher education in the UK and elsewhere. There are numerous examples of universities in the UK that have implemented innovative blended learning to some extent including the Universities at Medway discussed in Section 6.7.1. This experience could provide the basis for a potential model of delivery in Hastings.

In principle this model would require one or more higher education partners committing to deliver at least some of their academic programmes at the Hastings campus. The academic content of the programmes available at Hastings would be the same as those delivered at the partner's main campus. This could be achieved through the use of live broadcast technology and by making recorded content available on-line. It is understood that the Hastings campus is already

well equipped with modern IT equipment that would be well suited to this mode of delivery.

While the details of any future partnership would need to be determined through a formal feasibility assessment, in principle the model might involve the university partner delivering a sub-set of courses from each of its existing campuses at Hastings. This could be achieved using a variety of blended learning tools including live streaming of lectures and on-line recordings, which would be supported by seminars delivered by staff who would be permanently based at Hastings. In theory the effective use of blended learning tools could enable the University to provide students with more contact hours than it might be able to deliver at the main campus using more traditional delivery methods.

Such a model might also allow for transfers between locations, for example with students undertaking the first two years of their programme at Hastings before transferring to the main campus to complete their studies. This type of approach could have significant financial benefits for local students by enabling them to continue living at home for the first two years of their studies.

The number of students that might be required in order to make this type of model financially sustainable would be something that would need to be considered as part of any future feasibility work. Initial indications at this stage are that a reasonable working estimate could be something of the order of 2,000 students in the short term, increasing to around 6,000 in the longer term.

Developing this type of model at Hastings would almost certainly require substantial financial investment. As discussed above, it has been estimated that total investment in the Universities at Medway campus to date amounts to around £120 million. Based on the experience at Medway it is also likely that it may take a number of years before such a model could become financially sustainable. This implies that there would almost certainly be a requirement for the initiative to be underwritten by the Government and/or other public agencies for a period of time.

If a decision were to be taken to develop this option further then it would be necessary to develop a strong proposition that could be used to secure the support of both of potential funders (such as HEFCE, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Government) and of potential partners. The development of this option would also require a full feasibility study. Should a decision be taken to pursue this option then it may therefore be helpful to appoint a working group as soon as possible to take forward these tasks.

8.5 Potential Economic Benefits

A sustainable higher education model for Hastings and Rother will be one that is financially sustainable, that is, where the income to the higher education provider from tuition fees and other sources is sufficient to meet the costs and provide a return to any initial investment required.

However, there are potentially wider benefits that would be associated with higher education provision in the area. A study from 2014²¹ estimated that in 2012/13 the expenditure of the University of Brighton and its students generated over £27 million of output in Hastings and supported 280 full-time-equivalent (fte) jobs, including 88 fte University jobs (106 people) based at the Hastings Campus. At the time it was estimated that this represented around 1% of all jobs in Hastings.

²¹ Viewforth Consulting Ltd (July 2014), *The economic impact of the University of Brighton*

BiGGAR Economics' previous experience suggests that the typical regional (in this context, East Sussex) economic impact that might be associated with higher education provision could range from £17,000 per student per year for college based provision and at least £30,000 per student per year for university based provision. The actual impacts would depend on the details of the proposed models and their success but these figures provide some insight into the potential scale of economic impacts.

The impacts associated with college based provision would include those associated with the provider itself and with student-related impacts such as spending in the local economy and contributing to the local labour market through working part-time. For the university based provision the impacts would include these sources but also a wider range of impacts including those arising through knowledge exchange, innovation and productivity gains associated with graduates.

On this basis the annual regional economic impacts associated with a college based model that had 400 students could be around £7 million, and this could rise to £17 million with 1,000 students (Table 8-4). Similarly the annual regional economic impacts associated with a university based model that had 2,000 students could be around £60 million, and this could rise to as much as £180 million with 6,000 students. So, while the costs and risks associated with a university based model may be greater than the University Centre proposals, the expected economic impacts should also be greater.

Table 8-4 – Potential Scale of Economic Impact

College Based Provision	Initially	After Growth
Student Numbers	400	1,000
Potential Regional Impact per Student (£)	£17,000	£17,000
Potential Regional Annual Economic Impact (£m)	£7m	£17m
University Based Provision	Medium term	When mature
Student Numbers	2,000	6,000
Potential Regional Impact per Student (£)	£30,000	£30,000
Potential Regional Annual Economic Impact (£m)	£60m	£180m

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis

8.6 Conclusions

If some consensus cannot be reached on a strategy for higher education provision in Hastings and Rother, it is not difficult to see a scenario where there could be very limited or no higher education provision in the area.

Such a situation would be completely at odds with regional and local economic development strategies and would undermine and constrain the development of the local economy.

It is reasonable to take the view that the proposed University Centre Hastings model does not meet the scale of the strategic ambitions, at least given the initial proposed scope. However, it could do much to meet the immediate higher education demand and the partnership approach could deliver both quality higher education and retain a “university” brand (of sorts) in the area.

The preferred option emerging from the qualitative options appraisal was an innovative blended learning campus with another university partner. If feasible, this option would meet the strategic objectives for higher education in the area by meeting and raising the demand for higher education, meeting the skills needs of local employers and helping to attract others and supporting wider regeneration efforts. However, further feasibility assessment will be required before a view can be taken on how realistic a proposition this might be.

These two options might be seen as competing models. However, that is not necessarily the case, since they could target different markets with different higher education propositions.

There is also the issue of timing. It should be possible to reach agreement on a University Centre model within a few weeks and plan for it to be operational in time for the autumn 2017 student intake. On the other hand a campus for a new university partner would take longer to deliver.

There is therefore some merit in the Hastings and Rother Task Force supporting both of these options. This would ensure provision of higher education in the short term and, in the medium term, could deliver much more extensive provision that would very much meet strategic aspirations.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

9.1 Imperative to Focus on Future

The higher education sector is operating in a rapidly changing environment, with an increasingly important role in economic development, an increasingly competitive market and changing policy environment (including the higher education Bill currently being considered in Parliament). Universities across the country are considering their future strategies to determine how they can best survive and thrive in the future.

Against this background the University of Brighton has reached the conclusion that its campus in Hastings is unsustainable in its current form and instead is planning on working with SCCH to create a University Centre in Hastings. The University is undertaking a consultation process on how the University Centre should operate and so the details of the model will not be clear until that is complete.

The potential for a new model that would involve a new university partner is also uncertain at present. While this is a model that could meet the strategic objectives for higher education in Hastings and Rother, this idea is at a very early stage of development and will require further work to test its feasibility and the associated costs and benefits.

As a result of this uncertainty it is not possible to reach definite conclusions on the most appropriate sustainable higher education model for Hastings and Rother. It will be another six months or a year until there is greater clarity on the options that might be feasible. However, it is possible to identify the next steps required to increase the chances that a sustainable model can be in place in the future.

During the consultation programme undertaken for this study, it was clear that the focus of discussion on the future of higher education in Hastings and Rother was on the decision made by the University of Brighton and opinions on actions that could have been taken that might have led to a different outcome. While lessons for the future must be learned, it is now imperative that the focus of attention shifts to the actions required to secure future higher education provision.

9.2 Support University Centre Proposals

Until recently the University of Brighton's Hastings Campus has had a target of 1,500 students and a student population of around 680, meaning that Hastings could be considered to be a university town. The University Centre proposals, with 300-400 students initially represents a scaling back of higher education provision and means that there is no well established "university brand" in the area.

However, the University Centre Hastings proposals also have a number of merits. These include:

- a developed model that can be implemented as early as 2017, and so avoid the situation where there would be no higher education in Hastings and Rother (2016 will be the last intake to the University of Brighton's Hastings Campus);
- the opportunity for a local provider, SCCH, to work closely with local employers to design higher education provision to meet their needs;

- the opportunity to target provision towards local demand, including students that want to participate in higher education without incurring the debt that is usually associated with full-time study away from home (including using new types of provision and funding, such as higher level apprenticeships); and
- the potential to establish a new “university brand” in Hastings and Rother.

Recommendation 1: Hastings and Rother Task Force should engage with SCCH and the University of Brighton to assist them to reach an agreement that is consistent with the aspirations of the area.

The issues that will need to be considered as part of that agreement include the scale of provision that is envisaged over time, how the University Centre Hastings brand might be developed and an agreement that would give SCCH access to appropriate infrastructure required to deliver high quality higher education at a reasonable cost, including University of Brighton Hastings Campus facilities that will be surplus to University requirements.

The nature of the validation agreement between the University and SCCH will also need to be determined. While it would be reasonable to expect the University of Brighton to seek an exclusive validation partnership agreement, there would be merit in a model that allowed SCCH to seek other validation partners for any provision that the University of Brighton did not wish to prioritise.

Recommendation 2: Hastings and Rother Task Force should work with SCCH and the University of Brighton to identify ways in which the Task Force can support the viability of a future University Centre.

9.3 Further Investigation of Feasibility of Campus in Hastings for New University Partner

The development of a new campus in Hastings by a new university partner would be expected to target a different market to the proposed University Centre Hastings, in particular those that would otherwise leave the area to undertake higher education as well as developing an offer attractive to outsiders, including international students.

However, all higher education providers in Hastings and Rother should be encouraged to collaborate in terms of programmes available, target markets and the provision and use of supporting infrastructure to build an attractive higher education offer in the area.

Recommendation 3: Hastings and Rother Task Force should support the University Centre proposals and the potential for a new university partner to establish a presence in Hastings and Rother.

Further feasibility work will be required to determine whether a financially sustainable model can be developed. Experience from elsewhere suggests that it is good practice for universities investing in significant capital projects to work closely with economic development and other local stakeholders.

Recommendation 4: Hastings and Rother Task Force should make contact with potential university partners to offer assistance in assessing the feasibility of establishing a presence in Hastings and Rother.

The further feasibility work that will be required will provide:

- an evidence base on which a new university partner can make its own decisions;
- information to inform economic development and other local stakeholders about the scale and benefits of proposals; and
- the basis of an investment case for potential funders.

It will be a matter for the university partner to determine what is required to further assess the feasibility of establishing a presence in Hastings and Rother. However, based on the experience from elsewhere, there is likely to be a need for at least three phases of work, including:

- an outline feasibility study so that potential university partners can make a decision on whether to proceed with more detailed work. This would consider the model to be adopted, including teaching methods, the scale of ambition and some initial financial analysis;
- an economic appraisal that would set out the case for investment (including any public sector investment), in terms of market failure (i.e. setting out why investment is required in the higher education market in the area and the net additional effects on the market locally and nationally); and
- more detailed business planning, including identifying sources of funding (which may include both capital funding requirements and on-going sources of potential revenue income including from the University itself, student tuition fee income and other sources, such as NCOP), more detail on the delivery model, the required physical infrastructure etc.

A period of around a year might be required to undertake this work. So the earliest that any new university presence in Hastings could be achieved would be 2018, and more likely 2019. The last undergraduate intake to the University of Brighton's Hastings Campus will be the 2016 intake and so most of those students will be completing three year undergraduate programmes in 2019; this timescale would therefore be consistent with maintaining a university presence in Hastings and Rother, with no gap.

9.4 Monitor Rapidly Changing Higher Education Market for Additional Opportunities

While this assessment recommends pursuing two options, the University Centre Hastings and the potential new campus with a new university partner, the higher education market and policy environment is changing rapidly and it is possible that new opportunities may emerge. There is therefore merit in continuing to monitor the higher education market, in particular after the current higher education Bill passes, to be alert to new opportunities that might emerge, as a result of expanding higher education providers who may require new locations and from new entrants.

Recommendation 5: Hastings and Rother Task Force should maintain a watching brief on developments in the higher education market, to identify any opportunities that might arise from new entrants to the market or from existing universities seeking to expand.

9.5 Existing Higher Education Facilities

Hastings has already received significant investment in physical facilities for higher education, principally the buildings occupied by the University of Brighton. These buildings have been designed and fitted out for higher education provision and the options for their continued use for other purposes may not be promising. Re-fitting and alternative use opportunities could be limited in the commercial property market in Hastings. Empty buildings in such a prominent location in the town centre could compromise wider regeneration efforts. Their continued use for higher education purposes may therefore be desirable – either for the University Centre or as part of a campus for another University.

However, the arrangements for transferring ownership and/or occupation of these buildings must not compromise the future options for higher education by establishing a high cost base. The Hastings and Rother Task Force may be able to assist parties in coming to arrangements that are acceptable to all parties and do not lead to wider economic disbenefits for Hastings.

There may also be merit in commissioning a property expert to consider whether there are potential alternative uses for these buildings and to comment on potential capital values (taking account of costs associated with any potential alternative uses) and market rents.

Recommendation 6: Hastings and Rother Task Force should seek early discussions with the University of Brighton to determine its intentions for the future use of the higher education facilities that have been publicly funded over the last decade. A commitment to make these available for continued higher education provision should be sought.

9.6 Investment in Higher Education Facilities

Whether additional higher education facilities may be required, will depend on the outcome of additional feasibility work and on what it concludes in terms of the physical infrastructure required. The most likely requirements will be for halls of residence and a student union. Additional academic buildings may also be required, depending on the nature and scale of the new university partner's ambition.

The planning for such facilities should be led by the higher education partners to ensure that any development is fit for purpose and delivered at a cost consistent with long term financial sustainability.

However, there is merit in starting the planning process so that any required facilities can be delivered rapidly after decisions have been made. There may also be merit in examining any opportunities for facilities that could have a shared use. For example, some universities have developed sporting facilities that are designed for both student and community use.

Recommendation 7: Hastings and Rother Task Force should identify potential buildings and/or sites that would be suitable for the development of halls of residence, a student union and potentially also academic buildings so that the delivery of such facilities can be fast tracked should the need be confirmed.

Should public sector investment be required to support the delivery of a sustainable higher education model for Hastings and Rother, the policy changes

that are in the process of being implemented will mean that the nature of the case that will need to be made will be different from that made for investment in the past.

In particular, higher education policy in the future will have a much greater emphasis on competition. It is proposed that the Office for Students, which will replace the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will have a specific remit to promote choice and competition in the sector. This means that future cases for funding will most likely need to be based on market failure grounds. There will therefore be a need to demonstrate market effects and how the proposed investment will improve market outcomes. In the case of Hastings and Rother, the strongest market failure case could be based on the externalities associated with securing a sustainable model for higher education, including improving the supply of appropriate skills in the local labour market and delivering social benefits by lowering the barriers to participation in higher education.

Recommendation 8: Hastings and Rother Task Force should work with higher education partners to ensure that any case made for public sector support should be framed in market failure terms, encompassing both the effects of proposed investments on the local and national higher education market and the local economic development needs and benefits.

9.7 Higher Education Proposition for Hastings

If potential students were to search the internet to find out about university opportunities in Hastings, the search results would include several stories reporting that there is to be no university in the town in the future, following the closure of the University of Brighton's Hastings Campus.

There is an immediate need to address such perceptions, or else recruitment efforts for any new model will be undermined. This could be used as an opportunity to develop a new higher education proposition for Hastings and Rother that can be used for marketing purposes. This could include both generic messages about Hastings and Rother as a location for students and more specific information on the higher education offer(s). This should take account of the issues that potential students consider when choosing universities and courses (see chapter 7) and the advantages that Hastings and Rother has.

The advantages of Hastings and Rother as a higher education location include being well known as a result of the Battle of Hastings, the low cost of living compared with many other university towns, the scale of the town providing the potential to have the feel of a university town if student numbers increase and the proximity to London and international transport hubs.

Recommendation 9: Hastings and Rother Task Force should work with the education providers in the area and other relevant agencies to develop a proposition for higher education in Hastings and Rother that can be used in higher education marketing and in broader economic development and promotional activities.

9.8 Higher Education and Economic Development

While higher education can be a catalyst for economic development, the relationship also works in the opposite direction; wider economic development initiatives can contribute to improving the higher education proposition and so achieving a sustainable higher education model. For example, the proposed

improvements to the rail link to London would make Hastings more accessible and attractive to potential students.

Recommendation 10: Hastings and Rother Task Force should support wider economic development initiatives that are supportive of higher education aspirations. These would include infrastructure improvements such as an improved rail service to London.

Agenda Item 6



Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 28 September 2017

Report Title: Performance and Financial Monitoring for Quarter 1 2017/18

Report By: Jane Hartnell, Director of Corporate Services and Governance
and Simon Hubbard, Director of Operational Services

Purpose of Report

To provide members with an update on performance against the targets set out in the corporate plan for 2017/18, and other key activities, during quarter 1 (1 April to 30 June). The report also provides a summary of financial information.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the committees comments on quarter 1 performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back**
- 2. That staff be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter**

Reasons for Recommendations

To assist the council undertake performance management arrangements.

Background

1. The council's corporate plan has been divided into 5 areas, which reflect key priorities for the year ahead. The 5 areas are cleaner and safer, driving economic growth, support when it's needed, providing great services and income generation.
2. The corporate plan lists key activities which will be undertaken throughout the year to meet these objectives. Overview and scrutiny committee will need to monitor how we're doing against these targets throughout the year. The committee will also need to be aware of other activities and projects which, although they may not be listed in the corporate plan, are still significant to the town and organisation.
3. At their annual meeting on 19 July 2017, overview and scrutiny members agreed to continue piloting new ways of reporting performance monitoring information.

Summary of council wide financial information

4. The Council wide financial position as summarised below for the Quarter 1 to June 2017

Table 1: Overall Revenue position

Directorate	2017/18 Net Budget	2017/18 Forecast Outturn	Variance	Trf to / (Use) of Reserves	2017/18 Estimated Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Operational Services	9,708	9,744	36	118	(82)
Corporate Resources	4,787	4,789	2	134	(132)
Total for Hastings Borough Council	14,495	14,543	38	252	(214)

5. Corporate Services are forecasting a favourable variance (£132,000) to budget which is mainly due additional income in factory units (£49,000) and Properties & Estates (£76,000) where occupancy is higher than budgeted and the cost of rates relating to void units is lower than expected. Accountancy and Exchequer Services are forecasting a saving of (£29,000) due to unfilled vacancies. The use of reserves is expected to be £134,000.
6. Operational Services are forecasting a positive variance of (£82,000). There are numerous variances throughout the Directorate but the most notable of which are Off Street car parking forecasting a positive variance of (£75,000). Homelessness are forecasting an adverse variance £93,000, Selective Licensing is forecasting a

positive variance of (£60,000) and Social Lettings is forecasting a positive variance of (£53,000). The use of reserves is expected to be £118,000.

7. Capital Programme – as Table 2 shows that the gross expenditure to 31 June 2017 was £0.567m with a forecasted outturn of £7.014m against a budget of £7,084m which includes £1.289m of carry forwards.

8. Table 2 Capital Programme

Directorate	Original Budget 2017/18	Carry-forwards	Budget incl Carry forwards	Spend to date including commitments 2017/18	Forecast	Forecast Variance to Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Resources	500	745	1,245	320	1,280	35
Operational services	5,295	543	5,839	247	5,734	(104)
	5,795	1,289	7,084	567	7,014	(69)

9. Within the Corporate Directorate there are no particularly large variances to the budget but the new factory unit has over spent the budget by £40,000 in 2017/18 due to retention and the modifications required during building

10. Within the Operational Services Directorate again there are no particularly large variances at this time but Private Sector Renewal Loans and Empty Homes Strategy, both demand lend programmes are showing an underspend of (£45,000) and (£48,000) respectively.

What are we doing?

11. This is how we're doing against the key activities set out in this year's corporate plan:

Cleaner and safer	RAG
Improving the cleanliness of the town, working closely with our waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contractors	
Supporting community safety and working with the Safer Hastings and Rother Community Safety Partnership	
Delivering fair and proportionate enforcement services in relation to off street parking, enviro-crime and environmental health	

Driving economic growth	RAG
Working with regional and county partnerships to attract investment to the area including improved rail links and support to business	
Building on the opening of The Source, Hastings Pier and our widely	

recognised cultural programme we will promote Hastings as an exciting place to live, visit, work and invest	
Continue to support higher education provision in the town and the development of provision to succeed the University of Brighton	
Taking forward the development of a town centre and White Rock action plan to lay the basis and spread the benefits of regeneration along and adjacent to the seafront	
Subject to funding will deliver schemes to help some of the most excluded communities in the borough into economic activity and training	
Seek to enhance sports and leisure activity through new contracts for our facilities and encouraging others to invest in new provision	
Maximise the level of occupancy of the council's business premises and support the provision of new employment space by Sea Change or ourselves as appropriate	
Work with the town centre management committee and its successor Love Hastings to deliver an enhanced and mores sustainable town centre	

Support when its needed	RAG
Supporting local people during the transition to Universal Credit and other welfare changes	
Look to support as far as possible those affected by welfare changes	
Maintaining and further developing our approach to improving standards in housing through licensing and proactive enforcement activity	
Releasing land for residential development that caters for a range of housing needs (Year-end reporting only)	
Continuing our innovative approach to housing regeneration through the Coastal Space Programme, grot busting and empty homes programmes	
Extending our housing offer through the new housing company	
Working with developers and housing associations to improve the supply of new affordable homes	

Providing great services	RAG
Reviewing all our services and activities and considering the best ways of delivering these in the future	
Finishing our transformation programme to make sure our processes and systems are as efficient as possible and our services are designed to be delivered online	
Striving to continuously improve our performance and customer care	
Working with partnerships to get the best for local people	

Income generation	RAG
We will develop the financial, staffing and other policies that will enable us to put a more commercial approach at the centre of everything we do. At the heart of this will be a new Income Generation Strategy that will influence our planning and thinking for the future.	

We will bring forward proposals for:

- Housing investment – having set up a housing company
- Generating energy low carbon initiatives and involvement in the energy market
- Expanding seafront assets, like beach huts and glamping
- Purchasing commercial property where this is profitable and economically beneficial
- Using our parks and open spaces for new events that generate income and add to our cultural and community life
- Collecting our council tax and business rates efficiently
- Reviewing fees and charges

Wards Affected

Insert the list of wards affected

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

Risk Management

Environmental Issues

Economic/Financial Implications

Human Rights Act

Organisational Consequences

Local People's Views

Anti-Poverty

Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

Officer to Contact

Officer Name Mark Horan/Michael Courts

Officer Email Address mhoran@hastings.gov.uk or mcourts@hastings.gov.uk

Officer Telephone Number 01424 451485 or 01424 451764

Cleaner and safer

What's happened in Quarter 1?

- Green Flag retained for Alexandra Park, St Leonards Gardens and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve
- Numbers of missed bin collected significantly reduced
- Hastings Country Park Visitor Centre out to tender
- [New Environmental Enforcement Policy adopted](#)
- Planned environmental monitoring visits continue
- [Public Space Protection Orders introduced on 17 June 2017](#)
- [Hastings Street Community Partnership formed in March 2017](#)

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There has been a significant reduction in the number of missed bin collections over the past quarter. The waste team have been working closely with our contractor to tackle this issue. A monitoring list has been introduced to minimise the number of repeated missed collections. Additional resources have also been deployed by the contractor to address missed collections for brown bins, a new route is being developed which should make this service more efficient.

The waste team have also been working with social housing providers to address fly tipping and waste issues which have been reported in a number of estates around the town. This work may include an awareness campaign amongst residents as well as utilising the warden service.

The year-end figures which were reported to the committee in June showed an increase in litter and detritus. Since then, the contractor has drawn up an action plan to tackle this issue, which includes employing seasonal staff earlier in the year. St Leonards town centre also now has a designated barrow operative. However, due to the timing of audits, the impact of these changes may not become apparent for some time.

The first weed spray was delayed this year, although the contractor is now continuing their work to clear the weeds. A second spray is due to take place in early September.

Hastings Country Park Visitor Centre is currently out to tender, with a deadline of 21 July 2017. It is expected that the contract will be awarded in August 2017. The committee have previously considered options to keep the public informed of progress with this project. There are three main channels for communication which the council uses to keep people up to date; Fairlight Parish Council (which has connections to those living close to the site), The Friends of Hastings Country Park Newsletter and the volunteers at the existing visitor centre. Once the project proceeds to the construction phase there will be a further communication activities and awareness raising.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were introduced in the borough on 17 June 2017. The PSPOs provide scope for both enforcement and support activities. The council hosted an event

for a range of partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors in March, which led to the formation of the Hastings Street Community Partnership. The purpose of the partnership is to improve the co-ordination of support to the street community. The local police force has been heavily involved in the enforcement of the new PSPO's. The council's Warden Service is to apply for Community Safety Accreditation from Sussex Police in order that Wardens can be authorised to use additional powers required to enforce anti-social behaviour legislation, which is only otherwise available to the Police.

The pilot merger between Hastings and Rother crime reduction partnerships continues. Overview and Scrutiny members received details of these plans as part of their earlier review of community safety. The pilot is due to be reviewed in January 2018, and the two groups will continue to explore new ways of collaborative working. The partnership is also due to appoint a shared support officer in August 2017.

The Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) continues to focus on addressing street drinking, and this will be supported by a second phase of the Government's Local Alcohol Action Area initiative.

Works to install gates to some of the alleyways and thoroughfares around the town are also ongoing; this work is vulnerable to delays as it involves a number of stakeholders.

What to look out for in Quarter 2

- Expected award of tender for Hastings Country Park Visitor Centre (note that no suitable tenders were received so the contract has been retendered).
- [Local Strategic Partnership](#) update on rough sleeper and street activity workshop
- Kingdom enforcement pilot begins on 4 July 2017
- Report on [Future Waste and Cleansing Services](#) to be considered by Cabinet (note that Cabinet unanimously approved the recommendations, which included joint procurement of new contracted out refuse and recycling service, and work to develop a stand alone Hastings direct services organisation for street cleansing and associated services in the borough).

How will we know if it's working?

Target Number		Target	Performance
1.	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, dog fouling, detritus, graffiti and flyposting)	Q1 – 5%	Q1 – 7%
2.	Percentage of Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Q1 – 30%	Q1 – 31.8%
3.	Percentage of food establishments which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Q1 – 92%	Q1 – 98%
4.	The average number of failed bin collections (per 100,000 collections)	Q1 – 110	Q1 - 74
	Green flag status retained for our key parks and open spaces	Green flag status retained	Green flag status retained

Driving economic growth

What's happened in Quarter 1?

- Cultural Leaders Group Action Plan adopted
- Venue review completed
- Social Media Policy under development
- Marketing exercise underway to find a new operator for Hastings Castle
- [Famously Hastings Business Guide 2017](#) published
- Successful Jack in the Green event
- Soft market test undertaken in advance of retendering the Leisure Contract
- Programme of events and activities through [Active Hastings](#) including Fitness Rave, Sports for All Festival and 1066 Cycling Festival
- The new building control partnership begun on 1 April 2017
- [Locate East Sussex](#) website updated
- Continuing to pursue an option for a sports hub redevelopment and housing scheme

The council continues to support the cultural regeneration of the town. This includes taking an active role in the Cultural Leaders Group. The group, which is chaired by Paul Barnett, comprises representatives from a range of organisations within the artistic and cultural sectors. The Cultural Leaders

Group has also adopted an action plan, which focuses on creating a music city across Hastings and Rother.

Members of the overview and scrutiny committee have a longstanding interest in supporting the local music scene. The council has recently undertaken a venue review, using funding from the Arts Council. The findings of the review will be shared with all members shortly. This work also coincides with an ongoing options appraisal of the White Rock Theatre, to consider the long term future for this facility once the current contract has come to an end.

Hastings and Rother Arts Education Network have also been working in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a small grants programme to support arts and cultural projects to positively impact young people's mental health.

Following an action point raised as part of an earlier overview and scrutiny review, the Marketing and Major Projects Manager has been working on piece of work to develop the image of Hastings as a place to live, work and invest.

The council is continuing to pursue an option for a comprehensive sports centre redevelopment and housing scheme, which if realised, could have a major regeneration impact. This will form part of a future report to Cabinet.

The final draft of the White Rock masterplan is being refined and will be circulated shortly. The masterplan will help to



inform the development of the Town Centre and White Rock Area Action plan for this part of the town. The council has recently commissioned two key documents, a sustainability appraisal and strategic flood risk assessment, which will also underpin the development of the plan. Consideration will also be given to the impact on traffic of the different types of development encouraged within the White Rock and town centre areas. In total, the Area Action plan is likely to take around 3 years to develop and adopt.

The development of the White Rock masterplan has also been taken into consideration when planning the tendering exercise for the new leisure contact, to ensure there is sufficient flexibility to incorporate these sites into the development.

A public consultation took place during quarter 1 on the new Hastings central conservation area. The proposed conservation area consolidates the existing conservation areas within the town centre and White Rock, with some minor extensions. The consultation will conclude in July. A public consultation on a new conservation area for central St Leonards will take place in 2018.

The council is also reviewing the action plan of activities which supports the delivery of the Heritage Strategy objectives.

The Active Hastings team has continued to carry out a range of activities to encourage the local community to take up

sports. This included the Sports for All Festival, a half day of sports and activities for children and adults with disabilities, which was delivered in partnership with PODS 1066. The events attracted around 70 people and are intended to encourage participants to take up sports and activities in the future.

What to look out for in Quarter 2

- [Stade Saturdays](#) programme underway
- [St Leonards Festival](#) and [Coastal Currents](#)
- Mid-Summer Fish Festival
- Further round of [Compulsory Purchase](#) activity to be considered by Cabinet
- New life guard service delivered in partnership with the RNLI
- New cycle hire service launched over the summer
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee will received an update on the formation of a University Centre



How will we know if it's working?

Target Number		Target	Performance
	Number of visitors to the White Rock Theatre	No targets set, for monitoring only	Q1 - 16,926
6.	Increased number of visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery	Q1 - 10,100 Q2 - 24,800 Q3 - 36,200 Q4 - 46,500	Q1 - 11,967
7.	Increased number of people using council Leisure Centres	Q1 - 107,500 Q2 - 217,500 Q3 - 312,500 Q4 - 420,000	Q1 - 103,531
8.	Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with applicants	Q1 - 80% Q2 - 80% Q3 - 80% Q4 - 80%	Q1 - 100%
9.	Non-major planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant	Q1 - 80% Q2 - 80% Q3 - 80% Q4 - 80%	Q1 - 99%
10.	Householder planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant	Q1 - 80% Q2 - 80% Q3 - 80% Q4 - 80%	Q1 - 100%
11.	Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with the applicants between	Q1 - 60% Q2 - 60%	Q1 - 88%



	October 2015 and September 2017	Q3 - 60% Q4 - 60%	
12.	Non-major planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant between October 2015 and September 2017	Q1 - 70% Q2 - 70% Q3 - 70% Q4 - 70%	Q1 - 91%

Support when it's needed

What's happened in Quarter 1?

- Increased number of homelessness applications
- Increased council tax reduction claim enquiries
- Partnership meetings for CAN and SHINE projects

The number of homelessness applications the council receives has continued to rise throughout quarter 1, which reflects national trends. In part, this has been exacerbated by restricted availability of affordable accommodation for both private and social rents. Rising house prices are also deterring many first time buyers placing more pressure on the private rented market, which again restricts supply for those on the lowest incomes. As a consequence, the council has become increasingly reliant on temporary accommodation to meet the needs of those it has a statutory duty to accommodate.

Processes and systems are currently being reviewed, ahead of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018. The new act includes additional duties for local authorities to carry out intensive homelessness prevention activities at an early stage. A [flexible homelessness support grant](#) has been introduced by Government to help support homelessness prevention activities, this in part also replaces funding streams that previously provided financial cover for temporary accommodation costs.

The council was successful in its bid to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for funding to support a third round of the Coastal Space project. A suitable property has been identified within the seven streets area and this will enable the council and SELEP to commit the funding in full.

The Resettling Syrian Refugees Programme continues, with several families successfully matched with potential landlords in the town.

At the end of 2015/16 the council was awarded funding to bring forward options for community-based housing. An early release of funds was agreed for the Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust, to allow for capacity building and to cover costs associated with their licence to occupy land on the former power station site at the Ore Valley. Details of the full funding programme and the future of the Ore Valley land will form the basis of reports to Cabinet in Quarter 2.

Universal Credit was introduced in Hastings in December 2016. Since then, there has been a reduction in the number of new housing benefits claims received. However, service users have to contact the council more frequently if their circumstances change and the process for dealing with these enquiries has also become more complex. This has impacted the council's target for the average number of days to process changes to council tax reduction claims, where the benefits team has seen a significant increase in the number of enquiries received. This could create capacity issues not just



within the team itself, but also related services such as the Community Contact Centre.

The implementation of universal credit is also impacting negatively upon the net income the council receives from those temporarily accommodated by the council.

The council continues to support local people affected by changes to welfare system. This includes working closely with CAB to develop a referral system for households which may be struggling as result of the changes. The CAB then assesses each households needs and support requirements.

As part of an earlier review, overview and scrutiny committee members had raised concerns that some residents may be unable to access Universal Credit online. The council has been working with the CAB to develop a package of support to address digital exclusion issues. These activities are delivered by partners in the voluntary sector, including Seaview and Hastings Works. The programme ranges from refresher sessions and group training through to intensive one to one support.

The council has also utilised funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to appoint a Benefit Cap Co-ordinator. This roles includes carrying our home-visits to households affected by the benefits cap, to review their expenditure and signpost them to other sources of support on a range of issues. Where appropriate, households have also

been referred to council's discretionary housing payment scheme for additional support, while they adjust their spending patterns. The Benefits Cap Co-ordinator then continues to meet with those families on an ongoing basis to see how they are getting on. This approach helps to build up trust between them and has been very well received by the local community.

What to look out for in Quarter 2

- Development of a new property management service to replace the current leasing scheme operated under the LetStart Programme
- Development of new temporary accommodation solutions with a view to a final report being considered by Cabinet in Quarter 3
- [Hastings and Rother Reducing Health Inequalities Programme](#) to be considered by Cabinet
- Final report and business plan for proposed Housing Company as part of the council's overall income generation plans
- Future of the Ore Valley land and community housing fund reports



How will we know if it's working?

Target Number		Target	Performance
13.	Number of homelessness cases prevented (bigger is better)	Q1 - 375 Q2 - 750 Q3 - 1,125 Q4 - 1,500	Q1 - 426
14.	% of homeless applications resulting in a placement in emergency accommodation (smaller is better)	Q1 - 50% Q2 - 50% Q3 - 50% Q4 - 50%	Q1 - 47%
15.	Private sector homes meeting the required standard	Q1 - 50 Q2 - 100 Q3 - 150 Q4 - 200	Q1 - 43
16.	Number of affordable homes created	Not reported until yearend	Reported at year end
17.	Number of long term (2+ years) empty properties bought back into use (bigger is better)	Q1 - 18 Q2 - 35 Q3 - 53 Q4 - 70	Q1 - 25
18.	Number of neglected buildings improved (bigger is better)	Q1 - 12 Q2 - 25 Q3 - 37 Q4 - 50	Q1 - 20
19.	Number of new homes built	Not reported until yearend	Reported at year end



20.	Average number of days to process new housing benefit claims (smaller is better)	Q1 - 15 Q2 - 15 Q3 - 15 Q4 - 15	Q1 - 13.7
21.	Average number of days to process changes to housing benefit claims (smaller is better)	Q1 - 5 Q2 - 5 Q3 - 5 Q4 - 5	Q1 - 5.6
22.	Average number of days to process new Council Tax Reduction claims	Q1 - 15 Q2 - 15 Q3 - 15 Q4 - 15	Q1 - 13.2
23.	Average number of days to process changes to Council Tax Reduction claims	Q1 - 5 Q2 - 5 Q3 - 5 Q4 - 5	Q1 - 5.4



Providing great services

What's happened in Quarter 1?

- Bulky waste collection service now available online
- Council's website rated 3 out of 4 stars by SOCITM (an independent test for public sector websites)
- 53.3% of all cases are reported through self-service
- Customer first training begun
- Work to develop a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system underway
- Local Government and Parliamentary elections delivered successfully

The council adopted a [Customer First Strategy](#) in 2016. In quarter 1, an all-staff training programme began to implement the key objectives of meeting the needs of our customers, being accessible, improving customer experience and providing value. The training programme will run until 1 September 2017. The programme includes a shadowing exercise in the community contact centre, a face-to-face training session and e-learning packages. By the end of June, 137 staff had completed their contact centre shadowing placement and 8 of the 12 face to face training sessions had been delivered. The shadowing exercise has been particularly helpful, and has identified a number of service improvements which will be introduced over the weeks to come.

The contact centre team has been working closely with advice agencies in the town, including CAB, BHT and HARC, to develop a more effective referral process and make it easier for residents to understand what help is available and how to access it.

The team continue to plan large pieces of work with services across the council, to ensure there is sufficient capacity within the contact centre to meet high levels of demand. The team worked closely with electoral services to support the additional workload created by the general election in June.

The council's bulky waste collection service was made available online in April 2017. By May, 49% of bulky waste collection requests were completed online, and this in turn resulted in a reduced number of telephone calls to the contact centre. Indeed, take up across the council's online services continues to increase, ahead of a full marketing campaign for Myhastings online, which is due to take place in autumn 2017.

A scope was undertaken in quarter 1 for business process mapping the council's benefits service, with the intention of making the benefits application process available online. A similar exercise is also being undertaken with the resort services team.



The council is continuing to develop a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in partnership with Rother District Council, to replace the existing finance and human resources and payroll systems. The project remains on budget and within the agreed timescales. Staff from the human resources and payroll, finance, transformation and IT teams have been working closely with the external consultancy firm to design the new system. This work will continue into quarter 2 and may impact the capacity of these teams in other areas of their work.

The human resources team have also been developing a new approach for staff 1-2-1's, which is intended to provide a more flexible approach and identify staff development and training opportunities. This is complimented by work with Rother District Council, Wealden District Council and Sussex Coast College Hastings to explore training opportunities following the introduction of a new apprenticeship levy.

The procurement programme for quarter 1, which is delivered on behalf of the council by the procurement hub, is on profile. The programme includes retendering the public convenience cleaning contract.

The building surveyor's team have continued their work in relation to civil engineering, this includes routine maintenance to the promenade and assisting with design of a new lighting scheme for Bottle Alley.

What to look out for in Quarter 2

- Customer first and communications training programme completed
- Expected award of public convenience cleaning contract in July
- Business process mapping the council's benefits service
- Updates to the online report it function, based on feedback from members and the public
- Cabinet to consider the [final accounts](#) for 2016/17 at its meeting in July



How will we know if it's working?

Target Number		Target	Performance
24.	% of customers self-serving online	Year-end target – 60%	Q1 – 52.2%
25.	The proportion of working days / shifts lost due to sickness absence	Q1 - 1.55 Q2 - 3.15 Q3 - 4.70 Q4 - 6.25	Q1 - 1.38



Income generation

What's happened in Quarter 1?

- Commercialisation skills training delivered
- Draft income generation strategy; Land and Commercial Investment Strategy; housing company business plan; and energy investment measures under development.

Further work has been undertaken over the past quarter to develop the council's income generation strategy. The strategy will identify key areas for the council to consider for investment and provide a framework for a number of initiatives to generate additional income. A draft copy of the strategy will be shared with members, prior to consideration at a special meeting of Cabinet in September. Once the strategy has been developed, proposals for individual projects will be brought forward for assessment by the income generation board, and then decision by Cabinet.

Another key element of the income generation strategy is the communications plan, which sets out how these objectives will be incorporated throughout the council's activities. To compliment this, the Human Resources team have also delivered a commercialisation skills training programme for staff.

A draft strategy for commercial property investment is also being prepared. The council continues to explore opportunities within its existing portfolio of commercial properties, including the potential to develop a new factory unit in a vacant parcel of land.

Work has also been underway to develop a business case for a local housing company, following a [report](#) to Cabinet in December 2016. The draft business plan is also due to be presented to the special meeting of Cabinet in September.

An energy options study has been completed and a report will be brought forward to the special income generation Cabinet in September outlining initial findings and future actions.

Expressions of interest have been invited in development opportunities on council-owned sites at Harold Place and West Marina. The deadline for expressions of interest in the West Marina site is September 2017.

A tendering exercise has also been completed for the installation of new beach huts and chalets on the seafront.

Many residents now choose to pay their council tax over 12 months, rather than 10, and this impacts the quarterly collections profile. The council proactively engages with residents who may be at risk of falling behind with their council tax and only uses bailiffs to recover the debt as a last



resort (the number of cases referred to bailiffs fell from 1,349 in 2015 to 301 in 2016).

What to look out for in Quarter 2

- Key documents to be shared with members in advance of the special Cabinet meeting in September



How will we know if it's working?

Target Number		Target	Performance
26.	% Council Tax collected in year (bigger is better)	Q1 - 35.4% Q2 - 63.1% Q3 - 90.2% Q4 - 96.3%	Q1 - 33.8%
27.	% Non domestic rates collected in year (bigger is better)	Q1 - 35.0% Q2 - 59.5% Q3 - 84.1% Q4 - 98.0%	Q1 - 33.1%



Overview and Scrutiny Proposed Work Programme 2017/18 – Quarter 1 Update

Phase

Quarter 1	<p>Implementation of Scrutiny review recs...inc. O and S Chair meeting with MT & D Chair to align work programmes. (Meeting held on 7 September)</p>	<p>Update on formation of a University Centre scheduled post University of Brighton from Director of Operational Services (scheduled for Quarter 1 Committee)</p>	<p>Collective consultation response -Re St Leonards Crown Post Office (Response submitted 7 August 2017)</p>	<p>Meeting with Carole Dixon to review landscape post academies review (to be scheduled as part of the Education Review)</p>
Quarter 2	<p>Income generation briefing and if appropriate refine lines of inquiry for more in depth review work during Q2.</p>	<p>Update on White Rock Area Action Plan during Q2.</p>	<p>Inquiry Day- Review impact of legislation on homelessness prevention (Oct).</p>	<p>Review of LGA report to Cabinet (Sept) and follow up Scrutiny if required.</p>
Quarter 3	<p>Progress lines of scrutiny inquiry for the following (where required): Income Generation, Education (x2) LGA review recommendations implementation.</p>	<p>Report Inquiry Day findings to Q3 Scrutiny meeting.</p>	<p>To be determined: Grenfell cross committee working group and potential review of dilapidated buildings, reviewing the pilot of the new warden scheme.</p>	
Quarter 4	<p>Concluding the 2017/18 work programme in advance of local elections.</p>			

Agenda Item 7

