

## Minutes

### CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

4 February 2025



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | <p><b>Committee Members Present:</b><br/>Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair),<br/>Councillor Ekta Gohil,<br/>Councillor Kishan Bhatt,<br/>Councillor Peter Smallwood,<br/>Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead),<br/>Councillor Tony Gill, and<br/>Councillor Rita Judge</p> <p><b>Co-Opted Member Present:</b><br/>Mr Tony Little</p> <p><b>Officers Present:</b><br/>Antony Madden (Head of Service - First Response and Out of Hours Social Work)<br/>Ryan Dell (Democratic Service Officer)</p> <p><b>Also present:</b><br/>David Pells (Deputy Head, Park View, Orchard Hill College)<br/>Dylan McTaggart (HRUC Group Principal &amp; Deputy CEO)<br/>Professor Geoff Rodgers (Pro Vice Chancellor for Enterprise and Employment, Brunel University of London)</p> |
| 54. | <p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Becky Haggar OBE with Councillor Ekta Gohil substituting.</p>  |
| 55. | <p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Peter Smallwood declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 12 in that he was a trustee of the Union of Brunel Students.</p>   |
| 56. | <p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members thanked the clerk for the minutes.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed</b></p>  |
| 57. | <p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p>  |

58. **ORCHARD HILL COLLEGE** (*Agenda Item 5*)

David Pells, from Orchard Hill College, introduced the College.

Orchard Hill College operated across multiple areas including Hillingdon, Kingston, Southwark, and Sutton. The college had 11 sites and links with 14 schools that were part of their Academy. The site in Hillingdon had approximately 85-90 students.

There was a focus on working on Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) outcomes in employment, good health, independent living, and friends & relationships. These were related to the young peoples' EHCPs. There were also students who did not have EHCPs who were funded through the education budget.

There was a supported internship program, one based at the Civic Centre and one based at Hillingdon Hospital.

Members asked about the criteria for student admissions. There were a range of needs at the college including young people with medical needs and those with moderate to severe learning difficulties. The admissions process included expressions of interest from parents; assessments by a panel; and visits to schools to determine the support and funding needed.

Members inquired about the changes implemented as a result of student feedback. The Student Council meetings and the "You Said, We Did" report highlighted examples such as planning social activities and improving timetables. Regarding Student Council meetings, efforts were being made to standardise the agenda across all regions. Students had felt they did not have enough opportunities for activities outside the college. Consequently, the college had partnered with Brunel University of London, who had allowed the college to use their facilities once a month for a nightclub event. The first event was scheduled for the 27 February, and student participation was being encouraged. Additionally, the College had established strong connections with social care colleagues and local feeder schools. The Student Council was focused on addressing student concerns, such as access to town and community involvement. The college was collaborating with local authorities to improve these aspects for young people. The goal was to enhance student engagement with the community and provide more opportunities, ensuring consistency across all of the college's sites.

Members inquired about the support provided to students progressing to higher education or careers. The primary course was a three-year program centred on Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) outcomes, which included planning for students' post-college destinations. For example, some learners attended the gym at the leisure centre, and it was ensured that this continued after they finished their course. In the third year, during the annual review, the college suggested a post-college timetable to support the transition. This included arrangements for gym attendance and identifying any necessary support, such as a personal assistant. For employment, the college explored voluntary and paid job opportunities. They had established connections with various companies, including Uxbridge Football Club where some students had secured voluntary and paid positions. Additionally, supported internships were available for students who are suitable for this pathway, providing a stepping stone after completing the three-year course. The college also explored voluntary opportunities with charity shops and food banks, aiming to achieve the best aspirations for students, including paid work. Job coaches supported students by attending events and career fairs, working on interview skills, and providing career guidance. The

college also focused on building friendships and relationships, particularly for students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). Activities such as archery at the town centre were organised to ensure continuity after college. For students requiring additional support, the college collaborated with social care to facilitate their transition. Some PMLD learners attend day centres like Queens Walk, where they engage in activities and hydrotherapy. The college also offered a Work Start program, a two-year course for high-ability students, which included job coaching to support them in securing paid work. This program focuses on employability skills, assessed units, and functional skills in math and English. The goal was to help these students secure paid employment, working closely with social care to explore various support avenues after they finish college.

Members asked about the college's capacity for future growth. There was limited space but a desire to expand supported internships and work start programs.

Members inquired about how the Council could assist. The College would benefit from being known more widely in the area. They had been based next to Hillingdon Leisure Centre for approximately 30 years, and there was a desire to increase awareness about Orchard Hill College and its offerings. The importance of participating in events to raise the profile of their students was highlighted. Some students recently attended the SEND Youth Forum, which provided an excellent opportunity for interaction and discussion about effective practices. The need for more opportunities for young people to secure paid employment, voluntary positions and work experience was emphasised. The supported internships had been backed by a number of local businesses, and the importance of community engagement was reiterated.

Members asked about future capacity. The need for increased capacity was acknowledged as there were challenges of limited space, which restricted the possibility of expansion. Despite these limitations, there was a strong desire to increase the number of students. The college was exploring various options to address these space constraints. A significant number of students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) attend the college, often accompanied by family and friends, which further emphasised the need for additional space. The college was particularly focused on expanding its supported internships, which were currently off-site (at the Civic Centre and Hillingdon Hospital). There was a keen interest in growing these programs to accommodate more students, especially those at entry level and above. Members asked if this had been communicated to the Council and it was confirmed that it had been.

Members inquired about the life-changing learning opportunities provided by the college. Several success stories of students who had benefited from various programs and support services were shared:

One notable example involved a wheelchair user who initially had no communication aids and struggled to be understood. With the support of speech and language therapists, the student was provided with a grid pad, an iPad with pages for different communication needs, such as family, friends, and activities. This aid enabled the student to vocalise their needs and participate more fully in the community. The student had also been involved in enterprise activities, such as making items to sell at the Christmas market, which was a great success.

Another success story involved a student with significant mental health challenges who had been out of school for several years. After joining the Work Start course, the

student began attending regularly and secured two work placements: one at a reptile house and another at a dog grooming company. The student also worked at a football club, where they were offered paid work, although they were not yet ready to take that step. The student was now considering a supported internship program, potentially at Thorpe Park, which had been life-changing for them.

Additionally, there was the story of a young lady who initially lacked travel training skills and was unable to travel alone. With the support of a teaching assistant, she learned to navigate her route from home to college and was now working on traveling independently to her work placement at a hair salon in West Drayton. This progress had been transformative for her and her family.

Members congratulated the College for its outstanding Ofsted inspection in 2019 and inquired about preparations for the next inspection. Recent preparations included a health check conducted by a former Ofsted inspector, which involved learning walks and observations of teachers. Feedback was provided to the inspector who confirmed that their assessments were aligned. Additionally, the assistant principal conducted safeguarding talks, receiving positive feedback. The college had implemented intervention plans for students who needed them and offered contextual safeguarding sessions on relevant topics such as mental health and e-safety. New teachers underwent a comprehensive two-week induction process, covering essential training in areas like behaviour support and physio training. Only after completing this induction did they begin classroom teaching. The college conducted regular learning walks every couple of weeks and formal observations once a month. Teachers who did not meet the required standards were placed on development plans, receiving one-on-one support from the deputy head or head of college. The focus was on providing targeted feedback to help teachers improve without overwhelming them.

Members thanked the witness for attending and commended the work of the college.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report**

59. **UXBRIDGE COLLEGE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Dylan McTaggart, from Uxbridge College, introduced HRUC, and thanked Members for the opportunity to present the item.

The college group had 15,000 students, growing at 7% annually. 8,500 students were aged 16-18, with 50% at Level 3 and above. 4,500 adults were enrolled, with about 2,000 of these on part-time programs.

The college had a diverse student body, including 450 looked after children, which had doubled in the last two years. These young people achieved only 1% below their peers and amongst the highest achievement in the UK.

There were 850 high-needs students, ranging from low, profound and multiple learning disability where you might have three staff members and one student, up to those who were on their journey to university.

About 60% of students came to the college without both English and maths GCSE. The college had the highest progress despite this and was in the top 10% of all colleges nationally. This achievement was 8% above national average, despite merging with Richmond College which was a failing college financially and achievement-wise at the

time. Harrow and Uxbridge Colleges were both rated outstanding by Ofsted, and including Richmond College the overall rating was good.

The college was very employer-focused. The college boasted a 96% positive destination rate for students (i.e. a job or moving up a level).

The college had a 97% retention rate across the 15,000 students. Of the 3%, some were for relocation purposes. Exclusions were under 20 for the entire year, which the college was very proud of.

Significant investments were being made in STEM and engineering, including a £12 million investment to develop the Institute of Technology.

There was a strong partnership with the local authority. Hillingdon was very outward looking compared to other local authorities that the college group were stationed in.

There had been some groundbreaking work on the 14-19 education strategy and good partnerships with schools.

The college had just purchased Barra Hall in Hayes for a new facility. This would be of benefit as the college was growing by 15% a year in high needs students alone.

Members asked about the number of students who leave with GCSEs in Maths and English. For those who came to the college without this, the pass mark was around 23%, which was significant for this cohort. It was reiterated that there was a 96% positive destination. This meant that despite poorer starting points, those students were achieving merits and distinctions in their main vocational course, and 80% got their first choice of university. Students were generally at the college for three to four years and so by the time they left the college the vast majority had GCSEs.

Members asked about moving staff around the different sites. Some teachers did move across the sites, in engineering for example. The growth of the college was vast and they were constantly recruiting. There was a constant 7% vacancy factor with 3% agency on top. The college did not cancel classes.

Members inquired about the partnership with MIT. This was an exciting new project and the college was trying to focus their curriculum on the future. They did this by engaging with partners such as MIT. This was about upskilling staff and giving students the opportunity to visit MIT and experience MIT aspiration. There were internal scholarships for students and the college had started a national competition where schools and other colleges can put forward students to present approaches to changing environmental challenges and the judges of the competition were MIT. The college funded prizes for these students even when they were external to the college.

Members asked about whether the college was competing with local schools or offering something different. Students or parents may choose the college because their staff have worked in Microsoft or Google or other engineering firms and bring this experience into the classroom. The college also had facilities beyond traditional classrooms such as a nutrition suite that was set up like a hospital. They were also investing in aero technology. Students do as well as talk about.

Members asked about partnerships with secondary schools. It was noted that this was a strong and significant partnership that had evolved a lot in the last two to three years.

A lot of work had been done with the education team such as curating a headteacher network. While there may have been initial hesitation about the college form schools, the college had worked hard to dispel these concerns and to try to complement schools. The college attended regular networks to discuss working together. A key focus had been on the 14-19 strategy, looking at young people who were at risk of becoming NEET. There was a large learner voice network where class reps would go to student conferences and talk about their experiences of the college and their aspirations. There were brave conversation networks that focused on groups who may have underperformed. One cohort that had been underperforming was black Caribbean students. Conversations were had with young people about what they need when they come from secondary school and the college conducted initial and diagnostic assessments. The college also conducted knowledge gap assessments. The 60% of students who arrived without a GCSE was in the lowest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally, but the left in the top 10%.

Members inquired about addressing challenges faced by disadvantaged students and ensuring that further education was accessible to these young people. This was an important cohort for the college, particular 18-21 year olds in full time programmes. The college offered hardship bursaries and loans. The vast majority of students came for free because they will not have done their first Level 3 qualification and therefore they were funded. There was a small number of co-funded students doing part time courses who were already in work.

Members asked how the college ensured that students from low-income backgrounds and those facing social barriers received the necessary academic and pastoral support. Members also asked about mentoring schemes. This was a growing portion of the student body. There was a mental health tracking list for students with PIPs. There was training around this. There were safeguarding lists including for domestic violence. There was a significant student services offer with specialist wellbeing staff, specialist mental health staff, specialist looked after children staff, and counsellors. The college was good at tracking the student journey and would notice when students were falling away. There was a dedicated student services team on site. There was a tutorial offer where every student received one hour a week one-to-one with an academic tutor to ensure they were on track. Students could monitor their progress on the college app. The college were trying to make more use of AI and were investing in this. they were also experimenting with more mentoring programmes; there were a team of people who walked through the campus looking for signs.

Members further asked how the college addressed challenges faced by disadvantaged students. The college may enrol students in smaller groups so they get more support. There was a significant programme of workshops and additional teaching. There was a digital learning system to help engage students who had missed lessons.

Members asked about the numbers of withdrawals of students. The overall withdrawal rate was 3%, which was very low. Some students may withdraw due to relocation. For example, some of these students were ESOL students. There was a very small number of students who would be removed because of behaviour/ engagement.

Members asked about tracking destinations of students. The college measured the destination of every student, of which there were 96% positive destinations. About 35% went into work, a significant number came back into the college for the next year. Of the roughly 2,000 final year Level 3 students, they often went into university or work or the internal Higher Education programme. The other 4% were also tracked, for

example they may be NEET. This tracking was done via an intended destination and then a prolonged destination tracked in the following January.

Members asked how the college ensured consistency in tracking student progress across different campuses. The college had groundbreaking tracking tools at the headline, group, college and school levels (e.g. engineering school), and down to the student level. This included assessment tracking, attendance and retention. Every student had an individual learning plan (ILPs). Students had three ILP 1-2-1 sessions per year, with targets to help them get a higher grade or improve attendance or engage in a more productive way. These targets would be monitored alongside academic performance. These are signed off as 'met well', 'partially missed' or 'referred'. If referred the target carried to the next term. Specific targets were set for high needs students based on their EHCP and there was extra engagement with students where needed.

Members asked about the college's capital programme and plans for future capacity. It was both capacity and student experience focused. The college was growing quickly and wanted to invest in what it was like to be on campus. This would include new reception spaces and learning resources centres. The college was also investing in immersive classrooms.

Members commended the witness for their passion.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report**

60. **STRONGER FAMILIES HUB REVIEW UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Officers provided an update on the recommendations of the Committee's previous major review of the Stronger Families Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** To continue to raise the profile of the Stronger Families Hub with all Hillingdon stakeholders, including schools (both in and out of the Borough), community organisations, third sector organisations and elected Members, with a view to improving resident awareness of the Hub and the support available to them.

This recommendation was to ensure that all residents were aware of the support that was available to them.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** Seeks to maintain the resilience of the 24/7 Hub model by monitoring the staff and triage resourcing covering the out-of-hours service, in light of comments made by witnesses.

The Stronger Families Hub operated 24/7, 365 days of the year. This recommendation was to ensure that there was capacity in the out of hours service to lessen the strain within office hours, where most demand arose.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Review the capacity within the Hub to support increased demand, in light of comments made by witnesses, in particular from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving at Heathrow Airport.

A number of investments had been made to boost capacity. Having Heathrow Airport located within the borough created a particular set of challenges and opportunities for the Hub, and officers had introduced a pilot team to make sure that it was a dedicated

bespoke service that was provided to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** To note the Health and Social Care Select Committee's review into the effectiveness of the CAMHS referral pathway, and to review ways to enhance signposting around mental health services via the Hub and to voluntary and private sector services.

This was noted.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** To continue to raise awareness of the Stronger Families Hub regularly with partners to keep abreast of changes or new developments. This is to include an annual renewal of the membership of the Stronger Families sub-group to ensure it reflects all stakeholders; & **RECOMMENDATION 6:** Ensure the Stronger Families Hub is accessible to a diverse range of communities by investigating advertising and promoting the Stronger Families Hub in additional languages;

It was noted that while some communities were termed hard to reach, officers wanted to be more creative in ensuring accessibility and awareness of the Hub, aiding in preventative measures rather than waiting for issues to become entrenched. A number of methods had been used for this including using the Stronger Families Partnership as a conduit of sharing information. Officers focused on relationship-based social work with children and their families. Word of mouth was useful, and IT can assist in getting the message out in a range of languages. However, digital communication did not work for everyone. Therefore, the Hub did rely on partners including stronger communities leads and managers to work with faith groups, community groups and the voluntary sector to make sure information was available to all children and families.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** Investigate adding into the referral form process to explain why consent had not been obtained, where appropriate.

The Committee had questioned why there was not an option for the referral on the Early Help Assessment form (which served a dual purpose of assessment and referral) to be made without consent. Officers had given this much consideration and discussion but wanted to avoid pitfalls and barriers that had been encountered in the past. The Hub often received large amounts of information and would try to make contact with families, often without any contact details, which would increase the time taken when decision making should be 24 hours. Officers could enable up to 72 hours but preferred to make quick decisions within one working day to ensure there were no delays for the family and that they received the right service at the right time. Evidence showed that giving an option not to have obtained consent did lead to delays. It also started the process on the right footing as informed consent from every parent or person with parental responsibility was required. Getting this buy-in at the earliest opportunity was more pragmatic. This meant that by the time the family were contacted by the Hub this would focus more on explaining the support available, rather than the family being unaware that their information had been shared in the first place. Therefore, this recommendation had not been introduced. However, it was noted that there was free text within the referral form so that the referrer could enter any additional information on why consent had not been obtained.

Members noted that they were pleased to see the free text option.

Members acknowledged the progress made and the increased demand on the Hub. Members noted the vacant officer post and asked about the Hub's resilience to



increased demand. Officers confirmed that there was a continued growth in demand. The average of 1,500 requests for assistance per month had risen to between 1,900 and 2,200 depending on the time of year. Officers also acknowledged the innovative approach to building capacity outside office hours. The one vacant triage officer post remained vacant and officers remained committed to recruiting to this role. There were 10 posts in total. Three staff members had been recruited in the last six weeks. The interim post of a Stronger Families Hub team manager had now been converted into a permanent role. Nationally, there was an increase in demand in most local authorities. Most, if not all, local authorities were looking towards early intervention, being preventative and Hillingdon was ahead of the curve for this. The Hub were in discussions around national reforms.

Members noted that in light of national reforms there would likely be implications for the Stronger Families Hub including staffing and resourcing, as a full review of children's social care delivery model was currently in progress. Members asked for further information on this. Officers noted that they were continually looking at the improvement journey and aiming high. There were expectations, because of the national reforms, that there may be other areas of change. One example of this may be child protection experts leading on child protection inquiries. It was felt that having the same person lead on all child protection inquiries and having the same person chair the initial case conference would give consistency in oversight, whereas in the past it had been an allocated team that would complete the Section 47 Child Protection Inquiry and the assessment. The proposed changes were driven by the data, and the data showed that the Hub completed a very high level of Section 47 enquiries relative to the number that progressed to child protection case conference. The Hub respected the rights of the family whilst making sure that it adhered to statutory responsibilities to undertake assessments and inquiries if a child was reported or may be at risk of significant harm.

Members asked about unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving at Heathrow and asked about the impact on the service of the demand in this area. Officers noted that being a port authority was an area that made working in Hillingdon's Children's Services unique, with Heathrow being the largest air gateway into the UK. Hillingdon had good links with Heathrow Travel Care and UK Border Force to ensure that information sharing was rapid. On demand, apart from a slight decrease in 2020 due to the pandemic, there had been year on year increases in the number of children seeking asylum, many of whom arrived at Heathrow as a port authority (Port Authorities also included Essex because of Dover, and Croydon because of Lunar House). The number that Hillingdon had was always high compared to London neighbours and typically the second highest in number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The first response service, which was the referral and assessment service, had had responsibility for assessing and supporting all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that arrived in borough. This now sat with the new pilot team. Asylum-seeking children were looked after children with the same rights and responsibilities. Hillingdon was also a signatory to the National Transfer Scheme, which was about lessening the strain on the southeast of England. This scheme was working well. While the team was working to move children to their permanent borough within 10 working days, this was not always met. This was, in part, due to the need to rely on external colleagues and the receiving local authority for a placement to be identified and then supporting the safe transfer of that child to their new placement. It was hoped that the new team would continue beyond the pilot, and this would allow key workers to facilitate the transfer and

|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <p>escorting of children during their day of transport from Hillingdon to the new local authority and it would be worthwhile to have key workers able to support rather than social workers spending a disproportionate amount of time where there were other children that they need to be supporting and protecting.</p> <p>Members noted that a number of older asylum-seeking children were attending schools that were a large distance away, and that this had an impact on absenteeism.</p> <p>Members asked about mental health and the recommendation to 'review ways to enhance signposting', and that there were some areas for improvement required. Members asked how this was progressing. The role of the Thrive Network and particularly the appointment of the Thrive Manager and Practitioner had been vital in coordinating this. While Thrive had been in place for two to three years, it was felt that it had not been achieving the outcomes that were expected. Therefore, there was now a lead to oversee all 25+ services for mental health. There was an interim directory, and a user-friendly online directory was in its final stages and due to be launched at the end of this month. While digital resources were important, the importance of children's centres, family hubs, and universal services, whether it be colleges, universities or schools where people can access the support, whether it be pre-birth, or under 5, or 5 to 18, or all the way up to age 25 if they have special educational needs was highlighted.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update</b></p> |
| 61. | <p><b>PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM REVIEW UPDATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Chair noted that this item would be deferred to allow Members more time to consider draft recommendations and to discuss with officers.</p> <p>The Labour Lead thanked the Chair for this decision.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the item be deferred</b></p>  |
| 62. | <p><b>CPP MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Members noted the minutes of the previous Corporate Parenting Panel.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the minutes of the previous Corporate Parenting Panel</b></p>   |
| 63. | <p><b>FORWARD PLAN</b> (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Forward Plan.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan</b></p>  |
| 64. | <p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>Members suggested looking at, given that the March agenda was looking heavy, whether any items could be pushed back to a later date.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families &amp; Education Select Committee considered the report and agreed any amendments</b></p>   |

65. **BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON** (*Agenda Item 12*)

*(Note: this item was taken after item 6)*

Professor Geoff Rodgers, from Brunel University of London, introduced the item.

The university had a distinctive profile in UK higher education, with highly employable graduates, a driver of social mobility and doing research that was firmly informed by the needs of society, such as social science, engineering and computer science. In the spectrum of UK universities, Brunel was a distinctive organisation.

The university had 10,000 undergraduate students, 6,000 master's students, 1,000 doctoral students, 2,300 staff with a turnover of £300 million.

Brunel had an apprenticeship programme, focused mainly on the needs of the NHS workforce plan, and also digital science. Brunel had received an outstanding from Ofsted for its apprenticeship programme and was the only institution in London to do so.

There were two large transnational education programmes in China, one in Chongqing which was one of the four imperial capitals of China. There were 500-600 students studying electrical engineering there. The other was a digital science programme in Beijing with 600 students studying Brunel degrees.

Members inquired about the university's student demographics and marketing strategies. The university recruited locally, with 45% of students from the UK, 10% from Europe, and 45% from the rest of the world. Most UK students came from West London and surrounding areas. The university had strong relationships with local schools and colleges, particularly Uxbridge College which was the largest single provider of students. Recruitment efforts were focused on the south of England and particularly West London. A sizeable fraction of students were from Hillingdon, with some from surrounding boroughs.

The university was at the cutting edge of innovation in UK higher education. They were currently working with 20 businesses over five sessions to build innovation plans and secure public funding. Brunel had established the Central Research Laboratory at Hayes which had spun out nearly 130 new businesses, and had now moved to Slough. A large number of students went on to start their own businesses. The university's emphasis was on student start-ups with staff working with established businesses. Brunel received income from Innovate UK.

The university encouraged students to engage in volunteering to enhance their CVs and gain skills. There were also volunteering awards, which recognised the contributions of students.

Members inquired about the university's financial pressures. The university faced financial pressures similar to other UK universities and councils. Lots of universities were undertaking restructuring programmes. Brunel had a healthy intake of undergraduates which was an increase on the previous year's numbers. Efforts were being made to align capacity with demand.

The university worked closely with its Student Union, investing in projects that aligned with the university's strategy. There was strong cooperation on issues like widening

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>participation and supporting students.</p> <p>Members discussed the civic agreement between the university and the Council. This was a commitment from both parties to work more closely. While these relationships take time to grow, successful projects included work on High Streets and public parks.</p> <p>Members asked about integration of international students. Brunel had worked hard to create an inclusive and multicultural community to make everyone feel included. There was a sense of superdiversity within the university.</p> <p>Members thanked the university for its volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>It was noted that there were opportunities for Hillingdon to benefit from the university's entrepreneurial students and the potential for more incubators and support for startups in the borough. There were vast numbers of entrepreneurial students who could start businesses locally.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report</b></p> |
|  | <p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.35 pm.</p>   |

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell on [democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.