

REVIEW C: LOCAL COMMERCE, EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS & JOB CREATION

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Nigel Cramb, Partnerships & Business Engagement Manager
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

This report provides the Committee with information on September's site visit, and background information on the witness session that will take place at the meeting.

The witnesses that will be attending this meeting are Dr Darrell DeSouza, CEO & Group Principal at HCUC, and Mr Neil Impiazzi, Partnership Development Director at SEGRO.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the evidence heard at the witness session.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Visit to the Central Research Laboratory, Old Vinyl Factory Site

The Committee visited the Central Research Laboratory on 19 September 2019, replacing the review's 'Skills and Future' witness session, which was rescheduled for this meeting.

The visit to the Central Research Laboratory (CRL), currently located in the Shipping Building on the Old Vinyl Factory site in Hayes, afforded the Committee the opportunity to meet with and see some of the businesses currently operating from this venue. It also afforded the Committee members the opportunity to hear about, and experience, some of the hardware prototypes that are being designed and trialled at the CRL.

The Committee heard from CRL directors about how the Hayes CRL operation was the inspiration for a number of similar facilities being developed across the country under the brand name Plus X.

The CRL directors took the Committee through their plans to expand the capacity and facilities of the CRL. This would be achieved by moving to the refurbished and expanded Powerhouse Building on the Old Vinyl Factory site. The new facility would provide 350 work stations, exhibition and conference space, a café, and enhanced research and development facilities. Work on the site has recently started and the new facility will be operational in 2021.

Uxbridge College

Dr Darrell DeSouza has recently taken up the post of Group Principal at HCUC at an exciting time for the organisation.

The college, in partnership with Brunel University, and with support from commercial partners, Fujitsu and Heathrow Airport, have secured Institute of Technology (IOT) status. HCUC are just one of three colleges in London, and the only college in the central and west London areas, to have secured IOT status.

From 2021, the college will be delivering higher technical education (at Levels 4 and 5), with a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, such as:

- Engineering;
- Digital Production; and,
- Construction

The intention is that IOTs will focus on the specific technical skills required in their local area, and provide employers with a skilled workforce, and students with a clear route to technical employment.

From September 2020, the college will also be leading on delivering the new T-level qualifications. T-Levels are a qualification designed for 16-19 year olds, with a mixture of classroom learning and work placement.

T-Levels are a two-year qualification, developed in collaboration with employers and businesses, so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work.

As with IOT status, HCUC is trialling the new introduction of the T-Level qualification. One of only four institutions in London chosen to deliver T-Level courses, HCUC will be introducing the following subject areas:

- Digital Production, Design and Development; and,
- Education and Childcare.

SEGRO

The second witness is Mr Neil Impiazza, the Partnership Development Director for SEGRO.

SEGRO are one of the UK's largest logistic and employment site providers. Like Uxbridge College, SEGRO have been a long-term partner, and have worked effectively with the Council on a number of key projects in Hillingdon, including the delivery of Bosch's national training centre and adjacent Premier Inn on the Uxbridge employment park, and the Ocado delivery centre in Stockley Park.

Most recently, SEGRO have worked with Barratt London to secure planning permission for the major mixed-use development on the former Nestle factory site in Hayes.

The logistics / last mile delivery sector has become an increasingly important component of Hillingdon's economy, in terms of both land use and employment, and it is clear from recent acquisitions, such as the Prologis purchase of sites at Stockley Park, that the logistics sector's appetite for land in Hillingdon shows little sign of abating.

It is also very clear that both HCUC and SEGRO will continue to have considerable influence on the future shape of Hillingdon's local economy.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were agreed for the review:

- 1. To consider the current local economic environment, and better understand the implications of new developments and initiatives in Hillingdon;*
- 2. To examine where Hillingdon Council is currently performing within the regional economic picture and identify any gaps or weaknesses or areas for improvement;*
- 3. To consider the future of the Council's economy and its local residents, with a focus on education, skills and youth employment to understand their impact on the Borough's economy and identify any gaps or weaknesses;*
- 4. To explore the work that is being taken alongside partners, the Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses, to ensure the local economy remains strong and identify areas for action or improvement; and,*
- 5. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions and/or recommendations to the Cabinet to strengthen the local economy, that are cost-effective and through existing partnership arrangements.*

Implications on related Council policies

A role of the Policy Overview Committees is to monitor the performance of Council services and make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.