

TOWN DEAL

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

20. WELCOME, APOLOGIES

Members present:

Carole Dixon	Hastings Community Network
Graham Peters	SELEP/Team East Sussex
Andrew Harvey	New River Reit
Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group
Dawn Dublin	Unveiled
Dr Naomi Konu	Harold Road Surgery
Helen Kay	Hastings Opportunity Area
James Harris	East Sussex County Council
Jane Hartnell	Hastings Borough Council
Jess Steele	Heritage Action Zone
John Bownas	Love Hastings Ltd
Kate Adams	Hastings and Rother Cultural Leaders Group
Liz Coleman	Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum
Liz Gilmore	Hastings Contemporary
Richard Moore	The Source BMX
Sean Dennis	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Sonia Blizzard	Sea Change Sussex
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Voluntary Action
Stuart Mitchell	New River Reit
Terry Hume	Public Health

Others in attendance:

Alex Riley	SELEP
Amy Carroll	ARUP
Iain McNab	Cities and Local Growth Unit
Philip Johnson	Locate East Sussex
Rebecca Collings	Towns Hub
Rob Turner	Grant Thornton Associates

HBC Project team present:

Hannah Brookshaw
Pranesh Datta
Victoria Conheady

Apologies were received from:

Clive Galbraith, Darrell Gale, Fiona Kellett, Richard Watson

21. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

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Matters arising:

- Walking tour of the town centre – rule of 6 may make this difficult and this will be left to the discretion of individual board members to contact others and arrange
- List of town centre premises and other details – in progress

22. TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

Pranesh explained the process for writing the Town Investment Plan (TIP):

- Section 1 – covers the case for investment in Hastings and the structure
- Section 2 – is similar to a funding application and will need to show project description and other in-depth details
- Advice from the cohort 1 submissions is to use the Theory of Change tool, show a clear intervention logic and vision, a golden thread needs to be set up and there must be a clear evidence base and links to the local regional strategy
- Programme of work:
 - Today – agree the key challenges, aims, objectives and outcomes
 - October/November – project prioritisation process
 - Early November – agree draft TIP, identify and agree project proposals, discussion on revenue ask
 - 14th December – revenue wrap funding discussion
 - 21st January 2021 – meet to endorse final TIP prior to submission

23. DEVELOPING OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Rebecca and Rob explained the Theory of Change, how it will be used to achieve changes in Hastings and deliver the desired outcomes.

Victoria explained the outcome of the recent SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat) analysis, which was used to identify the key challenges around the themes of urban regeneration, connectivity and skills.

The meeting then split into 6 facilitated break out groups to discuss the key challenges, how the Theory of Change can help achieve changes in Hastings and deliver the desired outcomes.

The feedback will be analysed by the project team and a summary appended to the minutes of this meeting.

The challenges and priorities will be finalised and circulated for agreement by 6th October to enable prioritisation of the projects. The vision and impacts of the TIP will be re-visited, the Theory of Change will be finalised and a draft TIP will be presented for review at the November board meeting.

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Developing our Theory of Change – feedback summary

Group 1 – Low paid jobs and low household aspiration

Recorded only partly and attached with some written notes from the meeting.

Key notes from the discussion: the two issues are connected; both deep rooted and prevalent in many coastal towns; to tackle the issues needs capital but also joint working and co-commissioning of services; requirement of Health and Wellbeing Hub similar to Bromley By Bow offering food, health care and advice, child care; learning; socialising opportunities (in one place) etc. Skilled jobs needed to retain young people who do have aspirations and achieve goals (but currently move away from Hastings). Opportunities needed for people to come back to; start up facilities in town centre; home working may enable the town to retain those who do achieve success as well as invite new.

Group 2 – Lots of empty shops and town centre feels unloved

Deliverability (by 2026) against repurposing of town centre some disagreement. Meanwhile use could create vibrancy and create its own niche for the town given time. Independent retail may be the future, but rents needs to be kept low. Long term changes more challenging. Retail not all lost but changing.

Connectivity between the town centre and tourist hotspots (Old Town and Pier) important but lacking. Need to tackle the 'no man's land' – Argos, MMH, Pelham and the Bingo facility. Places in the town centre for making / manufacturing would be a change.

Group did not get to discuss their second challenge as ran out of time.

Group 3 Housing unaffordable and our Heritage

Technical failure – no recording.

Group 4 - Reducing Co2 emissions challenge

- Agreement that it's a cross cutting theme rather than a specific challenge
- New buildings and active use auto create new emissions – how do we minimise the impact/contribute to net approach to zero
- Could do overall impact assessment of the projects on clean growth
- Need new way of thinking for capital projects and how to embed clean growth, change of perspective needed with capital projects and may need allocated more funds to make buildings green with long-term benefits
- SELEP encouraging the region to think this way?
- Recognition that coastal places are likely to be the most effected by climate change, but also opportunity or coastal towns around clean growth agenda – hydro generation, wind, solar etc – energy generation as a piece and the job growth this sector can create. Perhaps as a broader package beyond the town deal programme
- What possible industries/clusters could we attract? We need to be seeking the opportunities with everyone playing their part – make sure we have the right partners around the table.

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Lack of strong industry focus

- As a region in SELEP there is a problem that we don't have a large specific highly skilled based sector that keeps us apart. Would be good to introduce the green growth sector into it. Although we need to support existing sectors like tourism etc, we need to think about new areas/sectors. Coastal towns have an opportunity – for lots of companies like this good place to be placed next to the coast.
- Do agree scale of challenge is quite high
Yes, as we know we don't have big industry people knocking at our door to come here? Have to recognise that we are competing against other town deal areas who potentially will also want things like this so how do we address this? Across SELEP lots of spare office blocks, is that the same here? Pandemic could cause moving towards hybrid working model for office types.
- What is our aim for the sector focus? High value, low density jobs? Or generate lots of employment? Add to this furlough ending/self-employment locally – lots of unemployment potentially. How do you could that challenge with addressing this new industry focus?
- Maybe consider focussing on/nurturing risk taking small businesses/entrepreneurs rather than large industry who are risk adverse especially at the moment. Small ones then tend to want to stay in places they started in.

Group 5 – We are 65 miles from London, but it feels like 200 miles

Less of an issue with changing work patterns. Little influence over this issue. People seem to more and more disregard geography as an issue. Covid has meant being feeling so far from London is no longer an issue.

Golden opportunity to make Hastings a place to visit and stay which is far enough from London to feel like it's a break/holiday. Appears increasing wealth coming into the town, does this have knock on effect for affordability for housing. How do we turn this into benefits for the whole town? Gentrification does bring employment opportunities but can bring problems in driving people away from the town and affordability.

We are close enough to London – we don't want to be closer and become a commuter town. But we do want to sort out our more local transport issues – gateway road. Our business community may view this differently.

Regional and National transport links shouldn't be as part of towns fund challenges, but potentially longer-term regeneration issue and should be recognised at least within the narrative.

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Town centre not well connected to all its assets – station to the seafront and other cultural assets (pier, castle etc)

Main road (A259) should become a shared space not a main trunk road. In terms of making it a great place – we need to connect everything. This is at the heart of what is achievable with the town deal, what can make the best impact. This is the time to make the town centre attractive. The disconnect between the seafront and town centre needs addressing.

Tippex test – castle, Norman history, town centre used to be old Norman harbour, fishing fleet, maritime heritage. Need to address dissection of the town from its assets. The community need to have confidence in our town – our history and stories could help this – energises people. Unique, that all our best assets are walkable – should be major part of our spend.

Will addressing this challenge address other things – yes! Town centre unpleasant especially on arrival to station. Need people to experience more coherent offer. Need to be able to compete with other coastal towns and encourage businesses to want to relocate.

This challenge strengthens some of the other challenges. If heritage assets good and people have pride in them – feel more aspirational in general – might address these issues in outlying estates. Need to make sure all parts of our community can access whatever we do.

Key driver of this challenge – A259. Public realm, make most of our assets (e.g. castle etc)

Is sorting out the A259 in scope? It may cause issues with deliverability.

Group 6 – Local public transport not well connected, infrequent and expensive

Cheaper buses and more buses – all require revenue funding not capital. Through the quality bus partnership – all places that stagecoach and others said that needed priority corridors/new services and routes etc have been done. Happy to consider further through the Quality Bus Partnership forum.

Digital connectivity on offer to businesses, voluntary sector and homes limited

Some think this need is overstated. In experience of town centre and industrial estate broadband already really fast – for e-commerce, design etc. Download speeds seems to be fine, but upload speeds seem to be the issue – so maybe this is the focus as a specific issue? For the Source (which has broadcast live events) not an issue from their point of view,

Tech Box – don't see it as an issue either.

Due to Covid – can we capitalise on people working from home in Hastings?

Priory Meadows shopping centre – businesses not reported any issues, but don't have any businesses that require large upload speeds.

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Is digital exclusion the issue instead (i.e. no laptop, can't afford connection) – this should be explored more by the TD project team as part of the core reason for Town Deal – levelling up. Will require revenue funding. Should link this to the low skills agenda as part of the problem.

Library has publicly accessible computers. ESCC has paid for and issued laptops to very low-income groups during lockdown. It's about more than just having a laptop but making sure all have access to share this and broadband around.

Question: could we use the Town Deal to invest in 5g for the town, then opens other companies to provide the service rather than be beholden to BT. But this is controversial!

24. EMERGING PROJECT IDEAS AND PRIORITISATION PROCESS

Hannah explained that there were 24 applications for town deal accelerated funding, of which 4 were recommended for approval by the Executive Delivery Group. These were submitted on 14th August and a decision is expected at the end of September.

The submission deadline for project expressions of interest closes on 25th September. As of 1st September, 56 submissions have been received, combined with other bids and accelerated fund projects, there are currently over 100 submissions.

Victoria explained the project prioritisation process and that projects will be assessed using the government toolkit; including against Appendix A- intervention framework in the government guidance, against spatial boundaries and capital expenditure, and against the Treasury Green Book: value for money, affordability, achievability, commercial viability and stakeholder support.

Volunteers are sought for the project priority working group from this board by 25th September. **Action 1: Contact Victoria to volunteer or for any questions ASAP**

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Communications plan and stakeholder engagement

Hannah summarised a paper on the above (see complete report below).

Support is requested from board members to support the project team in gathering stakeholder engagement details for the TIP and for support in marketing through individual organisations and networks. The paper will be circulated after the meeting.

The project team can be contacted at: TownDeal@hastings.gov.uk if board members have any questions or comments. Meetings will be arranged to go through the communications plan and the prioritisation if members wish to attend.

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Report to: Hastings Town Deal Board

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2020

Report Title: Town Deal communications Plan and Stakeholder engagement

Report By: Hannah Brookshaw
Regeneration Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information on the communications and stakeholder engagement plan
2. To provide information on key learning from the Towns Hub on cohort 1 Town Investment Plan submissions

Recommendation(s)

1. To note the requirements of the communications and stakeholder engagement plan and learning from cohort 1.
2. For board members to support the Town Deal project team in gathering stakeholder engagement for the TIP and to support the communication of Town Deal marketing through their own organisations and networks

Reasons for Recommendations

3. A stakeholder engagement plan and evidence of engagement is a requirement for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan.
4. Due to covid, previous traditional methods of engagement such as face-to-face events are not currently possible, therefore we need to use mechanisms we have available such as the town deal board and their networks.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan – Further Guidance criteria

5. Every Town Investment Plan (TIP) should include a stakeholder engagement plan, as defined in the Further guidance document. This should demonstrate how the town will:

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- **Involve:** Show buy-in from stakeholders and the community throughout the development of the plan and beyond, particularly those who have an interest in proposals and projects
- **Support:** show how you will overcome barriers to engage a wide audience, being mindful of covid restrictions
- **Evidence:** identify the needs and resources needed to do this to agree 'how' and 'when' of the engagement to be undertaken
- **Design:** methods should be fit for purpose and demonstrate past, present and future engagement throughout the lifetime of the Town deal fund.
- **Share information** to that those who participate can make decisions and engage in the process
- **Work with others:** use the networks and organisations available to you
- **Feedback:** show how you will feedback the results of the engagement to the community and the impact their engagement has had ("You said, so we are" etc)
- **Evaluate:** monitor throughout the process and adjust as necessary to ensure the engagement meets its purpose.

Guidance and Learning from Towns Hub and cohort 1

6. The Towns Hub have produced a guidance document to assist with the development of the stakeholder engagement plan, they are also producing blogs and holding webinars on community engagement and learning from cohort 1 TIPs.
7. A recently held Towns Hub webinar has provided practical tips and feedback from cohort 1 TIPs:
 - There is no one size fits all approach, be responsive to what will work for your town
 - Use the premise of "past, present and future" as the basis for your stakeholder engagement plan – engagement should be ongoing and not just one point in time.
 - Use what resources are available to you, particular in light of covid where traditional engagement measures are not really possible:
 - what engagement has already happened – no need to start from scratch, most towns will already have a wealth of engagement work
 - activate your board members
 - use them to tap into their networks and past engagement they have done to share the messages and feedback from their networks
 - use them during project prioritisation and challenge setting process as a sounding board
 - Need to show how your 'golden thread', projects and outcomes have been informed by and shaped through your engagement.
 - Take it to a granular level for projects. Once you have decided on those that will be included in section 2 of the TIP, identify project specific stakeholders that will be engaged as part of the project development and delivery (almost a mini-plan for each one).

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Next Steps

8. Project officers will make contact with board members for details/sharing of past engagements/consultations to support the TIP, as well current and future engagement activities in the pipeline that may contribute to the process.
 9. Board members support the engagement process –
 - sharing digital media content posted by Hastings Council across their platforms and websites to widen the net of engagement
 - engaging with their networks, communities, clients and individuals to ensure views are sought in respect of project ideas (EOI process and project prioritisation) and what outcomes they want the town deal to achieve
 10. Stakeholder engagement plan and communications to be standing item on the Town Deal Board and EDG agenda to allow for flexibility and responsive approach to delivery.
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Wards Affected

Policy Implications

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
The development of the Town Investment Plan is offering any organisation and residents multiple opportunities to input and suggest projects for delivery. The board includes representation from the community (business and residents)	
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Risk log is maintained as part of the HBC project management process for this workstream	
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Town Investment Plan, if approved will bring in up to £25m Town Deal funding, plus any additional private investment/other government funding.	
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	Yes
The Stakeholder engagement plan will set out the community and others will be engaged throughout the process, not at just one point in time.	
Anti-Poverty	No

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Additional Information

Officer to Contact

Hannah Brookshaw

Regeneration Manager

26. FUTURE MEETING DATES

16 November

Agree draft of TIP, identify & agree project proposals and forming discussion on revenue ask (learning from cohort 1 & 2 feedback)

14 December

Town Deal/revenue wrap funding discussion (SWOT 4) – as included in the TIP

21 January 2021

Meet to endorse final TIP prior to submission