

Town Deal Board Agenda

Thursday, 17 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

Via Microsoft Teams

For further information, please contact TownDeal@hastings.gov.uk

		Page No.
1.	Welcome, apologies 2:00	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting Actions not covered and matters arising 2:05	1 - 8
3.	Town Investment Plan 2:15 Guidance received, direction of travel and programme of work Please see the Towns Hub support documents folder in the Town Deal Board Team shared drive for further documents	9 - 12
4.	Developing our Theory of Change Facilitated by members of the Towns Hub 2:25	
5.	Emerging project ideas and prioritisation process 3:25	13 - 30
6.	Any other business 3:50	
7.	Future meeting dates	

17 September

TIP/TOC and agree key challenges, aims and objectives and broad outcomes

Early 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

Agenda Item 2

Public Document Pack

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12. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

Members present:

Carole Dixon	Hastings Community Network
Graham Peters	SELEP and Team East Sussex
Andrew Harvey	New River Reit
Catherine Parr	BID Love Hastings Ltd
Clive Galbraith	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group
Dawn Dublin	Unveiled
Helen Kay	Hastings Opportunity Area
James Harris	East Sussex County Council
Jane Hartnell	Hastings Borough Council
Jess Steele	Heritage Action Zone
Kate Adams	Hastings and Rother Cultural Leaders Group
Liz Coleman	Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum
Richard Moore	The Source Park
Richard Watson	NHS East Sussex CCG
Sally-Ann Hart	MP for Hastings and Rother
Sean Dennis	Let's Do Business Group
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Voluntary Action

Others in attendance:

Iain McNab	Cities and Local Growth Unit
Rebecca Collings	The Nicholls Group
Simon Hubbard	Hastings Voluntary Action
Terry Hume	East Sussex County Council

Officers present:

Chantal Lass	Tackling Climate Change Programme Manager
Hannah Brookshaw	Regeneration Manager
Pranesh Datta	Economic Development Manager
Stephen Dodson	Transformation Manager
Victoria Conheady	Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture

Apologies were noted from: Stuart Mitchell, Victoria Spencer-Hughes

13. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (4TH MARCH 2020), MATTERS ARISING AND REFRESH OF VISIONING

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

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Matters arising:

- Recruitment of the Regeneration Communications Officer wasn't noted as an action point but is now being reconsidered in light of the further guidance document. Action 3 – Slido questionnaire – 7 returns were received. The project submission form which was circulated will give everyone the opportunity to provide input
- Action 4 – Declaration of Interest forms – need to be returned by Board members by 3rd July. If the form is not returned, partner's positions on the board may have to be re-considered because completion of the form is part of the brief that the HBC has been given. Victoria Conheady or Hannah Brookshaw may be contacted if there are any queries.

14. UPDATES AND CURRENT POSITION

As partners are aware, COVID-19 has delayed a number of things, including this programme. A number of interconnected things that are starting have common themes and will need to be delivered to drive sustainable economic regeneration of the town and deliver long term economic productivity and growth. These can also be used as a starting point for conversations with the community:

- East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan – is the immediate response to COVID-19 with some actions that are already happening. The plan has eight thematic areas:
 - Expand low carbon, transport and energy infrastructure
 - Help local businesses adapt, recover and grow
 - New inward investment
 - Restart the visitor economy
 - Local supplier and procurement opportunities
 - Adapting and improving place making
 - Digital connectivity and retaining skills infrastructure
 - Supporting employment and building resilience of the workforce

Some partners may have already responded to this draft plan, but further input will be welcome.

- Coastal Prospectus – is a joint document across the local South East Local Enterprise Partnership area, which has a vision to improve the economic performance around the coast, to grow the economy and narrow the gap across the area
- Hastings Local Plan – is a statutory function and is currently being refreshed
- Hastings and Rother Task Force Regeneration review – looks at regeneration activity that has been delivered in Hastings since 2001. £590m capital improvements have happened but still need to level up and deprivation is still an issue

All of these pieces of work are underway and will inform the context, analysis, strategy and priorities of the town investment plan, although a lot of work still has to be done to bring this all together.

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In addition, the Hastings Opportunity Area has been extended for a 4th year. Further details on are still awaited and work is underway on the year 4 plan. It is important to take forward the quality of education and links made with it when planning any economic regeneration work.

Jess asked if it was possible to have the above-mentioned documents in a shared site. **Action 1: This will be taken up with HBC's IT department.**

15. TOWN DEAL FURTHER GUIDANCE

Carole explained that further guidance was recently released. This emphasises that 90% of the funding is for capital investment and the revenue element will have to be sought elsewhere. There are other areas that are made clear: 1) focus should be on the town centre, but will include other areas 2) business-led thinking is encouraged although it is recognised that we want this to be community-led, this will have to be a business-led piece of work, 3) in response to COVID-19, but it needs to be medium to long term response rather than short term, which fits with the timescales and three themes, urban regeneration, skills and enterprise infrastructure and connectivity. In terms of the process, there are three potential deadlines and opportunities to submit the investment plan: 31st July, 31st October or 31st January 2021. We are not competing against other towns and there is no merit in rushing into submit an early plan. The guidance is clear that submissions have to be right first time and that there will only be one other chance to develop this further and re-submit if the first submission is not up to scratch.

The first decision for this board to make is to agree the date of submission of the investment plan. Victoria added that there would be a significant benefit to run this programme with some alignment with the Hastings local plan consultation given the spatial requirements and that public consultation will be starting in September/October. We would need to work quickly to get the initial priority projects identified by that period to work up a full consultation on these. The council, as lead authority recommends this be 31st January 2021. In the case that the projects identified have a revenue element, James Harris asked for clarification as to whether there is any flexibility in the programme. Iain McNab advised that 10% of revenue funding is across the whole programme and not per place. The presumption is that this is a predominantly capital programme and a case can be made for revenue projects, but funding will only be granted on exceptional grounds.

Dan asked if we go for the last deadline, will those submitting against the first two deadlines receive the bulk of the funding. It was reiterated that it has been made clear in the guidance that this is not the case and we are not competing against other Town Deal areas.

There was general agreement that a longer lead in time would enable sufficient time to do the work needed, for consultation with the community and would work better in case there is a second wave of COVID-19.

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The meeting unanimously agreed that the investment plan will be submitted on 31st January 2021. It is expected that a decision on this and Heads of Terms will be signed by the end of March 2021. There will be up to a year to work on the next phase – producing business cases, with then a further five years for project delivery and implementation.

With regards to the tendering stage, Hannah explained that short-term actions are to:

- Amend the terms of reference to reflect the updated guidance that has been received. These will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.
- Review the diversity of the membership and ways to engage a younger representative are being looked into as agreed at the March meeting
- Consider setting up working groups and use this as an opportunity to engage wider stakeholders and community members
- Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to inform project development and delivery

In terms of the investment plan and community engagement tenders, these were opened on the procurement hub portal, a couple of weeks prior to lockdown, but the work had to be paused. The tender documentation and requirement to use consultants is now being reviewed in light of the further guidance received and HBC will be liaising with Rebecca, the Towns Fund Coordinator.

With regards to community engagement, it was clarified that there has been a raft of work that has already taken place and is due take place. Jess explained that the conversations mentioned have come together to put in a bid to the Lottery Emerging Futures Fund, that will help those who have worked on the community hub to work out ways to join the dots and co-create the work rather than hire a consultant to do so. In addition, as Hastings is a very diverse town, Liz suggested that this is demonstrated in the investment plan submission.

Rebecca explained that she has been appointed as the Town Coordinator for Hastings and eight other towns in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area and some of the other towns that are going through this same programme. Rebecca works for Nicholls, a consultancy, which has been specialising in supporting public and private sector organisations to deliver complex programmes for over 45 years now. Nicholls is part of the consortium that has been appointed by MHCLG to work with, help and advise the 101 towns going through this process. The consortium is led by ARUP, and there are a number of experts providing advice on public realm, heritage, skills and education and there is also a group of experts available to help with drafting the plan and business cases that will follow.

As per the guidance, there are a lot of requirements to be met and Rebecca's role is to ensure we get the best advice and support when developing our investment plan, so our submission is right the first time based on what Hastings needs. A meeting has been arranged for next week to get more of a sense as to where Hastings is in the process and what other support is needed. In addition, a website has been set up.

Action 2: details will be circulated with the notes from the meeting. Website address is: www.townsfund.org.uk

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16. TOWN DEAL PROJECT SUBMISSIONS WORKSHOP SESSION

Victoria explained that the focus of this session is to identify any 'shovel ready' projects, identify new ideas, focus on interventions in the town centre and open up discussions from partners.

In summary, there are 52 potential projects, mostly broad and macro in detail:

- 9 Local transport
- 2 Digital Connectivity
- 22 Urban regeneration, planning and land use
- 5 Arts, Culture and heritage
- 10 Skills infrastructure
- 4 Enterprise infrastructure

Some of the emerging town centre projects are:

- White Rock Baths courtyard enterprise project – Richard explained that this is phase 2 of the project, following the phase 1 work that started in 2013, which resulted in The Source Park opening in 2016. There are a number of rooms alongside the courtyard and the idea is that The Source will be the anchor tenant and a hub for retail leisure and hospitality will be created. The feasibility study has been completed and the project is ready to go. There was general support for this project and that this project was worth exploring further and building it up to be one of the potential projects
- Observer building project – Jess explained that the building has been derelict for 35 years. It was bought in February 2019, is 4,000 sq metres in size over seven stories. The planning application was submitted on 1st May and is viewable on the HBC website and partner support and comments is sought. The building is part of the Hastings Commons which started with Rock House in 2014 and now includes a whole range of building in that small area clustered around the alley in Claremont. Rock House has six affordable flats, 42 micro enterprises and a community kitchen. The Observer could give 166 full time equivalent long-term jobs when completed as well as 10 gross job years during construction. The jobs will be for local people, so when going out to tender, local labour and supplier clauses will be written. Phase 1 has been funded and is ready to start, tendering will start in September and it is expected works will commence in November, and completed in Summer next year. the next phase is for the alley level and ground floor, universal access, putting the lift in, allowing access from the front door and the alley level. This project will be explored further as a potential project.
- Heritage Action Zone capital projects (12 Claremont) – Kate explained that Heart of Hastings and Project Artworks led the community asset transfer for the building. The plan is for a phased development over the next 3-5 years, depending on the speed at the right capital funds can be acquired, to create an ultra-inclusive town centre community hub with focus on a gallery and project space on the ground floor, that will represent neuro-divergent artists and makers and also provide space for family carers and pier support training and volunteer opportunities. The basement will be a project space that will provide wide access to communities for various uses and will be run by Project Artworks. The top floor will be made into work spaces for creative people, with a strong inclusive element and for the middle

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floors, proposals are in place to create live work space for creatives, including one or two units for those who may need different kind of support to live independently, but all with capped and affordable rent.

- Town Centre Hotel – Hannah explained that the proposed site is on the site of the Cornwallis car park and it is looking to enter into an agreement with a hotel chain to develop and operate the hotel site. HBC Cabinet approved the decision to explore the opportunity in further detail in December last year. The work was paused due to COVID-19 but it is expected that a follow up report to set out the next phase of the agreement process and hopefully agree heads of terms will go to Cabinet shortly. There are a number of jobs, additional hotel spaces and other items that may need to be looked at in terms of benefits to the area. Details will be brought to this board once these have been confirmed with the hotel chain board.
- Station Plaza – work is being carried out on the East Sussex College Group's Estates Strategy and the concepts of a small conference facility and development of the ground floor as commercial space are being investigated as there are several outlets there already. Although not directly skills related, but directly linked to businesses.
- Energy infrastructure – should also be investigated as there have been a lot of discussion around how to attract new green and green technology companies to the town and there is an opportunity to explore these

There are also a number of other opportunities and empty spaces that may be coming up in the town centre which would be worthwhile to explore. An expression of interest form will be placed on the HBC website after this meeting, which will be made available to a wider audience to get more ideas.

It was suggested that a walking tour around the town centre should take place to look at the various sites. **Action 3: a tour should be arranged, COVID-19 allowing.** It was also suggested that a video could be created, possibly by students at the college. It was also suggested that public sector owned buildings should be considered and Steve suggested he could be the link between this body and the SPACES Board, which is the East Sussex-wide estates body.

A list of premises, spaces, sizes and uses would be useful to get a better understanding. **Action 4: a list will be created as part of the Town Investment Plan development process.**

17. ESTABLISHMENT OF THEMATIC AREA WORKING GROUPS

Steve explained that the proposal is that we move to setting up working groups each led by a member of the board to look at intervention areas based on the guidance. By doing so, we will have the opportunity to move beyond this board structure and input could be sought from other partners who are not members of this board. Terms of reference will be set up and chairs of the groups will be members of this board. It is intended to align this work with other working groups that are happening, bearing in mind the available resources and timescales of this work.

A way forward will be identified following this meeting as there was concern around capacity of board members to participate in this set-up.

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18. NEW MEMBERS TO THE TOWN DEAL BOARD

Both Liz and Dawn indicated their agreement to join the board and were welcomed.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

2pm, Thursday, 17th September 2020

Ad hoc meetings may be called as and when required.

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Agenda Item 3

Report to: Hastings Town Deal Board

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2020

Report Title: Town Investment Plan Template Guidance

Report By: Pranesh Datta
Economic Development Manager

Town Investment Plan template

Town Investment Plans should be clear, concise and accessible documents. The content is split into two sections. Section 1 outlines the context, strategy and process, and Section 2 provides details of prioritised project proposals.

TIP section 1: Section 1 of the Town Investment Plan should be no longer than a total of 10,000 words and a file size of no more than 20MB, exclusive of any annexes. It should be provided as a pdf document. Annexes may be included if required, as a separate document (with all annexes in one document), however it is advised that any key messages from annexes are distilled and included in the main text to aid assessment.

The document must be structured according to the three main sections (Context analysis, Strategy, Engagement and delivery). These sections should cover the content set out in the guidance (and again below), however, it is not compulsory that this content be set out under the subheadings listed below, so long as it is clearly marked where each aspect is being covered.

Past that, you have flexibility in how to structure, present and format your TIP. You are encouraged to make use of diagrams, maps, and charts, and to include summaries and signposts to help guide the reader. Once heads of terms have been agreed, a public-facing version of the document should be made available online. You may wish to flag which information in your TIP is considered sensitive.

Context analysis

- Map of agreed town boundary and related context
- The main challenges facing the town
- Evidence of need, relevant to proposed projects
- The town's assets and strengths
- Key opportunities for the town

Strategy

- Town vision, and headline outcomes and/or targets for 2030 or beyond

- Short summary of all projects, including the total Towns Fund funding requested
- Strategic plan, including:
 - Underlying evidence
 - Analysis and rationale
 - Objectives, targets, and priority areas for the short, medium and long term
 - Spatial strategy, including the recognition of the distribution of impact across town geography and demographics. If the total bid is for over £25 million, impact at a regional and/or national scale must also be analysed and demonstrated.
- Mapping of all strategies, partnerships, programmes and investments relevant to the vision and strategy, and how they will be aligned (including the accelerated capital funding, Covid-19 recovery and clean growth).

Engagement and delivery

- Clear evidence of buy-in from local businesses and communities, description of how they have been engaged throughout the development of this plan, and how this engagement will continue
- Demonstration of commitments from private-sector players, and ambitions for private-sector investment going forwards (clearly showing the total private-sector funding leveraged to date)
- High-level plan of business case development and appraisal for each project including the identification of the Accountable Body
- High-level delivery plan with justification of deliverability

TIP section 2: Section 2 of the TIP should contain key details of the projects you are proposing to receive Towns Fund funding for. The attached excel sheet sets out the details to include, and all cells in the template should be filled in. You should submit just one excel file with different worksheets within it for each project. To add more projects into the workbook, copy and paste the template into a new worksheet for each additional project.

Since the publication of the further guidance, adjustments have been made to the way projects will be assessed. Benefit-cost ratio and the level of match-funding secured will no longer be included in the criteria for project assessment. The project assessment criteria will be:

- Alignment with intervention framework
- Strategic, evidence-based, place-focused rationale
- Scale of outputs and outcomes, realism of theory of change
- Deliverability, risks and match funding
- Cost comparison

Submission: To submit your completed TIP (both section 1 and 2) you should email the files to towns.fund@communities.gov.uk by the deadline for your agreed cohort.

Report to: Hastings Town Deal Board

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2020

Report Title: Town Hub Briefing Update 7th August 2020

**Report By: Pranesh Datta
Economic Development Manager**

Town Fund – discussion with Town Hub support officer Rebecca Collins and specialist advisors.

Key points of advice to note:

1. The TIP needs to clearly show it has been developed using the principles of Theory of Change. **Theory of Change** is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is required and what is expected to happen in a particular social and economic programme.
2. For this to be articulated in the TIP we require agreement amongst Town Board members of the following set of principles.
 - a. A clear vision for the town, one which is achievable and realistic
 - b. To set out the key challenges for the town from which to derive five or six clear aims and objectives for the Town Investment Plan and ones which the Town Fund can address. The aims and objectives can be broader than the Town Fund, and as part of the Town Deal would require wider investment and partnership working.
 - c. Clearly articulate why these challenges and objectives are important to the town and prioritise them.
 - d. All projects submitted will need to be tested on how they deliver against these broad objectives and their proposed outcomes/impact.
 - e. The TIP needs to be bold, transformational and not come across as an ad hoc set of project proposals, which using the Theory of Change process will avoid.
 - f. The process of prioritising projects needs to be compliant with the Treasury's Green Book
 - g. Some form of Value for Money assessment is necessary – further guidance to follow.
 - h. As well as fitting with the Town Fund themes, the key cross-cutting principle of clean inclusive growth also needs to be met for any objectives and programmes/projects

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Agenda Item 5

Report to: Hastings Town Deal Board

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2020

Report Title: Emerging project ideas and EOI report

Report By: Hannah Brookshaw
Regeneration Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on the Accelerated fund proposals
2. To provide an overview of EOIs received up to date with emerging projects

Recommendation(s)

1. To note and for discussion the range of EOIs and projects in development
2. To note the update on the accelerated funds progress and feedback from government, along with projected timelines

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Submission to MHCLG for accelerated fund proposals took place on the 14th August Further clarity on timescales has been received.
2. EOIs have been open since June 2020 and this report attempts to categorise them and link them with the towns fund intervention framework, our emerging theory of change and existing policies, initiatives or major programmes of work.

Accelerated fund update

3. Overview of the Accelerated fund process is in Appendix A.
4. Out of 24 applications 4 projects were recommended for approval by the EDG as the strongest in terms of:
 - Strategic fit
 - Alignment with intervention framework
 - Deliverability
 - Value for money
5. This package was endorsed by 14 members of the board, with no objections, prior to submission. Delegated authority was also given to the co-chairs and the EDG to agree further details and negotiate any deviation from original submission. It is noted that several board members were conflicted.
6. All but two of the original 24 applications were from Board members.
7. Section 151 officer also endorsed the projects, and these were submitted to the government on 14th August 2020 with decision expected by end of September 2020.
8. The 4 projects are as follows:

White Rock Baths (part of The Source Park)

Re-develop the remainder of the site that has been derelict for decades. The funding will be used refurbish and re-open the units around the outdoor courtyard, transforming them into unique market-style retail and food outlets.

Employment, Events and advice hub at East Sussex Colleges Group Station Plaza building

This will repurpose part of the ground floor to offer a; one-stop shop employability/job seeking centre where job centre plus, employers, careers advisors and employability organisations can all provide help to those needing a job or skilling in a new job, a conferencing/training facility and a tourism training hub for students.

Increasing the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging points

Installation of additional fast electric vehicle charging points in seafront and town centre car parks. This will allow opportunities for visitors with electric vehicles to travel more confidently to our town as well as contribute to ambitions in the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy.

New retail, training and outdoor space at 'Hastings Commons' located in the Lower Alley behind Claremont

This project will continue the ongoing improvements to the alley area and add to the ever growing independent and quirky America Ground, Rock House and Observer building quarter.

Project ideas received from the EIO process - overview: (as at 1 September 2020)

9. The Expression of interest form went live on the HBC website in late June and due to be closed.
10. It was publicised via the council's social media and was also picked up via a press release with Hastings Observer.
11. In the appendix we have given the project description overview from all the EOIs we have received to date and from other sources as listed below:
 - Facebook comments
 - comments on the Hastings Observer website
 - comments on the My Town government website
 - original comments when the programme was launched
 - all accelerated fund applications (even those which were not assessed due to ineligibility)
 - all officer and direct emails related to project ideas we have received
 - all 'live' or previous bid ideas generated by HBC from the past 4 years

EOI:

12. 56 EOIs have been received as at 1 September. Of these a number are at project concept stage, some are from organised/recognised groups and some are from residents.
13. In addition to EOIs we are also including pipeline applicable projects which have recently been considered for other funding opportunities (however we can only include these projects where we have the details -partnership work is ongoing here to build this pipeline):
 - a. All accelerated fund applications (24)
 - b. Get Britain building Hastings applications (where we have the details) 4
 - c. Recent past bids which included capital programmes such as:
 - i. Past funding bids such as:
 1. Coastal Communities bids
 2. ACE/HE bids
 3. Homes England bids
 4. CHART CLLD capital bids

5. Local Growth Funds
6. Growing Places fund applications
7. Active transport ideas/bids
8. Programmes and recent feasibility studies into significant regeneration programmes such as – DESTI-Smart (Electric tram/transport) and Bohemia (culture/Leisure and Housing)

ii. We are also considering sites within our local plan which are identified for development – such as town centre sites.

14. This equates to approx. 100 project ideas.

15. Given the programme timelines for the TIP submission the call for EOIs closes on the 25th September. The closure of the call will be publicised widely.

16. The EOI form is a deliberately surface level document designed to enable anyone, whether they just have an idea they want to share or a more worked up proposal. We will use this initial information to then conduct a project prioritisation and assessment process, more detail of which can be found in Agenda item 5.

17. The majority of EOI's received fall within the Local transport and urban, regeneration and land use categories within the Intervention Framework structure in the government's 'Further Guidance document'. Approximately a fifth of EOI's sit under enterprise/skills infrastructure and arts, culture and heritage.

18. There is a real mix of EOI's submitted in terms of the size, scope and type of project. Although there are a number of key themes coming through including green travel (cycling improvements, electric bus/park and ride, walking, seafront tram), green landscaping of public realm, green transport (double up as visitor attractions) and visitor attractions/placemaking.

Officer to Contact

Hannah Brookshaw

Regeneration Manager

Appendix A – Accelerated fund process

A summary of the accelerated funds process undertaken in Hastings

Introduction

1. The accelerated fund announcement was made on the 1st July 2020.

2. Strong focus was given that the fund would only support the following:
 - Capital only projects
 - Projects which would complete by the 31st March 2021
 - Projects which were NOT phases of larger schemes (i.e. they could stand alone)
 - Projects were encouraged which resulted in:
 - i. Improvements to or new parks, green spaces and sustainable transport links
 - ii. Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
 - iii. Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit
3. Given Hastings town deal board has not agreed on any shovel ready programmes for the main scheme a limited call was made for project ideas.
 - This involved writing to all HBC councilors and HBC staff asking them to send the message through to their networks. Emails were also sent to the Town Deal Board asking them for project ideas and suggestions. Other organisations were also asked to spread the word:
 - i. Business Improvement District conducted a survey to identify potential projects
 - ii. Heritage Action Zone board meeting was advised and asked for projects
 - iii. Chamber of Commerce publicised a call for projects
 - iv. Coastal Users Group and Grants Advisory Panel (advisory bodies of the Foreshore Trust) were also asked for projects
 - v. Officers also reviewed all EOIs which have been submitted via our website for the larger towns fund to identify
 - vi. Dedicated approaches were made by board members and council officers:
4. The deadline for expression of interests was 12noon on July 22nd 2020.
5. The projects need to be submitted in a letter to government on the 14th August 2020.
6. We have been advised that with regard to governance this will be incorporated into our submission of our Town Investment Plan, were we will need to articulate how the projects funded by these monies support our vision and response to recovery in Hastings.

Assessment of applications

7. The Town Deal Board has not been constructed to consider a grants programme, but rather work on a strategy which incorporates an agreed range of projects which align with our theory of change. As such no formal grant assessment or mechanism is enshrined within it's terms or reference or governance. As such the process for assessment was outlined in an email to the board on the 6th July.

8. Once it was clear that a number of applications involved HBC and due to conflict of interest within the council officers (as there are a number of HBC projects) Philip Johnson, Director of Locate East Sussex was asked to independently assess all the projects, along with HBC Town Deal project team senior officers.
9. The assessment team met via Microsoft Teams 22nd July and an initial assessment was undertaken. The assessment looked at the following questions:
 - Was the project a phase within a larger programme?
 - Did it include revenue?
 - Could it be delivered in time?
 - Was it located in the correct area?
 - Was the initiative impactful enough to show some immediate change or was the project better to be built up for the town investment plan?
10. As the submission to government also needs Section 151 Officer approval a meeting was had with the Chief Finance Officer, the Managing Director and the leader of the council on the 23rd July, to agree the recommendation of any projects which may involve council assets prior to this paper being written, and to ensure delivery is not held up by the council processes.
11. A total 28 applications were submitted. Two were not submitted in the correct format and one was submitted after the deadline so 24 projects were assessed, with a total ask of £4,211,500. Over 4 times the amount of funding available.
12. Fifteen of those projects submitted were not eligible within the accelerated call. This was due to six main factors:
 - The project was clearly a phase of a larger scheme and would be difficult to identify as a stand-alone project
 - The project would not be delivered within the timescale
 - The project included revenue costs
 - The project did not add any additionality to the programme (i.e. part of owners repairs and renewals responsibility)
 - Insufficient detail identified to assess fully
 - The project needed considerable further development and fit with a wider town strategy and investment plan.
13. In assessing the applications, the assessment team attempted to ensure they were assessed in terms of the organisations' ability to deliver their proposals, how closely the proposed activities match the priorities of the accelerated fund and the wider town fund ambitions and value for money.
14. Following a full assessment process, the assessment team, HBC senior leadership agreed, along with support from the EDG, agreed to recommend and submit the 4 strongest projects listed in the main report.

Report to: Hastings Town Deal Board

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2020

Report Title: Project assessment and prioritisation process

**Report By: Victoria Conheady
Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture**

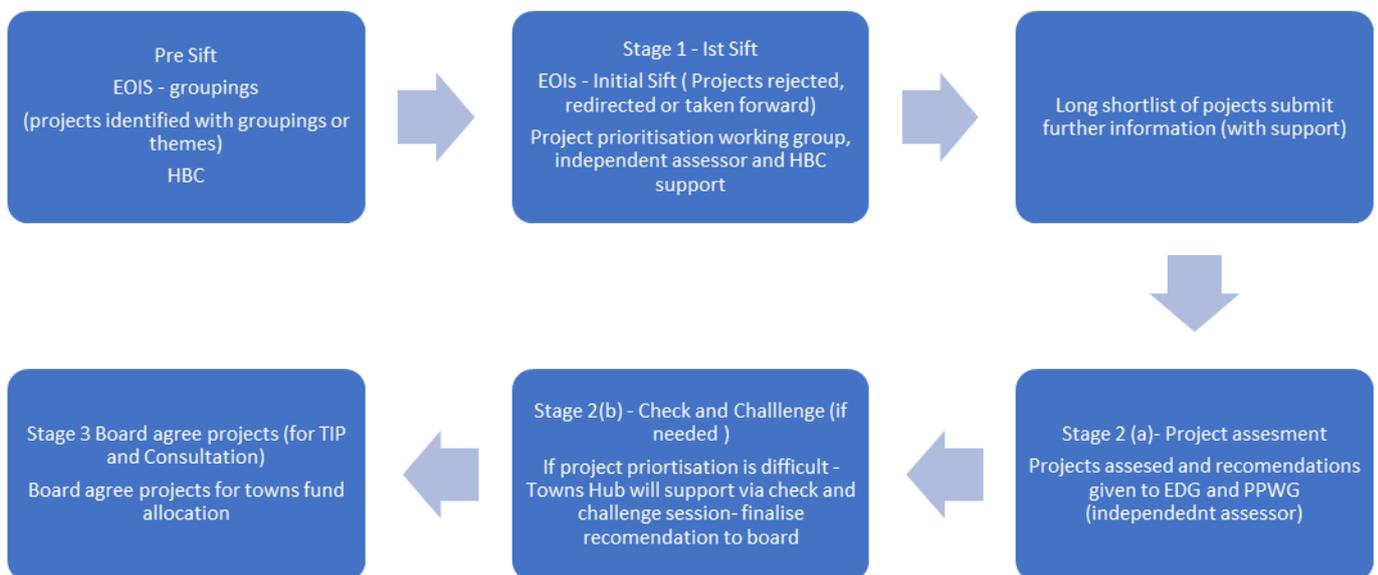
Background

1. The board agreed to try to focus towns fund investment on a small number of big ambitious projects. It is recognised that these projects need to be innovative but have a sustainable business model.
2. To date we have received 100s of ideas, via EOIs, accelerated funds, Facebook and social media comments, emails and partnership discussions. It would be unmanageable to assess all these as a whole board.
3. There is also a significant risk of conflict of interest within the board and lead authority on approx. 75% of the EOIs and formal applications.
4. The levels of detail which have been submitted vary significantly between organised groups with well developed projects to ideas and concepts submitted from individuals and residents. We do need to remember that we have time to develop and deliver project beyond the next 2 years, and these less worked up ideas need to be considered on a level playing field.
5. We will be learning from the 1st cohort of towns and there are significant resources related to this, which is available to all town board members on the towns hub website: <https://townsfund.org.uk/>
6. Of particular relevance are a couple of blog posted on project prioritisation during August, appendix 1 or via the following links: [Project-prioritisation-from-long-list-to-short-list](#)

[Project Prioritisation 101](#)
7. Our suggested process, is based on the above good practice
8. Since June officers have been developing a range of tools to asses projects, and these, together with documents and tools developed and made available via the towns hub (and which can be found on the above website) will be utilised to aid assessment of the projects.

9. However, the key element to assessment and especially prioritisation is developing our theory of change, and identifying which specific issues or challenges we, as a board, agree to focus this investment on.
10. Aiding and informing this process is the workshop we will be undertaking today, and the various evidence and pieces of work which have been undertaken recently related to:
 - a. Local Plan
 - b. Coastal Prospectus
 - c. Hastings and Rother Task Force Review
 - d. East Sussex Economy Recovery plan
 - e. And the feedback from the SWOT sessions we have and are undertaking
 - f. Survey and consultation around the local plan.

Project Assessment and prioritisation process overview:



Step	Narrative
Pre Sift	Undertaken by HBC officers with ESCC officer support Group by theme, agreed challenges and spatial area. Identification of projects which may be revenue funding Identification of projects which could be 'quick wins', or 'shovel ready' or already in development which can be delivered by existing programmes or funded by other more suitable schemes No rejections at this stage
Stage 1 – Sift Part 1	Undertaken by PPWG and Independent assessor HBC officers recommend the following to the working group: 1) rejected and reasons for 2) projects already being delivered 3) projects which are quick wins and can be achieved through partnership or existing

	programmes 4) projects more suited to alternative funding streams or programmes
Part 2	Independent Assessor and PPWG agree the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rejections due to non-fit with Appendix A, challenges and location, revenue - Projects identified which could be funded via other funding streams - Projects identified for more information needed - Project lead organisations identified/follow up actions identified. <p>Maximum of 20 projects between £1m and £7m each *(projects can be a combined programme incorporating a number of schemes though needs to have a lead partner identified, for example – town centre public realm incorporating a range of projects collectively costing £5m from towns fund)</p>
Stage 2(a)	Independent assessment of projects Proposed Projects presented to EDG and PPWG for discussion and agreement
Stage 2 (b)	If PPWG/EDG or independent assessor unable to decide on project prioritisation – towns hub 'Check and Challenge session' to support decision making
Stage 3	PPWG/EDG recommend projects to Board for discussion/ratification and endorsement
Next steps	TIP part 2 completed Consultation DRAFT presented to December 14 th board for agreement. Consult for 1 month Final TIP agreed January board – for submission.

Independent assessment

11. Given the potential risk of conflict of interest we are currently out to quotation for an independent consultant to assess projects ideas and EOIs. They will aid the board in project prioritisation process as set out above. The closing date for this tender is the 25th September 2020.

12. The independent assessor will be working with the proposed project assessment and prioritisation working group (PPWG) at stage 1. They will be solely assessing the more detailed applications at stage 2(a) to ensure impartiality of the board's decisions.

Project assessment and prioritisation working group

13. Given the number of EOIs received we will be setting up a small subgroup which will be tasked with aiding the assessment and prioritisation of projects which will be recommended as being part of our Towns Fund allocation.

14. They will also aid our discussions regarding 'wrapper projects' and potential revenue spend. We are asking for volunteers (up to 6) in order to manage potential conflict of interest. Proposed Terms of reference are found in Appendix 2.

15. This working group replaces the proposed themed working groups discussed in June. However, we may still need a theme 'champion' or sub group to sculpt a particular programme theme, (such as jobs and skills, culture, transport and public realm and others) if this is needed. This will be identified through our key challenges and agreed theory of change and will be informed by the projects which will be identified as being worked up at stage 1 of assessment.

Timelines

16. Working back from the need to produce a draft town investment plan for consultation by the 14th December deadlines are as follows:

Stage	By when?
EOI close date	25/09/20
Pre-sift	30/09/20
1 st Sift	6/10/20
Further information deadline	25/10/20
Independent Assessment	5/11/20
EDG/PPWG meeting to agree recommendation of projects to board	Before 11/11/20
Board endorsement	11/11/20 board (TBC)
Draft Consultation TIP agreed	14/12/20
Consultation – publish draft TIP and ask for comments etc	14/12-14/1
Final TIP agreed	21/1/21
TIP submitted	31/1/21

Additional Information

Appendix 1 – Blog project prioritisation

Appendix 2 – TOR project prioritisation working group

Officer to Contact

Pranesh Datta

Economic Development Manager

Project Prioritisation 101

Topics & Services

Margaret Kalaugher (from Town Hub web page)

A nice challenge facing many towns is the vast number of proposals for different interventions to solve problems, shape and change a town for the better. These proposals will have formed in lots of different ways: some will have come out of political discussion; some will have emerged from a technical need; and some from the local community. What's very clear is that it's not possible to do them all; the reality of funding and resource limitations, feasibility and politics will all play a part in limiting options. So how do we know which ones we should do first, or at all?

Most towns will naturally do some kind of prioritisation process already, whether through discussion in a board meeting, or an initial filtering by officers. But how do we know if decisions have been made in a robust, consistent way as opposed to it being somebody's pet project or who spoke loudest? How do we know if we've looked at the projects from relevant perspectives and ensured that they're the right ones to be doing right now? How do we know if the projects represent relative value for money? How do we know if the projects selected will stand up to scrutiny when things go wrong or change down the line? How do we help politicians make decisions and community, business and funders understand that decisions have been made in a transparent way?

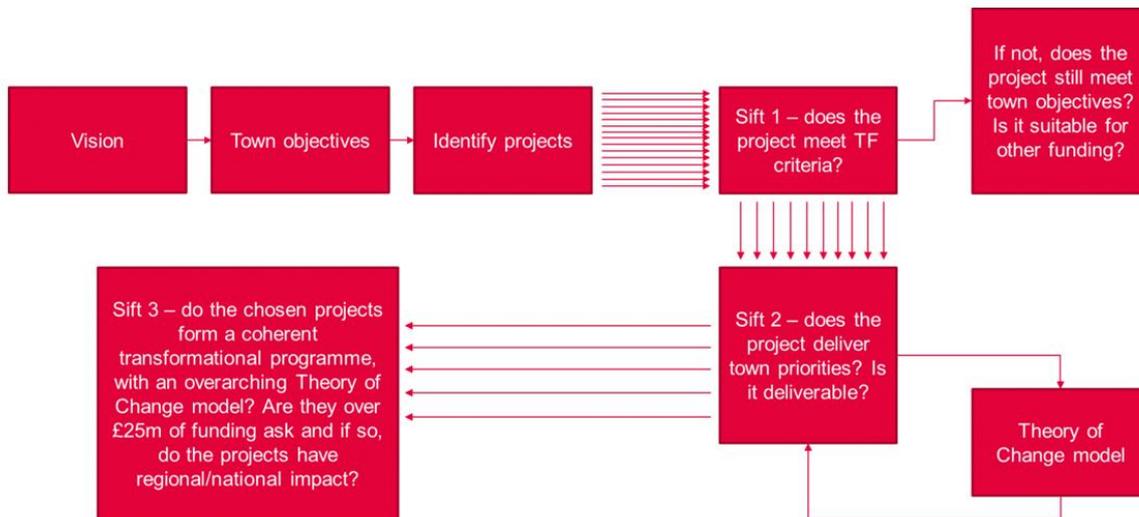
That's where asking a clear set of questions of each project and using a prioritisation tool can really help with decision making, and MHCLG is keen to see evidence of a project prioritisation process in the Town Investment Plan.

https://townsfund.org.uk/s/Project-Prioritisation-Tool_v1.xlsx

Above link to the project prioritisation tool kit to be used.

Ultimately, the decision on which projects are put forward will be a political one, but used in the right way, a set of questions and a tool can help ensure that projects have been selected following a rigorous process. The process should not backsolve the preferred project to fit the prioritisation process and should involve key stakeholders.

Below is an overview of a project prioritisation process that could be used, from setting a clear vision and objectives through to a final prioritised list:



Once vision and objectives have been established and potential projects identified, it's useful to do a first sift to see if individual projects meet key Towns Fund criteria. If they don't, but there is still merit, then are they suitable for other funding streams?

After this initial sift and the creation of a long list, projects should be assessed against the town objectives which should be based on the vision and local policies, including COVID-19 recovery and Clean Growth. During this second sift, a look at the Theory of Change for each project will be helpful to see if there is a clear chain of logic between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The Theory of Change model recommended by MHCLG can be found in the [Magenta Book](#) (page 24).

Finally, a third sift will help look at the programme of chosen projects as a whole and ask whether together they form a transformational programme and their sum is greater than their parts. It's also important to think at this stage about how outcomes could be measured and evaluated.

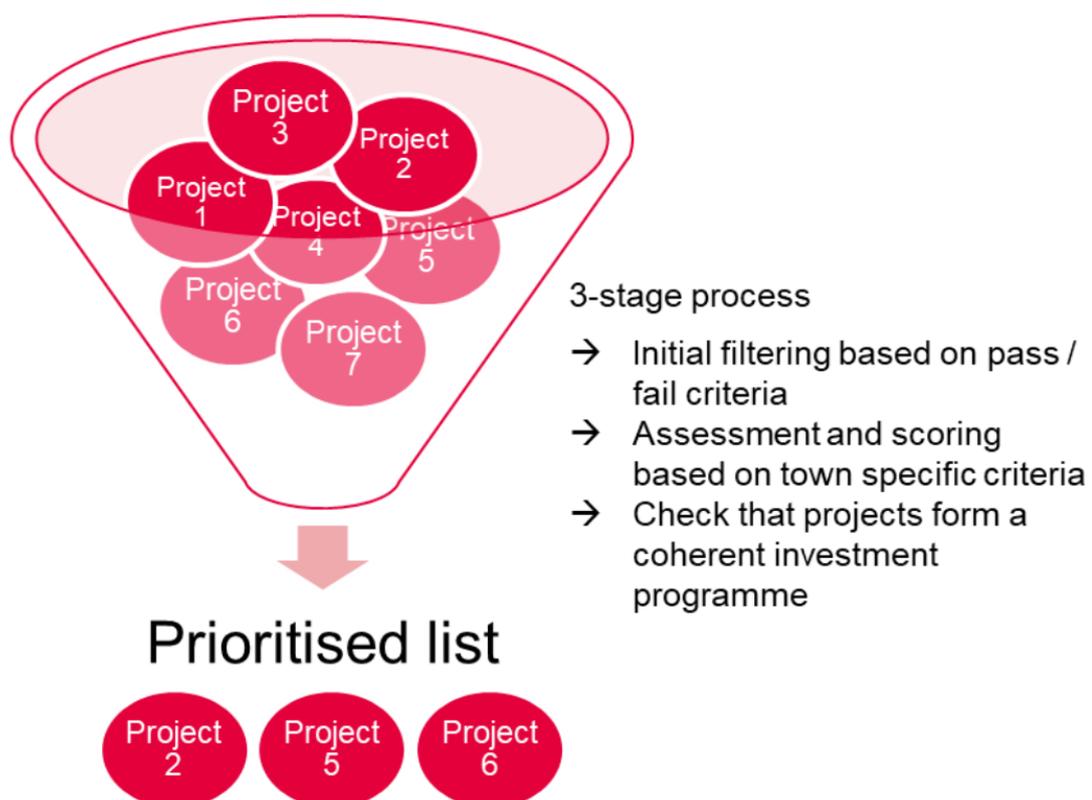
Our first entry blog on project prioritisation explained at a high level what prioritisation is about and set out the overall process, from understanding the need for investment, setting a vision and objectives, and identifying a shortlist of projects that support these objectives. In this entry, we focus on the key part of the process: how to choose which projects should go into an investment plan out of a long list of potential schemes.

The shortlisting process is not an easy task and is influenced by judgement. Even if we follow a clear and structured method, ultimately the choice of projects is a political decision. However structure does help - it enables us to assess projects on a consistent basis and provide robust advice to politicians. A useful way of undertaking this process is through a three-stage process, whereby the town or investment promoter filters the initial long list with pass or fail criteria and then moves on to score projects based on agreed objectives and vision. In the case of the Towns Fund, pass or fail criteria should focus on identifying the projects in scope – e.g. is the project a capital investment? is it located within the town boundary? is it related to the Towns Fund investment themes? is it compatible with clean growth and could it potentially help with Covid-19 recovery?. Once projects in scope have been identified, a more detailed assessment based on scores, usually 1-5, should be undertaken to identify the prioritised list. Finally, the investment promoter (e.g. the town) should check that all investments shortlisted form a coherent investment programme that can support the vision for the area.

Before the scoring or assessment can happen, a crucial step (and sometimes controversial!!) is agreeing the objectives that the projects should be assessed against. These should be specific to the local context and should support the vision for investment, while also accounting for practical considerations (e.g. do we have the capabilities to deliver the project?). A useful guide for identifying

objectives is thinking about the five cases of a standard business case (strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management) – does the project meet our strategic objectives (these will be different for each town), is it value for money from an economic perspective, is it affordable, is it commercially viable and can we deliver it? Overall, prioritisation criteria should be discussed in detail to make sure they reflect well the strategic objectives.

It is worth noting that to support a robust assessment of projects, the evidence of need should be clear and comprehensive. This way we are able to understand how projects can address existing challenges and support our objectives. Once we have our list of projects in scope and our objectives agreed, we can finally score our projects and rank them based on the assessment to inform the final prioritised list, clearly identifying the rationale for scoring.



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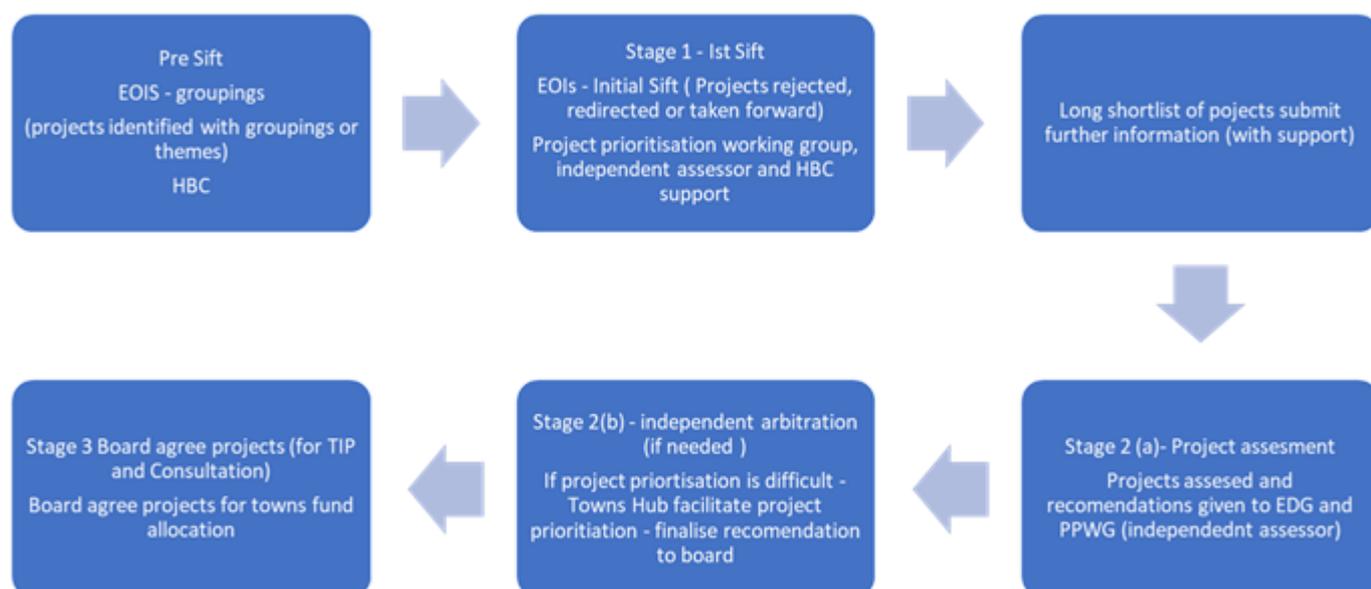
Hastings Town Fund Project Prioritisation Sub Group (Terms of Reference)

The Towns Fund is a programme launched by the government for towns like Hastings to improve its economy and improve the prospect of its residents. Hastings is eligible to bid for up to £25m for the [Town Fund](#).

A Town Deal Board has been established to oversee the development of the bid and shape the vision and strategy for the town fund. A key challenge for the Board is to select the right interventions from the vast number of proposals from different interventions to solve the towns problems. What's very clear is that it's not possible to do them all; the reality of funding and resource limitations, feasibility, scale, programme management, capacity and politics will all play a part in limiting options.

The purpose of the Town Board Project Prioritisation Sub Group is to work with the council's Town Fund project team and an independent consultant to advise on the selection of final set of projects for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan.

Hastings Project assessment and prioritisation process:



Step	Narrative
Pre Sift	Undertaken by HBC officers with ESCC officer support Group by theme, agreed challenges and spatial area. Identification of projects which may be revenue funding Identification of projects which could be 'quick wins', or 'shovel ready' or already in development which can be delivered by existing programmes or funded by other more suitable schemes No rejections at this stage
Stage 1 – Sift	Undertaken by PPWG and Independent assessor Part 1

Part 1	HBC officers recommend the following to the working group: 1) rejected and reasons for 2) projects already being delivered 3) projects which are quick wins and can be achieved through partnership or existing programmes 4) projects more suited to alternative funding streams or programmes
Part 2	Assessor and PPWG agree the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rejections due to non-fit with Appendix A, challenges and location, revenue - Projects identified which could be funded via other funding streams - Projects identified for more information needed - Project lead organisations identified/follow up actions identified. <p>Maximum of 20 projects between £1m and £7m each *(projects can be a combined programme incorporating a number of schemes though needs to have a lead partner identified, for example – town centre public realm incorporating a range of projects collectively costing £5m from towns fund)</p>
Stage 2(a)	Independent assessment of projects Proposed Projects presented to EDG and PPWG for discussion and agreement
Stage 2 (b)	If PPWG/EDG or independent assessor unable to decide on project prioritisation – towns hub arbitration/support with decision
Stage 3	PPWG/EDG recommend projects to Board for discussion/ratification and endorsement
Next steps	TIP part 2 completed Consultation DRAFT presented to December 14 th board for agreement. Consult for 1 month Final TIP agreed January board – for submission.

Key Tasks of the Town Board Project Prioritisation Sub Group

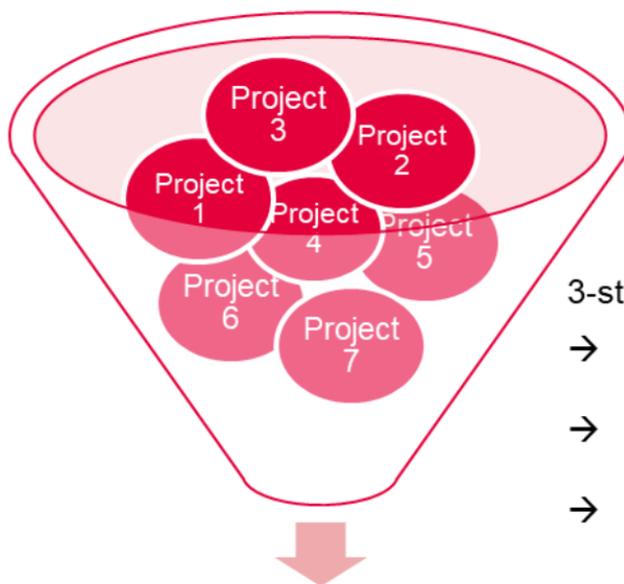
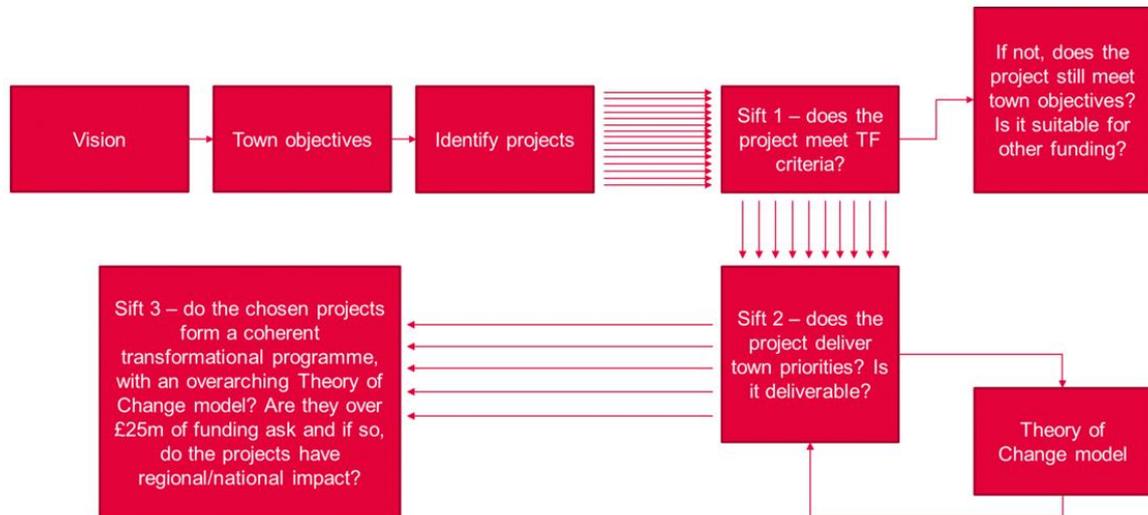
1. Utilise the agreed (by the Board) key criteria's against which will all projects will be measured throughout the assessment and prioritisation process See outline process below above.
2. To work with the consultant and HBC Town Board project team to assess projects for sifting as required.
3. To assist/ advise in populating the governments project prioritisation tool kit as attached https://townsfund.org.uk/s/Project-Prioritisation-Tool_v1.xlsx
4. To ensure all projects, aligns with the Town Fund objectives, follows an intervention logic, has the evidence base, meets other government and local criteria's and follows the narrative of the Town Investment Plan.
5. To make recommendations to Town Deal Board on projects for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan

Note as with the Town Board the sub group is an advisory function to Hastings Borough Council (Lead Council for the Town Fund).

Role and Responsibilities

The main role of Town Board sub group members will be to take a town-wide perspective and to develop consensus in the best interests of the town as a whole. Members of the group should clearly avoid all conflicts of interest and aim to bring their knowledge and expertise to the process.

Below is an overview of a project prioritisation tool which will aid this process and will be used, from setting a clear vision and objectives through to a final prioritised list:



Prioritised list



3-stage process

- Initial filtering based on pass / fail criteria
- Assessment and scoring based on town specific criteria
- Check that projects form a coherent investment programme

Membership

The Sub Group is comprised of up to 6 Town Deal Board members

Quoracy the group will be quorate when the Chair/or Vice Chair, an HBC Officer and three other members are present

Reporting and Governance Arrangements

- Sub Group to report to the Town Board

Dispute

In the event of a dispute or conflict of interest arising between members, which cannot be resolved, the Sub Group Chair will refer to the Town Board Project team.

PD August 2020