

TOWN DEAL

15 MARCH 2022

Present:

Carole Dixon (Co-chair)	Hastings Community Network
Graham Peters (Co-chair)	Team East Sussex
Andrew Harvey	Priory Meadow Shopping Centre
Candice Miller	NHS East Sussex CCG
Clive Galbraith	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
James Harris	East Sussex County Council
Jane Hartnell	Hastings Borough Council
Jess Steele	Heritage Action Zone
John Bownas	Hastings Business Improvement District
Liz Coleman	Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum
Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott	Public Health East Sussex
Sonia Blizzard	Sea Change Sussex

Others in attendance:

Iain McNab	Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities
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HBC Programme Team present:

Chantal Lass
Ian Sycamore
Ruby Crowhurst
Ruth Kynoch
Stephen Dodson
Allison San Diego

75. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

Carole shared some positive news with the meeting: Justin Thomas from NewRiver REIT is a new board member (replacing Stuart Mitchell), the programme team has a new Communications and Engagement Officer, Ruby Crowhurst, and the Towns Fund Delivery Partner/Towns Hub has returned and it is hoped Rebecca Collings will be able to join future meetings.

Apologies were received from: MP Sally-Ann Hart, Darrell Gale, Justin Thomas, Rebecca Collings, Sean Dennis, Steve Manwaring, Pranesh Datta and Victoria Conheady

As today is Clive Galbraith's final Town Deal Board meeting, Carole expressed her thanks to him. The town is going to miss Clive's input. He may make light of it and underplay what he does but what he has done for the town has been huge over the

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years and quite phenomenal. He may try to hide it and use wit and humour to cover everything up but underneath it all there is a real desire to see the town improve and not keep repeating the same mistakes or go down the same avenues that don't lead to success and in order to do that it's because of the heart that he's got for the town's people. Carole expressed a huge thank you on behalf of the Town Deal Board for his input into the meetings and for everything that he has done across the time he has been working in the business sector.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Carole Dixon and Clive Galbraith declared a vested interest in the Broadening Futures Together business case.

77. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (9TH DECEMBER 2021) AND MATTERS ARISING

Accepted as an accurate record.

Matters arising:

Ian Sycamore explained that it has been agreed that the Decisions of Town Deal Investment Panel report now includes a project summary explaining the project in more detail.

78. DECISIONS OF THE TOWN DEAL INVESTMENT PANEL

Carole Dixon and Clive Galbraith left the meeting at this point.

Ian Sycamore explained that the Investment Panel met in February and assessed the business case for the Broadening Futures Together project. There were some additional clarification points around inflationary pressures, staff recruitment and partnership arrangements which were all resolved, and the business case was approved as representing very high value for money, with a high level of certainty around achieving that value for money. The economic modelling brought a high benefit cost ratio of 5.2:1.

The project is a partnership between Education Futures Trust and Plumpton College to deliver a teaching facility on a 3-hectare site at The Firs. The main outputs and outcomes are a new educational pathway for local learners through a 7-year programme which hopefully will result in 2,220 local people being engaged or re-engaged in land-based courses and achieving up to level 2 or 3 qualifications. The Towns Fund contribution will be £352,000 of a total project value of £621,775. Further details can be found in the summary table in the report.

The meeting noted the decisions of the Town Deal Investment Panel.

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79. PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Project re-allocation of funds

Ian summarised the process. One of the Town Centre Core projects (1-7 Wellington Place / Sports Direct building) has been withdrawn and the implication is that the £1m grant funding for the project has been returned to the programme. In discussions with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) it has been agreed that £600,000 will be held and use of this will be considered later in the year and that £400,000 will be immediately reallocated through an open call process which opened on 2nd March and will close on 30th March. Several eligible projects have been asked to complete an application form which will go through the same rigorous process as the original projects. The submissions will be independently reviewed by Steer Group and be presented to the Town Deal Investment Panel and Town Deal Board shortly afterwards with the final decision being with DLUHC.

Iain McNab was thanked for his help with the process which meant Hastings was allowed to keep the funds.

Jess explained that the Hastings Commons project allocation was reduced by 5% a few months ago and this process has now been decided without checking with the projects that are trying to work with less than they had originally bid for. It would have been helpful if any projects that needed to go back to the originally requested allocation were approached. These concerns were noted.

The process to reallocate the remaining £600,000 has not yet been agreed with DLUHC and the £1m funding that had become available due to the project being withdrawn is not sufficient to give all projects their original allocation, hence the current position. Hastings was awarded over £3m less than it bid for.

Iain McNab explained that it is intended that the £600,000 that is being reserved from the withdrawn project's allocation is to be used as contingency for increasing costs across the projects rather than to backfill one which had its funding reduced because of the offer. It is up to the board to decide how funds should be allocated provided the proper processes are followed, but the general expectation is that projects are managed within the constraints of the offer that has been made. Any allocations would impact other projects and the remaining contingency fund. All towns received less than they bid for and had to make sacrifices against their original requests.

Another issue is making sure that projects are delivered overall and there are various reasons why some will be affected by increasing costs as opposed to others. In addition, it is not clear what will happen if other projects do not proceed. It is important that work does not get delayed further and the position with regards to the remaining £600,000 needs to be discussed and a decision made. **Action: programme team**

It was clarified that the Sports Direct building is in private ownership and the owners did not want to sell the building.

General projects update

Ian presented this part of the report which was noted.

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Project progress by theme/project

- Town to Sea Creative Quarter (Hastings Commons) business case is due for submission in mid-April. This will be assessed by the investment panel in May and the decision is due for noting at the June Town Deal Board meeting
- Green construction, energy and vehicle training centre business case has been delayed due to a resourcing issue at East Sussex College
- Other business cases are due for submission in June/July. There is an increased risk with this schedule currently due to project business case delays, a lot will be coming in towards the end of the development period. This risk will need to be actively managed to reduce any further slippage. If the projects become unviable towards the end of the process, there will be less time to manage the reallocation of any potentially returned grant.

Communications and engagement

Ruby Crowhurst joined the programme team in January as Communications and Engagement Officer. Ruby summarised her report and added that the next group project lead meeting will be taking place tomorrow and will focus on communications and engagement.

80. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jess advised there will be a Spring tour of Hastings Commons on 25th April from 11am-3pm. Board members are welcome to attend. Information will be circulated.

81. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

10am, Wednesday, 25th May