

TOWN DEAL

21 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present:

Carole Dixon (Co-chair)	Hastings Community Network
Graham Peters (Co-chair)	Team East Sussex
Andrew Harvey	Hastings Business Improvement District
Bianca Forrester	NewRiver REIT
Cllr Maya Evans	Deputy Leader, Hastings Borough Council
James Harris	East Sussex County Council
Jess Steele	White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures
John Bownas	Hastings Business Improvement District
Liz Gilmore	Hastings Contemporary
Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott	Public Health East Sussex
Sally-Ann Hart	MP for Hastings and Rye
Sean Dennis	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Sonia Blizzard	Sea Change Sussex
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Voluntary Action

Others in attendance:

Jon Trigg	Freedom Works
Justin Manning	Owens Entertainment
Katy Sherman	Hart District Council
Nathalie Tulip	Freedom Works
Nigel Stewardson	Department for Levelling Up, Homes & Communities

HBC Programme Team present:

Ian Sycamore
Pranesh Datta
Ruth Kynoch
Stephen Dodson
Allison San Diego

87. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from: Chantal Lass, Darrell Gale, Jane Hartnell, Justin Thomas, Liz Coleman, Ruby Crowhurst and Victoria Conheady

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

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89. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Accepted as an accurate record.

90. FORMER DEBENHAMS BUILDING PRESENTATIONS

Two projects have successfully been allocated Town Deal funding following approval of their business cases. 1) Owens Entertainment Centre and 2) Freedom Works' Hastings co-working, flexible office space, which are both located in the former Debenhams building:

Owens Entertainment Centre – Justin Manning from Owens Entertainment explained:

- Development of the entertainment centre is going well, and it is hoped it can be officially opened on or around 14th October
- The Towns Fund grant is being used to extend the centre's originally planned offer, therefore allowing for more attractions to be created
- Entry to the centre is through 1-3 Robertson Street (the former Debenhams perfume counter), where the bistro and information centre are located. Also on the ground floor are six bowling lanes, a table tennis court, pool tables, two state of the art football simulators and the 1066 immersive experience
- On the 1st floor will be the soft play centre, café and main garden bar where daily free of charge entertainment will be available, 10-pin bowling, an amusement arcade, a virtually reality centre and a wild west immersive experience
- On the 2nd floor, there will be a 140-seat themed carvery restaurant which will offer breakfast, lunch and dinner
- On the 3rd floor, there will be three indoor golf courses, a wonders of wizardry immersive experience, the Soar Tour virtual reality ride soaring over Hastings and the South Coast, Jurassica Live dinosaur themed experience, Oddity Museum, a maze and a vault themed game
- Energy prices for the centre have been successfully fixed for 3 years
- Entry to the centre will be free of charge and all of the attractions are individually priced, lower than others across the country. A local resident's discount pass is also being developed
- There will be 75-90 full time equivalent jobs available at the centre, estimated to equate to 120-130 part time jobs. Around 75 applicants have been recruited and 12 of these are doing a first aid course today. Another tranche of staff will be brought in during the week commencing 3rd October and the soft launch events will take place during the second and third week of October

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Hastings co-working, flexible office space – Nathalie Tulip and Jon Trigg from Freedom Works:

- Freedom Works was founded in 2016 and its mission is to create flexible working space across regional towns in the Southeast. Locations include Worthing, Southampton, Chichester, Gatwick and Hastings
- There are 9 branches in total and 3000 active members, including Let's Do Business Group which is moving into the Hastings space during the week after next. Each space has its own hotdesking spaces, meeting rooms, break out areas and event spaces
- Freedom Works also provides a space for collaborative working between its members, curated business support to members which includes seminars, and has a "no faff" policy, ensuring everything that would be needed in an office space is readily available for its members
- Working in partnership with curators of business support is also being looked into for the Hastings area
- Work on the 3rd and 4th floors are nearing completion. These two floors cover the 10,000 sq ft development area as stated in the project business case. Works on the 5th floor are yet to commence due to cost overrun but this work would be in addition to what was proposed in the business case and it is estimated this could be completed if an additional £70k was to become available
- Freedom Works doesn't target any particular groups but has been working collaboratively with local groups and agencies, and as part of its growth strategy is working alongside these groups to deliver specific strands of support within the community
- Membership is free and a pay as you go model is available for booking desk space, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It costs £20 a day to hire a desk, or £10 for half a day. Meeting room hire costs £15 an hour. Full tariff details can be found [here](#)
- The building will be heated via air conditioning and reverse cycle heating
- All are welcome to visit the space at the former Debenhams building

91. PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

- **Town Deal Programme update**

Pranesh Datta, Economic Development Manager at HBC presented the progress to date and updated on the Priory Street car park and Priory Meadow projects, and Homes England's interest in Hastings town centre.

The Observer Building is aiming to create 15 affordable flats, although it does not have access to sufficient funding. The possibility of involving Hastings Commons in the conversations with Homes England will be raised. **Action: Pranesh**

The number of new homes to be created stated in the Town Investment Plan is 200 and it is understood that the sites Homes England want to explore may create more than this, although the full scale of work is not yet understood. The MP asked to be

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kept in the loop regarding the indicative timelines which DLUHC has provided. The importance of addressing health and inequalities and creating lifetime homes was also raised. Public Health is also happy to be involved in early discussions as needed.

- **Decisions of the Town Deal Investment Panel**

Ian Sycamore, External Funding Manager at HBC summarised the decisions of the investment panel on the recently submitted and approved business cases: 1) Former Debenhams Site, 2) Green Construction, Energy and Vehicle Training Centre, 3) Town Living and 4) Public Realm and Green Connections.

These decisions were noted by the meeting.

It is understood that the 'Right to Buy' scheme exists for all social housing landlords, including the local authority, therefore potentially affecting the Town Living project. Community land trusts are exempt from right to buy and the importance of protecting long term investments was noted for future discussions. This will be looked into and the board updated. **Action: Pranesh**

- **General project update**

Broadening Futures Together

Carole Dixon explained that the partnership between Education Futures Trust and Plumpton College is developing, and the service level agreement has now been signed. A pilot accredited course was run very successfully just before the summer break and the site was also improved as part of this course. A difficulty though is that the project is still being delivered without a building. Work on the drainage and highways are both out to tender. The first full course will be starting tomorrow (23rd September) and promotion of the courses will start once the works have been completed and the classroom is in place. The project is also meeting with the Garden Town next month to look at collaborative working opportunities around the Public Realm and Green Connections project.

Hastings Commons

Jess Steele explained that the Observer Building was made weatherproof but very unfortunately the sprinkler system pipe burst and poured 40,000 liters of stored building water through it. The team worked all night to manage the water and the damage created will be covered by the contractor's insurance, however, the plaster and flooring will have to be re-done. On a positive note, the creative digital hub which will be going into the building has been running a pilot programme about 3-D scanning. 300 local people have been 3-D scanned and an exhibition and event will be taking place from 1st-8th October, during the hours of 12-6pm, which will give a taster of what the creative digital hub will be about.

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- **Business case progress report by theme**

Allison San Diego, Programme Support Officer presented the current status of the business cases for the project.

The chair extended congratulations and thanks to everyone involved in the projects, including the project leads, volunteers, consultants, the local authority and other partners on the investment panel on the progress to date.

- **Communications update**

Open Day on Saturday, 15th October in Priory Meadow Shopping Centre

Allison presented the communications update and reiterated that any support from board members on the day of the open day, with promotion of the day and other events will be appreciated. The programme team can be contacted at:

Towndeal@hastings.gov.uk

Further information about the open day will be circulated shortly.

- **Complaint regarding the process of selecting projects at the early stage of the programme**

Noted. It was mentioned that may be the original 150 proposal and ideas should have been made public and the complaint and response noted. .

- **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Pranesh summarised the need to produce an EIA for the programme as a whole, which needs to be submitted to DLUHC, likely in March 2023. Once the work is commissioned, project leads will be approached and workshops will be held.

- **Programme finance update**

Ruth Kynoch, Project and Finance Officer presented the programme finances, which was noted.

- **Subsidy Control**

Ian explained that the programme team is working with the HBC legal team to ensure the programme is compliant with the subsidy control act. More details will be shared when these become available.

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92. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

11:30, Tuesday, 22nd November 2022

The chair thanked everyone for their contributions into this work despite its challenges and for putting their energy into Hastings which is getting better as a result of everyone's efforts.