

TOWN DEAL

25 OCTOBER 2023

Hastings Town Deal Board
11:00am, Wednesday, 25th October 2023
Microsoft Teams

The meeting video can be viewed [here](#)

In attendance		Absent	
Graham Peters	Co-chair	Carole Dixon	Co-chair
Anna Merla	Public Health East Sussex	Allison San Diego	HBC – Prog Team
Bianca Forrester	NewRiver REIT	Andrew Harvey	Priory Meadow
Cllr Paul Barnett	Leader, HBC	Carole Crathern	NHS – Primary Care
Ellie McDaniel	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Maya Evans	HBC
Emma Smith	DLUHC	Francis Brown	Hastings Youth Council
Hannah Caldwell	East Sussex College Group	James Harris	ESCC
Hannah Collins	HBC – Prog Team	Jane Hartnell	HBC
Jess Steele	Hastings Commons	Justin Thomas	NewRiver REIT
John Bownas	Hastings BID	Marc Moore	The Source Park
Joseph Brown	HBC – Prog Team	Nigel Stewardson	DLUHC
Julia Hilton	Garden Town Team	Richard Dawson	ESCC
Kate Adams	Cultural Leaders Group	Richard Moore	The Source Park
Kit Godfrey	Hastings Commons	Victoria Conheady	HBC
Liz Coleman	Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum		
Liz Gilmore	Cultural Leaders Group		
Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott	Public Health East Sussex		
Mike Wood	Arup		
Pranesh Datta	HBC – Prog Team		
Richard Watson	NHS Sussex		
Ruth Kynoch	HBC – Prog Team		
Sally-Ann Hart	MP for Hastings and Rye		

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Sean Dennis	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce		
Sonia Blizzard	Sea Change Sussex		
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Community Network		
Suzanne Oakley	HBC – Prog Team		
Thomas Weake	Arup		

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from Carole Dixon, James Harris, Victoria Conheady, Carole Crathern, Andy Harvey, Justin Thomas, Richard Dawson and Cllr Maya Evans.

The chair extended his thanks and praise for everything Carole has done as co-chair of this board and for the town. He will be writing a letter on behalf of the board to reflect this.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5TH JULY 2023) AND MATTERS ARISING

Accepted as an accurate record.

Matters arising:

- Project documentation sharing/collaborating on procurement – the process is underway. Suzanne Oakley will be facilitating this with the college and other lead partners.
- Communications role – Suzanne is now in post.
- Levelling up Partnerships – last March Hastings was identified as one of the 20 towns and discussions commenced with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) last month. It is understood that approximately £20m funding (75% capital and 25% revenue) will be available this financial year and next. DLUHC is leading on the engagement work and will be directly contacting local stakeholders to gather views on both the socio-economic issues of the town and any project ideas. It is hoped they will have concluded the discussions by mid-November and their research by the end of November. There will then be further discussion at ministerial level and with the council on what to progress.

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- DLUHC has not set a date for a workshop as 1-2-1 engagement is being carried out. Cllr Paul Barnett assured the board that he will be putting forward housing, health and culture as the main priorities.
- The council's capacity to manage LUP and the Long-Term Town Plan will be discussed once the programmes become clearer and the council's budget proposals impact is considered. This will be released next month and will discuss proposal to safeguard regeneration planning capacity by finding new ways of funding it outside of the revenue pressures.

4. **PROJECT UPDATES**

4.1 Hastings Commons – Presenters Jess Steele and Kit Godfrey

- Key points:
 - A community-led approach to neighbourhood transformation focused on the assets in the White Rock area.
 - Brings spaces into use to create environments where people can enhance their lives, shape their neighbourhoods, look out for each other and the place.
 - Hastings Commons now owns over 8000 square meters of difficult and derelict property which is being transformed into affordable homes, capped rent work spaces and social spaces.
 - The Town Deal project involves 3 buildings: Eagle House and 12 Claremont (both going out to tender in January 2024 with construction starting in March), and the Observer Building (the OBX creative technology hub is now operational and Hastings Commons has secured planning permission to build 12 flats within the building)

Q&A / Comments:

Q. Emma Smith asked about the technologies involved in the project and if this is linked up to local businesses and companies in the sector.

A. Jess confirmed yes and that there has been a lot of outreach, which is ongoing. At first it was more generic outreach but now it is through the OBX connects events. The project is constantly trying to inspire new thinking so that new businesses or organisations get interested in the field.

Q. Emma also asked if any universities have been involved in any way.

A. Jess confirmed that the project is not connected to any particular universities.

Emma will put Jess in touch with others who are doing this kind of work in other parts of the region.

4.2 Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections – Ellie McDaniel, Mike Wood and Thomas Weake

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- Key points:
 - The project aims to improve the public realm and green infrastructure along Havelock Road and in the town centre.
 - Pending final contract signing, Arup has been appointed as consultant for the next stage of design and consultation.
 - The next stage of the project is split into 3 stages: 1) evaluation and engagement for RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 2 – this is already underway, 2) develop the design to RIBA stage 3 incorporating stakeholder feedback and 3) submit a planning application that will support the next stages of design.
 - The concept design report, the work carried out to date to understand the assets, challenges, opportunities, constraints and vision of the area were summarised for the meeting.
 - A summary of the design plans will be circulated in due course.

Q&A / Comments:

Jess commented that it is good to finally see this happening but stressed the importance of the connection to other things, including the integration with Priory Street and Cambridge Road, which is critical, although Homes England is interested in those areas. We can't just wait for Homes England and have two totally separate approaches to the space; it does need to be seen in context.

The Garden Town needs a social programme running alongside the physical, not just a community engagement person who comes in and does some engagement. Ongoing engagement and development in the maintenance of the space is needed and how to get people in the town get involved in that maintenance. The Garden Town team has been working on that but a proper social programme with resources needs to be connected to this capital programme.

Julia Hilton explained that she is part of the Garden Town team that put the project's original expression of interest together which was always about the wider plan for the whole town, the green connections and community gardens. The biodiverse planting in Sheffield was co-designed with Nigel Dunnett, and maintained by Green Estates who are a social enterprise that started in 2014. Nigel is a key part of the team and is keen to be involved in developing the planting palette for Hastings. The way the planting is designed is low maintenance, but we need to think about how we train for the future gardens.

Kate Adams asked about the access to consultations that will be carried out due to Project Art Works work with individuals with very complex neurological impairments and sensory disabilities, and how will the project connect with other greening projects as Project Art Works has designs underway for the space between its two buildings.

Lourdes commented that the scheme will provide a lot of benefits across the health economy and asked that consideration be given to the links to health and sustainability and the policy areas around these.

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Sean asked about consultation with the business community, particularly those within the affected areas. A presentation could be made at a future Chamber of Commerce meeting as part of the consultation process.

Work will need to be done to address issues raised here including maintenance of the scheme, the skills needed, the links with the various policies and anything that comes out of the consultation process when it starts. Fortunately, in terms of Homes England, the timing of these two commissions are similar and this project will slightly dictate what happens around the Station Gateway sites. The council will work with Homes England to ensure the two projects are joined up.

5. PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

5.1 Programme overview

Pranesh focussed on two key Hastings Castle and Town Living.

Hastings Castle – the council had intended to deliver the project, however, since submission of the business case, it is now in a different financial position, which affects this project. The council would now like to explore alternative ways to deliver the project and bring in a partner to assist in the delivery of the scheme. It is intended that expressions of interest will be invited from potential operators, developers or project managers. The submissions will then be assessed for suitability before firmer proposals to work with the council are sought. It is hoped that the invitation will be sent out by next week. Any interested parties should be referred to Pranesh. *Post meeting note:* further information and details for the expression of interest can be found [here](#)

Town Living – this project intended to focus on a council property in Wellington Square. Again, this will be a challenge to deliver due to the council's current financial position and discussions on alternative ways of delivering homes in the town centre will be opened up shortly.

There was general consensus to proceed with above two projects as presented.

5.2 Communications update

Suzanne Oakley started as the new Communications and Engagement Officer at the beginning of September. She introduced herself and updated:

- A project leads meeting was held earlier this month
- She has been working on updating the Town Deal blog pages and has uploaded some project documentation and asked projects to continue to submit any relevant information (email: Towndeal@hastings.gov.uk)
- Another Town Deal Open Day is being planned for 27th January at Priory Meadow Shopping Centre

5.3 Programme finance update

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Ruth Kynoch, Project and Finance officer presented and noted that there has not been much change on spend due to the current status of the projects, but it is expected this will start changing imminently.

5.4 Hastings Station Gateway project update

Work continues and Homes England is now producing a Strategic Regeneration Investment Framework. The main areas included in this piece of work are Priory Street car park and the surrounding buildings, Queensbury House, the station yard site, the gateway points through Devonshire Road and Cambridge Gardens.

A stakeholder workshop is being held on 20th November which some board members are invited to. Additional consultation work will also be carried out after the workshop.

5.5 Long Term Investment Plan for Towns – Endowment Fund

There will be a need to review the structure of this board and others but not immediately. It may be best to wait until DLUHC have responded to the questions that the council have raised, although it is also intended to work on developing a plan over the next months which will take us to April.

There was a reminder that this board is a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership, which will also need to review its membership and how it supports other structures and forums within the town.

Emma Smith confirmed that DLUHC is creating a task force around this work. From their perspective, the Levelling Up Partnership work will serve as a strategic plan that will help inform the long term endowment fund. The questions raised by the council re: further clarifications and guidance on the LTIP for towns cannot be answered fully just yet as the policy team is still going through design and development following the announcement.

This is an opportunity for the whole town and not just Hastings town centre. It is hoped that at the next LSP meeting but one (not late Nov 23) it will be agreed to bring forward a proposal on how we move forward with all the regeneration initiatives that are currently on the table. This is to make sure they are all joined up and not a series of separate initiatives overseen by competitive bodies.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

HBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee – has considered the activities of this board and the programme as a whole and have made some recommendations in relation to the way the programme is run and managed. These will be circulated to everyone and will be considered and responded to in due course.

Owens Entertainment – it was clarified that refurbishment work is ongoing and the intention is to re-open after the New Year or slightly later. A meeting with the new management team at Owens and the landlord is scheduled for 9th November and the board will be kept informed if there is any new information to share.

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- 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 11:00, THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY 2024**