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TOWN DEAL

25 JUNE 2020

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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