

Hastings Castle Project

Hastings Castle is the only direct link the town has with the battle in 1066 that made us famous around the world.

Although it dominates the seafront and town centre on top of the West Hill, it offers a poor visitor experience, attracting only around 30 000 visitors a year before the pandemic struck. Hastings Castle, the first Norman-built castle in the country, deserves to be a major visitor attraction, it has an amazing story to tell.

Hastings Borough Council has set out a clear vision to turn Hastings Castle into a must-see visitor destination, improving access for all with a real link between the building and the battle that made the town of Hastings famous around the world.

The Council has completed RIBA 1 concept phase, identifying a programme of interventions to improve the castle. The Town Deal funding will help to fund Phase 1 of a wider programme. Phase 1 will look to:

- Improve the West Hill Lift to make access to the site more accessible
- A new interpretation centre and café – with augmented reality interpretation
- New wayfinding, information, and pathways at Ladies Parlour along with improved connection to the castle grounds.
- New pathways and wayfinding within the castle through visual and digital links and a new viewpoint at the narrowing grounds in the south west.
- Viewing structure within the castle grounds.

The objectives for Phase 1 will be:

- Increase in visitors to Hastings Castle to c.100,000 annually by the year 2030.
- Increase direct and indirect employment as a result of higher visitor activity at Hastings Castle (12-20 net additional jobs by the year 2030).
- Improve visitor experience and perception and appreciation of a significant heritage asset, to be monitored through annual visitor engagement surveys, to the year 2030.
- Increase awareness of Hastings Castle and its history through hosting at least 15 education events and workshops per year by the year 2030.
- Raising Hastings' profile as a visitor destination more widely, with a long-term aspiration of achieving 250,000 visitors by the year 2040.
- Improve biodiversity at the site, planting new plant species to increase biodiversity by 15% by the year 2035.