



Hastings Board
10:30am, Wednesday, 20th March 2024
Via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Rebecca Conroy (Chair)	East Sussex College Group
Andrew Harvey	Business Improvement District
Cllr Julia Hilton	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Emma Smith	Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Sally-Ann Hart MP	MP for Hastings and Rye
Jane Howard-Smith	Office Manager to MP for Hastings and Rye
Katy Bourne	Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner
Lorraine Clarke	Priority Education Investment Area Board
Mandy Curtis	Cultural Leaders Group rep
Michael Ratcliffe with	Connected Futures
Carrie Ann, Danielle and Leah	Observers – Connected Futures
Scott Marshall	Advisor to Hastings Board
Sean Dennis	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Voluntary Action

HBC Officers present:

Dawn Poole
Hannah Collins
Jane Hartnell
Pranesh Datta
Victoria Conheady
Allison San Diego

Apologies:

Simon Mansbridge (Vice Chair)	Kurt J Lesker
Tracey Rose	Hastings Community Network Executive

1. Welcome and introductions

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Overview of the Long-Term Plan for Towns – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Q&A

Emma Smith from DLUHC explained that:

- The Prime Minister announced the £1.1b endowment type fund for 55 towns back in October. Hastings and Bexhill are included in these towns and will receive

£20m each. A long-term plan will have to be produced by the Town Boards that have to be established following this announcement. The programme has now also been extended to a second wave of towns which was announced in the Spring budget and includes Eastbourne.

- A new Towns Task Force has been set up to support towns with their long-term plans and unlock investment. This will report directly to the Prime Minister and is chaired by Adam Hawksbee, who recently visited Hastings. Adam also held a webinar last month and mentioned Hastings specifically and positively in terms of representation and the knowledge of the town.
- It is also intended that town boards will be able to contribute to Neighbourhood Plans and new Neighbourhood Priority Statements to help identify potential development locations. DLUHC will help towns maximise the long-term opportunities for investment, by encouraging local planning authorities and town councils to work with them to define the priorities for the community infrastructure levy when it is implemented.
- The prospectus for this programme was published in December and a tailored data pack has been produced by DLUHC's special data unit, which identified three investment themes under which spending can take place:
 - Safety and Security
 - High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
 - Transport and Connectivity
- The areas that towns have been asked to focus on are high level but are based on research on what people want in their local communities. With regards to the area boundaries, the funding is specifically for the town's built-up areas and may differ from other local authority boundaries that have been in place before for other programmes. DLUHC will allow requests to have the boundaries changed.
- DLUHC's first ask was that a town board is set up before 1st April, representing leaders from the local community and employers, to ensure that there is a community development focus and bringing in as many fresh voices, particularly those that operate on a community level. The board's job will be to identify the issues and priorities for the long-term plan to focus on, including supporting a process of ongoing community engagement, working with the local authority, setting out how local partners will use their knowledge, powers, assets and the new funding to deliver for their communities.
- The funding has been confirmed as £20m, which is split into £5m revenue and £15m capital, which will be received as an annual uniform predetermined amount across each year of the 10-year span of the programme. The £50,000 capacity funding has already been paid and a further £200k capacity funding will be paid after 1st April to cover some of the costs, with the expectation that the funding goes towards building community capacity. Local organisations can be commissioned to do this.
- The investment plan has to be produced and submitted by 1st August and it is expected that this be developed in close consultation with local residents and that it is well evidenced. Once the investment plan has been assessed and approved, the first capital payment of £500k and revenue of £249k will be released. After this there will be payments of £2m per annum. There is flexibility to roll over funds if these are not spent on an annual basis and there will be no clawbacks either.
- A full set of FAQs will be published in due course

- The data pack will be circulated to this board and it is intended to publish this on the council's website once confirmation is received from DLUHC that this can be done.
- Emma will be our main point of contact from DLUHC and is happy to be contacted after the meeting.

3. Development of the three-year investment plan and the ten-year vision and boundary change request for the board to consider

Victoria Conheady, summarised:

- The ten-year vision will be a 250-word vision statement which needs to be strategic and include:
 - what local people think needs fixing
 - the opportunities and investment offer over the decade
 - priority outcomes for 2034 and beyond
- There are already key strategic issues in the town that cover a wide range of regeneration issues but not necessarily focused on the three thematic areas of this funding. The board will need to understand what it wants to deliver because if it deviates away from the 3 themes articulated in appendix C of the guidance the long-term plan and investment plan will need to be much bigger and business cases will have to be written. If the board decides to follow the policy interventions in the guidance, there will be no need to submit additional business cases.
- The direction of travel through the 3 investment themes and the interventions that are available to achieve these need to be considered. Other 'off-menu' interventions can also be considered provided they sit within the 3 investment themes.
- We need to demonstrate clear evidence that the town board is community-led, ensure there is strategic oversight and how we work with the 50 other boards in the town as well as engagement with stakeholders. Front and centre of the investment plan is talking about our communication and engagement strategy, what we have done to date and what we plan to do going forward. Some of this needs to be submitted to government before the 1st April via a checklist that was received last Monday, and we need to clarify what level of detail needs to be submitted.
- Milestones and outcomes are high level over the 10-year lifespan of the programme and an overview of potential future interventions and how the powers in the policy toolkit will be used in a way that best suits the town across the 3 investment themes.
- In appendix B of the guidance there is a list of policy toolkits and there is a point of cognizance that is needed as some of those interventions will rest with either the police, one or more local authorities or within the upper tier authority and may also impact officer involvement.
- The 3-year investment plan annex needs to look at the interventions and powers the board wish to use over the first 3 years for each investment theme, how they will use them and how much they'll cost. In addition, we also need to look at how the interventions will address the outcomes set out in the 10-year vision and make sure it is grounded in evidence

Change in boundary

It is proposed that the boundary is amended to include all green spaces and therefore extending the ability and power to invest across the whole of the borough rather than just the urban built-up areas.

This was unanimously agreed by the board.

4. Community engagement, guidance and discussion

Steve Manwaring, presented:

- There are major challenges for Hastings, both in relation to finances and funding, in terms of engagement and connectivity, which will obviously impact on this on this programme as it does on others, and our ability to deliver on this programme and lever in on future investment will depend on how we work together.
- Local people are asking for things to be more joined up and we need to be making a step change in terms of how we link them all together.
- Community engagement is at the heart of the long-term plan for towns but regeneration that is not grounded in community aspiration, in community engagement will remain superficial and will become the list of projects which people see happening but don't entirely connect with.
- There is some real practice in Hastings of which we can be proud of, which has been joined up and engaged successfully, such as the COVID response which was joined on some key principles and that morphed quickly into joined up action around vaccination, the welcome of guests from Ukraine and the current joint work on cost of living and winter readiness.
- Hastings Community Network has a membership of over 250 local community organisations and will run a series of opportunities to enable local organisations to engage. The events are either themed, chosen by network members or 'open mic' sessions, which are opportunities to talk about the things that are important and celebrate the work that is being done. The community network is formally represented on this board and Victoria and Dawn will be participating at next week's event.
- Through these processes, it is possible to synthesise a whole range of ideas in relation to a single document. The 'Facing the Future' document was compiled through a series of workshops, community events and one to one engagement sessions which brings together into 10 key themes, the things we want to see programmes like this develop. A volunteering strategy for Hastings has also been developed. The Institute for Volunteering Research was commissioned to do some field work in Hastings and from that the strategy was developed.
- Partnership and engagement will be key to achieving this programme and Hastings has proven it is capable of delivering the work but there is still much to be done in some very challenging circumstances. There is an opportunity for us to rethink how we engage, not just on this programme but on a range of other things as well.

The slides will be circulated after the meeting, along with a copy of the 'Facing the Future' report.

Action: Dawn/Alli

5. Admin

Dawn explained that a press release is going to be published today which will include board member's names. Biographies and photos have also been requested and will be chased. If anyone does not want this information to be shared, Dawn should be contacted today: Hastingsboard@hastings.gov.uk

The rest of the admin requirements will be handled via email after this meeting.

A meeting between communication leads for HBC and HVA will be arranged.

Action: Dawn

6. Any other business and any points of clarity

Victoria explained that because of the transparency guidance, the minutes of this meeting and the documentation that has been circulated will be published. Today's meeting was arranged to take place before Hastings goes into the pre-election sensitive period on Tuesday next week as it wouldn't have been possible to hold a public meeting until after the elections on 2nd May.

After the elections, there is a choice to be made as to whether we wish to make these meetings public, that could be via live streaming but as the suggestion is that these meetings shouldn't happen in local authority premises there is a limitation around that.

It was confirmed that the minutes will be circulated to the board and will not go out in the public domain without its agreement.

7. Date of networking meeting – April

To be arranged.

Action: Dawn/Alli

Action and decision log

Actions:

Item No	Matter	Action	Owner
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4	Community engagement guidance and discussion	Slides from meeting to be circulated after the meeting	DP/ ASD
5	Admin	Email to be issued with information and request for action and information Arrange a meeting between communication leads for HBC and HVA Date of networking meeting in April to be circulated	DP DP DP/ ASD

Decision log:

Item No	Matter	Decision	Reason(s) for Decision
3	Boundary change request	It is proposed that the boundary is amended to include all green spaces and therefore extending the ability and power to invest across the whole of the borough rather than just the urban built-up areas.	To enable the Long-Term Plan for Hastings to cover green spaces, especially if the board proposes interventions S3, H3 and H6 which include provision of sports programmes, creation and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments as well as encouraging people to explore the local area. The current boundary does not include green space that is not built up.