

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Report Title:** Long-Term Plan: Community Engagement

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## 1. Background

Community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan for Hastings. A core requirement is that the Long-Term Plan reflects local priorities and is co-designed with communities, businesses and residents. Any new engagement activity also needs to build on the comprehensive community engagement that has been undertaken at a local level, specifically in the design of the Hastings Town Deal and build on existing partnerships, consultation and ongoing activity that mobilises local people.

## 2. Commissioning Options

Two commissioning options are set out below for consideration.

### **Option 1**

Co-commission Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) to manage the design, development and delivery of a comprehensive and innovative programme of community engagement and consultation to ensure that the Long-Term Plan reflects actual rather than the perceived needs of the community and helps to build community capacity and leadership. It is anticipated that HVA will sub-contact / commission relevant voluntary and community groups within its network to deliver the requirements outlined in this brief.

### **Option 2**

Commission via an open competitive tender process a comprehensive and innovative programme of community engagement and consultation to ensure that the Long-Term Plan reflects actual rather than the perceived needs of the community and helps to build community capacity and leadership. The Board will wish to engage with local and experienced practitioners who are comfortable with engaging with all representatives of the Hastings community.

An indicative timeline for each option is outlined below.

### **Option 1**

- Hastings Board approval of this draft brief – 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Inception meeting with HVA and preparation of a fee proposal / detailed work programme – w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024.
- Nine week engagement programme ending Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- Fortnightly progress meetings starting w/c 29<sup>th</sup> April 20024
- Final report issued by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## **Option 2**

- Issue survey tender information – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024
- Deadline for the submission of proposals – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024
- Evaluation of proposals and potential interviews – w/c 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- Award of contract and project inception meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- Seven week engagement programme ending Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- Final report issued by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024

### **Board Considerations**

1. To consider and agree a preferred commissioning route to deliver the community engagement work to support the LTP.
2. To consider, comment on and agree the draft Community Engagement brief as set out in Appendix 1.
3. To agree the budget allocation of £50,000 plus VAT for this commission to be funded from the £200,000 revenue capacity funding allocated to the Hastings Board.

## Community Engagement – Draft Brief

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### 1. Background

The Hastings Board is preparing a 10 year Long-Term Plan and 3 year Investment Plan to submit to government by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 to secure c£20 million of endowment investment to deliver transformational inventions under three themes:

- Safety & Security
- High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration
- Transport & Connectivity

Community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan for Hastings. A core requirement is that the Long-Term Plan reflects local priorities and is co-designed with communities, businesses and residents. Any new engagement activity also needs to build on the comprehensive community engagement that has been undertaken at a local level, specifically in the design of the Hastings Town Deal and build on existing partnerships, consultation and ongoing activity that mobilises local people.

### 2. Community engagement principles

Community engagement requires the establishment of a strong process which gives a voice to local residents, allowing them to genuinely influence and direct delivery of the Long-Term Plan. We expect the engagement process to adhere to some core community engagement principles:

- Map the assets in the local area to build from existing strengths and work with community groups who have existing relationships and expertise in community development to design engagement and ensure sufficient reach.
- Open and inclusive to all interested parties.
- Use local knowledge to understand where engagement has typically been weakest and which groups have been underrepresented.
- Go to where the people are and be creative. Hold engagement events in the social spaces where people meet, for example, the local high-street, youth clubs, pubs, schools and community centres.
- Use participatory tools as a hook to engage residents, helping to identify local solutions and bring forward innovative ideas.
- Identify opportunities for community ownership of plans and delivery.
- Commit to ongoing accountability.
- Seek opportunities for building the development of community leadership and capacity into delivery plans.
- Don't over-complicate it.

### 3. Scope of work

The focus of the engagement is to identify the issues that matter most to people under the three investment themes, which are the focus of the Long-Term Plan. We want the engagement to be a 'deep-dive' to enable the local community to have their say on the good or bad and to make positive suggestions to improve the borough, e.g.:

- **Safety and Security:** are there crime and anti-social 'hotspot areas' and what needs to be done to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in an holistic way?
- **High Street, Heritage and Regeneration:** what are the weaknesses and challenges affecting our town centres and what are the priorities for action to enable them to adapt and diversify to meet local aspirations?
- **Transport and Connectivity:** how can we improve accessibility and movement in Hastings and make it a safe and attractive place to work, shop and visit?

The appointed organisation will subcontract / commission and manage an experienced local community engagement specialist to design and deliver a comprehensive community engagement plan, which addresses our core principles, as highlighted above, specifically:

- Map current community engagement activities and outputs particularly under the three priority themes;
- Identify and build relationships with existing community groups to engage early and identify priorities from the start;
- Liaise with existing partnerships, boards and structures in the town, identifying opportunities to facilitate engagement;
- Organise and facilitate a minimum of 6 resident sessions to secure the views of residents who may not typically attend consultation events; and
- Build local capacity and identify practical ways of getting more people interested and active in the Long-Term Plan process.

The Board is keen to ensure that young people are engaged and involved in the process of informing and delivering the Long-Term Plan for Hastings. Therefore, the appointed organisation will also be expected to sub-contract / commission a separate programme of work targeted specifically towards young people to inform, engage, seek opinion and build capacity to ensure that young people are represented on the Hastings Board and the Long-Term Plan.

### 4. Methodology

The Board is keen to develop an engagement process that covers a number of phases, which could be delivered in parallel:

Phase 1: early engagement to seek opinions on the issues, challenges and priorities under the three themes.

Phase 2: assessing community aspirations and ambitions for Hastings (generating consensus around the Hastings Vision).

Phase 3: developing priorities and ideas on options and projects to address needs and opportunities.

Phase 4: on-going capacity building (which could be delivered after the 1<sup>st</sup> August deadline).

The Board does not want to be too prescriptive as to the methodology, but it could include:

1. Online engagement and survey distribution through social media, email lists, and community forums.
2. Co-design workshops or charettes.
3. Engaging with Hastings Board thematic sub groups and appropriate wider partnerships
4. Site walkarounds with residents and neighbours.
5. Interviews with community representatives and stakeholders.

We are keen to encourage innovative approaches and deep analysis to ensure that the Long-Term Plan draws on the needs and aspirations of the local community.

The appointed organisation will be expected to prepare a detailed work plan to outline its methodology and expected outputs and outcomes.

## **6. Timeframe**

It is anticipated that the work will be conducted over a period of between eight to ten weeks to allow for sufficient data collection, analysis and reporting. A detailed programme will be agreed on commissioning.

## **7. Analysis and Reporting**

Data collected will be analysed to identify areas of concern or improvement under the 3 priority investment themes. A comprehensive report will be prepared, highlighting key findings, recommendations, and actionable insights as well making recommendations on future capacity building and community leadership.

## **8. Stakeholder Engagement**

All results will be shared with the Hastings Board relevant stakeholders, including local government officials, business associations, and community groups, to foster dialogue and collaboration in generating consensus around the Hastings Vision and priorities for action.

## **9. Budget**

A maximum budget of £50,000 plus VAT has been allocated for community engagement, survey administration, data analysis, and report preparation, ensuring the survey's effectiveness and integrity. This excludes the budget for the youth engagement work.

## **10. Fee Proposals**

Organisations are invited to respond to this brief (on no more than eight sides of A4) on the following:

- Understanding of the brief
- Identify any risks associated with completing the commission
- Proposed engagement methodology, delivery partners and timetable
- Budget breakdown against key areas of activity

## **11. Contact Information**

For inquiries or further information, please contact:

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