HASTINGS COMMUNITY PLANNING RESOURCE

A partnership initiative to create better resources for community engagement in planning and regeneration in Hastings & St Leonards.

Business Plan
Revised: 27 September 2011

Contents

Hastings Trust
Hastings Voluntary Action
Hastings Borough Council

University of Brighton
– Coastal Regeneration Resource Centre
– University Centre Hastings
– Community University Partnership Programme.

Nick Wates Associates

1   Executive Summary

1.1   The Hastings Community Planning Resource will improve accessibility to, and understanding of, the planning system in Hastings and St Leonards and provide a model for other towns to follow. It will make it easier for local people to get involved in planning and regeneration issues in the town and it will help the local authorities, agencies, professionals and the University of Brighton (UoB) engage more effectively with local communities. This will be useful in any event, but particularly so in the light of the present government's introduction of Localism and neighbourhood plans.

1.2   The Resource will consist of two elements: a new website and a physical resource based in the modern, centrally located University of Brighton's Hastings Campus building. Both will provide access to information that people need to help them plan effectively for the future and learn from the experience of the past.

1.3   The idea for setting up the Resource arose from discussions between the Coastal Regeneration Research Centre (CRRC) based at the University of Brighton's Hastings Campus, local umbrella voluntary sector organisations Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) and Hastings Trust (HT) and Nick Wates Associates (NWA), a community planning consultancy with over 20 years experience of working in the town as well as managers of an international good practice website, CommunityPlanning.net. A partnership was established to test the feasibility of the idea with seed funding from the University of Brighton's On Our Doorsteps programme.

1.4   Feasibility work has established that there is considerable enthusiasm for the project from local community organisations, Hastings Borough Council (HBC) planners and the University's new Town Planning course. Several archives of material have been offered already and there are clearly more that will be available when the Resource is established.

1.5   The organisational and technical requirements have been explored and it is clear that there is great potential for volunteers - both local residents and students - to participate in developing and maintaining the Resource once the library and website infrastructure are established.

1.6   The next step is a 'development phase' to establish the library and website infrastructure prior to a public launch. Development funding of £75,450 is being sought to make this possible.

2 Background

2.1 Local people in Hastings are very fond of their town and full of ideas on how to improve it. Over the last twenty years, and probably longer, there have been numerous initiatives to regenerate it, to restore the best buildings and spaces and to build new facilities. There have been a great many feasibility studies, masterplans, project proposals, regeneration programmes and public consultations involving a huge investment of voluntary effort and significant public and private funding. The initial aim of this project was to enable those involved in planning and regeneration now and in the future to benefit from this investment by having easy access to the results. This would improve the process of planning in the town, thereby benefiting agencies and the general public alike.

2.2 It is important to undertake this project soon because a generation of key individuals involved in the recent phase of regeneration in Hastings are retiring or being made redundant. There is a danger that valuable personal memories, physical archives and collective community intelligence, from the final years of the pre digital era, will be lost forever.

2.3 Additional impetus has been given to the project by the Coalition Government's introduction of Localism and neighbourhood plans. The project could provide a bridge between formal planning and localism and provide a valuable resource for all those engaged in neighbourhood planning. It could also act as a pilot for similar resources elsewhere.

3 Aims

Aims set for the project are as follows:

3.1 To stimulate more and better community engagement in local planning and regeneration.

3.2 To improve local library and internet resources on community engagement in local planning and regeneration (past, present and future) by pooling local knowledge and information.

3.3 To create a model for a generic local resource about community engagement in planning and regeneration.

4 Activities to date

4.1 A Steering Group has been established comprising University and community partners. The Group has met six times and provides overall direction. (See Appendix A)

4.2 A project information flyer has been produced and emailed to over 700 newsletter recipients of Hastings Voluntary Action comprising HBC councillors, community groups, interested individuals and local residents.

4.3 The initiative was publicised on Saturday 20 November 2010 at a conference in St Leonards titled 'Making Planning Better'.

4.4 Feasibility work has been undertaken on archive categories, digitising and website architecture. A first tranche of archive material has been delivered to the Hastings Campus Library.

4.5 The potential for volunteering has been explored with university course leaders and with community organizations.

4.6 Further information about the activities to date can be downloaded from:

www.communityplanning.net/Hastings

This includes:
- Application to On our Doorsteps for feasibility funding
- Notes on Steering Group meetings
- Series of Information sheets: Project information; website brief; Steering Group members; network; archive sources; archive digitization pilot.
- Categories for archiving
- Digitising pilot (Hastings Pier competition 1990)
- Powerpoint presentations made at the Planning conference and the third Steering Group Meeting
- Business Plan

5 Main findings of the feasibility work

5.1 There is considerable support in principle for a project of this type from community groups, the local authority and those involved with planning and regeneration in the University of Brighton. It is seen as timely and relevant, particularly in light of the Coalition government's Localism

agenda and the challenges facing Hastings in the present age of austerity. The initial phase of the project has already resulted in a rich resource of information and several further offers to provide material have been received.

5.2   The Resource will be of practical use to the public, private and voluntary sectors. For instance, it will facilitate the public sector in undertaking future consultations, it will facilitate the education sector in undertaking research and training, it will facilitate the private sector in devising proposals for future development and it will facilitate the community and voluntary sectors in understanding policy and engaging more effectively in the planning process.

5.3   It is strongly felt that the project should focus on current and future resources required by community and university partners, with archive material available as a starting point not an end goal in itself. The test for deciding what to include and what not to include should be to ask what is likely to be needed most.

5.4   A digital web resource should be the first priority with a physical archive providing a supporting role. Further work needs to be done on the extent or material requiring to be digitised and the extent and rationale for a physical resource.

5.5   The Resource should focus on and explain the key phases in Hastings development. First priority should be 1990 to the present; then post Second World War; then heritage.

5.6   It will be important to integrate the new Resource with other available resources e.g. HBC website, Hastings History House, up to date information and good practice websites.

5.7   There are considerable opportunities for volunteers - both from the community and from students of relevant university courses - to build and develop the Resource but only when a basic organisational and website framework is in place.

5.8   To maximise opportunities for partners and volunteers to participate easily in building and developing the Resource, a website using a content management system (CMS) is likely to be most appropriate. (A Drupal platform is recommended by consultants The Green IT Company.)

5.9   No specific sources of funding have been identified as yet but, since the Resource will be of benefit to many agencies and university departments,

the potential for raising funds exists. Once established, maintenance costs will be relatively low.

6 Next steps and timing

6.1 Six steps are now proposed as shown in the table below. It would be advantageous if steps 1 and 2 took place simultaneously. Target dates for completion are indicative at this stage and will depend on the availability of resources.

Step	Task	Explanation	Target completion
1	Build website structure	Create website on Drupal platform using sample material for testing.	Winter 2011
2	Establish physical resource	Take delivery and sort and catalogue material offered to date. Decide what to digitise. Prepare for making available in the Hastings Campus Library. Establish procedures for future offers.	Winter 2011
3	Populate website	Add content to website	Spring 2011
4	Publicity	Promote website and library resource	Summer 2012
5	Build resources	Add content to both website and physical resources	Autumn 2012
6	Monitor and evaluate	Review development of Resource and take initiatives accordingly.	Winter 2012

7 Work programme

7.1 The tables below elaborate on the tasks necessary for each of the six steps and indicates which organizations and individuals would take responsibility for each task.

7.2 **Step 1- Build website structure**

Ref	Task	Responsible
1.1	Mapping workshop for Steering Group and others	NWA / Nick Wates and Steering Group
1.2	Set up Drupal site	NWA / Green ITcompany
1.3	Website design	NWA / Keith Gillies
1.4	Testing and feedback	Steering group, network members and volunteers
1.5	Project management and editing	NWA / Nick Wates HVA / Fran McKeown

7.4 **Step 2 - Establish physical resource**

Ref	Task	Responsible
2.1	Recruit and induct volunteers	HVA / Fran McKeown
2.2	Arrange delivery of archive material already identified to UCH (see IS13). Identify and engage other archive sources.	HVA / Fran McKeown volunteers
2.3	Catalogue above	HVA / Fran McKeown volunteers
2.4	Make available to users	HVA / Fran McKeown UoB Hastings Campus
2.5	Establish procedures and criteria for future material	HVA / Fran McKeown UoB Hastings Campus
2.6	Project management	NWA / Nick Wates

7.5 **Phase 3 - Populate website**

Ref	Task	Responsible
3.1	Sourcing existing digital material	NWA / Nick Wates HVA / Fran McKeown Volunteers
3.2	Uploading to site	NWA / Keith Gillies and GreenITCompany
3.3	Testing and feedback	Steering Group
3.4	Project management and editing	NWA / Nick Wates HVA / Fran McKeown

7.6 **Step 4 - Publicity**

Ref	Task	Responsible
4.1	Promoting website and physical archive. Organise publicity events.	HVA / Fran McKeown NWA / Nick Wates All project partners and volunteers

7.7 **Step 5 - Build Resources**

Ref	Task	Responsible
4.2	Add supplied content to physical resource	HVA / Fran McKeown UoB Hastings Campus Volunteers
4.2	Add supplied content to website	NWA / Nick Wates / Keith Gillies / GreenITCompany All project partners and volunteers

7.8 **Step 6 - Monitor and evaluate**

Ref	Task	Responsible
6.1	Reviewing physical resource and website	Steering Group / all project partners and volunteers
6.2	Establish ongoing management arrangements	NWA / Nick Wates HVA / Fran McKeown
6.3	Project management	NWA / Nick Wates HVA / Fran McKeown All project partners

8 Delivery arrangements

8.1 Costing the work programme is difficult because of uncertainty in the level of volunteering that can be anticipated. Hopefully it will be possible to attract students and members of the local community to undertake many of the tasks but sufficient paid time has been budgeted for to ensure delivery regardless.

8.2 Once the resource is in place, ongoing maintenance need not be costly. The physical resource will be provided for within the normal functioning of the Hastings Campus Library. Provision will need to be made for maintaining the website and this, including the possibility of incorporating advertising on the site, will be explored during the delivery phase.

8.3 The approach adopted for the development phase is to estimate an average amount of time per week over a one year period for two key funded delivery parties.

Key delivery parties	Roles and responsibilities
Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA)	Assistance with project management Archive collation and cataloguing Physical archives Liaison with community and voluntary sector
Nick Wates Associates (NWA)	Overall project management Website construction and design Digital archives Liaison with Steering Group

8.4 The existing Steering Group will continue to meet and it is anticipated that members will play an increasingly active role as the structure of the resource becomes established. Steering Group members have indicated that they can manage this within existing budgets and responsibilities. It may be useful to invite additional Steering Group members to provide a wider perspective e.g. Sea Space.

9 Budget (£)

9.1 The budget set out below would allow the Resource to be set up as a comprehensive and fully functioning facility. A lesser amount would risk the possibility of ending up with a half completed project but phasing is considered possible. A budget of 50% would make it possible to establish a pilot Resource which could then be used to demonstrate the need for additional funding. A budget of 33% would be sufficient to make significant progress on a website.

Hastings Voluntary Action		
Project Officer (Fran McKeown)		
1 day per week @ £400	20,800	
Honoraria and expenses for volunteers	5,000	
Rent and overheads for archive and cataloguing space	7,000	
		32,800
Nick Wates Associates		
Project Manager and Editor (Nick Wates)		
0.5 day per week @ £400	10,400	
Graphic designer (Keith Gillies)		
1 day per week @ £250	13,000	
Website developer (Green IT Company) (tender)	4,250	
		27,650
Digitising (provisional sum)		10,000
Contingency		5,000
Total		**75,450**

APPENDIX A - The Partners

1   **Hastings Trust**
        An independent charity working for the people, heritage, economy,
        environment and future of Hastings.
        Hastings Trust is represented on the Steering Group.
        Mel Bonney-Kane,
        Director, Hastings Trust,
        35 Robertson Street, The America Ground, Hastings TN34 1HT
        Tel 01424 446373,
        mel@hastingstrust.co.uk
        www.hastingstrust.com

2   **Hastings Voluntary Action** (HVA)
        A Council for Voluntary Service which promotes the principle and practice
        of voluntary action by both individuals and organised groups and by
        supporting the development of local initiatives to meet community needs.
        HVA is represented on the Steering Group.
        - Fran McKeown will assist with project management and coordinate the
        initial assembling and cataloguing of material.
        Steve Manwaring,
        Director, and
        Fran McKeown,
        Hastings Community Network Development Officer,
        Hastings Voluntary Action,
        Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings TN34 1QN
        Tel 01424 444010
        Fax 01424 432877
        steve@hvauk.org
        www.hastingsvoluntaryaction.org

3   **Hastings Borough Council** (HBC)
        The local authority for Hastings and St Leonards-on-sea.
        HBC is represented on the Steering Group.
        Jane Jackson,
        Planning Policy Manager
        Hastings Borough Council
        Upper Ground Floor Aquila House Breeds Place Hastings East Sussex
        TN34 3UY Tel: 01424 783320
        jjackson@hastings.gov.uk
        www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf

4   **University of Brighton – Coastal Regeneration Resource Centre**
Mission includes generating new evidence to support and guide the coastal regeneration process locally and elsewhere. Represented on the Steering Group.
Peter Ambrose, Director,
Coastal Regeneration Research Centre (CRRC),
University Centre Hastings, Havelock Road, Hastings TN34 1DQ
Tel 01273 643914
mobile: 07776 218200
P.Ambrose@brighton.ac.uk
www.uch.ac.uk/research.html

5   **University of Brighton – Hastings Campus Library**
Offering to host the physical resource in Havelock Road premises. Represented on the Steering Group.
Sarah Friend,
Information Services Manager,
Heather Cooper
Gerard Allsop, Head of IT Courses
University Centre Hastings, Havelock Road, Hastings TN34 1DQ
Tel 01273 644606
s.j.friend@brighton.ac.uk
www.uch.ac.uk

6   **University of Brighton - Town Planning Course**
Postgraduate course in Town Planning. Represented on the Steering Group.
Samer Bagaeen,
Subject Leader, Town Planning and Director, CRRC,
Frank Rallings
Senior Lecturer, School of Environment and Technology,
University of Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton, BN2 4GJ
F.Rallings@brighton.ac.uk
s.g.bagaeen@brighton.ac.uk
http://courses.brighton.ac.uk/course.php?cnum=1129

7   **University of Brighton - Volunteering service**
Matches student volunteers with opportunities in the local community. Represented on the Steering Group.
Jo Bevan
Curriculum Development Officer (Careers and Volunteering)
University Centre Hastings
Tel: 01273 644638

8   **University of Brighton** – **Community University Partnership Programme**
Aims to create sustainable partnerships that provide an enduring benefit to local communities and to the University of Brighton. Supported the feasibility stage of the project. Represented on the Steering Group.
Ceri Davies,
Development Manager,
Community Knowledge Exchange,
Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp),
University of Brighton
Falmer Campus, Mayfield Ho 104, Brighton BN1 9PH
Tel 01273 64 4557
www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp

9   **Nick Wates Associates**
Hastings based company providing consultancy on community planning. Publishers of Communityplanning.net, a good practice website which in 2011 was selected as a key resource for a UK government service providing free support on planning to communities in England.
- Nick Wates will act as overall project manager and lead editor. He has been a specialist on community planning and design for over 30 years. In the late 1980s he was Director of the Hastings Urban Conservation Project.
- Keith Gillies will act as web and graphic designer. He is a versatile and experienced graphic designer and a former Chair of the St Andrews Square Residents Association.
- Adam Clamp of the GreenITCompany will construct the Resource website platform and provide ongoing technical support. He is a former Chair of the Hastings Environment Network.
Nick Wates Associates (NWA),
Creative Media Centre, 45 Robertson Street, Hastings TN34 1HL
Tel 01424 205446
Fax 01424 205401
nick@nickwates.co.uk
www.nickwates.co.uk