

Hastings Castle & West Hill Café Prospectus March 2024



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Background and Context



Background and Context

- Hastings Borough Council wishes to appoint an experienced partner within the Cultural Assets sector, to develop, build, operate, and maintain the West Hill Café as a quality food & beverage facility as well as an innovative education experience telling the story of Hastings Castle.
- The project also includes access upgrades to Ladies Parlour and the castle itself with improved landscaping of the surrounding grounds.
- The design should integrate the West Hill Lift Upper Station entrance/exit and customer toilets.
- Hastings Castle is a scheduled monument and is the only direct link the town has with the battle in 1066, which made it internationally famous. How this story is interpreted and told will be an important consideration.
- The current visitor offering is poor and only attracts c.30k visitors per annum. However, with an improved visitor experience there is the potential to exceed 250k.
- Hastings was awarded funding through the Government's Towns Fund to kickstart the regeneration of the town in 2021.
- Transforming the café and the castle area into a leading destination is the flagship project of the Hastings Town Investment Plan. It is the project that will drive a step change in the south coast's visitor economy, to ensure that Hastings once again becomes a 'must visit' destination.
- Hastings Borough council has been awarded £3m of 'Town Deal' funding to invest in the Hastings Castle project.
- In this first phase of the project, it is expected that Towns Fund monies will be used predominantly to develop the site of the West Hill Café as outlined above.
- It is envisaged that in future phases of the project, working with the council, it could incorporate assets within the locality of the site area (such as the castle itself and St Mary in the Castle).

Key Objectives



Key Objectives

- The council's overall objective for this project will be achieved by enhancing the visitor experience to the castle site and maintaining a sympathetic strategy that preserves the existing castle structure with no or minimal impact.

Key objectives for the project as identified within the Town Investment Plan:

- Increase in visitors to the West Hill and Hastings Castle up to 250k per annum.
- To provide a projected 1,500 jobs to the region because of higher visitor activity to the castle, café and the town.
- To improve visitor experience, perception, and appreciation of a significant heritage asset and to tell the 1066 story in a most innovative way.
- Raise Hastings' profile as a visitor destination more widely, with an increased boost of 20% to the South Coast Visitor Economy.
- To improve ground protection of the site by improved access, landscaping and biodiversity.

The Opportunity



Hastings: The Opportunity

Location:

700k+ of the adult population are within 1 hour drive time of Hastings. Hastings has excellent road, rail and airport links and is close proximity to London.

As a seafront location with a good transport infrastructure this makes Hastings a popular visitor destination.

Tourism Market*:

- 6.1mil day trips were undertaken in 2022
- 1.7mil overnight stays
- £363.6mil spent by tourists during their visit to the area
- £30.3 million spent on average in the local economy every month
- 20.4% of population employed as a result of tourism in the Hastings Borough

*Economic Impact Report Hastings 2022

Hastings: The Opportunity

Education:

Hastings has 18 primary and 3 secondary schools with 6k+ pupils in the local area.

The project has the opportunity or potential to provide a safe and exciting learning environment for all ages with an ongoing footfall of students.

Additionally, there are 20+ language schools bringing over 35,000 students per year*.

Local landmarks:

Hastings, and the surrounding region, has a wide range of landmarks and attractions that bring visitors to the locality, such as Smugglers Adventure (100k+ visitors per year) and nearby Bodiam Castle (186K+ visitors per year).

Castle setting:

The site's location and size make it suitable for hosting high-profile events like festivals and supporting regular activities such as weddings, drawing large crowds.

History:

Huge historical significance with the Battle of Hastings and a compelling story to tell as part of this project.

*source EnglishUK.com

Vision and Ambition

A photograph of the ruins of Hastings Castle, a stone structure with several towers and arches, situated on a grassy hill. In the background, a town is visible, and the sea is on the left. The sky is overcast.

The vision is to turn Hastings Castle and the surrounding area into a fully accessible must-see visitor destination, providing a real link between the building and the battle that made the town famous around the world.

Vision and Ambition

The development of the castle focuses on 4 key areas...

- A vision for the area that is developed together with the local community, and tells the story of the castle and significance of the Norman landings.
- Refurbishing the West Hill Café, the West Hill Lift upper station, public toilets and a creative, innovative education offer/facilities, with good accessibility for all needs.
- Improve the connection to Ladies Parlour and the entrance to the castle from the Café and West Hill lift.
- Provide landscaping to the surrounding grounds and incorporate digital technologies that will enhance the visitor experience.

Funding



Funding

- The Town Deal Board approved the development of the objectives of the project, and we are now looking for experienced partners to help us deliver the scheme and facilities.
- **The council has £3m of ‘Town Deal’ money to invest** to improve the West Hill Café as a high-quality hospitality venue and exploring innovative ways, or incorporating digital technologies, to tell the story of the site including the Castle. Plus, improved access to Hastings Castle and the surrounding grounds.
- **5%** of the grant can be used as revenue to ‘subsidise’ the early years of the Café operation.
- The appointed Consortium will **consult, design, build, operate and maintain** the property. Within your submission, please state in detail any investor funding available, both in terms of monetary value and any contributions in kind (eg project management, development support etc)
- Hastings was awarded funding through the Government’s [Towns Fund](#) to kickstart the regeneration of the town. The programme, which was built around seven project themes, offers Hastings incredible and exciting opportunities to drive forward **sustainable growth and prosperity**.
- Both **Historic England and the Heritage Lottery Fund** are supportive of the project and provide the possibility of future funding post-completion and launch of this phase.

Procurement Framework



Procurement Framework

Overview

Hastings Borough council is intending to engage a suitably qualified and experienced Consortium to undertake refurbishment or rebuilding works to the West Hill Café (including public facilities), access to Ladies Parlour and Hastings Castle, improvements of the settings and landscaping of the surrounding area, and creating an innovative interpretation offer/facility to tell the story of Hastings Castle.

Once the works have been completed the intention is for the council to lease the property to the Consortium and/or its lead partner.

The lease could also include the operation, management and maintenance of Hastings Castle itself.

The Consortium will be responsible for operating and maintaining the property under the lease on a Full Repairing and Insuring (FRI) basis.

Procurement Framework

There are several aspects to the project as follows:

- **Engagement** - engagement and working with the local community to develop the proposal together with the council.
- **Construction** - during which the design and construction of the refurbishment and access works will be undertaken and completed by the Consortium, funded by the Towns Fund grant via an Agreement for Lease and a separate Grant Funding Agreement.
- **Post-construction** – on completion of the works the Property will be leased to the Consortium.
- **Post-construction** - the Consortium will be required to operate and maintain the property to the councils' requirements as set out in the terms of the lease.

Procurement Framework

Minimum Requirements

- Suitably qualified and experienced Consortium to consult on, design, build, operate and maintain the property.
- The appointed design team should have experience of responding creatively and sympathetically to historic places and should have experience of working in historic places and with conservation architects, landscape architects and archaeologists.
- Risk transfer to the Consortium via FRI lease of 15 to 25 years.
- Zero subsidy model with fixed fee payable to the council or a fixed fee and a gain share model payable to the council.
- Evidence of all policies, procedures and qualifications required by law and put into practice.

Procurement Framework

The Authority will assess RFP responses as follows:

- Information only questions: bidders are required to respond to all questions (even ones marked 'for information only') and to ensure that they are completed in full, and in the format requested.
- Pass / fail questions: bidders must pass all pass / fail criteria within the RFP.
- Scored questions: The evaluation panel will appreciate responses which are clear, concise, relevant, in line with the question and do not contain standard documents that have no contractual value.
- Responses to specific questions will be assessed in accordance as below:
 - Any responses requiring a yes or no response will be evaluated on a pass (“yes” response) or fail (“no” response) basis. Failing these responses will result in immediate disqualification and the submission will not be evaluated further.
 - All other questions will be assessed in line with the scoring criteria below. The council will reject and not assess further any responses that receive scores of 0, 1, and where 2 or more scores of 2 in a bidders' response to the additional questions including project specific questions.

Procurement Framework

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting	Level 2 Sub-criteria	Sub-criteria Weighting
Operational Delivery Proposals	40%	Organisation Introduction & Business Plan	10%
		Design Experience	10%
		Construction Experience	10%
		Sustainability, Social Value & Community Engagement	5%
		Biodiversity	5%
Commercial Proposals	50%	Construction Cost Plan	30%
		Strength and deliverability of Business Plan	20%
Legal and Commercial Proposals	10%	Amendments to Business Transfer Agreement	2.5%
		Amendments to Lease	2.5%
		Overall risk to the council	5%
	100%		100%

Procurement Framework

Timetable

Publish RFP	- w/c 18th March
Site visit - interested parties	- w/c 15th April
RFP Submission	- 3rd June
RFP Evaluation	- w/c 3rd June
Clarification interviews	- w/c 17th June
Evaluation and moderation complete	- w/c 8th July
Issue intent to award	- 22nd July
Lease award & mobilisation	- w/c 2 nd September
Project completion	- March 2026

Technical Method Statements



Technical Evaluation

Minimum Thresholds

The Authority has set a Minimum Threshold that will be applied for technical and legal responses. The Authority will reject a bidder's response in its entirety where:

- any Method Statement response or any of the legal responses scores 0 or 1 or
- for Method Statement responses and the legal responses, more than two responses score 2

Calculation of Technical Scores

The weighted score for each 'Technical' question will be calculated using the following formula: Score achieved/Maximum achievable score x weighting = weighted score for each question.

For example, any question weighted at 15%, where a Tenderer's response is scored as 3 / 5 (Acceptable): $3 / 5 \times 15\% = 9\%$

Technical Evaluation

Calculation of Technical Scores

Weighted scores for each 'Quality' question will then be added together to give the total weighted score achieved for 'Quality'.

Calculation of overall scores

Provided that the bidder meets the Minimum Technical Thresholds, for each section the bidder's total score will be calculated in accordance with this paragraph.

The Total Score for each bidder will be calculated by adding together their weighted scores for Commercial, Legal and Quality elements.

Technical Evaluation

Score	Summary	Description
5	Excellent	The bidder's response is outstanding and will bring significant added value/benefit and/or show innovation to the Authority. The Authority has full confidence in the response.
4	Very Good	The bidder's response meets the Authority requirements, and includes good, full and robust responses which give the Authority confidence and will bring added value/benefit to the Authority.
3	Acceptable	The bidder's response satisfactorily achieves the requirements of the question and is acceptable with no major concerns.
2	Weak	The bidder's response fails to meet requirements of the question and the Authority has some major concerns.
1	Very Weak	The bidder's response is insufficient or unsatisfactory.
0	Not answered	The question is not answered.

Method Statement 1

Organisation Introduction and Business Model

Introduce your organisation(s).

This should include at a minimum an outline of your company's (consortium) history, major accomplishments and a short overview of your core working philosophy.

Describe your approach to delivering a best-in-class visitor attraction and commercially sustainable business model for the Hastings Castle and West Hill Café (the facilities)

Page limit: 20 Max. of A4 Weighting: 10% (of 40%)

Method Statement 2

Design Approach

Please outline your consortium's approach and experience in delivering design projects of a similar scale and complexity.

Page limit: 10 Max. of A4 Weighting: 10% (of 40%)

Method Statement 3

Construction Strategy and Approach

Describe your consortium's track record in successfully executing construction projects within budget and time constraints.

Provide a detailed cost plan which delivers the Turnkey Project (design, build, operate and maintain) within the limitations of the Towns Fund grant of £3,000,000.

Provide a detailed sectional programme (Gantt chart or equivalent) which highlights key milestones, prelims, pre-construction, construction, handover, and aftercare.

Provide the CVs of the multidisciplinary team directly involved in the project.

Page limit: 20 Max. of A4, excluding CVs and Gantt chart Weighting: 10% (of 40%)

Method Statement 3

Construction Cost Plan

Provide a detailed cost plan which delivers the Turnkey Project (design build, operate and maintain) within the limitations of the Towns Fund grant of £3,000,000.

Provide a detailed sectional programme (Gantt chart or equivalent) which highlights key milestones, Prelims, pre-construction, construction, handover, and aftercare.

Weighting: 30% (of 50% Commercial)

Method Statement 4

Sustainability, Social Value Initiatives & Community Engagement

How will your consortium engage with the local community to develop the vision and plans for the area that is then taken forward with the then many other interested parties?

How will your consortium integrate Sustainable and Social Value practices and materials in the refurbishment project?

Outline your consortium's sustainability policy and cultural policy and describe how this will benefit the project and align with the Authority's plans.

Page limit: 10 Max. of A4. Weighting: 5% (of 40%)

Method Statement 5

Biodiversity Preservation

Describe in detail, your consortium's approach to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity and landscape of the locations during and after the project.

Outline the systems, people and measures you will take to enhance and protect the facilities and improve access.

Page limit: 6 Max. of A4, excluding supporting diagrams and design intentions. Weighting: 5% (of 40%)

Method Statement 6

Business Plan

Bidders are required to provide a rationale (“Business Plan”) to support their Operational Financial Model articulating and outlining how their model is resilient, robust, and deliverable.

NB 4 sides of A4 max. using Calibri font 11, excluding the Operational Financial Model.

Weighting 20% (of 50%)

SCORE	RATING	CRITERIA FOR AWARDING SCORE
5	Excellent	There are no concerns around either the credibility of the Business Plan nor the evidence for the assumptions used in the Financial Model
4	Good	There are only a very limited number of concerns of limited significance around both the credibility of the Business Plan and the evidence for the assumptions used in the Financial Model.
3	Satisfactory	There are a number of concerns of limited significance around both the credibility of the Business Plan and the evidence for the assumptions used in the Financial Model.
2	Poor	There are a number of concerns some of which are regarded as significant around both the credibility of the Business Plan and the evidence for the assumptions used in the Financial Model.
1	Weak	There are major and significant concerns around both the credibility of the Business Plan and the evidence for the assumptions used in the Financial Model.
0	No response or the response is unacceptable	The Business Plan is not credible and/or there is no evidence to support the assumptions used in the Financial Model.

In Summary

- Strong vision and ambition developed with the local community for an important historical site, which will become a key part of the cultural economy.
- Clear objectives to provide an exceptional visitor experience.
- Best in class, relevant and accessible café concept with strong local provenance.
- Strong historical significance which will provide a compelling educational experience and engaging story to tell.
- £3m funding already secured but with the opportunity for match funding and capital contributions.
- Commercially resilient and robust business model.
- Exceptional biodiversity, social value and community engagement initiatives.

Submission Instructions

Please submit your proposal including all required documentation to TownDeal@hastings.gov.uk by the 12 noon on the 3rd June 2024. Please specify within your response if your proposal can be shared publicly or not.

Further Information:

- Any questions or clarifications should be sent to TownDeal@hastings.gov.uk by 12 noon on the 6th May 2024. Frequently asked questions will be collated and added to the [Town Deal blog page](#).
- If you would like to talk about this in more detail, please contact Julian at Blue Horizons Ventures on 07584 102287.
- Please note, the legal suite of documents (Appendix 11. Agreement for Lease, Lease, and Grant Funding Agreement) are currently being prepared by our legal team. Interested Parties who have registered via the Procurement Hub will be notified when the documents are ready to access.

Appendices



Appendices

1. Reports
2. Stakeholder Engagement
3. West Hill Lift
4. Planning Advise
5. Hastings Climate Emergency Plan
6. Surveys
7. Historic England Advice
8. Local Wildlife Citation
9. Construction Cost Template
10. Financial P&L Café
11. Legal Documents
12. Method Statements
13. Schedule of Documents