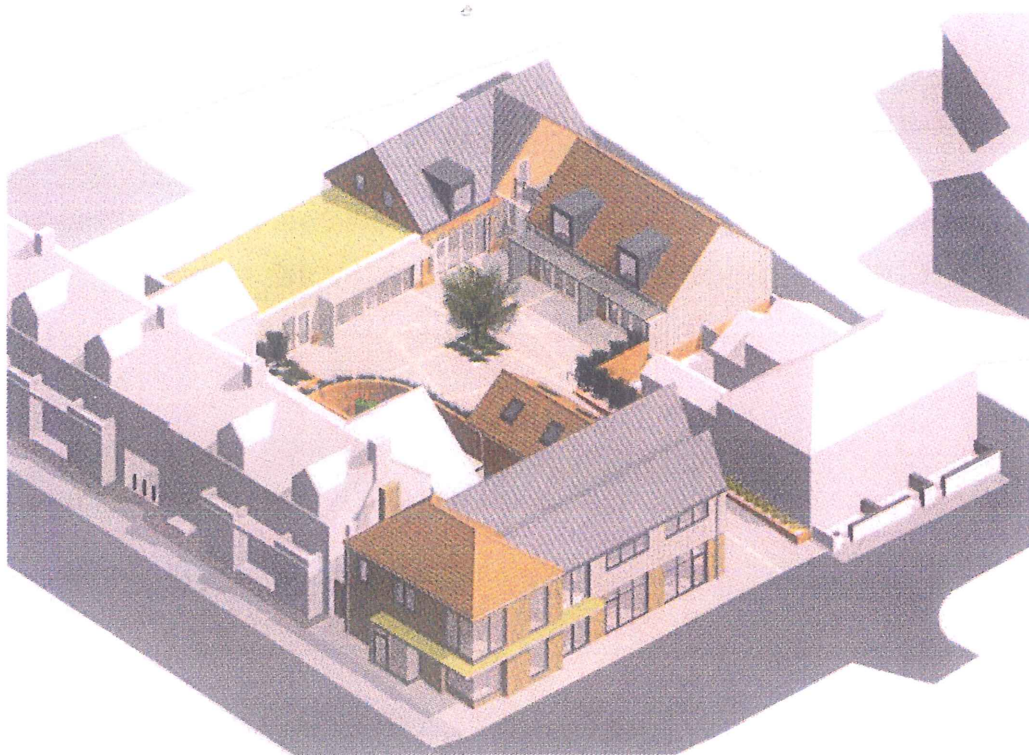


## YOUR TOWN COUNCIL ANSWERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SOUTHWOLD ENTERPRISE HUB



In September 2019, Southwold won a Coastal Communities Fund grant of c£1 million to help redevelop Station Yard as an Enterprise Hub employing up to 73 people and a convenience store. The grant also funds a three person Economic Development Team that will help all of the Town's businesses.

This is a long term regeneration project to address the Town's severe sustainability issues – a rapidly declining and elderly population. The Hub will bring young working people into the town to become the next generation of community leaders. They will spend money in our local shops that are struggling. 60% of our dwellings are no longer occupied full time. Some might choose to live locally if opportunities arise and they and their families could then become part of our community.

**Has the Town Council consulted about building office space on the site?** Yes. In 2013, the community-led Town Plan found that 86% of respondents thought it was important to encourage local employment. Since then, four more consultations and surveys have reinforced the need to create space for start-up and small businesses. 53% of businesses told the 2017 Southwold Business Confidence Survey that lack of suitable premises was a problem.

**Who will use the offices?** Anyone already in the area or thinking of moving or returning here: graphic designers, care providers, environmental services, website design and computer repairs, education services, surveyors, financial advisors – these are just a few examples.

**Where will the Hub's employees park?** In the Millennium Foundation car park.

**How much will it cost to build the Hub?** £2,799,858.

**Will rate payers have to pay for this project?** The Hub will be funded by £800,000 from the grant, the sale of under-performing Town Council assets like the houses on Strickland Place, and/or a loan.

**How much income will the Hub generate?** The Business Plan and Risk Analysis, developed by an experienced, independent business consultant, shows that **12 years after opening**, the Hub should be generating at least **£230,000/year** compared to **£27,000/year** from the Station Yard businesses.

**Could the income be used to reduce the precept?** Yes, in the long term, along with doing many other things to make the town better for its residents and businesses.

**Will the Town Council manage the build?** No. The grant pays for an experienced Project Manager.

**Why can't the Council just repair the existing buildings?** The Town Council began working on redevelopment plans in 2000 after the Town Surveyor advised that the garages' condition was unacceptable. Since then, their condition has worsened because of the difficulty of repairing structurally unsound buildings. Regardless of what is built, the Council is required to decontaminate the site and demolish unsafe structures.



**Can the Council afford to decontaminate the site?** We have already done surveys indicating potential ground contamination. We have factored decontamination costs into the budget, plus we have a £347,000 contingency fund.

**Would building a new garage on this site be financially viable?** The site is contaminated and in a Conservation Area, which makes the build costs high. The Council considered two options for building a garage and long term both would lose money, undermining the Council's financial sustainability.

**Could the Council use the £1 million grant if it decided to build a garage?** A garage on this site would not generate enough jobs to comply with the grant.

**Can the Council find a new location for a garage?** The only suitable site owned by the Council is the former Household Recycling Centre. The Council is working on obtaining planning permission.

**What happens if the current garage tenants decide not to move there?** The site would be available for any other garage provider.

**What about the convenience store?** The tenants have been offered a new lease in the same place, with a temporary location in a near-by empty shop.

The cornerstone of this project was established around the convenience store in its current location.

**What about a cycle hire & repair business?** The Millennium Foundation, which is building a Visitor Centre and car park in the field opposite Stella Peskett Hall, has offered a site, subject to Trustee confirmation.

**How can I learn more?** Check out:

<https://southwoldtown.com/station-yard-development/> for a more detailed Q & A, the full Business Plan, and CCF Application.

Follow developments on #southwoldtowncouncil and @southwoldtown council.