

The redevelopment of the Station Yard site

Initially developed from a Feasibility Study undertaken by Ingleton Wood, on behalf of the Town Council in support of the Neighbourhood Plan. A public consultation was undertaken at Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, on Wednesday 18th November 2015 and consultation boards were subsequently displayed on the Town Council website to inform the local community about the vision for these regeneration proposals.

The initial concept of the proposal was included in the designs for the 'Entrance to Town' which formed Strategy 1 of the Town Council 'Strategy for the Future of Southwold' May 2016. The proposed site also forms an intrinsic strategy of the Southwold Coastal Community Team Economic Plan.

The planning application currently being considered by Waveney District Council proposes the construction of two separate buildings. The building on the corner of Station Road and Blyth Road would comprise four retail units across the ground floor, with the addition of two flexible office units on the first floor. The new building located within the existing yard area would contain four new flexible commercial units, which could be used as small offices or retail units. Two residential apartments would be located on the first floor of this building. The area between the two buildings will become an attractive landscaped courtyard area to enhance the environment surrounding this new business hub.

By creating more units on site and optimising the use of the yard area, the proposal intends to create retail space and new office space for local businesses, improving economic opportunities within Southwold. The size of the units is flexible with the view that the buildings can accommodate the needs of a range of different businesses, including young start-up businesses that may not be able to provide suitable premises currently.

As well as the commercial units, the residential accommodation provides a one-bed room, and a two-bedroom flat, as it is considered that there is a limited number of small, rentable properties for local people in Southwold.

As the site is owned by the Town Council, it will be able to ensure that the residential and business properties become available to local tenants, while keeping the rents affordable and fair.

In terms of the existing tenants, they were informed, by the Town Council, at an early stage for plans for the site. The Town Council remain in ongoing, private discussions with their tenants. At present, no options have been finalised, but we would hope to achieve a solution which will minimise disruption during the development. However, it should be reiterated that by optimising this space, the proposals are providing more opportunity for businesses to thrive in Southwold.

Queries have also been raised in relation to the lack of parking on the site. It is considered that, given the nature of the site, encouraging cars to enter the courtyard area would not provide a safe pedestrian courtyard area, nor would it optimise the space available. There are proposals currently being prepared by the Southwold Millennium Foundation for a new permanent car park of over 100 spaces, which is to be located very close to the site. The Foundation has kindly offered to provide parking spaces, secured via long term lease, for both the commercial and residential units proposed as part of this application. In any case, the proposed commercial units are designed to be aimed at small local businesses, for which owners and employees are already likely to live within walking or cycling distance to the site. Given the central location, sustainable modes of transport such as walking, and cycling should be encouraged for business uses. Significant cycle storage provision is therefore included within the proposals.

The proposed scheme has been duly developed over a long period of time to create a development that will improve Southwold's economic and social function, with the vision of offering new opportunity for the local community leading the proposal.

*In order to provide some clarification and offer an opportunity to discuss the planning application, we will be holding a public drop-in event on **Thursday 19th July 2018 between 2pm and 8pm at the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, Mights Road, Southwold**. Members of the public are invited to come along to view the details of the planning application that is currently being considered by Waveney District Council and to discuss any concerns with representatives from Ingleton Wood and Southwold Town Council.*