Welcome to the Southborough Hub Consultation Event

What is the purpose of this public exhibition?

- Understand the proposals being put forward for the Southborough Hub site
- Consider the layout, designs and facilities being proposed and their impacts and benefits
- Provide feedback on the two different schemes being presented for the Community Hub
- Ask us questions about the project and give us your views

How can you have your say?

- Whatever opinions and thoughts you have about the scheme, we want to hear your views.
- Your opinion and comments matter and will help us to create a development that best suits the needs of you and your local community and businesses.
- We encourage you to complete the consultation questionnaire either in hardcopy or online at kent.gov.uk/southboroughhub

What else should you know?

- All the consultation material is available for you to view online at kent.gov.uk/southboroughhub
- If you require any of the consultation material in an alternative format or language please speak to a member of the team or email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 421553. This number goes to an answering machine which is monitored during office hours.
- This project is separate from the improvement works to the A26.

Thank you for your time and interest
It has been a long standing aspiration of Southborough Town Council (STC), Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) and Kent County Council (KCC) to provide improved community facilities for residents and businesses in Southborough and High Brooms.

The redevelopment of the Southborough Hub site provides a significant opportunity to consider how the Royal Victoria Hall (RVH), Town Council offices, Library and football pavilion and related services will be provided in the future.
Opportunities

The Southborough Hub development is a significant opportunity to provide new community facilities, homes and public space that will also deliver a prominent new focus within Southborough town centre. This is an exciting opportunity for Southborough to shape a stronger and more prosperous future.

Over the past 2 years, partners have spent time refining the development proposals. This has allowed time to clarify site constraints and opportunities following the commission of specialist technical advice. During this period we have also been working with local stakeholders to clarify their needs and requirements.

It is now expected that the Southborough Hub development site can provide:

• A community hub complex to include:
  - A refurbished or new community hall (Theatre)
  - Town Council offices and meeting rooms
  - Library
  - Café / bar
  - Premises for a medical practice
• New sports pavilion
• Public spaces around and through the site
• A mix of new homes
• Enhanced provision for town centre car parking
• Pedestrian routes and a new cycle link

The proposals presented are intended to represent the form of development that could be delivered on the site. It is expected that partners will make further modifications to the proposals prior to the submission of a planning application to Tunbridge Wells Planning Department.

Where aspects of the proposals remain indicative at this time, this is clearly indicated.
Southborough Hub Masterplan Development

The Hub Site - Context

Fronting London Road the Hub site is situated centrally within the urban area of Southborough. The site includes existing buildings, vacant land, surface parking and open recreation space. Existing residential dwellings in Hythe Close, Crendon Park, Bondfield Close and Gallard’s Close are adjacent to the site, as are the premises of Lloyds Bank and the Water Margin Chinese restaurant.

The broadly flat site includes some established and protected trees to the southern and western boundaries. Away from the London Road frontage where buildings are three to four stories in height, surrounding development is of a two and three story suburban character. The existing recreation space included within the site is currently part of the Ridgewaye playing fields.

Existing Buildings and Land Uses

The Hub site includes the following existing buildings and uses:

1. Royal Victoria Hall - Originally gifted to the community by David Salomon, the premises are now owned by STC. The building has been assessed by both TWBC and English Heritage to confirm its heritage status. In November 2014 English Heritage confirmed that; “The Royal Victoria Hall certainly displays local historic interest, and if it is retained a significant proportion of its central municipal theatre fabric, would potentially be listable as the only municipal and civic theatre in England.” However, they conclude that “...completeness of design and façade details are key considerations in assessing theatres of this period. The Royal Victoria Hall’s extent of alterations over time and loss of key architectural features, such as the original entrance, the cast-iron porch and its canopy replacement and the latter installation of a box office and bar means that the building as a national representation of late Victorian municipal theatres does not meet our strict criteria for post-1840 buildings.”

English Heritage therefore, does not consider that the building is suitable for listing to protect its fabric. TWBC has separately assessed the building for consideration on its local list of heritage assets and for similar reasons the building is not considered suitable for inclusion on the local heritage list.

The building is in need of significant financial investment and would benefit from improvements to provide more flexible accommodation that is attractive to a wide range of users. The existing hall is also not currently fully accessible for disabled people. The building was closed by Southborough Town Council in January 2015 due to mounting financial pressure relating to continuing repairs.

2. Council Offices - The Town Council offices and ancillary buildings are also in need of significant investment and are no longer considered to be fit for purpose due to their layout. These premises are not fully accessible for disabled people.

3. Tesco Derelict Land and Public Toilets – The site of a former public house that is currently derelict and enclosed with hoardings. The toilets are dated and poorly designed.

4. Ridgewaye Buildings - These buildings are owned by KCC and are currently occupied by the Ridgewaye Football Club and on a temporary basis by a KCC managed pupil referral unit. The buildings are in a poor state of repair and are not fit for purpose, nor are they fully accessible for disabled people.

5. Yew Tree Road Car Park – The car park is owned by TWBC and serves Southborough town centre, it currently provides 2 hours free parking.
The Southborough Hub site is provisionally allocated for mixed use development in the TWBC site allocations document, which is expected to become a statutory part of the Borough Local Plan early in 2016. The document includes a policy for the Hub site (AL/SO 2), which requires that:

“A comprehensive scheme for redevelopment and/or refurbishment of buildings and spaces will be prepared to provide community facilities, homes and improved parking.

Proposals will be expected to deliver all of the following:

• approximately 50-60 residential units
• flexible community floorspace, including space for assembly and leisure uses (Use Class D2)
• retention of the existing public car parking capacity”

Once adopted the policy will replace saved policy CR6 in the Borough Local Plan (2006), which has long established the development potential of the site. Please refer to the TWBC Local Plan documents for further information.

The Southborough Hub site is predominantly held within the ownership of public sector partners, as shown on the plan below. Additional land that is currently within the ownership of Tesco and Lloyds Bank is required to deliver the full development of the site. Negotiations are ongoing to acquire the additional land.

Land Ownerships

The Southborough Hub site is predominantly held within the ownership of public sector partners, as shown on the plan below. Additional land that is currently within the ownership of Tesco and Lloyds Bank is required to deliver the full development of the site. Negotiations are ongoing to acquire the additional land.
The preparation of development options for the Southborough Hub site was undertaken in consultation with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Meetings were held with individuals and organisations that use the land and existing buildings. This was followed by a two week public exhibition which presented three initial options for the site.

Stakeholder Meetings - Key messages

- Most stakeholders were supportive of the delivery of improved and shared accommodation as part of redesigned or new community building(s).
- Generally stakeholders with an interest in the RVH were keen to see it refurbished, but appreciated that there would be some merit in a new development. Increasing the flexibility of the Hall was supported in principle with theatre groups requesting that any new space should be able to operate effectively as a theatre.
- Local amenity and interest groups had a more conservative viewpoint with regard to the future of the site and were opposed to its development and any redevelopment of the RVH.
- The Ridgewaye Football Club were willing to consider relocating the existing junior football pitches, which are within the Southborough Hub site boundary, if this resulted in the provision of better built facilities.

Exhibition – Key Messages

- Vehicular traffic and parking – concerns were raised regarding the impact of the development in terms of traffic implications and vehicular parking requirements.
- In terms of options presented for the RVH and other community uses, the refurbishment was the most favoured. The prospect of a new or improved community facility was generally welcomed, with many keen to see the RVH refurbished or replaced to provide a more flexible space.

In response to the exhibition, approximately 140 response forms, letters and emails were received. The Options Study final report is available online. The issues identified have been given further consideration in the preparation of the latest proposals.

Stakeholder Engagement Ongoing

During the development of the project, meetings have been held with stakeholders. Groups and organisations have included: The Friends of the Royal Victoria Hall, Ridgewaye Football Club and Southborough Access Group. Updates have been presented at Committee meetings held by Southborough Town Council. Project updates have also been issued via press releases, email and social media.

Separate discussions with Tunbridge Wells Planning Department and Kent Highways Services are also ongoing.

Questionnaire 2015

To increase awareness of the Southborough Hub’s development and continue to clarify the requirements and aspirations of the local community for the project, a questionnaire was undertaken between May and June 2015. This provided an opportunity for local residents and businesses to share their views. 570 completed responses were received.

Key messages

- Over 70% of respondents stated that they visited the Royal Victoria Hall within the past 2 years, the most prominent purposes being for the pantomime, music and theatrical performances.
- Of those who responded, over 450 people stated that they use theatres elsewhere in Tunbridge Wells.
- Over 85% of respondents stated that they used Southborough Library.
- When asked what facilities they would like to see provided within a ‘Community Hub’, over 450 respondents identified that they would like to see a theatre retained or re-provided. Other prominent facilities included a Farmers’ Market, Café, Community spaces/Hall and Library.

A summary document analysing the questionnaire responses can be found online at kent.gov.uk/southboroughhub
Community
Ensure that proposals enhance the sense of community and provide internal and external space.

Flexibility
Provide a range of community facilities that can operate collaboratively and flexibly.

Enhancing Links
Reinforce and enhance the link from London Road to the Ridgeway Recreation Grounds and establish a sequence of spaces along this route.

Connectivity
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to Southborough Town Centre from all directions.

Integration with London Road
Respond to commercial uses on London Road with additional commercial uses located on the retail corridor strengthening the offer in the centre of the town.

Creating Places
Design buildings and spaces to create a locally distinctive sense of place.

Providing Homes
Provide a range of high quality homes with private amenity space and access to recreation facilities.

Identity
Use architecture to create a distinctive place with a sense of orientation and address.

Arrival
Create a landmark that identifies the centre of Southborough that can be easily recognised from all approaches.

Coherence
Deliver a consistent architectural language with variations on a theme to create visual richness whilst maintaining a building style which is in keeping with Southborough.

Landscape
Enable improved access to green spaces and extending open spaces into the town centre.
Southborough Hub Masterplan Development

Proposed Site Layout

Key Masterplan Elements

- New Community Hub, Town Square and Mixed Use Buildings
- Yew Tree Road Car Park Extended
- Residential Apartments and Housing
- Landscaped Route Connecting Town Centre with The Ridgewaye Recreation Grounds
- Sports Pavilion and Ground Workers Depot

Buildings Key

- Community and Mixed Use Site Area
- Residential Buildings
- Existing Buildings
- Site Development Boundary

Community Hub Option 1 New Build Scheme - Indicative New Build Hub

Community Hub Option 2 Part Retain Scheme - Indicative Part Retain Hub
Community Facilities

Better Facilities For The Community
The Southborough Hub has been a long term aspiration for Southborough Town Council (STC) stretching back over 20 years.

During this time, a number of studies and consultations have been undertaken and partners have agreed that the Southborough Community Hub should comprise:
- Community Hall (Theatre)
- Town Council Offices
- Library
- Medical Centre
- Café/ Bar
- Flexible spaces for the community

Flexibility for the benefit of the wider community was established as the main design requirement.

Community Hall (Theatre)
Following engagement sessions with stakeholders including theatre groups and working alongside theatre specialists, the following requirements were agreed:
- The community hall should be as flexible as possible to allow for all community activities
- The existing theatre facilities should be enhanced where possible
- A design that supports rental of the facility

The use of retractable seating allows for a large flexible community hall to be created with minimal manual input. Access to this space, the location of the balconies and the alignments have all been agreed with the aim of creating a large, flexible community hall once the seating is retracted.

Medical Centre
Following meetings with healthcare professionals it was identified that orientation, natural light, vegetation and quality of space is important for the architectural design of medical facilities. The new medical centre will provide the facilities required due to the increasing patient roll numbers expected in the area by 2020. It was also identified that independent access to the building is required by NHS England for infection control and emergencies. The following accommodation was agreed in line with NHS design guideline HBN11-01:
- 9 consultation and examination rooms
- 4 treatment rooms
- 2 nurses rooms
- 2 private offices
- Secure storage

Library
With the relocation of the Library service into the new Community Hub the existing services on offer will be retained and enhanced, therefore maximising the potential of this community asset to ensure that more services can be accessed, all in one place in the centre of the community.

The proposed Library will be an equivalent size to the existing with the advantage that this can be designed to ensure that the layout, stock and activities on offer meet the current and future needs of Southborough together with the opportunity for Southborough residents to contribute their views going forward.

The Library will be designed with maximum flexibility in mind so that the space can be used for other events and activities outside Library opening hours.

Following engagement sessions with Kent Library Services the following requirements were agreed:
- Library space, to include children’s space, main library, computer area and space for meeting and study
- Flexibility to allow different activities

Town Council Offices
Discussions with the Town Council identified that the offices should be on the ground floor for ease of access and public visibility. The Town Council offices will include the following:
- Space for at least 3 members of staff with desks
- An interview room
- An archive
- Welfare areas
- A large meeting room

Sports Pavilion & Ground Workers Depot
Following consultation sessions with The Ridgewaye Football Club it has been identified that the Sports Pavilion requirements are:
- 2 group shower/changing rooms
- 1 individual shower/changing room
- Social area with kitchen
- Flexible space for admin or training
- Storage space for equipment and lockers

The Depot re-provides the facilities for STC Ground Workers that are currently located to the rear of the Royal Victoria Hall. It was agreed that the depot should include the following:
- Storage for internal maintenance vehicles
- Workshop space
- Storage space for tools
- Staff welfare areas

Other Uses - Café/Bar & Retail Areas
A small cafe/bar unit is proposed to support the community uses within the Community Hub building and also to support other retail uses in the scheme.
The Southborough Hub Masterplan has been developed with two options for the provision of a Community Hub.

Both design options strive to complement and contrast with their context, providing a contemporary iconic building for Southborough town centre that brings together community facilities on a central site.

The first option proposed is to demolish all the existing buildings on the site and construct an integrated new build Community Hub.

The second option proposed is to retain and refurbish only the hall and stage elements of the original Royal Victoria Hall building. The remaining parts of the building will be demolished and replaced with new buildings to provide the other community facilities required.

Following the selection of a scheme proposal, the designs will be developed further to fulfill all the brief requirements and progress the development of the whole Masterplan.

**Option 1 – New Build**

This building will bring together the community facilities required into a single new building. The Community Hub will combine the main uses in defined areas of the building with a central hall for circulation and activity. The central hall is the main feature of the hub, with a curved roof extending beyond the building line to provide an entrance canopy to all approaches.

**Option 2 – Part Retain**

This proposal incorporates the retention of the existing hall within the Royal Victoria Hall building. There will be a new layout that surrounds the existing hall to connect into the original hall space, improve the existing facilities and to provide the space required for all the other community facilities within the Community Hub.

The relationship between the community facilities is slightly different in this option as the medical centre is an independent building.
The flexibility of this space is provided by the open plan area that is achieved through a structural system that requires no vertical supports in the central hall space. The central space is completely clear of obstructions so the area can be rearranged as needed. This is possible thanks to the design of the lightweight curved canopy and the inclusion of structural supports embedded in the perimeter ring.

The central space is a flexible display area for shelving and seating. Additional space for quiet reading and study is provided for the Library in the enclosed outer ring of the hall.

The Library

The central area has been designed to serve all the uses of the Hub. Flexibility could be provided with the provision of movable furniture to make the space suitable for Library use, other assembly and exhibition uses.

The central hall/Library has three entrances into the Community Hub. There are two primary accesses, with one leading directly from London Road and the other from the proposed town square to the south, which links with the Yew Tree Road Car Park. The other, secondary entrance is from the north, where service vehicles, staff and disabled parking will be allocated.

The central area boasts a large amount of natural light thanks to a double system of openings; a high level ribbon of glazing on the elevation provides indirect light whilst a large oculus skylight focuses the attention on an illuminated centre.

The outer ring hosts the entrance lobbies and accesses to the other uses like the hall, café and toilets. It also accommodates quiet rooms, administration areas, reception and collaboration rooms.
Community Hall (Theatre) and Town Council Offices

The Community Hall is accommodated in the largest part of the building, together with the Town Council offices. The Community Hall has several levels with retractable seating provided on the ground floor that enables the space to be reconfigured for a variety of community uses. Access to the space on all levels, the location of the balconies and seating configurations have been designed to maximise flexibility.

The proposed stage is level with the ground floor requiring the first rows of seating to be located below ground floor level. This allows for the first rows of seating to be removed and a temporary floor installed.

The Town Council offices are located on the ground floor with a frontage onto the proposed pedestrian route through the site. The Council will have use of the community rooms at upper level for Town Council meetings.

The Medical Centre

The medical centre is located in another part of the Community Hub. It has entrances directly onto the street, as well as connections with the central hall/Library via the collaboration suites. The design is in line with best practice principles of primary healthcare design with the inclusion of landscaped courtyards and maximised natural daylighting features. This facility will be provided to meet current and future demand in the area and benefits from integrated collaboration areas between the medical centre and the Library.

Highlights - Option 1 New Build

- All community facilities are integrated into one building
- Flexibility is provided within the community hall. The central area is free of structural elements so that the adaptability can be maximised.
- Target capacity: 360 seat hall
- Flexible hall space with retractable seating, increased stage dimensions and more generous wings
- New control room, control bridges, double height workshop and changing rooms
- Fully accessible to all
Southborough Hub Masterplan Development
Community Hub - Option 2 - Part Retain

**Accommodation Layout**

The part retained Royal Victoria Hall forms part of a new Community Hub building. The retained hall will be surrounded by new single storey spaces, fronting to London Road and to the south. There is also a new build standalone building to the south of the Community Hub building.

The community hall facilities are provided within the existing hall with additional support spaces to the rear. The Library and Café/Bar are located in the entrance hall to the front and the south and the Town Council offices are located with frontage to the south of the building.

The Community Hub has three entrances; one leading directly from London Road, one from the proposed town square to the south and a third to the east which links with the east-west pedestrian route along The Ridgeway.

The medical centre is located in an independent building, to the south of the main Community Hub; with two entrances, one leading from the corner on London Road and the new Hub building and the other from the corner with London Road and the disabled parking and drop off area.

**The Library**

The Library is located within the entrance to maximise access to the customers and to encourage increased use of the Hub building. This space is intended to be used as flexible space as well as for circulation.

The Library is well lit by natural daylight with glazed roof lights and elevations. The café/bar has a visible position at the front of the building aligned with London Road.
Southborough Hub Masterplan Development

Community Hall (Theatre) and Town Council Offices

The community hall is accommodated in the Royal Victoria Hall auditorium and will be refurbished to current building standards.

The two levels of the existing hall will be retained, but modifications will be made to provide retractable seating on the ground floor that enables the space to be reconfigured for a variety of community uses. The provision of retractable seating is fundamental to the operational flexibility of the hall space, however this will reduce the number of seats in the existing hall, but will ensure the building meets the latest legislation.

A new workshop and changing facilities will be provided to the rear of the hall, with direct access to the stage. The existing stage and proscenium will also be retained. Access to the hall space at ground and first floor has been reconfigured and a new mezzanine will be provided for access to the balcony along with a new control room.

The Town Council offices will be located on the ground floor with a frontage onto the proposed pedestrian route through the site. The Council will have use of the community rooms at upper level for Town Council meetings.

The Medical Centre

In order to maintain the hall space in the current location, the medical centre will be located in a separate building from the main Community Hub in this option, however the internal layout remains the same.

The design is in line with best practice principles of primary healthcare design with the inclusion of landscaped courtyards and maximised natural daylighting features. This facility will be provided to meet current and future demand in the area.

Highlights - Option 2 Part Retain

- Community facilities are split across two buildings
- Flexibility is provided within the Community Hall and Library. The whole area is free of structural elements so that the adaptability can be maximised
- Existing hall space is retained and refurbished
- Target capacity: 250 seat hall
- Flexible space with retractable seating
- New control room, workshop space and changing rooms
- Fully accessible to all
The Retained Ridgewaye Field will continue to provide accessible open space for general recreation, such as football and dog walking. The field will continue to accommodate both full size and junior football pitches. Partners are continuing to work with the Ridgewaye Football Club to accommodate their requirements for playing pitch capacity.

The sports use of the Ridgewaye field will be supported by the proposed sports pavilion. The current design includes two team changing rooms and showers, a separate shower and changing room for referees, storage space for sports equipment, a social area, kitchen and a flexible space that could be used as an office or training room. It is intended that the facilities will conform to Football Association requirements.

The proposed Ground Staff Depot is located next to sports pavilion and will have direct access onto the Ridgewaye field. It will re-provide the facilities that are currently located to the rear of the Royal Victoria Hall. The depot is required for the storage of maintenance vehicles, tools etc. and will provide workshop space and toilets for the ground workers.

The Sports Pavilion and Ground Workers Depot

Indicative Layout Plan

The Retained Ridgewaye Field will continue to provide accessible open space for general recreation, such as football and dog walking. The field will continue to accommodate both full size and junior football pitches. Partners are continuing to work with the Ridgewaye Football Club to accommodate their requirements for playing pitch capacity.

The sports use of the Ridgewaye field will be supported by the proposed sports pavilion. The current design includes two team changing rooms and showers, a separate shower and changing room for referees, storage space for sports equipment, a social area, kitchen and a flexible space that could be used as an office or training room. It is intended that the facilities will conform to Football Association requirements.

The proposed Ground Staff Depot is located next to sports pavilion and will have direct access onto the Ridgewaye field. It will re-provide the facilities that are currently located to the rear of the Royal Victoria Hall. The depot is required for the storage of maintenance vehicles, tools etc. and will provide workshop space and toilets for the ground workers.

The Sports Pavilion and Ground Workers Depot

Indicative Layout Plan
High Quality Urban Spaces

The Masterplan is structured around a coherent framework of public places each with a distinctive character.

It presents an opportunity to create a walkable neighbourhood that puts pedestrians first through the provision of a legible layout, level access and carefully integrated landscaping. It will also provide a dedicated pedestrian and cycle route from Western Road across London Road (A26) through the site to The Ridgewaye. This will form part of a cycle route proposal linking to North Farm, that is being prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

By creating areas with different public uses within the Masterplan, the development has the potential to create vitality within Southborough town centre with new facilities and outdoor spaces that can be enjoyed by many residents and visitors. This could also support the development of a local farmers’ market.

Open Space

The proposed development site will enhance connectivity and permeability from London Road through the site to the playing fields. Ease of access to green space from Southborough town centre will therefore be improved. By linking the existing Ridgewaye field to London Road, and enhancing both the hard and soft landscaping through the site, the development provides an opportunity to encourage more people to make use of the site and playing fields for recreation purposes.

The options present an opportunity to redefine the relationship of the buildings on the site to the street scene, and improve their setting as well as key views through the site. With enhanced visibility comes natural surveillance that will make the area safer. It also presents an opportunity to create distinctive new urban spaces, such as a town square and market space that would complement the role of the town centre.
The residential element of the Southborough Hub Masterplan will be the enabling development with a required amount and mix to fund the development of the Community Hub building.

The residential development will be brought forward in line with current policy, in response to the site constraints and the viability of the Masterplan development.

The indicative residential layout shown is for a total of 55 units. Following the conclusion of the public consultation the residential layouts will be progressed in outline form for a planning application.

Example Housing Layout: 4 Bed Mews House

- Bedroom
- Family Bathroom
- Bedroom
- Master Bedroom
- Ensuite
- Terrace

Second Floor Plan

Third Floor Plan

First Floor Plan

Ground Floor Plan

Front Garden
- Balcony

Bedroom/Study
- Living Room
- Storage Wall
- Kitchen & Dining

Cloakroom

Undercroft Parking

Example Contemporary Town Housing

Precedent: Abode, Great Kneighton

Precedent: Spa Meadows, Tunbridge Wells

Precedent: Lott Close, High Brooms

Site Section AA: Mix of apartments, mews and town houses

Site Plan: Mews & Terraced Housing Example

Outline Residential

Example Contemporary Town Housing
A housing mix composed of a variety of homes types will be provided across the site.

The indicative residential layout shows that in areas close to the Community Hub, a more urban model of mixed use residential apartment buildings are proposed with commercial uses and active frontages.

In areas which are located closer to the existing residential developments along the site boundaries, lower density, traditional low rise semi and detached dwellings are proposed.

In the area between the two plots for housing, it is proposed to have a transition of medium density, terrace town and mews style houses.
Site Access

The Masterplan options provide new access routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This includes a new cycle route through the site that will connect with North Farm once complete. Facilities for bus passengers will be maintained with access to frequent services connecting to Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and beyond.

The development presents an opportunity to achieve improved vehicular access into the site from London Road, while reducing the number of private points of access onto the A26. This will be of benefit to the flow of traffic along the A26. The existing access to the Hythe Close garages is well positioned to serve part of the site as shown. It is proposed that this vehicular access route will be improved to form a side junction, serving the sports pavilion and ground workers depot. It will also provide selected access to the medical centre, for hall deliveries and a small number of private flats. The junction will be modelled to ensure that it will operate satisfactorily without significant detrimental impact on the existing highway network.

The existing access road known as The Ridgewaye that currently leads to the former school site, presents an opportunity to extend this road into the development site. It is possible that improvements may be required at the junction of The Ridgewaye and Yew Tree Road, this is subject to further transport modelling and advice. Any improvements delivered will seek to ensure that the increased traffic generated by the development will be minimised.

Parking

Traffic surveys have been undertaken to inform the preparation of the Masterplan options. The surveys have identified that the Yew Tree Road Car Park is currently under utilised, therefore providing capacity to meet demand arising from the proposed development. The calculated parking demand for the library, hall/theatre, retail, café/bar and medical centre can be accommodated within the extended Yew Tree Road car park and proposed new spaces adjacent to the Ridgewaye playing field. By acquiring the land currently owned by Lloyds Bank to the north of the current Yew Tree Road car park, the car park can be extended.

The residential housing units will be provided with parking spaces within private garages, driveways or parking courts, with additional unallocated spaces made available for visitors. The residential apartments will also be provided with at least one parking space per unit in on street parking courts. The parking provided within the Masterplan options is based upon established local authority parking standards and expectations of car ownership based upon 2011 census data. The layout, allocation and management of the proposed onsite parking is subject to detailed negotiations with Kent Highway Services and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
Kent County Council (KCC) is improving the traffic signal controlled junctions of Yew Tree Road and London Road, Speldhurst Road and St John’s Road in Southborough to improve capacity and reduce peak time congestion. These improvements are not part of the Southborough Hub development, but are important to improve traffic flow to support the development of the Hub site.

The scheme has been fully funded by central Government following a successful Local Growth Fund (LGF) bid and will form part of a future package of improvement works for the A26 corridor between the A21 and Tunbridge Wells.

It is intended that the scheme will improve the current constraint of peak time congestion on the A26 through both junctions.

The scheme includes a revised layout of traffic signals and pedestrian crossings, and will not require the removal of any established trees. The needs of all road users including cyclists are being taken in to consideration by KCC in preparing the final design.

What are KCC planning to do?

The scheme will involve the replacement of the existing traffic signal equipment at the St Johns Road junction with Speldhurst Road and London Road junction with Yew Tree Road with an intelligent traffic control system capable of modelling congestion in real time and adjusting the signal timings to reduce delays. The existing pedestrian crossing on London Road near the junction with Holden Park Road will be removed and incorporated within the new traffic signals at the Yew Tree Road junction. Whilst the traffic signal upgrading works are being undertaken KCC will also take the opportunity to resurface the carriageway and improve the footway surfaces through both junctions.

Why do KCC want to do this work?

KCC have been working in liaison with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to identify possible schemes to improve journey times and air quality on the A26 corridor between the A21 at Tonbridge and central Tunbridge Wells. Following detailed survey work on the route, the Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road junctions in Southborough have been identified as key locations requiring action to meet the stated objectives.

How will KCC carry out the works and how will it affect you?

The A26 forms a strategic link into Tunbridge Wells and it will be necessary to carry out the construction works at night to minimise disruption. Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road will be closed at their junctions with the A26 overnight between the hours of 19.00 and 05.00. Holden Park Road at its junction with London Road will be closed for the duration of the construction works. These road closures will allow KCC to increase the productivity of the construction work by creating increased safe working space for their operatives. Signed diversion routes will be in place for traffic accessing the A26 from Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road. The works will be undertaken 7 nights per week and construction work that involves excessive noise will be carried out before midnight each night.

When will the work start and how long will it take?

Construction works are programmed to commence on Monday 18th January 2016 and will take 12 weeks from this date to complete. KCC will be trialling the temporary traffic signal control (used during construction) for both junctions commencing on Monday 11th January 2016 to ensure the system works correctly. Between Monday 11th January and Monday 18th January 2016 the old traffic signal equipment will be switched off, but will be available for use should there be any problems with the temporary equipment.
Landscape, Trees & Arboricultural Impacts
A Tree Quality and Constraints Report has been prepared by ADAS. The proposals seek to retain the character of the Ridgewaye open space provided by the existing trees and vegetation on site. The removal of some trees is proposed, but the majority of these trees have been identified as not being of significant quality and proposals include mitigation planting through the proposed public realm areas that will more than offset any loss incurred.

The proposals include new garden spaces and street planting with native species. There are a number of important trees located on and around the Southborough Hub site, as identified by designations of Areas of Landscape Importance (ALI) and Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). These areas of landscape present an opportunity to retain and enhance the existing quality landscape features, which have important environmental and amenity value and contribute strongly to the character of the area.

Biodiversity/Ecology
An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Grassroots Ecology and no adverse impacts have been identified in association with the two statutory designated sites Barnett’s Wood and Hilbert Wood or the non-statutory designated sites Brookes Wood and Southborough Common.

The existing habitats present within the site are of heavily urbanised character and of limited intrinsic or ecological value. Therefore there is an opportunity for the development to provide net ecological enhancements. The habitat losses are not considered to be significant in ecological terms, however a number of enhancements are recommended in order to provide maximum opportunity for wildlife. Limited fauna was identified during surveys and enhancements, precautions and recommendations have been made.

The development of new buildings on the site also presents an opportunity to incorporate green strategies such as sedum roofing and courtyards that are both visually attractive and support a sustainable approach to integrating new facilities.

Air Quality
The area is located within a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) as the London Road already exceeds air quality objectives. Development of the Southborough Hub site will require a mitigation strategy to ensure that residents are fully protected from exposure to poor air quality and also a sustainable transport and low emission strategy to mitigate against the impacts on local air quality.

Technical works have begun and a draft Air Quality Assessment has been prepared. The new Air Quality Significance Criteria that were published in May this year are much more stringent that the previous criteria. A mitigation scheme will be proposed, broadly in line with the Masterplan design principles set out below:

- Reducing the number of vehicular junctions along London Road could improve the traffic flow and therefore reduce the time that vehicles take to travel through the area
- Integration of community facilities into a hub building in a centralised location within Southborough may present opportunities to reduce vehicular trips in the local area, as community facilities will be provided in a single destination and could be supported by the surrounding commercial retail or cafe uses. The centralised location could also encourage people to travel to the site using public transport, as the bus stops are located close to the site
- The development also presents an opportunity to create an improved infrastructure for sustainable methods of transportation to enable increased walking and cycling. Adequate cycle storage facilities will be provided throughout the site. The London Road, Southborough to High Brooms cycle route will be directed through the proposed site
- Specific building and landscaping design principles can also contribute to the mitigation strategy, such as:
  - Locating habitable rooms away from the A26
  - Mechanical ventilation systems
  - Sealed or limited opening of windows on the roadside facade of the building;
  - Location of air intakes away from the road to draw in clean air
  - Buildings set back from the main road
  - Further landscaping and vegetation boundary between the development and road

- Specific strategies for the proposed residential dwellings that could be employed are:
  - Parking bays could be provided with electric vehicle charging facilities
  - Existing publicly accessible car clubs could be expanded
  - Low NOx boilers should be used

Noise
The site is located adjacent to London Road which suffers noise from traffic. An appraisal has been carried out by WSP and there are considered to be no significant acoustic issues. It is considered that the sensitivity of the proposed development is no greater than the existing uses in similar proximity to London Road. At detailed design stage, issues such as control of noise from building services plant will be addressed.

The development site presents an opportunity to propose a site layout that responds to the existing acoustic issues. The development offers potential to cluster public buildings with higher levels of noise together and to cluster private residential buildings near to existing residential developments. The development also presents an opportunity to create a buffer zone of built form or landscaping development to reduce the acoustic impact of London Road on the development site. The provision of larger public buildings fronting London Road could help to create a better environment for protected public spaces and residential developments further away from the busy road. The positioning of the proposed buildings could also reduce the acoustic impact of The Ridgewaye Recreation grounds on the existing residents of Crendon Park and Bonfield Close.

Drainage and Flooding
The Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by Pick Everard indicates the proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore the site is considered appropriate for the proposed uses.

Measures for sustainable surface water management will be confirmed at planning stage, but the site investigation has reported that there is potential to utilise permeable ground for soakaways and sustainable drainage systems in order to reduce the impact on existing surface water drainage through a reduction in surface water discharge off site.
Southborough Hub Masterplan Development

Architecture

Community Hub
Mixed Use Residential
Contemporary Medium Density Housing
Contemporary Traditional Low Density Housing
Public Open Spaces
In order to help the project move forward the three Councils are coming together with their respective landholdings while also seeking to acquire land from Lloyds Bank and Tesco. To ensure the partners each have an understanding of how the project will move forward, agreements have been entered into that set out the governance for the project.

**Project Governance**

Project decisions are taken by the Project Board. The Board has been formed by the Memorandum of Understanding and includes one elected representative from each partner authority, with each partner having one equal vote.

The Board members are the following:

- Chairman of STC, Cllr Glenn Lester
- TWBC Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing, Cllr Lynne Weatherly
- KCC Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Mike Hill.

**Legal Agreements**

A *Memorandum of Understanding* has been entered into setting out how the partners will work together on the project. The document sets out the roles and responsibilities for each partner, the desired outcomes and the governance for the project.

**Call Options** have been entered into between KCC and both TWBC and STC, in order to ensure that the land required for the project can be transferred as and when required to KCC in order to progress the project.

The Memorandum of Understanding is being used as the basis to form the *Collaboration Agreement* which is the legal document that allows the project to progress.

**Development Agreement** will follow on from the Collaboration Agreement and the consultation and will set out exactly what will be delivered in terms of the community facility.

**Interim Services**

KCC will work with all service partners to ensure that wherever possible, they will have continuity of service during the build period.

**Land Acquisition**

Third party land owned by Tesco and Lloyds is required to deliver the masterplan as shown in this consultation. KCC, in its role as lead delivery partner is continuing to negotiate with these landowners.

Commercially confidential discussions remain ongoing with landowners.

**Viability**

Overall *capital costs* are estimated to be around £30 million for both options and both are currently considered to be viable under present market conditions.

**Operational costs** for both options are based on factors that have yet to be quantified. These will include utilities, day to day servicing and building maintenance.

**Revenue income** for both options will be based on the final delivery model that is yet to be agreed. Income is anticipated to come from a number of sources including private hire.

**Planning**

Feedback from this consultation and further input from Kent Highway Services and Tunbridge Wells planning department will look to shape the final designs to be submitted as part of the planning application.
We Value Your Feedback

- Having viewed the exhibition, we would be grateful if you could complete the consultation questionnaire before you leave. Alternatively you can complete the questionnaire online at kent.gov.uk/southboroughhub
- Questionnaire responses must be received by Sunday 24th January 2016.
- Members of the project team are available to answer any questions you may have.
- Following the exhibition, if you have any questions, please contact us by email southboroughhub@kent.gov.uk

What Will Happen Next?

- A detailed summary of the responses to this consultation will be presented to the Project Board and will inform their final decision on which of the schemes to take forward.
- Feedback will be collated and made available.
- It is hoped that a planning application will be submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in 2016.

Thank you for your time and interest