

**Agenda Item No:****Report To:** Cabinet**Date of Meeting:** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021**Report Title:** Bockhanger consultation outcomes 2021 and next steps**Report Author & Job Title:** Mark James – Development Partnership Manager  
Rebecca Smith – Housing Operations Manager  
Sharon Williams – Head of Housing**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Paul Clokie – Portfolio Holder for Housing**ASHFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**Summary:**

In May 2018, a petition was submitted to the Council on behalf of Bockhanger residents calling for Bockhanger to be given a new community centre. Following debate at a full Council meeting in July 2019, a cross-service officer-working group was established to work in partnership with Kennington Community Council (Kennington CC) and other community stakeholders to develop an appropriate scheme for the community.

A 'Task and Finish Group' was set up in September 2019 and initial feedback was received from a survey of all residents within the agreed catchment area around the former community centre site. 4,575 households were surveyed and work was undertaken to then host a community consultation event in March 2020. Unfortunately this event was postponed due to the coronavirus. A revised virtual event, held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, saw council officers and Kennington CC speak about delivering a flexible community space through an affordable-housing led solution financed by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The virtual event marked the beginning of a consultation period that saw all residents in the locality mailed about the new consultation (virtual event slides, speaker notes, questions and a short survey were issued) to try and obtain maximum response rates.

That consultation period ended on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021. This report details the feedback from stakeholders about the principle of an integrated community space in the area and the delivery mechanism specified. It will seek a clear steer from cabinet on the proposed way forward and suggested next steps.

**Key Decision:** NO (delete as appropriate)**Significantly Affected Wards:** None

**Recommendations:** The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- I. That members note the feedback from the consultation event and subsequent mail out
- II. That members support and agree further work be undertaken into the viability of an affordable housing-led scheme, which provides a flexible community hub within it
- III. That the options for delivery of the scheme are developed and agreed in principle with Kennington CC
- IV. That any community facilities developed will be delivered only after Kennington CC sign a formal undertaking to lease the space provided and take responsibility for its management and coordination of services delivered following a viability assessment
- V. That the lease includes conditions restricting sub-letting without formal consent
- VI. That the final design, to be developed in conjunction with the Community Council, be shared with the local community at a further consultation event before being brought back to Cabinet for endorsement

**Policy Overview:** Building on solid foundations: delivering affordable homes in Ashford – our delivery plan for 2019-2023

Housing Strategy Framework Priority 1 – Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in urban and rural areas, and Housing Statement 2018-2023

Reform of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Cabinet endorsed five key priorities for further spend, as a result of greater freedom within the HRA.

National Housing Strategy 2011 – delivering new homes under the affordable rent model.

A Charter For Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper 2020.

A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities (Kent Housing Group [KHG]) – February 2021

**Financial Implications:** The viability of the scheme is a key consideration both in terms of its delivery and how the community space provided will be managed by Kennington CC.

**Legal Implications:** The Council has sought advice

<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	See attached at Appendix B. The assessment does not identify any adverse impacts on any client group.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment:</b>	The impact on Data Protection will be undertaken for each individual project at the appropriate time.
<b>Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):</b>	Risk is identified in the report itself in terms of the Business Plan. Risk assessments have been undertaken on each of the projects being taken forward within the Business Plan and risk is assessed fortnightly by officers within the appropriate teams involved in the projects. These meetings identify any implications for the pipeline of sites being progressed. Further risk assessments are undertaken on each individual project at the appropriate time.
<b>Sustainability Implications:</b>	Any solution delivered would need to include assumptions regarding the Council's ambition for carbon neutrality in its HRA stock. The project, alongside all other projects proposed in the Council's 30-year HRA Business Plan, would need to be individually assessed to include the potential costs and benefits of carbon neutrality.
<b>Other Material Implications:</b>	Design and construction standards will comply with Ashford spatial standards (complying with Residential Space and Layout SPD), Lifetime Homes (a standard the Council has set out for Registered Social Landlords) and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 (which has been committed to for Page 17 Homes England purposes), and level 4 on energy. Emphasis on the building envelope will deliver the greatest benefits for landlord and tenant
<b>Exempt from Publication:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<u><a href="mailto:Mark.James@ashford.gov.uk">Mark.James@ashford.gov.uk</a></u> – Tel: (01233) 330687 <u><a href="mailto:Rebecca.Smith@ashford.gov.uk">Rebecca.Smith@ashford.gov.uk</a></u> – Tel: (01233) 330688 <u><a href="mailto:Sharon.Williams@ashford.gov.uk">Sharon.Williams@ashford.gov.uk</a></u> – Tel: (01233) 330803

## **Report Title: Bockhanger consultation 2021 outcomes and next steps**

### **Introduction and Background**

1. A petition was submitted by Cllr Diccon Spain on behalf of Bockhanger residents to the Council calling for Bockhanger to be given a new community centre in May 2018. This was subsequently debated at a full Council meeting in July 2019.
2. The resolution agreed at full Council was that the Borough Council establish a cross-service officer-working group with an appointed lead to work in partnership with Kennington CC and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate scheme for the community. It was also agreed that that the two Councils work together in a positive way to address the funding issues that were sure to arise in the delivery of such facilities and/or improvements.
3. The Head of Housing was tasked to lead the project and a 'Task and Finish Group' was set up in September 2019 consisting of officers from the Council's Housing, Culture, Corporate Property, Planning, Policy and Communications services. The nominated colleagues from these services have been working alongside nominated members of Kennington CC to undertake a full consultation with residents. Additionally, an internal working group has been set up so that a corporate approach is taken.
4. A method of consultation was agreed by the Task and Finish Group, to understand what the community needs were and how to address them, with the aim of mapping facilities in accessible locations and encouraging better use of the community amenities. A full mapping process subsequently took place to identify existing community facilities in the area.
5. The agreed consultation process set out four stages as follows:
  - Stakeholder Engagement Workshop
  - Resident Survey
  - Sense Check and Narration
  - Community Conversation
6. At the first Task and Finish Group Meeting in September 2019, Kennington CC recommended the boundary of households to be consulted, starting from the M20 bridge and travelling north, was:
  - West side of Canterbury Road to Penlee Point,
  - West side of Faversham Road to Grosvenor Road,
  - South side of Hurst Road to Trinity Road,
  - South-east side of Trinity Road to Nicholas Road
  - Kennington CC boundary to M20

7. A workshop was undertaken with local stakeholders on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 to raise the awareness of the project and to provide an opportunity to understand, comment on and influence the project. The contribution from the stakeholders (including residents, local businesses, Kent Police, GPs, Health and faith groups) provided an excellent platform to understand the needs of the community to take the issues forward into the next stage. The stakeholder workshop also reviewed the information on the existing facilities either within, or within easy reach, of the catchment area using public transport or walking. The facilities identified were mapped out across the area as a tool to understand the gaps in the area. The outcomes of the workshop were then used to shape the survey questionnaire.
8. That survey was then sent to 4,575 households in the consultation area to complete either by paper or online. Residents had until 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to return the survey using a pre-paid envelope. Almost 600 responses to the questionnaires were received.
9. When analysed, nearly 60% of respondents said they didn't use the former community centre. The 40% of residents who indicated that they did use the previous building said they used it for its library, for private events or functions, for clubs and activities, for voting when it was a polling station, for playgroups and for public meetings. Other headlines to come out of the 2020 survey were as follows:
  - Lack of affordable housing for residents
  - Development and subsequent infrastructure strain
  - Lack of facilities for teenagers in the area such as Youth Club, centre and meeting place (n.b. there were no respondents to the survey between the ages of 18 and 24 years)
  - Low quality public space and a lack of play areas for children
  - Provision of a new community centre required to provide facilities for the whole community
  - Crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) were a concern
  - Lack of social activities, especially older residents
  - Lots of traffic
10. The consultation process did generate valuable insights and a second consultation was proposed on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020. However, this 'in-person' event did not take place due to the pandemic gathering pace (in hindsight it was one week before the first national lockdown) and real doubts were expressed as to the appropriateness of permitting a potentially large gathering at that time.

## **2021 consultation**

11. The pandemic changed many aspects of home and working life. It was therefore necessary – once work could sensibly resume on this project – to review and reassess previous plans. Additionally, during the intervening months, the housing officers who had led on the previous work had left the authority. New officers were assigned the work as a priority and discussions began again in earnest.

12. The consultation work was revisited and revised, to make it relevant for the different circumstances that were now faced financially and in terms of working patterns. It was still felt that it was inappropriate to hold a large event 'in-person'. This meant that a virtual event was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September between 5pm and 7pm on Microsoft Teams 'Live'. It was well advertised with media informed, social media utilised and a banner on the Council's website directing people to the virtual space. Additionally the event was streamed at the Spearpoint Pavilion in Kennington. The recording was posted on the Council's You Tube channel afterwards.
13. The purpose of the event was to remind the public of the previous consultation work and pick up the threads to enable the work to continue. The consultation was not seeking a final approval of a detailed scheme but was sense checking the principles of what the two Councils were seeking to achieve, before detailed work commenced to shape the final proposals.
14. The main points made by officers to stakeholders in the consultation event were as follows:
  - Decisions about the provision of a flexible community space must meet the current needs of all stakeholders while considering the reasons behind why the old centre did not perform as it should have. Providing another underutilised space is not an option
  - There are financial pressures that mean the Council needs to be more creative in the way the project can be delivered:
    - i. After the height of the pandemic to date there is less scope for the General Fund to deliver such a scheme – partly because finances are tighter, partly as the costs of construction have risen and partly as an argument exists that residents in rural parishes should not be paying for the creation of the space, which indirectly they would be were it to be constructed in the General Fund
    - ii. There are currently no section 106 developer funds to deliver the scheme
    - iii. Limits on community fundraising mean it unlikely that a substantial amount could be raised to deliver this space
    - iv. Borrowing, while an option, comes with its own risks
  - Officers stated that realistically the only solution viable is for Ashford Borough Council to deliver a flexible community space through its Housing Revenue Account as part of an affordable-housing led scheme that would benefit the area more generally while providing much-needed affordable homes in Ashford, where around 1,500 households remain on the Council's waiting list. In the original survey work 28% of respondents cited the need for more housing as an issue.
  - While anti-social behaviour (ASB) is continually addressed and mitigated through housing's robust management service and policy, there are good links with other agencies to minimise its impact and reduce its occurrence. Initiatives and projects like CHESS (Community Health Engagement Survey Solutions) are engaging the young people within the community of Bockhanger to identify quick, positive changes

that can be made. An outcome from the CHES project is that a longer-term action plan will be produced to reduce anxiety about crime and ASB in the area. The CHES project has been delivered using funding obtained from the Violence Reduction Unit to trial a public health approach to tackling violence.

- How community facilities can be managed and who is responsible for the building was also discussed with three main options listed:
  - i. Parish Council Management
  - ii. Trust/Community Group Management
  - iii. Third Party Operator
- Each model has its benefits and drawbacks. Generally, it is understood that local facilities are operated most successfully by local community representation. That can be via a Charitable Trust or a Community Interest Company (there are a range of different models available depending on individual circumstances and needs). However, local volunteers will be needed to make it work. Parish Councils (or in this case the Community Council) are closer to the local community which can be a real benefit and being able to claim back VAT payments and reductions in business rates can help make facilities financially viable. One other method is for a third party operator such as a professional management company to manage the facility. They would operate it on behalf of the building owner and generally work to an agreed specification and series of outcomes. This option does require someone to effectively manage the management company
- In response to a recent audit of play area facilities and the issues raised from the consultation citing a lack of play for children and facilities for teenagers, officers said plans are currently being drawn up to improve the leisure facilities on the green at Rylands Road. The focus will be on delivering accessible and inclusive facilities for all in a safe environment.

15. Just over 30 people 'attended' the virtual event, and while there were some questions raised in the chat facility on the evening, it was subsequently felt by officers that the slides, the speaker notes from the evening and a letter should be issued to all of the households who were originally consulted. An extended deadline was then offered for responses to maximise the return rate.
16. Following the virtual event, to ensure that all residents in the catchment area had the opportunity to engage in this project, over 4,500 survey packs were sent out but fewer than 50 responses were received in response to this. This could indicate apathy or a sense of consultation fatigue, with the community probably wanting to see some tangible plans brought forward.
17. Ahead of, and subsequent to, the virtual event the Council was aware of activity on social media regarding this project. This has included criticism of the Council's approach to consultation and the principle to which it is working to deliver a community space. It is also now aware of a newly formed Bybrook and Bockhanger Matters residents group, who are going to survey residents once more.

18. Despite the negativity, the Borough and Community Councils will attempt to engage with the new group with the objective of utilising any feedback they receive and incorporating it to inform how the project develops. It is disappointing that not all residents have engaged directly with the Council, however the interest displayed by the newly formed group must be viewed as a positive step towards engagement of sorts in that they feel empowered to influence what happens in their local community.
19. It should be pointed out that the approach taken by the Council to this survey is actually in line with previous surveys it has undertaken that have been deemed fair by official bodies.
20. Having spoken to the Community Council, the Borough Council and Kennington CC colleagues will be reaching out to the new group to try and understand what can be done to ensure all stakeholders can work together, rather than against each other.

## **Official survey feedback**

21. The Council's most recent official survey returned just 41 responses out of over 4,500 households approached, meaning that the response rate was lower than 1%, which was very disappointing. Given the comments raised on social media mentioned above, this low response rate does indicate at least to some extent either an unwillingness for parts of the community to engage with the Council on the project, or apathy about delivering a scheme at all. (The feedback from the Council's survey is attached at Appendix A). The small number of responses mean that it cannot be considered a strong mandate on which to proceed alone. However, the Council was clear with residents about what constraints it had in delivering a flexible community space on the site at Bockhanger and the presumptions that it was proposing as a principle for development when it took the proposals to the community to recommence this process.
22. However, of those who did respond there was a consensus that most people want a community facility delivered but there is no agreement on what that should comprise. This suggests that a flexible space would work best in order to accommodate a number of potential uses. There were differing views on how the centre should be managed, however this is not felt to be a significant barrier to overcome.
23. There were a number of views expressed on whether the HRA should be leading on this project, and whether further affordable housing in the area should be the mechanism to bring forward the community space. Of course, the number of responses does not categorically indicate that the majority of the community share this view.
24. The HRA can 'lever in' other funding streams that would help to provide the community facility and the housing and though there are concerns that the green space the community has become used to would be completely built over with new homes, the work would be sympathetically entwined with the locality. Further consultation processes would share an agreed design with stakeholders. Ultimately, the decision would rest with the planning committee as to whether any subsequent application was permissible.

25. If an HRA-led proposal was not supported then the housing service would step back from the project but there are, as stated in the consultation, very limited avenues through which this project can be delivered. Previously, members of Kennington CC have given a clear steer that in their view any residential provision should be affordable housing.
26. In addition to the formal survey, Sk8side has been contacting younger groups, agreeing to work with the Council to try and engage younger residents, based on the fact that no 18-24 year olds took part in the original 2019 survey. They are to be thanked for their support. As referenced earlier, their input and the involvement of the CHESS project is helping to engaging younger people within the community. Sk8side's findings are anecdotal, and include the views of those aged 8-19, but are listed as follows:
- All were positive about the proposal for a new community facility
  - 85% asked for a regular youth club – suggesting various activities
  - Respondents stated that the previous centre was used by young people chiefly for birthday parties
  - Those using other Ashford facilities were mainly those attending youth football clubs
27. It is worth pointing out that while the second survey response rate was low, there were approaching 600 responses to the original questionnaire that was issued pre-pandemic and this set a strong course for this project. Additionally the feedback from that first survey, combined with the work that Kennington CC is doing to survey the usage of other facilities in the area, provides a platform on which to progress with further options to the community.

## Proposals

28. It is suggested that we move forward with the next stages of the project to work on the detailed plans for a housing led scheme, with the provision of a community space to be provided as part of the scheme.
29. So far the information obtained has been useful to help to start to consider the size of the community space and the types of functions to cater for within it. These include:
- A focus on providing a community hub
  - Flexible use space capable of creating a number of small rooms which could also be opened up to a larger room
  - The inclusion of a community café
  - The provision of business hub to cater for those needing to access computers and other business facilities
30. The above is based on research to date and the results of previous consultation exercises, but this is very much a starting point. A Task and Finish group has been set up to continue working jointly with Kennington Community Council to refine the provision and develop the proposals further. This work will not only consider the housing provision and community space but also look at how the Community council can run the facility provided and ensure sufficient revenue streams to maintain the operation of the space.

31. Once a more detailed proposal is developed this will be shared with the local community once more for a further consultation exercise, and ultimately brought back to a future Cabinet meeting.

## **Assumptions**

32. The question of where the project would sit if completed is governed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which requires that the HRA be used for income and expenditure related to the provision of council housing only. While this does permit the costs of some supplementary assets to be charged to the HRA where they relate to the provision of council housing, there is a presumption against charging the HRA with other costs.
33. The Government guidance on operation of the HRA ring-fence makes it clear that the General Fund should contribute towards amenities that are provided from the HRA but shared with the community as a whole. This is designed to prevent use of the HRA to cross-subsidise non-HRA services.
34. There are further complexities, as the appropriation of property into the HRA, such as existing General Fund land, can lead to charges to the HRA, for example through interest payable on the HRA capital financing requirement. Therefore, the Council must ensure that it has the approval to transfer this land into the HRA and it may need the consent of the Secretary of State under S12 of the Housing Act 1985 to do so.

## **Risks**

35. As with any development project there are a number of risks – these relate to feasibility spend without the guarantee of planning permission, the number of competing views on how the project should be funded, what should be delivered and the way it should be managed are all risks to its delivery and ultimately acceptance by the community and at planning. The cost of the build may well affect what can be delivered too. Many factors need to be considered and understood by all stakeholders.
36. One risk, which must be acknowledged, is the potential for a new facility to be underutilised again once built. Although it is a difficult argument, the point has to be made that after the demise of the previous facility there must be a reasonable exit strategy in place if this space is not well used. Kennington CC has advised that it has set aside some funding to ensure that the community space is managed and officers from Cultural Services are offering the Community Council advice in relation to various models for running a community space.

## **Other issues impacting upon the recommended scheme**

37. Alongside the main elements of the project outlined above, if a proposal involving affordable housing were to be formulated, there are other considerations associated with supporting the project that need to be resolved at a later date.
38. Preliminary work has started to think about the implications of what a potential affordable housing-led scheme could look like. One important consideration

that needs to be raised is the location of the existing Bockhanger shops and flats. While an opportunity such as this could be a moment to evaluate regenerating the whole site, the livelihood of the businesses is paramount and the potential costs of purchasing the existing leases, in which there are no break clauses, would add to the complexity of making the overall viability of the project work.

39. Therefore, while the preferred route would be to negotiate the relocation of the existing businesses into new shop facilities and to buy back the residential leases for the flats above this approach is likely to be disruptive to the businesses in question and costly to the Council. Hence, any option that is considered will not involve moving the businesses on the site. It is important to give this certainty now.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

40. Members are referred to the attached Assessment at Appendix B.

## **Consultation Planned or Undertaken**

41. In addition to the consultation process that the Council has outlined above, both Borough and Community Councils have pledged to engage with the newly formed group in Bybrook and Bockhanger, so that all stakeholders are working together.
42. Should members agree via this report that an affordable housing-led solution be explored further, then there will be additional consultation with the wider community once formal plans have been designed up and positive pre-application advice has been sought from planning officers. This will follow the format of housing's development scheme consultations, with either a virtual or in-person event depending on the national and local coronavirus situation and Public Health recommendations at that point.

## **Next Steps in Process**

43. As stated, the Borough and Community Councils will work hard to bring the community together to collectively drive forward the plans for the centre.
44. If members agree that the only viable solution is an affordable-housing led solution in the HRA, with the HRA being tasked with leveraging in additional funding to try and enhance the community provision, officers will report back to the 'task and finish group' with the Community Council. Work to develop plans for a scheme that can be submitted to planning for pre-application advice will then commence. If this receives positive feedback then the proposals will be put to the community to discuss further.

## **Conclusion**

45. For the reasons outlined above, the only viable option to deliver the flexible community space at Bockhanger in the current circumstances is through an HRA affordable housing-led scheme. Much work is needed to bring the community together to work towards this common goal but the Borough and Community Councils are aligned in their belief that working together is the

most productive way to deliver this project and with it a meaningful space for the community.

### **Portfolio Holder's Views**

46. The pandemic significantly interrupted the progression of this project but it is pleasing that the Borough Council and Community Council are still working in tandem to deliver a positive outcome for the residents of Bockhanger and Bybrook. This report indicates that there is a significant way to go in order to come up with a proposal however, each of the survey responses received to date provide the platform to lead the project along a pathway for an HRA-driven solution. Given the lack of headroom in the General Fund to deliver a scheme such as this, it is welcomed that the HRA can step forward to offer a route to a viable scheme.
47. I would urge all stakeholders to engage in the process and to participate in the Council-led solution when it is proposed. The delivery of any scheme must be future-proofed to ensure there is an exit strategy, if one is needed, but this solution really represents the most likely delivery mechanism to achieve the community goal.

### **Contact and Email**

48. [Mark.James@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.James@ashford.gov.uk) – Tel: (01233) 330687
49. [Rebecca.Smith@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Smith@ashford.gov.uk) – Tel: (01233) 330688
50. [Sharon.Williams@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Sharon.Williams@ashford.gov.uk) – Tel: (01233) 330803



## Responses to 2021 survey by Ashford Borough Council

## Q1 - Is having a new community centre important to you?

Yes, a place to socialise
For this responder personally no but for others in the community yes
yes somewhere family friendly
Yes it is important to have somewhere to gather for social, meetings, sports and can be utilised for various activities
Yes there is a lack of facilities in this area
Yes a space to meet the needs of local residents
Yes snack bar
It is important for Bockhanger to have a replacement community space as there is nowhere for local groups to base themselves, nowhere for youth clubs and nowhere for groups such as [REDACTED] (Bybrook Nature Reserve) to hold public meetings, committee meetings and indoor community events.
Yes it's very important to me. Firstly for young people who have little facilities within the Bockhanger area, who do not have transport to move around the Ashford area to other facilities. Secondly to provide facilities for older people who are also less mobile and need a local facility. Thirdly to provide a sense of community to Bockhanger. Stanhope has a square with 'skippers', a hall and other facilities, as do many other urban parts of Ashford. Bockhanger did have this and needs some sort of community facility in that area
I would like to see a community centre replace the one which was there [REDACTED] playing badminton in the hall, knew that the hall was well used by a local pre-school facility and that the library was used on a weekly basis by a number of local residents.
I feel a Community Centre is needed that is accessible to all ages. When the library was there you could drop in. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
The areas should be a community area for locals
Leave the shops as they are
Yes to meet people from all backgrounds,
Yes we need a place for young and old to meet, we also need green space for young children to play

Yes paying lots of tax so want to benefit from it
Yes
Not sure, would rather have a nice pub, too much housing already
would like to see a new Post Office at Bockhanger [REDACTED]
Very important to me, [REDACTED] would like to mix more freely with the community, do not have transport and regularly pass the Bockhanger area
No, I don't go to the Bockhanger area
Yes. This is because having a new community centre will attract more business activities to the axis of Kennington and its environs, it will create an avenue for more social activities and indirectly give us the local residents more sense of social inclusiveness within Ashford community
Yes, a new community centre is important to us. There is a need for a multipurpose welcoming place for people of all ages, with facilities such as a snooker table, air hockey, 5 a side football, basketball, brownies and similar activities. It needs to include a kitchen area which can serve hot/cold drinks and snacks at a sensible price and be available to all e.g. people of all ages who just want to pop in for a seat and a drink, this is particularly important for older people who may be lonely, toilet facilities are essential. The centre must also be usable as a voting hall, as was the old one, also for functions and meetings.
A new community centre is important to me because this would attract different organisations and activities. There would be more I could walk to instead of driving which increases pollution.
To answer this simply <b>YES</b> . It would be wonderful to be able to access a hall for parties such as children's birthdays and well as have a local meeting points for the community. With information sharing events and perhaps even a community café. This would be great for the community and I honestly think that if the person running the centre works pro-actively then great things would be achieved. Also, some nurseries and pre-schools have closed recently near Kennington and this could be another option for the space or even a much needed after school and holiday club, for parents who work and the children who attend Phoenix Community Primary School. There seems to be a real lack of support for working families in this area with regards to this.

██████████ I was an avid user of the library coming straight out of Bybrook juniors' school to get more books to read, as a brownie we held many a fair, jumble sale, helping out making things to sell, other social events. The centre was a cross generational hub and feel communities need a centre to bring people together. This area of town is lacking facilities and this is a central location close to the school and shops being a natural hub for a new centre. This new centre could support local pre-school activities, as sure start was abandoned, could be a centre for new clubs as well as private hire for social events. It could include an internet cafe, drop-in centre, be open at different times for different age groups as well.

a hall for the use of community it vital

Yes, available community facilities are all on the periphery of the Bockhanger-Bybrook area and outside of the daily life of residents, this has left the area without a focal point and heart.

Yes its extremely important to the Kennington community, the old hall offered a library, playgroup as well as the large hall, which was used for birthdays wedding receptions etc.

yes, a lot of young people in the area with nothing to do, a community centre could help reduce vandalism and provide youth sports clubs

Yes. I think it's so important for the local community to have a place where events can be held. I'm sure the space would be well used from toddlers groups, through to youth clubs, general interest groups, including dog training, groups that would bring health benefits for all ages, and a point of contact for multi-cultural events.

yes the centre was well located with parking (bonus). The last few years should have shown us how important community is.

A community centre is very important. It should be a hub for all community activities (meeting rooms, clubs, café, voting, sports, support centre for disadvantaged, computer training, advice centre), a model for this is Repton Court

Not important, we work full time outside the area and prefer the green space that's been made available following the removal of the old community centre

Personally, No. ██████████ In any case, a standalone centre would not be an effective use of the available land or a good use of any available money, especially as the previous centre was not used sufficiently.

**Q2. Do you agree a residential led scheme delivering affordable housing as well as new community facility is a sensible solution?**

Possibly
Yes homelessness is a big problem, affordable housing is needed
No, no point in a survey if we have already made the decision, and doing what we want regardless
Probably not, the council should be able to find funding for this project
As long as the hall is built at the same time as the housing and not defaulted on
No more housing
No more housing
The council managed to find the money to demolish the old hall and promised to replace it. I have no problem with part of the site having AFFORDABLE HOUSING just as long as the scheme is just that (AFFORDABLE) and includes a community space as promised.
I disagree with this solution, it's not the ambitious solution that Bockhanger needs. That area needs a small community facility, and some investment in the green space (proper football goals/ benches etc). This solution would lead to a congested number of houses in the area, causing further parking issues in the area. In terms of funding I believe the Kennington Community Council should be using the taxes it receives to contribute towards the cost of building this facility.
A couple of questions. How was the original community building funded? Why was the original community building demolished without providing a replacement?
I feel there is enough housing in the area already.
No more housing
No, less money is available because its spent in the wrong places
yes providing they are built in a sensible location
No more housing needed
Too many houses being built in Ashford, need more green spaces
Yes
I do agree that a residential led scheme should be implemented to facilitate the development of affordable housing with good community facilities in the areas for both young and elderly

Don't know
No replacement only
I agree to an extent that the residential-led scheme that sees the community benefit of delivering affordable housing prioritised for those with a local connection as well as new community is a sensible solution.
We are against any new housing, affordable or otherwise, with one exception, see 3 below. There are sufficient and varied retail units to serve the community, with the exception of a sub post office. The whole of Kennington is currently served by a tiny sub post office in the Faversham Road, which does not open until 12 noon and often has long queues outside with no shelter. Is/has ABC been applying pressure to the Post Office to reinstate this useful and much used facility as part of the overall project?
A suitable building should not be downsized or squeezed by other housing or retail units when open space is at a premium, there must be sufficient open space for children to play safely. Given that s106 or ABC funds are not available, it is unclear how "a residential led scheme" will fund the project. What does this mean?
I understand the issues regarding funding a community facility but I'm not clear where the affordable housing could be situated. This green space is so important for young people especially- there are always youngsters kicking a ball around. To develop this space - apart from a community facility and updating the existing shops and takeaways - would exacerbate a situation in an overpopulated area where there isn't enough for younger people to do and older people don't have anywhere to meet.

Honestly **NO**. The area does not need more houses crammed in it, it needs the space back for local residents for support and information. Why not build the building with the funds allocated to this Community Centre you must have save some as the building was taken down and not used therefore the allocated money not used for this site over the last few years should still be radially available? Otherwise, Kennington have been left out and forgotten and the funds for this area gone on another which seems unfair to me. You should create a building that actually meets the needs of the community, such as a nursery facility for children and babies under 2 years of age, a café as a local meeting point, information sharing areas, a room for local professionals to hot desk, or even home working professionals to hire out space, computer room for children and teenagers, a hall for after school clubs and holiday clubs. There are so many more option I could also list. This being said, should the housing-led option be the only available solution then surely to ensure the community is at the heart of decision the housing should be for older people such as a sheltered housing scheme? This would be a great option and could even incorporate community involvement from Phoenix Community School and other locals. As the children could perform Christmas carols etc for the residents. This also ensures any issues of anti-social behaviour remains to a minimum as there have been on going issues recently. As teenagers in the Kennington area simply have nowhere to go. The park on Rylands road is abysmal and there are no recreation facilities to help these young people flourish into stable young adults. You have let them down sadly.

I'm not quite sure why you are linking delivering housing with a new community centre. The centre is needed already for the existing community.

It must be big enough to accommodate all needs and activities; otherwise it will be wasted

The Kennington CC asks the CEX to reassess options for funding for a community hub on the site. A Residential led scheme has been the base line assumption by both councils and may remain the most promising approach. But this should not be pursued at the exclusion of other funding sources, especially if the result is a facility that does not meet residents needs fully or is not viable. Two years have passed since the initial assessment was made. Commitments to major projects such as the Stour centre have been completed and the passage of time may have released funds which could supplement those available through the HRA. Incorporating adjacent land might also increase the options available.

I thought that money was set aside years ago, when the old hall was torn down. An area as large as Kennington has become it is like a large village and the centre would benefit the whole neighbourhood. What is the point in building new houses when the area cannot cope, lack of schools, esp secondary schools, GP's, roads overcrowded, hospital not coping and no community centre.

No, the Council are building on every scrap of land available, this should remain open space for the community, village green policy

I think it's disappointing that there's no funding for such a scheme and it can only be developed by building houses. Please can the Council reconsider and use money generated by all the housing development in Kennington (106 and other funds).

I don't agree with the housing development. The affordability is only for those able to buy and make profit by renting, green is even more important now than ever. At the moment this aspect of respecting the earth is totally ignored to the benefits of only a few.

This seems inevitable. An open space is not a community facility, a piece of apparatus and a few benches is not a community facility, a residential led scheme is not what the community is demanding. Affordable housing is not a replacement for a community centre.

Absolutely not, there is significant building currently all over Ashford, why does this green space need to be filled. This is currently used as a play area, leave it alone.

Yes. This would be desirable

### Q3. How should any new facility be managed?

Stop building homes on green spaces, a nice community - even green is better
Local Community Leaders and Council should make a committee and nominated caretaker in the same way that other facilities are (Singleton, Orchard Heights)
It should be run as a community project with health care as a priority
Along the lines of the Stour centre, hiring out of the hall
A new community facility should be funded by hiring it out to local groups at reasonable rates and perhaps include a community cafe and reinstate the local library in the building.
It should be managed by the Ashford Borough Council with involvement from local volunteers.
It would be good to have a multi-sports facility on the site, like the ones at Victoria Park and at Wye so that the local teenagers can use it on an ad hoc basis without the need for booking and payment as playing ball appears to be a popular use of the green space in this area or think about incorporating such a facility within the Rylands Road play park development. CHESS funding might be used as there is not such free community facility within Kennington.
I feel it needs to be a drop in centre with refreshments on sale and toilets to use, with play area outside.
A committee to run it, with classes to raise funding
No longer need a library, maybe a mobile library
Volunteers, the local community, ward members
Civil Servants and local community
ABC
Yes
Priority should be given to long standing tenants
A team of experts from ABC specialising in the various needs of the Bockhanger community. To implement Social housing development, create new employment, and reduce ASB, also creating sports facilities for teenagers

In order to benefits and services the needs of all members of the local community, new community facility should be managed by capable individuals with proven genuine interest of the community at heart and with proven track record of success in such a community project. There might also be a well thought out guidelines as to how such facilities should be managed considering all existing variables and the future of the community in mind.

Managed by a resident manager/caretaker living on site in the only new build property, or a flat as part of the new centre build, responsible to the community and ABC.

Any new community facility should be managed to ensure it tackles loneliness and support for older residents - one of the reasons behind the now demolished Joe Fagg Centre in St Johns Lane Car Park- and a play and activity area for younger people. It could act as a health centre, coffee shop, hold classes, have social activities, be a Citizens' advice centre, have WIFI etc. It would be great to have a Post Office again locally which could perhaps be in the centre, instead of going to Faversham Road.

This centre would need to be run by someone in the local community, who knows the needs of the community, hell I could do it. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I have a vast amount of knowledge and I know about the needs of the community from speaking to neighbours and parents at the school. I also live in the community and am aware of things that are lacking not just in the community but also within Ashford itself. You could even employ 1 or 2 part time people to run the facility and then find volunteers to help if finances are an issue. You could rent space to local businesses such as the facility of a café, they could lease the space etc. Or the Council could run this with ongoing events such as speakers, community breakfast time, get to know your neighbours etc. You could have speakers visit the café or wherever in the building, such as Healthwatch Kent, carers first, Citizen's advice, KAB, Health professionals, other local services or business. Make it a real information hub for the community. You could have tutors help with children who struggle. You name it you have the power to really utilise the space into something fantastic for the community and not just make the same mistakes as an underutilized space filled with residence of the properties you want to erect. There are really so many possible things that you could put into place for the community it makes me excited writing this at just the sheer amount of options available to the community if only you hire someone who is invested in the local community and has the drive to really take this project and run with it. You will not find a person more driven than a local person with the knowledge of what support and services are out there and who has a valid investment in the community itself.

The Kennington CC will support management arrangements which will involve local residents directly or indirectly. It is exploring the option of taking on the lease itself and establishing a residents' advisory body, with a view to creating a 3-5 year trust to run the facility. An alternative is to create a trust immediately, which may allow access to grant giving bodies, but the details of this has not yet been assessed fully.
Yes
There would have to be a management group who would receive requests for use and would make a decision as to what was feasible. There would have to be a finance group who would organise immediate costs, long term repairs etc. An on-site caretaker, an administrator etc.
It should be managed by a trust or volunteer like any hall with a booking system
Management by a community trust
Based on other listed facilities we see little value in providing further facilities, leave it as green space for play
External organisation employees running the centre

#### Q4 -Why was the previous centre not supported or used?

Badly needed updating, young people need someone to go

Lack of awareness, not appealing to young people

It was run down and not appealing

It was too old and too expensive to refurbish the building

Poor maintenance and management

Poor repairs/ unwelcoming / lack of information about events

Due to neglect

The previous centre was not well supported as it was allowed to deteriorate and the last time our group hired it there was no available seating and nowhere to provide any refreshments to attendees.

I feel the previous community centre was under-invested to the point where it was no longer of use to the local community. I do feel funding was removed to ensure a reduction in use, and therefore an excuse to remove the facility. A small yet properly funded facility needs to replace it.

It was allowed to become rundown so that it not a welcoming venue for the community to use for any age group and the library closed.

The old centre was very run down

It was left to rot and not managed properly, not sufficient money spent on it, again due to money spent in the wrong areas

Run down, not filled with inviting things, not advertised, looked horrid

The area

Never used it so no comment

Other people found it was mostly unnecessary

As a fit and healthy [REDACTED] no reason why I cannot walk 10 minutes to benefit from any new development and facilities available

Well as a new resident in Kennington, I don't really have any answer to the number 4 question

Not very welcoming, poor facilities for youngsters, no advertising of what was available.

I cannot comment on the perceived lack of support or under-utilisation of the community facility without seeing comparable figures for comparable run down facilities

This is an easy question. Whoever was responsible for running the centre before clearly had no idea of the community's needs or wants. They were not pro-active enough to engage anyone, for example [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] However, what a disappointment this was for us. Furthermore, every time I went near the community centre it was always shut and there was no one around to ask any questions. So how were the local community supposed to access something without a contact to do so? You need reliable people to run it and constantly show their face in the community, to build trust and a rapport with the residents. You need someone who knows about information, signposting and to manage bookings, to ensure to have things going on and that residence made aware and not just on a notice board but to be pro-active. To hand out leaflets, post through doors and social media etc. It seems to have been run in the past by someone who just didn't put the effort in. Please MAKE AN EFFORT THE COMMUNITY IS WORTH IT!!!

It was allowed to deteriorate so it became less desirable to use. Also times have changed, since it's deterioration & subsequent loss, people do seem more keen to connect, social media helps bring people together by easily publicising events & communicating widely and the idea of re-using, sharing skills, is increasing not just for economic reasons but for green reasons too.

This was covered in the 2020 questionnaire and the Kennington CC have no reason to question the answers - 'people said they didn't use the old community centre because it didn't offer anything of interest to the respondents, they didn't need to use it as their needs were met elsewhere, because it was inaccessible, or they didn't know what was offered or where it was. The Condition of the building and the perceptions of the square in which it was located were also deterrents.

Was not aware it was under-utilised, had an active library, dance clubs and a nursery, along with other sporting groups

It was not advertised for use. It was an unattractive venue. There was no point of contact that I was aware of.

I was under the impression that this centre was for sport only, would love to see the space available for teaching as free parking, also once a month to have a company offering refill to tackle plastic issues as well as organic local foods. Creating a community garden where the people in this scheme can give participation, collecting home grown vegetables, this scheme is existing in other areas.

Profile not raised by enough people locally, disadvantaged do not feel empowered unless encouragement is given through advertising facilities. Make it a welcoming hub with a café. ABC does not care about disadvantaged people.

Functions held previously were selective and failed to support the wider community

Probably because there was not any facilities to attract the public. Although the centre was used by some organisations, a coffee shop, for example, would have attracted people to meet and chat

**Q5. What were the barriers to using existing facilities in wider Kennington and Ashford?**

To attend classes and use the library.
Not really, good car parking and on bus routes
These are run down too, plus would not have let my teenager go there alone as not safe
This is the nearest convenient place to organise events
There just aren't enough of them, expanding population
There are no other "public" facilities available in the area
Facilities elsewhere will not help the lack of community spirit in Bockhanger. As mentioned other areas such as Stanhope and villages surrounding Ashford have a community hub. Bockhanger is missing this.
There is no multi-sports facility and there is no library within a 20 minute walk of my home. There is no pre-school facility within Bybrook.
The other centres are only open to groups as far as I know and have to be pre booked. As for the play areas the park on Little Burton has little there for children, and the Rectory Road play area badly needs updating. I suggest a visit with young children to see how long they can play in them.
None of the open spaces have toilet or refreshment provision, so even Conningbrook Lakes can only be visited for a relatively short time. Compared with somewhere like Kearsney Abbey where families can spend a whole day it falls short.
Supporting locals through use of community space
Development of shops to incorporate a community centre, shops above the hall/space, local groups to have access - pre school, knit and natter, but not a hall, space
Better to have less facilities that are well maintained and used but functional
Ability to walk to these facilities or other local shops
Elderly are not always able to go too far from home
No
No resources at Towers View, Orchard Cottage Grounds has a space that can be utilised
Just not my thing, nice to have a place to meet people, a local pub would be nice and more wide open spaces would be nice.
No

	I spend my time at home and in my garden
	No, I have no barrier to using any of the available facilities in the wider area of Kennington and Ashford, however, having a new community centre in Kennington will be a giant stride towards more modern civil development that will have a far reaching effects not just within Kennington and its environs but in the entire Ashford community as a whole.
	No barriers, but following closure of Bockhanger sub post office have little reason to visit the area.
	Yes, the main issues being transport, cost, and facilities. Transport as my daughter had her birthday party at Hothfield Hall recently and some children could not attend due to their parents not being able to drive and buses are not reliable. Costs - as Hothfield hall cost £35 for 4 hours, other halls costs are far, far more making them unaffordable. Facilities – As I have been told that Hothfield hall is at risk of closure within a year and if so, there is nowhere else in Ashford which is affordable to hire.
	Kennington has increased considerably in size and Bybrook needs its own local centre as the other facilities are too far for young families, vulnerable and elderly people to get to easily. Also going to a centre outside of your immediate area, e.g. Julie Rose, Ridge Pavilion is that it doesn't feel like your community. There has been considerable social research that we connect with people in relatively small numbers with 150 meaningful relationships (Dunbar's Number), which is why community centres are so vital for community cohesiveness and in reality need more than we have. So facilities on the other side of Kennington are socially as far away as centres on the other side of Ashford.
	The facilities in the Kennington area generally are targeted at specific groups, such as the WI, Scouts/Guides etc and are otherwise open when they have been booked by a group hiring them. There is no casual drop-in attraction such as a café or under 5's play area. They are on the edge of the area and not situated next to places which put them on the daily route such as shops. An attractive family facility in the heart of the locality will provide a place capable of breaking down social isolation for all age groups. It may attract people for a wider area but residents can expect to find the majority of people coming from close to their own home hence having to some extent a shared daily experience to which they can relate.
	Transport, there is a large community in Bockhanger and they deserve their own hall and outside space
	I have no reason but it would be very important to ensure it was an inclusive venue – ramps etc.
	Yes, I never thought this space could be used for teaching etc
	working outside the area, no potential barriers just prefer the green space
	Age related difficulties, especially if private transport was not available

### Additional Feedback

Keep the kick wall goal and seating area next to where the old hall was, the old centre was used for meetings and other things. If a new hall is provided this could be used for teenager facilities, and meetings a pleasant space for the elderly to sit and chat. It is an important space and should not be used for housing
It was the council allowing the old hall to get into disrepair and not to include interior facilities for the elderly and very young. 18-44's can drive and access the Stour centre and football and cricket venues
It must have attached facilities e.g. a kitchen and pleasant toilets
It needs a stage
The rental must be low enough to make its use possible to charities, children's clubs etc
It must have a sympathetic caretaker who will keep the place clean and smart and be supportive to those who use it.
The system of hiring must be straight forward – more straightforward than for example booking waste removal.
In other parts of Ashford the Community Centre, or whatever it is called, gives a focal point and binds society together. It fights social isolation. It enriches people's lives.
Unfortunately Kennington has been without such a centre for so long that people will have lost the habit of using such a facility. There must be lively publicity to promote new ideas and activities.
The last Hall went into decline because it was allowed to rundown and was not adequately maintained.
Parking is essential
Competition with Housing- should not be a competition, affordable housing and existing estates need first class facilities
Young people more than anyone need activities
Excellent example of a Community Hall in Ashford- Stanhope.
This is a request to please consider the environment in the development of your plans - not only as an opportunity to help nature but because there is also a wealth of evidence showing the benefits nature can have for our health and well-being. There are diverse benefits that can be delivered through including natural infrastructure in development plans. For example, trees and hedges provide shelter and shade, improve air quality, retain rainwater and trap carbon dioxide. Planting native flowers encourages bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects and wildlife. Together they add a natural beauty to a place.

A community centre is needed to cater for many clubs including play groups, meetings, slimming world, jumble sales, young people clubs, badminton, archery, games, disco, exercise clubs, dance classes, crèche, library, music classes, crafts, knitting, coffee shop, Christmas stalls, book clubs, and dog show. Somewhere for families to meet.

The old community building was little used in part because it had been allowed to deteriorate and no longer met reasonable expectations. We had used the venues for children's parties and children's groups, but the physical condition was allowed, by the Council, to deteriorate to the extent that it just wasn't attractive. That is one of the main reasons why usage was so low.

In terms of a replacement, the Council needs to understand how communities work and the benefits of community hubs as a way of bringing communities together. The Council has invested shedloads of money in the Repton facilities and these are very well used. We should expect the same commitment in Kennington. I know the money for Repton came from different sources, but that is not our problem, and if Repton deserves facilities, so too does Kennington. The County and Borough Council, between them wasted £186k on that ridiculous cycle scheme which lasted less than a week and if it can find that sort of money, and can waste that sort of money, it can certainly find money for a community building.

Community facilities should be a matter of right, just as we expect an area to have a library and shops, so too should we expect community facilities.

Thank you for all your work to make the best use of the Bockhanger Community Hall Site. I don't think building more houses is the answer as it is an area of affordable and low cost housing and the road is already busy with buses, vans and cars. Could you consider better facilities for young people? Could you create a Skate Park as skate-boarding is now an Olympic sport? It could have automatic lights to avoid unnecessary impact on neighbours and to save power. There could be a prefabricated log cabin/timber club house/committee centre, with a small kitchenette ( ). This could have vandal-proof public toilets like the ones at Folkestone Harbour. This could be sold or re-used if there was a change of plan, or you could form a club. One of the local shops could hire skateboards and Kennington Community could use the clubhouse for committees and supervise maintenance.

# Equality Impact Assessment

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1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

## Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

## Appendix C to Bockhanger consultation outcomes Cabinet report

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

### Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:
- Age
  - Disability
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage and civil partnership\*
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation

\*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

### Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
  - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate

in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.
8. In terms of timing:
  - Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
  - Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
  - The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

### Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:
  - Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
  - Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.

- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

<b>Lead officer:</b>	Mark James
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy, project, service, contract</li> <li>Review, change, new, stop</li> </ul>	<p>That members note the feedback from the consultation event and subsequent mail out</p> <p>That members support and agree further work be undertaken into the viability of an affordable housing-led scheme, which provides a flexible community hub within it</p> <p>That the options for delivery of the scheme are developed and agreed in principle with Kennington CC</p> <p>That any community facilities developed will be delivered only after Kennington CC sign a formal undertaking to lease the space provided and take responsibility for its management and coordination of services delivered following a viability assessment</p> <p>That the lease includes conditions restricting sub-letting without formal consent</p> <p>That the final design, to be developed in conjunction with the Community Council, be shared with the local community at a further consultation event before being brought back to Cabinet for endorsement</p>
<b>Date of decision:</b> The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	16 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Summary of the proposed decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims and objectives</li> <li>Key actions</li> <li>Expected outcomes</li> <li>Who will be affected and how?</li> <li>How many people will be affected?</li> </ul>	<p>That members note the feedback from the consultation event and subsequent mail out</p> <p>That members support and agree further work be undertaken into the viability of an affordable housing-led scheme, which provides a flexible community hub within it</p> <p>That the options for delivery of the scheme are developed and agreed in principle with Kennington CC</p> <p>That any community facilities developed will be delivered only after Kennington CC sign a formal undertaking to lease the space provided and take responsibility for its management and coordination of services delivered following a viability assessment</p> <p>That the lease includes conditions restricting sub-letting without formal consent</p> <p>That the final design, to be developed in conjunction with the Community Council, be shared with the local community at a further consultation event before being brought back to Cabinet for endorsement</p>
<b>Information and research:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline the information and research that has informed the decision.</li> <li>Include sources and key findings.</li> </ul>	<p>Building on solid foundations: delivering affordable homes in Ashford – our delivery plan for 2019-2023</p> <p>Housing Strategy Framework Priority 1 – Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in urban and rural areas, and Housing Statement 2018-2023</p>

	Reform of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Cabinet endorsed five key priorities for further spend, as a result of greater freedom within the HRA. National Housing Strategy 2011 – delivering new homes under the affordable rent model. A Charter For Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper 2020. A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities (Kent Housing Group [KHG]) – February 2021	
<b>Consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What specific consultation has occurred on this decision?</li><li>What were the results of the consultation?</li><li>Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics?</li><li>What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics?</li></ul>	In addition to the consultation process that the Council has outlined above, both Borough and Community Councils have pledged to engage with the newly formed group in Bybrook and Bockhanger, so that all stakeholders are working together.  Should members agree via this report that an affordable housing-led solution be explored further, then there will be additional consultation with the wider community once formal plans have been designed up and positive pre-application advice has been sought from planning officers. This will follow the format of housing’s development scheme consultations, with either a virtual or in-person event depending on the national and local coronavirus situation and Public Health recommendations at that point.	
<b>Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.</b>  When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.		
<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Relevance to Decision</b> High/Medium/Low/None	<b>Impact of Decision</b> <b>Positive</b> (Major/Minor) <b>Negative</b> (Major/Minor) <b>Neutral</b>
<u>AGE</u>		
Elderly	High	Positive (major)
Middle age	High	Positive (major)
Young adult	High	Positive (major)
Children	High	Positive (major)
<u>DISABILITY</u>		
Physical	Medium	Positive (major)
Mental	Medium	Positive (major)
Sensory	Low	Positive (major)

<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>RACE</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>SEX</u> Men	Low	Positive (major)
Women	Low	Positive (major)
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	Low	Positive (major)

<b>Mitigating negative impact:</b> Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	All residents could benefit from any new community facility – especially if that space is a flexible space offering the opportunity for any groups to meet up.
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<b>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?</b> Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's <a href="#">Essential Guide</a> , alongside fuller <a href="#">PSED Technical Guidance</a> .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	N/A

<b>Conclusion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish.</li> <li>There should be no unlawful discrimination</li> </ul>	Due regard has been considered throughout this proposal to each protected group.  No unlawful discrimination has arisen from the decision.
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<p>arising from the decision (see guidance above ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.</li> <li>• How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?</li> </ul>	<p>The effect on the community will be positive due to the aims of the programme delivery. No adjustments required.</p> <p>The programme will be monitored by a Housing Project group with regular updates to our Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.</p>
<p><b>EIA completion date:</b></p>	<p>26<sup>th</sup> November 2021</p>