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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

#### MINUTES

Monday, 11th May, 2026

**Present:** Cllr L Athwal (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Cllr K Barton, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr R W G Oliver, Cllr S Pilgrim, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr K S Tunstall, County Cllr P Stepto and County Cllr M Hood

Together with representatives from:

Friends of Mill Stream (Vice-Chair)

Feast

Hi Kent

Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group

Tonbridge Civic Society

Tonbridge Historical Society

Tonbridge Line Commuters

Tonbridge Parish Church

Tonbridge Sports Association

Tonbridge U3A

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cope and B A Parry. Apologies for absence were also received from Angel Indoor Bowls Club, Barden Residents Association, Rotary Club of Tonbridge, Scotts Project Trust and Tonbridge Lions Club.

#### **TCF 26/11 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

A nomination of Vice Chair from community representatives was received from Mark Ansdell. As there were no further nominations received, the community representatives agreed that Mark Ansdell be duly appointed as the second Vice Chair of the Tonbridge Community Forum.

#### **TCF 26/12 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute Members.

#### **TCF 26/13 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**TCF 26/14 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES**

There were no matters required to be updated.

**TCF 26/15 KENT POLICE UPDATE**

A written statement was provided by Inspector Nick Atkinson to provide members of the Forum with an update on Police activities, with a focus on the Tonbridge area.

The statement outlined neighbourhood team coverage arrangements in Tonbridge, including Beat Team officers and Neighbourhood Task Force officers, and described recent activity to tackle retail theft and anti-social behaviour. Examples included targeted days of action, arrests following intelligence received via the Shop Safe radio system and enforcement activity in relation to drugs, including a stop search which resulted in the seizure of Class A drugs and a subsequent charge and remand.

Furthermore, the statement reported activity to address violence against women and girls, including engagement with local businesses and 'walk and talk' events, and mentioned enforcement action in respect of anti-social behaviour involving youths, including the use of Community Protection Warning Notices. Attention was also brought to the seizure of illegal e-bikes and e-scooters and partnership working with housing associations and the Borough Council's Community Safety Unit.

Members of the Forum were pleased to note that Kent Police would continue to work with partner agencies to address issues affecting Tonbridge, including tackling anti-social behaviour, targeting those responsible for harm and disruption and maintaining a visible presence to provide reassurance and deter offending, with particular reference made to actions towards illegal e-bikes and e-scooters.

A full version of the statement was attached as **[Annex 1]** to these Minutes.

**TCF 26/16 UPDATE ON BANKING HUB**

Members of the Forum were advised that Cash Access had identified a suitable permanent location for the banking hub and that progress was being made to put arrangements in place, but formal announcement of the location would have to wait till the lease was completed. It was indicated that, if all went well, completion of the lease was expected within the next few weeks and that the hub should be ready to open within two to three months following commencement of works to the premises.

During discussion, reference was made to Post Office arrangements for paying in cheques and the banking hub services temporarily provided from Tonbridge Castle. The Chair undertook to make enquiries in

relation to the acceptance of cheques at the Post Office and to share the information once available.

## **TCF 26/17 NEW ANGEL CENTRE**

Members of the Forum received an update on progress of the new Angel Leisure Centre, provided by the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration, Councillor A Mehmet, and the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services of the Borough Council. It was reported that the project was at Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 4, encompassing the planning stage and technical design, and that the planning application was currently live. It was explained that timescales had been tightened due to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and that workstreams were being progressed in parallel in order to meet the delivery target of the project programme.

Reference was made to a public consultation undertaken earlier in the year, including engagement at the existing Angel Centre, and members of the Forum were advised that 68% of respondents were in favour of the scheme and 56% considered the design to represent an improvement on the current facility. It was also noted that there was a positive response to the red brick exterior design, which had been changed to reflect architectural character of the local area.

It was reported that feedback from community groups had focussed on the adequacy and flexibility of the three community spaces. In response, design changes had been made, including replacing the fixed wall between Studios 1 and 2 with a demountable acoustic partition to create a flexible combined space, and providing an additional fire exit to increase capacity in Studio 3. Members of the Forum were advised that, with the partition in place, Studios 1 and 2 could each accommodate meetings of up to 60 people and Studio 3 could accommodate 120 people, and that with the partition removed, a flexible space created by combining Studios 1 and 2 could accommodate a meeting of over 300 people. It was also stated that the sports hall could accommodate over 600 people for major events.

In discussion, representatives from the community groups raised concerns about audio-visual performance and accessibility, including for people using hearing aids, and the need to ensure that speakers and screens could be seen and heard in larger room layouts. Members of the Forum were advised that detailed design work was ongoing with the intention to deliver a state-of-the-art facility. It was indicated that, as room specifications were developed, information could be brought back through the Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board for Borough Council Members to consider and for community groups' requirements to be represented. Additionally, reference was also made to the consideration of options for demountable staging, seating provision and storage.

Members of the Forum continued to discuss access arrangements including cycle storage, pushchair parking and the potential to reinstate a marked cycle and pedestrian route between the Angel Centre and the river. It was suggested that these matters could be considered alongside wider work around the riverside area.

A copy of the presentation slides was attached as **[Annex 2]** to these Minutes.

#### **TCF 26/18 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

Members of the Forum received an update on the overall Tonbridge Town Centre Redevelopment project, including progress on a linear riverside park. It was reported that work was underway to prepare a masterplan for the riverside area, including the space in front of the current Angel Centre and between the building and the river, and that the intention was for the area to be landscaped into a new riverside park and public open space once the current Angel Centre was removed. It was suggested that cycling and walking routes discussed under Item 9 on this agenda be considered as part of the wider piece of work. The opportunity to review and feedback on the draft masterplan when design work reached an appropriate stage was welcomed by the Forum.

Finally, a suggestion for an update on the wider Tonbridge Town Centre Redevelopment programme, including progress on the new Angel Leisure Centre, to be provided at alternate Forum meetings going forward was supported.

#### **TCF 26/19 TONBRIDGE INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT SUB-GROUP**

The Chair provided an update on the Tonbridge Infrastructure Statement Sub-Group and advised that a meeting had been held with those who had expressed an interest in participating.

It was reported that a range of potential projects had been considered and that five proposals had been selected to take forward for costing and further development at this stage. These were the provision of a secure storage box for parkrun organisers, consideration of a multi-sensory fidget wall near the children's play area at Tonbridge Racecourse, exploration of a flexible community space in Tonbridge capable of supporting multiple initiatives, consideration of water bottle filling points in Tonbridge and Hildenborough, and a proposal for a footpath connection between the motorbike gates on London Road and Tonbridge Angels Football Club to address an identified gap of approximately 120 metres.

Members of the Forum were advised that the intention was to obtain costs and complete the statement by June 2026, so that the proposals could be put forward for consideration by the Borough Council. It was explained that the purpose of the statement was to provide a mechanism

for community-led priorities to be available for consideration in discussion with developers, including potential funding through Section 106 (S106) contributions. The Chair also advised that the statement could be reviewed and updated over time and that community engagement in future work on the statement was encouraged.

During discussion, reference was made to the condition of certain paths, including areas near a railway bridge, and associated challenges posed by land ownership and maintenance responsibilities. It was noted that although volunteer efforts had helped improve some areas, issues remained and could be challenging to resolve.

## **TCF 26/20 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

### (1) Tonbridge Historical Society – Tonbridge Historical Weekend

- 10 am Saturday 23 May 2026 – Walking the Fosse with Mark Ansdell (Walk 1), starting from The Big Bridge (fully booked)
- 1 pm Saturday 23 May 2026 – Lost Pubs of Tonbridge with Cathy Rishman (Walk 2), starting from Tonbridge Railway Station
- 11 am Sunday 24 May 2026 – Medieval Tonbridge by George Buswell (Talk 1), at Tonbridge Castle
- 1 pm Sunday 24 May 2026 – The Worthies of Tonbridge by Pat Mortlock (Talk 2), at Tonbridge Castle
- 12 – 4 pm Monday 25 May 2026 – Exhibition of artefacts and images, at Tonbridge Castle.

### (2) Tonbridge Lions Club

- Saturday 16 May 2026 – free Prostate Specific Antigen Testing, at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge
- Friday 19 June 2026 – ‘It’s a Knockout’ event tailored for adults with physical or mental disabilities, at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge
- Sunday 19 July 2026 – Classic and Sports Car Tour, starting from Tonbridge School
- Sunday 26 July 2026 – Community Fete and Parade 2026, at Tonbridge School
- Saturday 12 September 2026 – Diabetes Screening, at The Big Bridge, Tonbridge

- Sunday 4 October 2026 – The Tonbridge Half Marathon 2026 (jointly with Tonbridge Rotary Club), starting from Brook Street.

### **TCF 26/21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(1) Enforcement of Safety Works at Rose and Crown Hotel, Tonbridge

The Chair provided an update, drawn from information in the public domain, on urgent works requested in relation to the portico of the Rose and Crown Hotel in Tonbridge. It was reported that the Borough Council's Building Control Team had required the owners to carry out identified actions under Section 77 of the Buildings Act 1984 relating to dangerous structures, allowing seven days to comply in order to reduce risk to the public and avoid legal action. It was further reported that additional works had been identified as urgent in relation to the column's flat roof and the shield/coat of arms, and that these matters had also been referenced in a recent listed building notice.

During discussion, members of the Forum noted that activity had been observed at the site and concerns were expressed about the standard of works. The Chair indicated that Building Control was engaged and that any concerns could be raised with Borough Council Members for onward consideration.

The meeting ended at 8.33 pm

Good evening,

Firstly, my apologies that I am unable to be present this evening. My name is Nick Atkinson, and I am currently covering for Inspector McAiney whilst she temporarily fulfils the Chief Inspector role at Maidstone for a period of approximately two months. I am ordinarily the Beat Team Sergeant for Tonbridge and Malling, a role I have held since July 2021.

I oversee a team of 10 Police Constables who are assigned to specific areas across Tonbridge and Malling. Their role is to engage with local communities, gather information and intelligence regarding emerging issues, and address concerns in a proactive and professional manner.

Within Tonbridge, two officers from the beat team are allocated to ward coverage and one to the town centre itself – PC Moore has returned to the town centre, and his presence is expected to provide reassurance to the community and contribute to crime prevention.

They are supported by two town centre Neighbourhood Task Force officers. These officers focus on addressing ongoing issues including anti-social behaviour, targeting priority nominals, and reducing crime through high-visibility patrols, stop searches, and positive enforcement where appropriate.

Over the past three months, officers have conducted targeted days of action in Tonbridge to tackle retail theft, utilising both plain-clothed and uniformed patrols. During one such operation, Neighbourhood Task Force officers were alerted via the Shop Safe radio system by Sainsbury's security staff to two males who had used over £600 worth of Nectar Points in suspicious transactions. Both individuals were arrested, and subsequent searches of their home addresses and vehicle identified further gift cards and items believed to have been fraudulently obtained.

Beat team officers also conducted a stop search of a male acting suspiciously in the Castle car park. A search of the individual and his vehicle uncovered a concealed compartment containing Class A drugs. The male was arrested, interviewed, charged, and remanded to court following CPS authorisation.

In March, a male was deterred from committing theft at Sainsbury's and was subsequently stopped with a trolley of goods stolen from Waitrose, valued at over £750. He was arrested, interviewed, and charged. On a separate occasion, a female suspect involved in two shop thefts was identified and dealt with by way of community resolution. It was further established that she had used a Motability vehicle in the commission of offences, and Kent Police has requested its removal.

Local officers have also successfully identified multiple offenders captured on CCTV for offences across the district, as well as in neighbouring areas such as Tunbridge Wells, resulting in arrests and offenders being brought to justice.

A number of retail premises in Tonbridge have been identified as priority locations due to high levels of reported offences. Officers have increased patrols at these locations and provided tailored crime prevention advice to staff, contributing to a reduction in offending.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains a key priority for Kent Police. Officers have engaged with local businesses, including supermarkets, beauty salons, and hairdressers, to distribute awareness materials. In addition, “walk and talk” events have been conducted to engage directly with women regarding safety concerns and areas where they feel vulnerable.

As expected with the warmer weather, there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour within the town centre. Officers have been addressing issues involving a group of youths aged 14–17 responsible for incidents including theft, criminal damage, and other low-level offending. Identified individuals have been interviewed, and those aged 16 have been issued with Community Protection Warning Notices restricting their access to the town centre unless accompanied by an adult. Breaches will result in further enforcement action. PCSO Baker and PCSO Coe have had leading roles in this, seizing CCTV of offending and assisting with identification of those involved as well as completing follow up visits with the families.

Officers have also seized several illegal e-bikes and e-scooters in recent weeks. Engagement with parents, alongside joint working with housing associations and TMBC Community Safety Unit, has had a positive impact. Continued enforcement and partnership working aim to reduce further offending.

There has been a recent rise in rogue trading offences. Last week, a group were arrested for targeting vulnerable and elderly residents in Tonbridge, charging excessive amounts for work that was either substandard or not completed, and in some cases increasing the sums demanded beyond what had initially been agreed. A number of these incidents were reported by vigilant neighbours, which reflects the strength and supportive nature of the local community.

In summary, officers will continue to work closely with partner agencies, including the local authority, housing providers and community safety partners, to address the issues affecting Tonbridge. There will remain a strong focus on tackling anti-social behaviour proactively, using the full range of powers available to us to prevent escalation and support those impacted within the community. We are committed to identifying and targeting individuals who are responsible for causing harm and disruption, ensuring that appropriate and proportionate action is taken to bring offenders to justice. At the same time, we will maintain a visible and approachable presence within the town to provide reassurance to residents, businesses and visitors, and to act as a clear deterrent to those considering offending. Through continued engagement, enforcement and partnership working, we aim to sustain positive outcomes, reduce crime and disorder, and support a safe and thriving community.

# Angel Centre project update

Cllr Adem Mehmet - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Tonbridge Regeneration

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# Project objectives

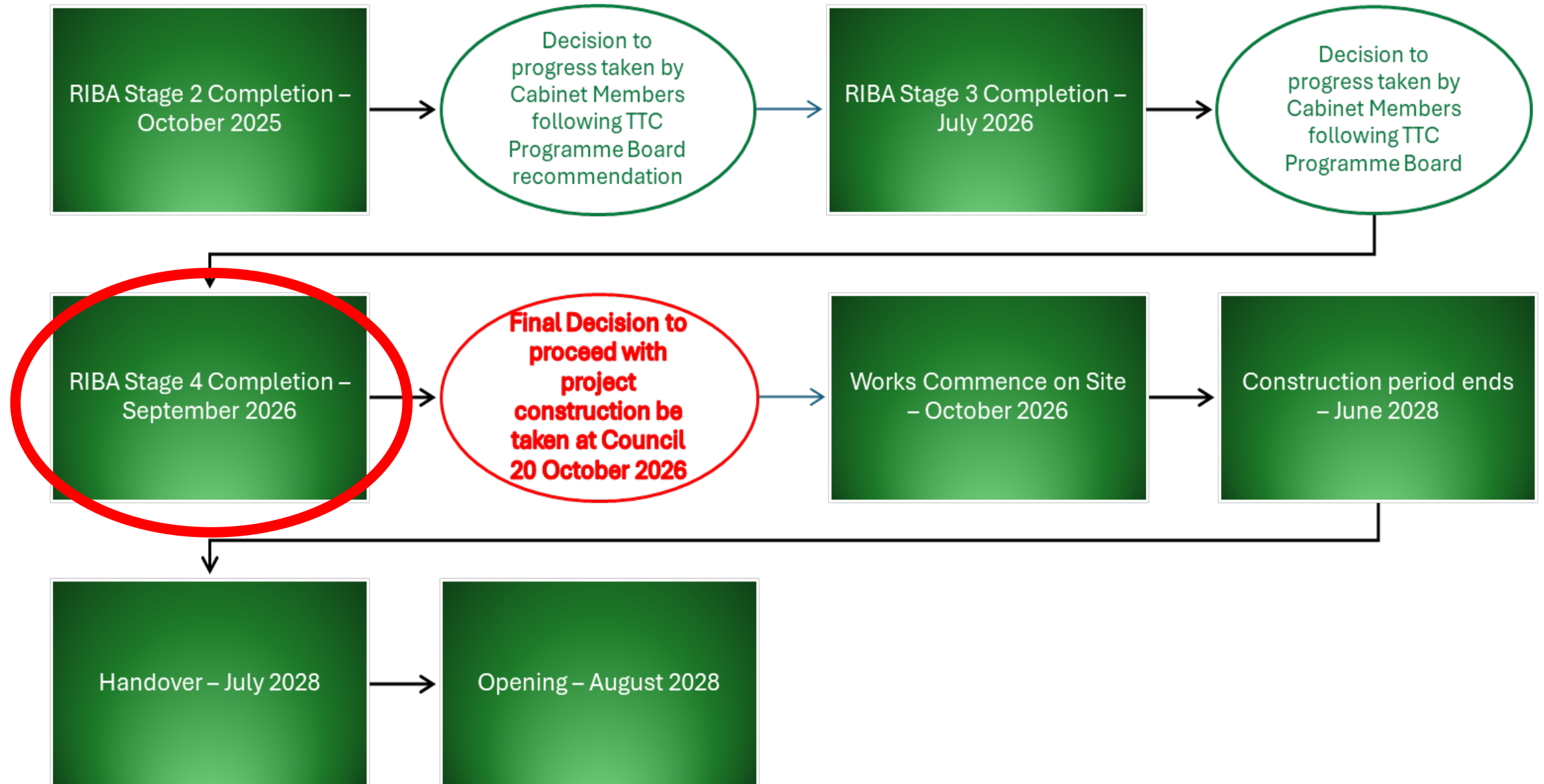
- to provide a fit for purpose, state of the art, carbon neutral facility delivering high quality leisure/community facilities, replacing the existing building that is no longer fit for purpose
- to provide the right mix of high-quality accessible leisure/community facilities in the right location
- to ensure the facility can be adapted in the future to meet changes in the market
- reduce ongoing operational costs and generate new income
- to be carbon neutral
- to help facilitate wider development of the area east of the high street and increase footfall and investment in the town centre
- to secure the future of leisure facilities for the residents of Tonbridge and maintain continuity of service for residents

# Timeline

We are here



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# Consultation

## 16 February – 22 February public consultation pre submission

- ✓ 6,500 website visitors
- ✓ 700 attended exhibition in person
- ✓ 436 completed survey
- ✓ 68% in favour of scheme to provide new contemporary centre
- ✓ 56% think designs represent improvement on current facility
- ✓ Positive response to red brick exterior reflecting architectural character
- ✓ of Tonbridge

As a result of feedback new designs include:

- ✓ Remove dividing wall between studios - increase community event capacity
- ✓ Expanded gym
- ✓ Immersive spin studio
- ✓ Soft play and café



**NEW!**  
**Accessible + Spin Studio**

 **Health and accessibility for all**  
A strong message from our survey was the importance of dedicated exercise spaces for those with limited mobility.  
We're introducing an Innerva 'Active Wellbeing' studio, featuring specially designed power-assisted equipment to ensure the new centre provides exercise opportunities for all.

 **Dedicated immersive spin studio**  
Our new immersive spin studio will offer a great way to get your heart pumping with group cycling sessions.  
The combination of motivational music and inspiring instructors makes spin a great way to push harder, get stronger and build stamina.

Scan for more info



# Planning application

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- March 2026 – Full planning application submitted
- Architects, [Saunders Boston](#) currently completing RIBA Stage 4 of the design - which is the technical refinement of the design.
- The planning application is due to be considered by full council on 14 July.

# Issues arising from consultation

## Footprint for the new Angel Centre

- Site location and scale of the new centre approved as part of Town Centre Masterplan.
- Analysis of current space found certain areas are underutilised.
- New plans incorporate multi-purpose studios that can accommodate a variety of activities from yoga to community events.
- Footprint large enough to deliver a modern, efficient, effective and flexible mix of spaces.

## Meeting room capacity

- Looked at how existing spaces used, while building in flexibility for the future.
- Space now incorporates a retractable wall, to open-up studios 1 and 2 for larger groups.
- Space comparable in size to the Medway Hall - 235 square metres, capacity of 332 people.
- Hopeful to also improve capacity in Studio 3 – discussions with KFRS.

# Issues arising from consultation (cont)

## Meeting the needs of all the community

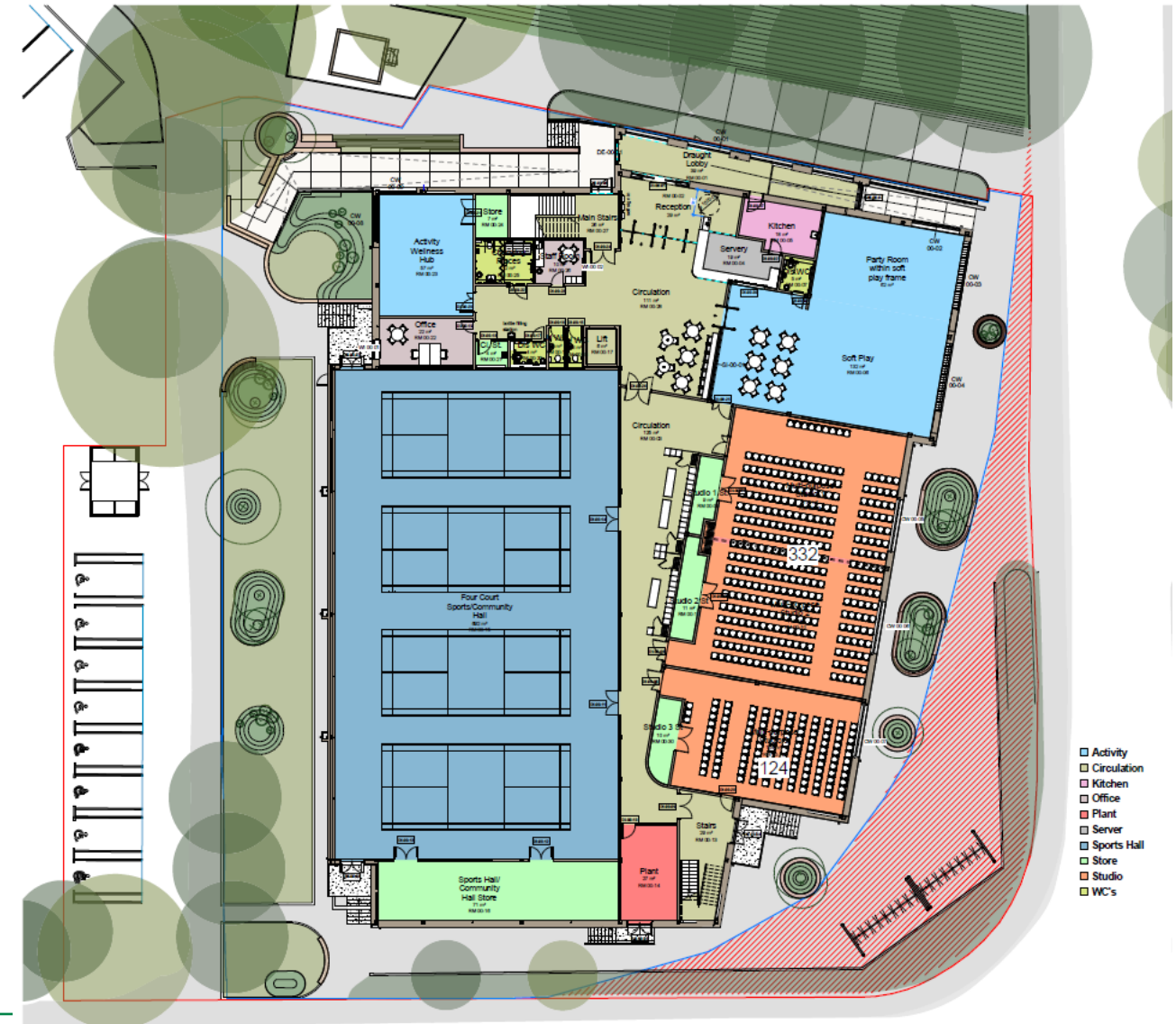
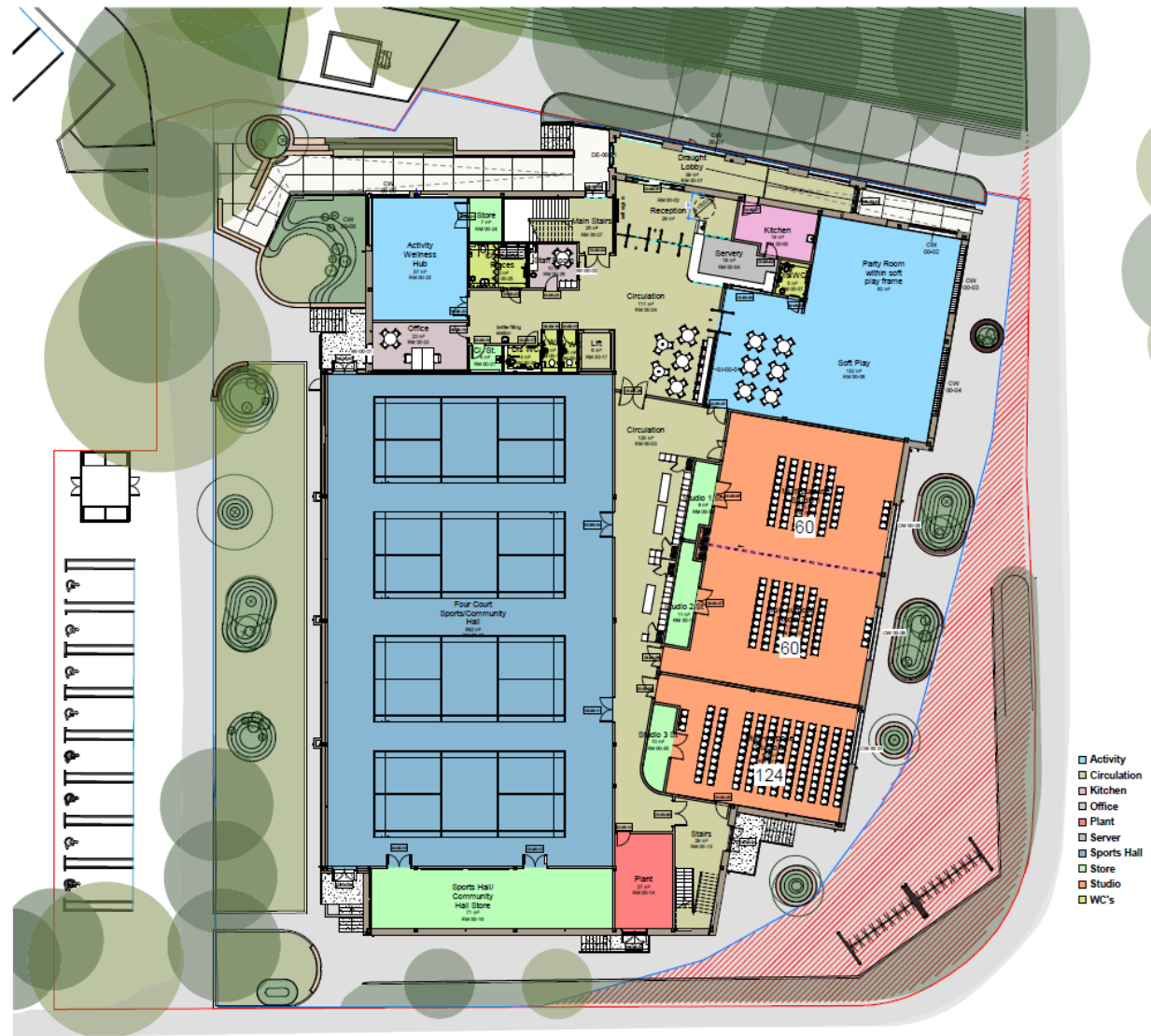
New centre takes an inclusive approach:

- New Active Wellbeing facility for those who may be less mobile, living with long-term health conditions or recovering from injury
- Flexible spaces that can be used for hobbyists, events and meetings
- Soft play facility
- Cafe where people of all ages can gather
- Lift, level access throughout and Changing Places facility
- Secure cycle parking
- Improved storage

## Farmers Market

- Positive discussions with current owners to find suitable alternative location

# New floor plans



## Next steps

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- Continue to meet with community groups
- Planning Committee 14 July
- Website – [angel-leisuredevelopment.co.uk](http://angel-leisuredevelopment.co.uk) and social media regularly updated
- Work begins October 2026

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