

# COMMUNITY HOUSING CASE STUDY SouthGen Suffolk



**Plunkett  
Foundation**

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## KEY DETAILS

**Primary trading activity** Community housing and hub

**Amount raised** £390,000 (June 2019)

**Proposed opening date** October 2020

**Population area served** 3,680

### Additional activities proposed include

Community hub, long-term lease to Southwold Library, nursery, co-working space, social dining space supporting local chains and employment, four affordable flats and five shared ownership dwellings

## Background

Over 100 years ago, local residents united together and raised money to build the Southwold and District Hospital to care for all people. This was at a time when the majority of the population were farm workers, fishermen, and artisans; average life expectancy was 40 years old.

When the NHS called for a consultation on the future of the hospital, the community saw the writing on the wall – sale to the highest bidder, demolition of an iconic civic building, and redevelopment as luxury housing. The fact that this did not happen is a tribute to the fighting community spirit of Southwold and Reydon. Now, through investment in the Old Hospital Fund, the community will regain ownership of this iconic building.

## Journey

SouthGen was created out of a crisis - the closure of the hospital and the threat of the historic building being both demolished and redeveloped. At the same time, the popular local library looked set to be forced to close as its lease was coming to an end and a new home couldn't be found.

SouthGen is now turning this crisis into an opportunity, and as well as providing much-needed services to the community, the project will provide affordable housing too.



## Services

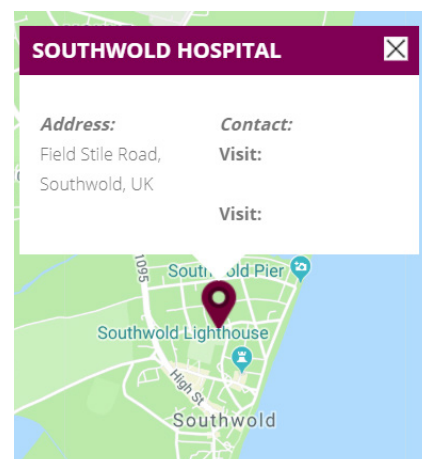
SouthGen's geographic area reflects the catchment area of the former Southwold and District hospital, which cared for patients living within a 13-mile radius of Southwold. SouthGen's Society Rules describe its charitable objectives which include:

- Providing affordable work space, buildings and land to create jobs and training
- Advancing education and training opportunities, particularly for the unemployed
- Providing, maintaining and improving public amenities including childcare
- Providing an inclusive space for community association and social welfare
- Preserving buildings or sites of historic or architectural importance
- Providing nine affordable dwellings and a community hub

## Impact

For the community of Southwold, SouthGen project will:

- Retain a library for future generations offering expanded educational, cultural and social opportunities for all ages
- Help meet the needs of young families by creating a nursery
- Provide a co-working space with up to 30 desks, superfast broadband, high spec meeting rooms, plus mentoring and support to revitalise the local economy
- Create a welcoming, inclusive social space with simple, tasty, healthy food, where young people can be trained, and which will also support local supply chains
- Providing a place to meet, eat, work and live as well as training and providing educational opportunities



## Plunkett's role

As well as being members of Plunkett Foundation, SouthGen have also received 2 days of action planning support and used Model Rules from Plunkett Foundation. Plunkett are also proud to be supporting SouthGen with the official launch of their share offer on 10 May 2019. There is also a close working relationship with SouthGen and Hastoe Housing Association, who are a key partner for Plunkett Foundation.