

5.0 Uckfield Town Council's Strategic Objectives for 2021-26

In addition to agreeing a set of specific priorities each year, the Town Council has set out a number of medium term aspirations for the town.

5.1 People

5.1.1 Cultural and related services

By 2026, we will have:

- Supported local community and voluntary organisations and sought to assist them with their positive work within the town;
- Explored options for the facilities provided at two town council buildings – Foresters Hall and West Park Pavilion, to see how these buildings can better meet the need of Uckfield's residents and organisations,
- Improved the facilities and surfacing at the Town Council's play areas with plans to upgrade at least one further playground;
- Introduced a number of initiatives to increase the use of our open spaces, and encourage greater physical activity (distance markers, fun games and activities which encourage movement);
- Worked with our partner agencies to increase opportunities for residents of all ages to take part in activities which improve their health and wellbeing;
- Organised events which assist in attracting visitors to the town and support local businesses;
- Established a list of special and important dates or individuals within the town's history and commemorated these on heritage plaques;
- Investigated the viability of providing additional public convenience facilities within the town centre and seeking to obtain a changing spaces facility;
- Restored the traditional red telephone box and brought back into use in a prominent location as a community facility;
- Continued to maintain, improve and protect all of our natural areas to accommodate the demands of future growth of the town; encouraging community involvement;
- Explored whether there are opportunities for adding to or improving the existing skatepark facilities, and the drainage in the vicinity of the skate park;
- Supported the partnership work and continuation of the Uckfield Youth Club;
- Explored the issues around food poverty, particularly youth food poverty in Uckfield, and worked with the relevant authorities to try and tackle these local issues;
- Worked with partner agencies, to identify future options for providing more community space within the town to meet the needs of local community groups and organisations.

5.1.2 Luxfords and Civic Centre

By 2026, we will have:

- Increased the capacity of the pellet hopper for the Civic Centre's Bio-mass boiler to reduce increasing costs in the purchase of wood pellets;
- Removed the window area in the Civic Centre atrium to reduce water ingress;
- Made improvements to the decoration and flooring within the main corridors and meeting rooms;
- Decorated the Weald Hall and undertaken improvements to the venue's performance facilities;
- Considered options for providing a temporary but sound proof partition within the Green Room;
- Updated room facilities in line with the latest modern technologies, continued to improve WI-FI connections and ensured networking ports are of good quality;
- Made improvements to air conditioning within the Civic Centre building;

- Installed a new internal booking system for use by the Civic Centre for all venue and room hire;
- Explored and implemented (if cost effective) the introduction of an online booking facility on the Civic Centre website for the purchase of event tickets;
- Developed and implemented a communications and marketing plan for the Civic Centre, in addition to an annual calendar of events;

- Introduced a number of initiatives and increased takeaway options for customers in Luxfords Restaurant;
- Built a good online and social media presence for both the Civic Centre and Luxfords Restaurant;

5.2 Place

5.2.1 Environmental and regulatory services

By 2026, we will have:

- Maintained a good standard of grounds maintenance within the town to ensure Uckfield remains an attractive place to live;
 - Maintained good quality floral displays within the town centre, to ensure Uckfield town centre remains an attractive place to live, work and visit;
 - Financially contributed to East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract in 2021/22, to retain a a good standard of service and ensured visibility is maintained on pavements and highways;
 - Considered in detail, whether the Town Council could undertake its open space grass cutting contract in-house rather than contracting out.
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- Completed an audit which has assisted with calculating our carbon footprint;
 - Implemented ways in which we could further reduce our impact on climate change; focusing on contracts, buildings, vehicles and equipment, energy sources and management of nature and waste disposal;
 - Implemented a tree planting scheme so that for every tree that has been removed, another tree has been planted. We will have also identified suitable sites where additional trees can be planted on Town Council land;
 - Supported the set up of the Community Fridge initiative and community herb garden project to encourage the reduction of food waste;
 - Led by example, to deliver a project with Brighter Uckfield and Uckfield Chamber of Commerce to encourage Uckfield's businesses and organisations to reduce their use of single-use plastic and undertake a review around recycling and re-use;
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- Continued to provide burial authority services with responsibility for the maintenance of the Cemetery at Snatts Road and Holy Cross churchyard;
 - Consider the options for extending Snatts Road Cemetery and alternative green and natural based burial solutions within the adjacent woodland;
 - Continued to work with East Sussex County Council to gradually review street lighting and replace with new columns and LED lighting where necessary;
 - Considered whether the Town Council is the right service and has the funds available to take on services devolved by the District and County Councils, to ensure residents retain a good level of service provision.

5.2.2 Planning and development services

By 2026, we will have:

- Worked closely with the planning authority, Wealden District Council, to understand the latest legislative updates and guidance;
- Fed into Wealden District Council's Local Plan development process, as part of cluster meetings to respond to consultations and raise issues relating to Uckfield;
- Supported the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and worked with Action in Rural Sussex and the local Planning authority to enable this plan to be adopted and utilised alongside the Wealden Local Plan by developers;
- As a member of Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Committee, we will have worked with our partners (*Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council*) to explore options for regeneration within the centre of the town, and possibility of expanding the retail and business offer;
- Promoted the need for affordable housing within Uckfield Town, to support those in housing need and first time buyers;

- Worked with Wealden District Council to ensure the Town Council is fully engaged in other regulatory matters such as licensing;

- Developed an annual process by which the Town Council reviews its assets and strategic asset management plan and consideration is given to each of the Town Council's buildings to improve the efficiency and use of these properties
- Delivered a ten year programme of maintenance and decoration to all of the Town Council community buildings through schemes of major and minor works;
- Reviewed the condition of car parks adjacent to Town Council owned buildings and agreed a programme of repairs or resurfacing;

- Arranged an annual display of Christmas lights;
- Worked with the Chamber of Commerce to engage with High Street landlords (commercial and residential) to promote and secure improvements to street frontages.

5.2.3 Highways and Transport services

By 2026, we will have:

- Identified potential areas within the town which required improvements to pedestrian safety and worked with the relevant agencies to lobby for enhancements;
- Worked with our partner agencies to feed into improvements to the bus station area, to improve accessibility, signage and provide improved facilities such as real time bus information and public convenience(s);
- Worked with our partner agencies to identify highway issues within the access corridors into the town centre and utilised S106 developer contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy to improve the infrastructure and address matters relating to traffic congestion, traffic calming and road safety;
- Worked with the relevant partner agencies to address the danger of speeding vehicles and the possibility of extending the 20mph town centre speed limit;
- Introduced speed reduction initiatives including community speedwatch and behaviour change campaigns, and explored the introduction of installing permanent speed indicator devices;
- Worked with partner agencies to identify and implement solutions for introducing parking controls within the town centre;
- Engaged in discussions to actively promote the re-opening of the Uckfield to Lewes railway line, and a direct route into Brighton;
- Worked with partner agencies to explore whether electric car charging points can be introduced in Uckfield town;
- Organised an annual day with partner agencies to educate young people about key issues – climate change and safety – potentially alternating the subject matter each year;
- Worked with partner agencies and landowners to explore the possibility of improving footway links between Ridgewood Farm, the SANGs and the nature reserves, and explored the possibility of creating a riverside walk;
- Created up to date street maps of the town, which highlight our open spaces and footways including the alleyways and twittens.

5.3 Provision

5.3.1 Central Services

By 2026, we will have:

- Improved communication with residents, businesses and visitors to the town through enhancements to the Town Council website and social media accounts;
- Improved the condition and display of existing noticeboards, and undertaken a review of their location to ensure they are clear and visible;
- Produced the Town Calendar in-house for 2022; working with local businesses to provide greater advertising opportunities and information about voluntary and community organisations.
- Improved accessibility to committee meetings by installing an additional hearing loop in the Council Chamber;
- Increased promotion of the town's key facilities;

- Reviewed our existing financial processes – including changing from the existing cheque payment method to dual authorisation BACs payments for suppliers, and digitalised our purchase order and invoicing process;
- Encouraged applications from local traders and organisations in the Town Council's procurement procedures for contractual work within the town;

- Provided training and briefings for the Town Councillors and staff, to support them in their learning and development;
- Undertaken an annual review of all key policies to ensure they remain up to date with the latest guidance and best practice;
- Reduced our use of paper within the Town Council office, by reviewing our working practices and procedures with regard to file retention, purchase orders and invoicing and record management;