

Our Strategic Priorities - Conservation

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.

Environmental and regulatory services

By 2030, 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;
- Purchased suitable machinery and equipment to improve arrangements for managing the cutting of the Town Council's open spaces in-house;
- Improved the facilities and surfacing at the Town Council's play areas with plans to upgrade at least two play areas (Victoria Pleasure Ground and West Park);
- Undertaken two-yearly full football pitch renovations for the Town Council's football pitches;
- Delivered short term plans to improve the Town Council's sport pitches, and identified medium and long term plans, with potential funding (cricket and football) to improve existing sports facilities;
- Explored and agreed a plan to deliver improvements to the Town's skate park;
- Designated areas of Town Council land, for the growth of wild flowers;
- 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;
- Continued working with Sussex Local Nature Partnership as part of their Green Spaces Project to understand the ecological benefits of green spaces as well as the social and health/wellbeing benefits, in order to develop a longer term vision and set of objectives for these sites – particular focus will have been given to Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Snatts Road Cemetery;
- Commissioned ecological appraisals and specific/specialised wildlife surveys to fully understand the species within our woodlands and nature reserves;
- Adopted an action plan for delivery against our carbon audit, in order to reduce our carbon emissions, and ensured a periodic review of the audit is undertaken;
- Introduced changes and new initiatives in line with the Town Council's Climate Change Policy and action plan to reduce the Town Council's carbon emissions through reviews of our contracts, buildings, energy sources and management of nature and waste disposal;
- Host events such as the Eco EXPO to better inform residents of the various alternative technologies and services available to do their bit to tackle climate change;
- Recorded and mapped the findings of frequent tree surveying programmes to ensure safety from ash dieback, and other diseases.

- Continued to deliver important tree planting schemes 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 to restock from felling or coppicing, or to create new community orchards;
- Liaised with landowners adjacent to the River Uck to investigate the purchase of land from the end of the footpath in Knights Meadow to Hempstead Lane by the mill, rugby field and Buxted Park and create the first section of a River Walk;
- 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;
- Continued to provide burial authority services with responsibility for the maintenance of the Cemetery at Snatts Road and Holy Cross churchyard;
- Consecrated a new area of land within Snatts Road Cemetery, and explored the expansion or creation of new cemetery provision;
- Identified space for new allotment plots to meet demand from growth in population;
- Continued to work with East Sussex County Council to gradually review street lighting and replace with new columns and LED lighting where necessary;

Planning and development services

By 2030, 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; responding to consultations and raising issues relating to Uckfield;
- Supported the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and finalised the plan for adoption 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 and key-worker housing within Uckfield, to support those in housing need and first time buyers;
- Considered the infrastructure requirements for the town in terms of sport, leisure, recreation and community facilities through engagement with key stakeholders, local residents and businesses including future demand on Town Council services such as allotment and cemetery provision;
- Held developers to account to ensure the conditions of planning permissions are met, and adjacent boundaries and wildlife are sensitively looked after;
- 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, which considers each of the Town Council's buildings to improve the efficiency and use of these properties;
- Delivered an annual programme of maintenance and decoration to all of the Town Council's built assets 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, with a particular focus given to drainage and repair at Hempstead Recreation Ground, Ridgewood Village Hall car parks and the staff Civic Centre parking area;
- Worked with the Chamber of Commerce to engage with High Street landlords (commercial and residential) to promote and secure improvements to street frontages;
- Protected the green space between Uckfield town and surrounding villages;
- Worked towards the 30 by 30“ United Nations target to designate 30 percent of land and ocean areas as protected areas by 2030 to aid nature recovery.

Highways and Transport services

By 2030, 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; including investigating the possibility of repairing the footpaths on Manor Park to remove the risk of trips and falls;
- Lobbied for improved bus services which support the community, enabling residents on the periphery of town to access the High Street and business park, and for residents in local villages to access Uckfield as their key service centre;
- 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;
- Remain engaged in discussions for supporting the town’s growth with the consideration of further parking areas for the future;
- Remain engaged in discussions to actively promote the electrification of the railway line, and the potential reopening of a line between Uckfield to Lewes providing a direct route into Brighton and connections to Tunbridge Wells;
- 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;
- Continued to work with East Sussex County Council to gradually review street lighting and replace older lights with new columns and LED lighting where necessary;
- Worked with Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to review festive lighting for the town centre in preparation for Christmas 2025 and beyond;

Our Strategic Priorities - Community

Cultural and related services

By 2030, we will have:

- Supported local community and voluntary organisations and sought to assist them with their positive work within the town;
- Worked alongside the local business community and community groups to deliver a free public event within the town – Weald on the Field;
- Assist and support the organisation of the annual Remembrance Parade and Services;
- 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 through applications for associated grant funding;
- Supported the town with the promotion of its tourism offer, through liaison with Uckfield Heritage and Wealden District Council's Economic Development team;
- Continued to maintain, improve and protect all of our natural areas to accommodate the demands of future growth of the town;
- Explored the creation of an outside performance space on Town Council-owned land, for use by the town as part of the annual events calendar;
- Supported the partnership work and continuation of the Uckfield Youth Club;
- 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;
- Worked with partner agencies to understand more about our disadvantaged communities and explored ways to engage with these households;
- Lobbied for a banking presence, and supported the creation of a banking hub, to provide a face to face facility for local residents.

Luxfords and Civic Centre

By 2030, we will have:

- Made improvements to the decoration and flooring within the main corridors and meeting rooms;
- Undertaken improvements to the venue's performance facilities (sound, lighting and staging);
- Replaced the tables and table racks within the Civic Centre to ensure easier manoeuvrability for room set-ups;
- Updated room facilities in line with the latest technologies, providing the facilities to enable hybrid meetings to be hosted within the Weald Hall and Council Chamber;
- Introduced temporary air conditioning units within the Civic Centre building for the summer months;
- 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;
- Installed further solar panels on the roof of the Civic Centre in line with the Town Council's Climate Change Action Plan;

Our Strategic Priorities – Continuous improvement

Process and procedures

By 2030, 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;
- Installed new parish and community noticeboards for residents living in new developments and areas of the town;
- Improved accessibility to committee meetings by installing an additional hearing loop in the Council Chamber;
- Increased promotion of the town's key facilities;
- 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 a thorough review of our key policies in particular personnel and GDPR based 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;
- Further reviewed our financial processes, and streamlined in line with Internal Auditor guidance
- Placed more focus on searching and applying for suitable grant funding to fund key projects for the benefit of local residents;
- Set up Councillor surgeries to enable residents to have more frequent face to face contact with their elected members;
- Engage with residents in a variety of means to understand their requirements and desires for the town, to better inform our annual business planning, neighbourhood planning and infrastructure planning.