



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 10 March 2025 at 7.00pm

Cllr. J. Love (Chair)
Cllr. K. Bedwell

Cllr. C. Macve (Vice Chair)
Cllr. S. Mayhew

Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. P. Ullmann

IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Lewis – Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Linda Lewis
2 members of the public

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interest that they may have in relation to any item on the agenda, but none were forthcoming.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

P65.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak.

A resident wished to speak on Agenda item 5.0 Planning Applications in objection to WD/2025/0181/F 49 High Street, Uckfield, TN22 1AN.

He stated that the number of proposed conversions would accommodate anywhere between 5 to 10 people, which would have the expectation of between 5 to 10 additional vehicles. He had found no proposed parking areas within the application and assumed that the two parking spaces for the former NatWest Bank would be used for other purposes.

P66.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES

None.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2025

P67.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 27 January 2025, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Action List

Members agreed to remove the following items from the Action List which had been completed or appeared later in the agenda.

P56.01.25 – Letter to the Head of Planning & Environmental Services to clarify the role of the Town Council and acknowledgement of the response received.

27.01.25 – Response to survey on East Sussex Rights of Way Access Plan.(Item 10.0 of this agenda).

5.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2024/2919/MAJ FARMLAND TO THE NORTH-WEST OF SAND HILL LANE, HALLAND (APPROXIMATELY 500M NORTH-EAST OF CROCKSTEAD FARM, 360M SOUTH-EAST OF PALEHOUSE COMMON, 1.5KM NORTH OF HALLAND AND 2KM SOUTH-EAST FROM THE OUTSKIRTS OF UCKFIELD).

Construction of a battery energy storage system (BESS) with an output capacity of 600mw along with associated infrastructure and equipment, including fencing, security cameras, cabling, access tracks, transmission and distribution substations, together with associated landscaping, biodiversity enhancement and SUDS provision, and creation of new access track from Sand Hill Lane and supplementary secondary access track for emergency use only.

The Clerk stated the Town Council were not consultees in the planning process for this application as it was outside of the Uckfield Boundary. As such, the response of the Town Council would be as a member of the public, and the committee's comments would be submitted to the Wealden District Council Planning Portal.

Members discussed this application at length and were appalled that this application was on an existing greenfield site and not a brownfield site and would carve a huge hole into the countryside. The location of the battery energy storage system was questioned, but reasoned it was due to the fact that the substations which connect to it had already been built and therefore the site was committed. It was felt that this was a potentially dangerous and an environmentally damaging development.

P68.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to object in the strongest terms to the application and to support the detailed objections from the Parish Councils of Framfield, East Hoathly and Halland. Members made the following reasons for objection:

- Concerns for the potential significant detrimental effect in the event of an environmental disaster on the site. Potential leaching into ground water, potential contamination of the Framfield and Ridgewood Streams; as well as an explosive potential to the site. This was supported by the fact that there were two substantial access points to allow for emergency vehicles, that there would be hardstanding for at least 3-4 emergency vehicles; and that there should be a substantial perimeter track around the site to allow for emergency vehicles;
- In the event of a fire it was stated that it would be necessary to deliver water at a rate of 1900litres per minute for a minimum of 2 hours. Members queried how the vast volumes of water stated necessary to deal with a fire, would be delivered to the site;
- Concerns that the BESS was cited on existing naturally green countryside and not an existing brownfield site. It was mentioned that perhaps an old military base or disused air base would have been more suitable;
- The construction would have a detrimental impact on the rural character of the landscape and was contradictory to Wealden Local Planning Policies that seek to protect the countryside from unsuitable development. The application would be contrary to the protection of the rural countryside, which we should be stewarding;
- Sand Hill Lane was inappropriate as an access road to the site. This was a very narrow, small country lane and was barely wide enough for two cars to pass each other and was not suitable for heavy good vehicles which would use the lane during construction;
- The road through Palehouse Common which would be used by heavy goods vehicles to travel to the site during construction was also inappropriate, due to vehicles parked in Palehouse, and congestion when deliveries took place;
- The immense 3.3m batteries would be a blot on the landscape and would far exceed any screening or improvement to the environment;
- Concerns for the depletion of farming land. It was thought that this land was acquired through a compulsory purchase order, due to the proximity of the new substation and its accessibility through an existing road access;

- Listed Buildings were within the area – Grade II Pelham Farmhouse and Pelham Place were both only 160m north of the site. We would ask for NPPF 16 for ‘Conserving and enhancing an historic environment’ especially in this historic setting, to be considered.
A member informed the committee that the Pelham family funded and managed the early turnpike roads that opened up the area.
- Members highlighted that any harm or damage to nearby ancient woodland should be considered and therefore the application should be refused as per the NPPF;
- Members would strongly stress that ESFRS needed to be consulted regarding the fire and explosive risk on the site;
- Members would disagree with the suggestion by the Flood Authority for the use of roadside swales, as roadside swales would be inappropriate in this area due to the water courses around it.

Furthermore, members stated that the map provided lacked the following information:-

- (i) The map did not show there was any prominent vehicle storage space;
- (ii) The map did not show that there was a secondary access and egress, as per guidance;
- (iii) The map did not show an adequate perimeter trackway;
- (iv) The map did not show how the batteries were sectioned as per the guidance.

The Chair read aloud the pre-application advice given by a Senior Planning Officer at Wealden District Council. Their comments relevant to the LVIA were reported in a document from Stable Green Energy and were read as follows:

- *‘One of the key considerations is impact on the visual amenity and character of the area. The site is rural, open countryside, falling just outside the High Weald AONB which lies to the north and set within High Weald’ Ouse Catchment Landscape Character area, Wealden District Council Landscape Character Assessment 2022. This area is not a ‘protected’ landscape.’*

The sites topography and surrounding field networks, alongside the surrounding network of public rights of way, is visible from public vantage points and the highway. Development on the site will result in a landscape impact and this would need to be weighed in the planning balance against the need of the development as proposed (public benefit test).

As discussed, it is recommended that a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment is prepared and assists in forming the site layout and landscaping proposals that would be needed.’
- *‘Existing hedgerow should be maintained and where required improved to provide a deep landscape buffer zone, whilst the loss of mature trees category A or B would not be supported, whilst the removal of Category C or below would be acceptable only when there is an operational need.’*
- *‘The new crossover to the highway and the associated access track also have the potential to result in an adverse landscape impact. I noted my concern with regard to the character of the existing road, Sandhill Lane and how narrow this appears to be. Whilst not a long-term issue once the construction phase is complete, large machinery movement and access to the site may prove problematic. Their support of the scheme in advance of the application submission will assist in expediting a quicker decision.’*

- *'There is a network of established hedgerows and these are likely to act as wildlife corridors given the pockets of Ancient Woodland. Maintaining and supplementing these would be important.'*
- *'The establishing of a formal access and road may result in the requirement to remove hedgerow/trees to Sandhill Lane in order to achieve the visibility splays. This should be avoided where possible as could result in an unacceptable visual impact.'*
- *'The principle of development is acceptable; however, the development on this site will result in a moderate adverse landscape visual impact, particularly owing to its open character and network of public rights of way adjacent. This impact would need to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and any other material considerations.'*

WD/2024/0715/LB CHESTNUT HOUSE, 127 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1EH

Replacement of six pairs of sashes to two front bay windows with associated repairs, together with repairs to windows in side elevation.

P69.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application subject to the agreement of the Conservation Officer. Although the application referenced using acoustic glass, it was felt that the Conservation Officer would state that the original form of glass should be used.

WD/2025/0220/LB 200 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1RD

It is proposed to demolish and rebuild a boundary retaining wall between 200 and 198 High Street due to the partial failure of the existing retaining wall.

P70.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** that, subject to the approval of the Conservation Officer, members would support the application, as the wall was to be rebuilt using the existing bricks.

WD/2025/0181/F 49 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1AN

Proposed part conversion of existing ground floor commercial space to form 1no. studio apartment, full conversion of existing first floor offices to form 2no. 1 bed apartments, new second floor roof extension to form 2no. 1 bed apartments, new external access stair to rear elevation, and new external bin and cycle storage area.

Members discussed the application and there were differences of opinion regarding the design. One member felt that the design of the addition could be improved aesthetically and that the design planned would degrade the street scene. Others felt that it would not deter from the original aesthetic of the building which was of its time. However, all agreed that there was a great need for this type of accommodation in the town and on a brownfield site.

Members would request to see the construction plan for the arrangement of parking for construction workers.

P71.03.25 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to support the application in respect of this being a brownfield site and it bringing this type of greatly needed accommodation into the town centre, whilst retaining retail use.

Members were concerned however, regarding parking. The town already lacked capacity in off street parking, which was worsened by the increased numbers of retail residential conversions in the High Street, at a time when it was already lacking in capacity.

Should Wealden District Council be minded to approve the application there were a number of points that would need to be considered regarding a construction plan i.e. site vehicles, site deliveries and parking of contractor vehicles.

P72.03.25 It was further **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk re-visit talks regarding acquiring the land on the corner of the High Street and Civic Approach, which had been historically used as a community space – for example for the towns Christmas tree.

WD/2025/0403/F 49 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1AN

New signage, air conditioning condenser units and extract grilles, shopfront and awning.

P73.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application and members welcomed a retailer returning to the High Street premises.

WD/2025/0455/F WHITE HAVEN, LONDON ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1PB

Single storey rear addition.

P74.03.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application on the following grounds:

- The addition would cause no detrimental effect to properties;
- Similar extensions existed in the vicinity and therefore a precedent existed;
- There would be no impact to the oak trees at the front of the property.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Approved:

WD/2024/1760/F

REPLACE FLAT ROOF TO EXISTING GARAGE WITH NEW PITCHED ROOF. TO PROVIDE ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION.

MOLESEY COTTAGE, HEMPSTEAD RISE, UCKFIELD

WD/2021/0744/FR

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION FROM GARAGE TO ANNEXE ACCOMMODATION AND HOLIDAY LET

COOMBE BANK, SNATTS ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AN

WD/2024/2949/F

PROPOSED GARAGE CONVERSION AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS WHICH INCLUDE ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL WINDOWS TO THE SIDE AND CHANGED WINDOWS TO THE REAR ELEVATION. WITH ADDITIONAL VELUX WINDOWS TO THE GARAGE ROOF

11 LYEWOOD WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 5GL

Refused:

WD/2024/2625/F

ONE REPLACEMENT WINDOW TO THE REAR OF PROPERTY FLAT 1, 130 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1QR

Withdrawn:

WD/2024/2899/FR

REINSTATEMENT WORKS TO REAR OUTBUILDING FOLLOWING FIRE DAMAGE 228 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD TN22 1RE

WD/2024/2798/LB

PROPOSED CONTEMPORARY EXTENSION TO EAST ELEVATION AND ASSOCIATED MINOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WORKS

MILTON COTTAGE, PUDDING CAKE LANE, UCKFIELD TN22 1BU

WD/2024/2799/F

PROPOSED CONTEMPORARY EXTENSION TO EAST ELEVATION AND ASSOCIATED MINOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WORKS

MILTON COTTAGE, PUDDING CAKE LANE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1BU

Raise no objections:

WD/2025/0159/OH

INSTALL H POLE AND INSTALL 200KVA 3PHASE POLE MOUNTED TRANSFORMER.
HIDDEN PLACE, RIDGEWOOD HOUSE, LEWES ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 5SN

Change of Enquiry Date:

WD/2024/1799/MAO - BIRD IN EYE FARM, BIRD IN EYE HILL, FRAMFIELD, TN22 5HA

THE INQUIRY WILL NOW COMMENCE NO EARLIER THAN WEEK COMMENCING 14 JULY 2025, AND NOT THE 25TH MARCH 2025.

Members noted the Decision Notices.

7.0 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

TM/2025/0040/TPO

RAISE CANOPY OF GROUP OF ASH TREES TO 5-6M ABOVE GROUND LEVEL WITHIN TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (UCKFIELD) NO 36, 1984 MILLINGTON COURT, MILL LANE, UCKFIELD TN22 5AZ

The clerk informed the committee of the following comment given by the Head Groundsman of the Town Council:

To crown raise an Ash, (with likely Ash Die Back) would possibly “Top Load” the trees making them more likely to fail. It was therefore suggested that these trees would require a PTI report before agreeing.

P75.03.25 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to respond to Wealden District Council with the above comment.

TM/2025/0031/TCA

REDUCE ONE WILLOW TREE BY 2.5M SUBJECT TO REGULATIONS DESIGNATED UCKFIELD CONSERVATION AREA OCTOBER 1968/JUNE MARCH 2017

56 CHURCH STREET, UCKFIELD, EAST SUSSEX, TN22 1BT

Members noted the Tree Preservation Orders.

8.0 TO ADVISE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL’S OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE USUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS

Members noted the report subject to the following correction.

Cllr. J. Love had declared a personal interest in WD.2025.0227/F 35 Manor Way TN22 1DF.

WD/2025/0159/OH HIDDEN PLACE, RIDGEWOOD HOUSE, LEWES ROAD, TN22 5SN

Install H pole and install 200kva 3phase pole mounted transformer.

Uckfield Town Council have no objections to the application.

and

WD/2025/0227/F 35 MANOR WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 1DF

Proposed car port over existing parking space.

Uckfield Town Council have no objections to the application.

5th March 2025 for:

WD/2024/2792/F 46 CHURCH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1BT

Installation of a timber garden room in the garden.

Uckfield Town Council support the application. However, as it is within the Conservation Area as well as being in the boundary of a listed building, members would like to Heritage/Conservation Officer to pass comment or any advice.

It was questioned whether the Heritage/Conservation Officer felt it would have an impact on Monks House and Milton Cottage, as it would be visible from Puddingcake Lane as the applicant had detailed in their statement.

9.0 TO CONSIDER IF THE COMMITTEE WISH TO RESPOND TO A WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION: VALIDATION LOCAL LIST - RESPONSE BY 8 APRIL 2025

It was **RESOLVED** not to respond to the consultation.
Members felt it was not necessary.

10.0 RESPONSE TO SURVEY ON EAST SUSSEX RIGHTS OF WAY ACCESS PLAN -FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Members noted the response.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.