

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 2 June 2025 at 7.00pm

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

29 members of the public
2 additional members of the public at 7.34pm
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. B. Reed
Linda Lewis – Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Linda Lewis

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

P03.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak on Agenda Item 5.0 Planning Applications, in object to WD/2025/0922/MEA Land West Of Uckfield - Owlsbury Farm, Horsted Green, Little Horsted TN22 5TJ

The Clerk had received an email from a resident (Resident 1) who had asked that her letter be read out in full at the meeting, since she was unable to attend.

Resident 1 – In her letter the resident called for members to object to the planning application. She explained that for 45 years she and her husband had lived in the Farm Cottage of the owners of the Farm land proposed for development. She was concerned that having enjoyed looking onto fields, that she would now be in the middle of a housing estate, with houses across the lane able to look directly into their bedroom and garden. She was concerned for the eradication of farmland that provided essential ecology and biodiversity (carbon storage, flood control, wildlife habitats), and light and noise pollution. The site sat within the Uck Valley green corridor, near Ashdown Forest, which was a protected SAC, plus SPA area, and this development would threaten the ecosystems of protected species and wildlife. She stated that the low Weald character area would be irretrievably lost. The environmental degradation caused by this development could not be understated and that National Planning Policy reserved such destruction only in the most exceptional circumstances, and that this development would not meet those thresholds.

She was also concerned for the loss of Grade 3 Farmland, which would be detrimental to British farming, which should be supported to protect the country's food security. The 'rural' town was currently struggling to cope with the amount of traffic in the town and the A22 and A272 would be unable to support the additional traffic resulting from this development.

The town lacked infrastructure to support such a development; doctors; schools etc.

She described finding this distressing and how she and her family had benefitted by enjoying green space which she had hoped could be enjoyed by future generations, and that this would be a loss of countryside enjoyed by people for their mental health, wellbeing and exercise.

Speaker 2 (Horsted Parish Council representative) reported on the position of the Parish Council, following a recent meeting to discuss the application.

He informed that there were five species of scheduled 1 raptors, and that peregrine nested there.

He stated that the developers had argued that they would mitigate the loss to wildlife by putting in a SANGs. However he made comparison to the SANG on the Ridgewood development, which he said had become an ecological desert and had no functional use whatsoever.

He questioned the honesty of the body responsible for Ridgewood development and stated that to an entire meeting of approximately 50 people the 'individual who was now running it' had promised that it would not go across the A22, which formed a natural barrier. He had since found that at the time of that meeting (which was minuted) negotiations were in place to bring development across the A22.

He also compared the site to Ridgewood with regards to the promise of affordable housing, when this had been originally given as 30% and was now only 3%.

He gave concerns for species supported by the amazingly clean water of the river running through the site and noted that the application had no provision for additional sewage facilities.

He stated that the area was prone to flooding and referred to a flood last Spring and early Summer 2024.

He gave concerns that the A26 and A22 were already at capacity for traffic.

He felt that houses in this area were unnecessary since the developers were unable to sell what they had. He suggested that housing needed to be built on a proportional basis and linked to the size of the existing infrastructure. He felt that this development would be disastrous.

Speaker 3 (Resident of Isfield) stated that the information given by the representative of little Horsted Parish Council was true and had been discussed at Isfield Parish Council and within the village. She cited the threat of damage to ancient woodland to be of grave concern which would be irretrievable. There was no way that you could barrier ancient woodland and expect to create pathways away from this. She raised concerns for the loss of species, flora and fauna in this corridor of ancient woodland.

Secondly, she was concerned that more development upstream of Isfield would intensify flooding problems for them. She referred to studies at Newcastle University and the modelling they had done on surface water build up which showed that as drainage land was taken by housing it would cause more flash flooding, and this here would be the case.

On a number of occasions Isfield has experienced the effects of the flood barriers that had been put in place to use Isfield as sacrificial land. Last winter the water almost came over the disused railway line, as also happened in 2000. Isfield already had a malfunctioning sewage system which flooded over the farm on which she lived.

There were already problems in tiny settlements like Isfield and the accumulative impact of all the developments that were being proposed, including at Halland, only exacerbated problems.

The site was strategically unsuitable in terms of transport links.

She also said that insurance companies wished to see a halt to any building on high and medium risk flood land.

Wealden District Council had produced a video advertising this development and she was not aware of any precedent for this. She was considering what formal objection route was available to them in relation to the advertising standards authority, as it was completely unclear what the purpose of that communication was and she was disgusted by this. It did not bode well for transparency, objectivity and decision making in the District Council and had asked that the clerk minute this statement.

Speaker 4 (Resident of Uckfield) – stated that the proposal would cause many problems for residents and urged the Town Council to use any powers of persuasion it had to stop this from going through.

The development boundary was to be the A22 bypass, which should have been sufficient. He acknowledged housing was needed but this development would result in losing ancient woodland and habitats, more pollution and less services. He listed concerns for lack of parking, schools, doctors, hospitals, water and sewerage to name a few. He queried whether the new substation that was being built would adequately supply all the new developments.

Speaker 5 (Resident of Uckfield) - Frances Sully wish to be recorded that she opposed the application for many reasons, and agreed to the comments given by the previous members of the public.

She had concerns that the A22 and A26 were at capacity. They were unable to take any extra traffic from the Ridgewood site and other smaller developments and from those that had already been passed, but not yet built. This would increase pollution and severely impact the Uckfield area.

She had concerns for public transport, buses and trains, and stated that the trains were the worst in the South East.

She stated that the Police were currently unable to cope, that there was a lack of parking for people visiting the town centre for their daily needs, lack of places for primary school and secondary school children. She stated that the Community Hospital was going to be downgraded and questioned how young families without the ability to travel would cope.

Concerns for the already stretched services of water and sewerage.

She was concerned that there would be a loss of farmland for the production of food.

She was angry that this beautiful part of Sussex was being destroyed and that ancient woodland and habitats would never recover.

Speaker 6 (Resident of Hartfield) – Spoke regarding the provision of primary schools. He lived in the village of Hartfield and had found that the larger the town grew, the smaller the catchment area from which children could be accepted. The development was putting in a primary school, but had no inclusion of a secondary school which was needed.

He agreed with points raised by members of the public that had already spoken. He questioned why the town was being made larger when services and infrastructure were currently unable to cope.

Speaker 7 (Resident of Uckfield) – Gave the figures for the housing on coming to the area; 1700 Owlsbury Farm; 750 Ridgewood yet to build and 340 at Horsted Pond plus the smaller developments.

He noted that there was to be a primary school but no secondary school. The developer was intending to make the old Lewes Uckfield railway into a cycle path and walkway. As a member of the Brighton Mainline 2 project for many years, he understood that over many years they were trying to open this train line which would relieve the traffic on the roads and this was to be kept as it was.

The County Council could not keep up with the current repair to the roads.

He thought that that the development was contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.

He also questioned that the affordable housing would not be affordable in reality and doubted that the 35% affordable housing would be retained.

Speaker 8 (Resident of Uckfield) – Stated that despite wide publicity and public meetings he had yet to read a positive comment from anyone in the district except from the developer.

Within the developers prepared documents he had found a comment stating that they believed that they were doing the district a big favour by proposing this development and helping Wealden to meet its targets. This was a misrepresentation of facts and developer propaganda.

The development would impact not only Uckfield but also developments within a 20-mile radius.

Every developer reminded them that Wealden District Council were failing on three fronts; there was a shortage of housing; failing to meet their targets and that they did not have a five-year housing supply.

These three points were a fabrication of reality and he cited facts from a leading property sale web-site where there were in excess of 433 homes currently on the market within a 3 mile radius of Uckfield, including affordable and smaller properties.

He accepted that housing targets were not being met and stated the reason being that developers were not building the housing that they have been commissioned to build because the ones they were building were struggling to sell. Those that were selling were being bought by people from outside of the area, because local people could not afford them. As Wealden had no control over this, they were unlikely to meet any government set targets.

It was a nonsense that Wealden had no five-year land supply as there were approximately 9000 homes already approved for development which developers were land banking. If these were to be built, they would exceed all government targets and collapse the whole infrastructure of the district.

He stated that the supporting infrastructure was fragile if not broken.

He also stated the figures for the consummation of fresh water from both Owlsbury Farm and the Ridgewood development, stated that they needed 1.15million litres per day.

The Uckfield Waste Water Centre was unable to cope with the current discharge and was regularly discharging raw sewage in the area and this development together with the Ridgewood development, (when completed of 1000 homes), would mean an increase of 21.16% of water disposal.

He could find no benefit to Uckfield, just increased costs and less income. Infrastructure needed to be first before building houses that local people could afford.

Speaker 9 (District Cllr. B. Reed) – addressed the public present and thanked them for taking the time to come to the meeting. She thanked the representative of Little Horsted Parish for coming.

She explained that herself and District/Town Cllr. D. French, both in their capacity as County Councillors were monitoring the initial objections as they came in, and that their simple and concise letter of objection had been uploaded to the Planning portal. She recommended to those present to subscribe to updates on the Planning Portal where they could follow updates and consultee reports as they came in. She advised that should they believe any inaccuracies then they were able to comment again to report this.

She thanked the Plans Committee for reviewing the application.

Speaker 10 (A first Responder) – As a first responder he often saw elderly and also very young children and babies for whom it was critical for them to be reached in optimal time. He was concerned that increased population without infrastructure would result in more deaths since response times would be slowed.

P04.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES

None.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2025

P05.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 12 May 2025, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Action List

Members noted the Action List.

5.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2025/0922/MEA LAND WEST OF UCKFIELD - OWLSBURY FARM, HORSTED GREEN, LITTLE HORSTED TN22 5TJ

Demolition of poultry farm and associated dwelling; Erection of up to 1700 new dwellings (including 35% affordable housing and 50 residential care/late living units (C2)); Mixed-use centre with retail, commercial and community uses; 2FE primary school including early years provision; Multi-purpose sports hub; Community allotments; New and enhanced pedestrian/cycle links; Open space including new sang; Sustainable Urban Drainage features; Children's play areas; Landscaping; and creation of two points of access onto A22.

Members individually spoke on the application.

Cllr. Macve felt that this was a terrible loss of agricultural land which would be a very retrograde step. We were constantly being faced with increase food imports, and to build more and more houses to the expense of agricultural land was not a good idea.

He was always led to believe that the bypass was to be the western extent of development, but since then we had received the Gridserve solar farm application, which had already been approved, and now we are being faced with these 1700 units.

As already said the infrastructure could not cope.

A lot of the site was an existing flood plain and to put houses on the site would only exacerbate the surface water problem.

Our highways were completely at their limit. Many years ago, we were told that the Uckfield by-pass was at its maximum capacity, and then when allowing the 1000 homes at Ridgewood they would mitigate this by increasing the entrance onto the Copwood roundabout and the Little Horsted roundabout. This would accommodate all of the extra vehicles. Although they had done the entrance onto the Copwood roundabout, the Little Horsted roundabout would not be done until the 750th house was occupied.

We were to understand that the sewerage plant was at capacity, and yet the consultee report of Southern Water now says they could accommodate these 1700 units.

Active Travel were objecting to the plan because they needed more information, and the medical services and education in the town was at breaking point.

Cllr. Bennett spoke about the human aspect of this, which he stated, often got missed as we had to speak in planning terms. He stated that when the bypass was first built, we were promised that the bypass would protect the town from further building to the west. The passing of the Gridserve Application removed this promise of the A22 being the development boundary.

In connection with the 8000-9000 other houses in the area, which were yet to be built, he felt that it was morally scandalous to expect Uckfield to take further.

He advocated for the protection of the railway line, which if and when it reopened would reduce traffic. He recognised the need for housing but this should be for 'Wealden people' and 'local residents.'

Cllr. Mayhew stated that the Town Council had been fighting against developments for years and would continue to do so.

He stated that the Ridgewood development was in fact 1100 homes if Seghers Place was included.

Cllr. Mayhew referred to the Active Travel report which cited Kidlington roundabout in Oxford by way of example. This roundabout was known to Cllr. Mayhew and he expressed grave worries since the roundabout was very hazardous.

He stated that there was no Highways report and no transport reports.

Regarding the affordable housing, he was pleased that the developer had listened to the Town Council and that there was a higher proportion of affordable housing than any other development previously proposed.

His main concern would be how traffic flow would be seriously impacted by the proposed crossings for pedestrian access to the town. The roads quickly became gridlocked in the town when any incidents occurred on the A22.

Cllr. Bedwell stated that although the development did not sit in the Uckfield parish, Uckfield would be the facilities hub and would be greatly impacted.

She thanked the developers for their engagement with Uckfield Town Council, including the four meetings held to discuss the proposed development which had allowed a valuable exchange of ideas regarding housing mix, elderly provision, SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace), parking, flood mitigation, and environmental impacts. However, despite some commendable aspects of the proposal, concerns remained which she spoke of in depth covering:

Absence of the development from the Local Plan; traffic impact and highways safety; environmental and flooding concerns; strain on social infrastructure and public services; housing mix and affordability; urbanisation of rural landscape and community harm; sustainability and climate concerns, was contrary to NPPF Paragraph 208.

She stated a number of conditions that needed to be met for the application to be considered further, including needing a full assessment of the cumulative impact of the 9000 already approved homes; a sound, adopted Local Plan; strategic highways, flood mitigation and public service infrastructure and full consultation with key agencies.

To conclude she stated that this development, could not be justified on environmental, social, or infrastructure grounds. It was premature, lacked alignment with an adopted Local Plan, and failed to meet multiple critical criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Not all of which had been mentioned.

She stated that this application represented the largest development ever proposed in Wealden, and as such, should not be considered in isolation. It should form part of a comprehensive, democratically developed Local Plan, which had yet to be submitted for examination (Regulation 19). Advancing a scheme of this scale without an approved strategic framework undermined the principles of plan-led development and sets a dangerous precedent for ad hoc urban expansion.

She recalled that members first met with the developers in March 2023. Progress appeared to be moving quickly for a development of such a large housing proposal that would impact not only Uckfield, but surrounding villages, landscape, infrastructure and public services, with no evidence of preliminary discussion with planning officers at WDC. There were very few consultee reports available for Uckfield Town Council to read and understand.

Uckfield residents were witnessing the rapid and uncoordinated urbanisation of rural towns and villages, driven not by genuine local need, but by political imperatives to meet national housing targets. Successive governments had prioritised volume over vision, focusing on numbers rather than sustainable communities. This had come at the expense of:

Local housing need alignment; Support for rural businesses and agriculture; Protection of vital environmental support systems.

With approx. 9000 homes already approved, but not yet built in the Wealden district, there had been no assessment of the cumulative impacts on Freshwater availability; Sewage infrastructure; Road congestion and air quality; Flooding risks and river biodiversity; Sensitive ecological areas such as the Ashdown Forest SPA.

Additionally, the proliferation of battery storage systems, solar farms and power infrastructure in agricultural areas, often accessible only via narrow rural roads, raised serious concerns about flooding, waste, and ecological degradation. All to serve large scale development that is neither needed nor locally supported.

There was palpable frustration in our community. Residents felt they were being forced to accept development that eroded their rural identity, undermined their quality of life, and ignored the democratic principles of local planning. The presumption in favour of

development should not override the need for thoughtful, community-led, environmentally sound planning.

She stated that this application should not go ahead until the following conditions were met:-

- A full assessment of the cumulative impact of the 9,000 already-approved homes;
- A sound, adopted Local Plan developed through community engagement;
- Strategic highways, flood mitigation, and public service infrastructure in place;
- Full statutory consultation with key agencies including Highways, the Environment Agency, Education, and Sussex Police, WDC Arboriculture and Landscape, WDC Conservation, Natural England, Southern Water, ESCC Archaeology, Forestry Commission, South East Water;
- ESCC SUDS and Flood Risk Management.

Cllr. Bedwell for the above reasons proposed that members objected to the application.

Cllr. Macve added that car parking capacity within the town needed to be increased substantially as it was currently inadequate and this needed to be addressed. The developers were promoting the town as an economic hub however this issue had not been discussed in any conversations.

The Chair referred to Ridgewood Farm and mentioned that the illustrative drawings had looked very green and perfect, however now we had found that this was over development of the land and items originally included had been lost ie. the community space and the wider corridor connecting Boothland Woods had been reduced. They had also had to put in extra drainage and she suggested that this could be possible for Owlsbury Farm Site.

She also had heritage concerns for the protection of the setting of Owlsbury Farmhouse itself, which could be seen from Boothland Wood and from Victoria Pleasure Ground.

It was vital that there was a Statement of Common Ground and the Chair asked the clerk to write to the Head of Planning for an update on this.

It was noted that many consultee reports remained outstanding.

P06.06.25 Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to strongly object to the application on the following grounds:

1). Prematurity and absence from Local Plan

This development represented the largest proposal ever submitted in Wealden, yet was not part of the current Wealden Local Plan, Paragraph 7 of the 2024 NPPF defined sustainable development as meeting current needs without compromising future generations. Approving such a large-scale scheme in isolation, without a strategic framework, undermined sustainable planning.

This development would cross the development boundary to the West of Uckfield and merge villages removing the character of settlements and important open space between them. It would directly impact areas of unspoilt and remote countryside and impact the retention of ancient woodlands, boundary trees and hedges of which there are hundreds on this site. This was in direct contravention to WDC saved policy EN4.6, EN8.

2) Traffic Impact and Highway Safety

The development would generate approximately 1.4 million additional car journeys annually (based on 4250 residents and national averages), with no visible plan to mitigate this. Uckfield's High Street, a single access route that crosses a flood-prone

river, was already congested. East Sussex Highways had not provided a consultation report, and no strategic highways plan had been shared.

i) Necessary for an update Statement of Common Ground

Members were not aware of any updates to Highways strategic assessment or the **'statement of common ground'** that we were told had been agreed by Horsted Pond farm, Downlands farm and Bird In Eye which would mitigate some of the impact of those proposed developments to the Town Centre which according to the Highways Cysleys report was already a Capacity.

We would highlight the current vulnerability of Uckfield's traffic network. Uckfield Bypass was quickly severely impacted and gridlocked by any traffic incident. This affected local businesses who had reduced footfall impacting their ability to employ staff.

The proposal to install Toucan crossings along the Bypass and Bell Farm Lane was particularly concerning. These crossings would interrupt traffic flow at key points, leading to congestion that would:

- Backlog along Bell Farm Road;
- Create pinch points near Boots Corner, especially during peak hours;
- Exacerbate congestion on the High Street, which already experiences heavy use and delays.

The Ridgewood Place /Seghers scheme had proposed extra lanes at key roundabouts, this was insufficient to mitigate the systemic issues caused by bottlenecks, signal interruptions, and the lack of alternative access routes. The cumulative effect would be negative for both traffic efficiency and town centre vitality, contrary to NPPF Paragraphs 108 and 112, which required developments to avoid severe transport impacts and promoted efficient movement of people and goods and is in contravention of WDC saved policy 4.12

An accident at the Little Horsted roundabout would reduce access onto the site and the second proposed entrance was close to Seghers Place industrial site entrance and new sewage works entrance which would see large lorries causing extra traffic and congestion at those entrances.

Paragraphs 109, 112d, 115, and 118 of the NPPF clearly required:

- Evidence-based transport impact assessments;
- Travel plans;
- Measures to address congestion and promote sustainable transport;

These were either missing or inadequate in the current proposal.

Active Travel consultation had been deferred, saying it was not currently in a position to support this application and requested further assessment, evidence, revisions and/or dialogue as set out in their response.

Wealden had a higher-than-average elderly population which was increasing and their reliability on the car would not decrease. Uckfield was on a hill and cycling would not be suitable for the very young and old. It was not feasible that congestion either on the bypass or in the town centre would diminish and a cumulative study of the impact to road congestion by developments passed for planning and not yet built out must be completed before another large development was added to the already struggling road network.

Local amenities (gym, health, schools, shops) were accessible within 20–40 min walk, people would not walk on wet dark winter nights to use these facilities and do their weeks shopping.

3) Environmental and Flooding Concerns

The proposal lacked evidence of formal consultation with the Environment Agency. Given the annual flooding of the River Uck, the omission of a defined and approved 6-metre buffer zone was a significant failing. This was a legal and environmental requirement that directly affected public safety, biodiversity, and local infrastructure. Approving this scheme without proper flood risk mitigation violated 102 of the NPPF, which stressed the importance of and public safety.

Part of the developers report on groundwater highlighted groundwater at several points, responding quickly to rainfall - suggesting hydraulic connectivity with River Uck and Ridgewood Stream.

Multiple wells showed potential surface flooding risk under extreme rainfall.

Local knowledge would tell that this area was prone to flooding and would impact the bypass if not mitigated appropriately.

The tunnel connecting Ridgewood Place and the SANG could flood to waist height during winter months.

The impact to our streams had been looked at in isolation of this development and not as a cumulative impact on the Ridgewood Stream, directly leading to the River Uck, which was currently being used for Surface Water Drainage for numerous proposed developments.

The sheer scale of this development proposal would impact the environment, green corridors, biodiversity and habitat networks.

Paragraph 180 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognised that the planning system should conserve and enhance the environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Land alongside River Uck was particularly valuable for wildlife and it was essential that this was protected.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive stressed the importance of natural networks of linked corridors to allow movement of species between suitable habitats, and promote the expansion of biodiversity.

Many parcels of the proposed land were designated as ancient woodland and protected under local plan policies EN8, EN12, EN13.

There were numerous Woodland ponds, wet woodland ponds, priority and non-priority ponds onsite important under Wealden's SPD; several support aquatic vegetation and were noted for wildlife value.

There were Veteran trees and bluebells noted in woodland areas with high ecological value. Many habitats were designated Ancient Woodland; Considerable amount of young and mature English Oaks, Maples and Willows, all with ecological and visual significance;

126 Badger sets- all protected by Protection of Badgers Act (PBA)[1]

4) Strain on Social Infrastructure and Public Services

There had been no consultation with key agencies including:

- East Sussex County Council Education (primary and secondary school provision).
- East Sussex Children's Services.
- Sussex Police, despite a 7.5% increase in crime in 2023 attributed in part to population growth.

Uckfield College was rebuilt without the extra provision to expand its intake, and primary school spaces would require substantial new investment. No evidence had been submitted regarding CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) or S106 funding to expand capacity.

Sussex Police required CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) or S106 funding to expand provision of police infrastructure.

Sussex Police required consideration and collaboration with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Secured by Design (SBD) to mitigate against local crime trends and site-specific requirements.

This failure contradicted Paragraphs 100–102 of the NPPF, which emphasised proactive collaboration to meet educational and public service needs and public safety.

5) Housing Mix and Affordability

Members were glad to see smaller units being proposed for the development and this was positive for local people who were struggling to afford the executive homes that there were many of.

According to the WDC Housing register the proposed housing mix failed to reflect the local demand and still needed to be balanced.

Unit Size	Applicants on Register	% of Demand	% Proposed
1 bed	587	50%	40%
2 bed	309	27%	47%
3 bed	208	18%	13%
4 bed	61	5%	0%

There was no provision for 4-bedroom affordable homes, despite long waiting lists and significant need. This contradicted the advice from the WDC Housing team and violates the aim of Paragraph 8b of the NPPF, which required housing to reflect both current and future needs.

Furthermore, the preference for maisonettes over flats and the need for private outdoor space had not been properly incorporated.

6) Urbanisation of Rural Landscape and Community Harm

This scale of development would irreversibly urbanise a rural area, especially in conjunction with the proposed Owlsbury Industrial Estate. This contradicted the community's desire to preserve its rural character and existing way of life. Paragraph 8b of the NPPF calls for development that supports “health, social and cultural well-being” – this proposal did the opposite by disrupting established communities, increasing pollution, and removing access to nature.

7) Sustainability and Climate Concerns

The lack of a Travel Plan, absence of consultation with Active Travel England, and the increase in car dependency was inconsistent with:

- NPPF Paragraphs 109c, 112, and 118, which promote active, low-carbon transport;
- The principles of sustainable development (NPPF Paragraph 7);
- Uckfield Town Council were still waiting for an update to the 2018 SUSTRANS report and for consultation with Active Travel to understand and help develop the strategic plan for alternative travel.

Increased traffic, inadequate infrastructure, and missing environmental safeguards contradicted the government's net-zero goals.

8) NPPF Paragraph 208 stated that minor or less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including its impact on sustainable development.

Owlsbury Farmhouse, specifically, was a Grade II listed building, recognized by Historic England since December 31, 1982.

It sat within an agricultural setting with historic documents supporting the area as a working farm. It would have significant impactful harm to be surrounded by this development.

9) Lack of provision for essential additional car parking in the town, especially when the developer was promoting the town as an economic hub.

The Chair thanked members of the public for attended and called for a short recess of the meeting at 8.14pm, whilst members of the public present left the room.

The meeting reconvened at 8.20pm when 5 members of the public, including District Cllr. B. Reed and District Cllr. D. French remained.

WD/2025/1099/F BRAMBLESIDE, HIGHLANDS AVENUE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5TD

Internal alterations, relocation of front door, alterations to rear access steps, dormer alterations and new rooflight, fenestration alterations, garage alterations and front entrance canopy.

P07.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as the works would result in an improvement to the external appearance of the building. Members were pleased to note that the dormer was to be retained so as not to increase the roof height.

WD/2025/1152/FA KINGS COURT, HEMPSTEAD ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1FE

Variation of Condition 5 of WD/2016/2924/O (outline application for a proposed residential development comprising 3 no. two-bed apartments.) To amend the wording for windows.

P08.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as the inclusion of obscure glass was necessary to prohibit the potential over looking to Molsey Court.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Approved:

WD/2025/0496/LB

PROPOSAL TO TURN THE NORTH WEST RECEPTION ROOM INTO THE KITCHEN/DINER

NORTH MANOR HOUSE, REGENCY CLOSE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1EH

WD/2025/0804/F

PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION

66 LASHBROOKS ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AZ

WD/2025/0434/F

CONVERSION OF EXISTING CARPORT TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION.

THE OLD QUARRY, SNATTS ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AP

WD/2025/0455/F

SINGLE STOREY REAR ADDITION

WHITE HAVEN, LONDON ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1PB

Refused:

WD/2025/0768/F

3 TIMBER REPLACEMENT WINDOW TO THE PROPERTY- 2 TO THE FRONT AND 1 TO THE REAR.

FLAT 1, 130 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1QR

Appealed:

101 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1RN

CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS TO PROVIDE THREE FLATS AND GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL UNIT ALONGSIDE ASSOCIATED WORKS

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/C1435/W/25/3365421EE PRESERVATION ORDERS

Ref APPLICATION NO'S WD/2024/1843/F AND WD/2024/1844/LB.

Members note the decision notices.

7.0 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

TM/2025/0129/TPO

WORK TO TWO OAK TREES WITHIN TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (UCKFIELD) NO 61, 1989.

37 BARNETT WAY, UCKFIELD TN22 1XH

Members noted the tree preservation order and would have no objections as long as works were carried out mitigating damage to the natural environment, flora and fauna of the tree.

8.0 TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED STREET NAME FOR DEVELOPMENT - LAND SOUTH OF SPRINGFIELD, LEWES ROAD UCKFIELD TN22 5SL

P09.06.25 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed name of Primrose Drive. One member wished to be noted as abstaining from the decision.

9.0 TO NOTE RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPEAL FOR LAND AT BIRD IN EYE FARM WD/2024/1799/MAO – attached.

The Chair advised that she and Cllr. Bedwell would be attending day one of the appeal. however, could not attend more days due to other commitments.

The meeting closed at 8.33pm.