

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 12 May 2025 at 7.00pm

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

7 members of the public
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. B. Reed

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

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.

Councillor Macve declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5.0, application no. WD/2025/0957/F – Luxford Centre, and the latter section of agenda item 6.0 – decision notices. The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Macve would need to leave the room for the planning application referenced under agenda item 5.0.

Councillor Mayhew declared a personal interest in agenda item 5.0, application no. WD/2025/0957/F – Luxford Centre, as a result of being a member of the centre, and his spouse being a Trustee. The Town Clerk assessed whether the committee would be quorate for this item, before Councillor Mayhew advised that he would feel more comfortable leaving the room for the item.

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

P91.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak.

Member of Public 1 (resident) referred to the minutes of the meeting on 22 April 2025, and asked if a response had been received from Wealden DC's Planning department in relation to the question raised at the last meeting for WD/2025/0740/FA – Land to the South of Springfield, Lewes Road, Ridgewood, TN22 5SL. The Town Councillors were not aware that a response had been received. The Town Clerk would check.

Member of Public 2 (resident) wished to speak in relation to agenda item 5.0, planning application WD/2025/0736/MRM – Mockbeggar Farm, London Road. He wished to raise a concern with the way the houses were aligned. It was suggested that to obtain full potential from the solar PV panels, all roofs should have a south facing aspect.

Member of Public 3 (applicant – Cala Homes) wished to speak in relation to agenda item 5.0, planning application WD/2025/0736/MRM – Mockbeggar Farm, London Road. He wished to clarify a couple of points previously queried by the Town Council in relation to the (i) ancient woodland and adjacent green space, and (ii) the eastern boundary of the site.

(i) the woodland to the south of the site – the primary function of this area was still to enhance the connectivity for wildlife such as bats. The introduction of the play equipment and trail was not intended to result in any reduction to the ecology in this area. The design would benefit the wildlife, and future management would be sympathetic toward protected species. This was all set out in the management plan for the site and landscape ecological management plan.

(ii) dwellings on eastern boundary – further to the public exhibition and feedback from

consultees, the revised proposals included a landscape buffer to the rear of these plots to give more separation. Plot 60 had been moved south to accommodate tree root protection areas, and a landscape buffer to the northern boundary. Plot 52's garage had been moved north to address the adjacent woodland buffer. Plot 53 and 54 were narrower units than first proposed, and there were a greater proportion of pitched roofs were garages integrated within the property.

The applicant also acknowledged the Town Council's previous feedback on the size of the units. The Town Council expressed a need to see smaller units on the market. The revised designs offered 2 x 1bed private units, and 6 x 2bed private units, alongside the affordable offering. This meant 8 of the 39 private units were now 1 or 2 bed.

The Chair, Councillor J. Love thanked the applicant for listening, and expressed the need to keep dialogue open.

Member of Public 4 (resident) wished to speak in relation to agenda item 5.0, planning application WD/2025/0736/MRM – Mockbeggar Farm, London Road.

It was questioned why discussions were focusing on bats and all these quangos. He referred to road stops for snails and dormice, but yet high-speed rail lines on the continent, wouldn't consider these matters in this level of detail. He referred to other sites in the town, before advising Town Councillors that he had owned the adjacent woodland for 50 years. It was now regarded as ancient woodland. It was originally grazing land, with some trees. The wood had been impacted greatly during the 1987 storms. There was currently a blanket preservation order on the woodland. He had planted more trees than he had lost, and he had cleared the brambles. Deer were present in the woodland, and affected some of the trees. He questioned to what extent the applicant would be protecting the woodland.

Member of Public 5 (resident) had followed the application since its inception. He wished to echo the Chair's comments, to thank the applicant for their attendance and response. One of the pleas from residents on the eastern boundary along Coopers Green Road, focused on reduced light due to the density of the housing layout. He was pleased to see this had been addressed for plots 52, 53 and 54, but plots between 55 to 60 (all 4 bed) had integral garages, which resulted in only 6ft between these properties. A little bit more gap would aid the retention of what all neighbouring properties had at present – a lovely view across the fields. The residents that backed onto these properties were also worried about security.

The resident raised further concerns about the water table. Residents had already suffered in their properties and gardens from surface water run-off. They were therefore concerned about the impact to drainage during and after construction.

P92.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2025

P93.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 22 April 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/2023/2939/MRM LAND WEST OF UCKFIELD (SITE SD1), INCLUDING LAND BOUNDED BY LEWES ROAD, NEW TOWN, A22, UCKFIELD SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS AND LAND TO THE WEST OF A22 NORTH OF HORSTED POND GATE

Reserved matters application pursuant to condition 2 of the Outline Planning Permission reference no. WD/2015/0209/MEA. Amended plans and reports received.

The Chair referenced the letter from Savills, which accompanied the application which

noted that the following aspects of reserved matters had been reviewed and revised:

- Public Right of Way;
- Bus route and stops;
- Design and layout, parcels;
- Connecting internal highway;
- Increase of the buffer on the ancient woodland;
- Levels of parking;
- Hardstanding and landscaping;
- Pedestrian and cyclist connectivity;

Councillor Macve noted his initial observations:

- (i) the original application stated that there would be a mixed-use hub. Was that what was now referred to as the 'local neighbourhood centre';
- (ii) of the hundreds of trees planted on the eastern side of the A22 Bypass, a considerable number were now deceased. Were these now going to be replaced, and better care taken of them? The same had occurred on the western side of the Bypass, on the SANG. Adequate screening was required;
- (iii) the bridge deck – partly this application and that of the employment space. This was proposed to span the Ridgewood stream to reach the employment space. Cllr Macve couldn't see on the drawings where the existing levels of the floodplain reached. He was concerned that the width between the supports for the bridge would be less than the existing floodplain levels. In periods of heavy rain it could back up, similar to that experienced by the Uckfield railway station;

Councillor Bedwell referenced:

- (i) the response from East Sussex Fire & Rescue which noted the lack of detail regarding the location of fire hydrants etc;
- (ii) the response received from East Sussex Highways. She was unable to see any further update since January 2024;
- (iii) there didn't appear to be any agreement with the Environment Agency or ESCC for the protection of the proposed bridge to the employment space;
- (iv) in 2024, it was proposed to remodel the roundabout to accommodate all users, but she struggled to find any further detail on this;
- (v) ESCC requested a Transport plan, and it had not been forthcoming;
- (vi) concerns about the biodiversity impact on Boothland Wood (ancient woodland) and the footpaths around, which would result in a break in connectivity. It was acknowledged that there was a larger buffer zone around the woodland in places than first designed;
- (vii) the application still lacked clarity on light sensitivity and the impact on wildlife such as bats;
- (viii) Wealden DC's Tree Officer's latest report – had regard to ecological connectivity and potential damage to groups of trees and hedgerows. There was no mitigation currently in place by the applicant;
- (ix) on 1 May, the NatureSpace Partnership wished to remind the applicant about the district licence requirements for newts needing to be adhered to. It was still uncertain if the licence had been obtained;
- (x) no updates had been received from Southern Water. Uckfield Town Council had sent a letter to the local planning authority and shared a copy with both the applicant for this site and Owlsbury Farm. This letter followed a site visit in 2024, and highlighted the serious concerns of both Southern Water and local residents regarding the impact of the proximity of attenuation ponds near to the sewage treatment works, and subsequent risk that these ponds would have in creating fly swarms. Limited information had also been received on odour control;
- (xi) there was still some concern regarding the loss of the two oak trees affecting the landscape character. It was acknowledged that the applicant would be retaining the almost veteran tree T14, but further reassurance was required on the scale of crown reduction to accommodate double decker buses along this route. Other trees were also noted to be of concern by the Tree Officer – T101, T110 – all listed in the District Council Tree Policies, and T94 and T916 due to the close proximity of the parking spaces;
- (xii) the revised application suggested that the applicant wished to upgrade the path in Boothland Wood (public right of way) as it could get waterlogged at particular times of year.

This would have to be further discussed in detail with Uckfield Town Council as the landowner and East Sussex Rights of Way, as it was not conducive to the preservation of an ancient woodland, nor the hydrology of this wet woodland. Uckfield Town Council would be considering ways in which to protect the perimeter of the ancient woodland and it was vital that the applicant was involved in these considerations. Ancient woodland was disappearing rapidly, so its protection was essential.

Councillor Bennett's comments mainly related to the bridge design. He questioned whether hydraulic capacity modelling had been undertaken for the design of the bridge. Uckfield's residents knew the history of the floodplain, and required reassurance on this.

Councillor Mayhew focused on the Highway report incorporated in the revised application. He noted the objection of East Sussex Highways (ESCC) on 6 January 2025 due to insufficient information and wished to highlight just a few of the inaccuracies noted in the documentation:

- (i) if departures from the employment space were deemed unacceptable, an alternative access provision would need to be sought. As yet, this couldn't be found;
- (ii) street furniture and infrastructure still needed to be considered for the bus route (stops/shelters);
- (iii) as of yet, the footway and accessibility to the school had not been incorporated within the plans;
- (iv) the travel plan framework needed reviewing as it was still based on the time period from when outline planning permission had been granted. A lot had changed since then in terms of the demographics and travel patterns;
- (v) the location of parking bays for general/visitor parking were not situated well and raised concerns as motorists would have to reverse out of these spaces with limited visibility near to the community buildings;
- (vi) methodology and further detail was required on the footpath connections to Victoria Pleasure Ground;
- (vii) more detail and discussions needed for the public rights of way, in terms of routing, the underpass, and surface materials;
- (viii) concern for the safety of pedestrians at the A22 bypass roundabouts;
- (ix) the proposed employment access was considered undeliverable;
- (x) Brighton & Hove Buses had been approached, but Metrobus hadn't. ES Highways highlighted that turning movements had not been factored into plans for the exit point onto Lewes Road nor had this been confirmed as a safe exit point. The turning movements were also not factored in for refuse vehicles;
- (xi) limited consideration for connectivity for pedestrians/cyclists throughout the site;

Overall their response highlighted that much of the documentation submitted had not been updated to reflect the current demographics, the most recent census data, nor the current use and layout of the town. There were also typos within the report, which suggested it had been written over, from another site.

Councillor Mayhew would be very concerned if other points of access were considered such as Anvil Close/The Smithy. This would not be conducive near to Bridge Farm Wood, and the main access for the sewage treatment works.

The Town Clerk requested if she could have permission to speak. This was granted. It was requested that the Committee consider Town Council staff concerns, as an adjacent land owner.

- (i) Victoria Pleasure Ground sat adjacent to the site and in effect would be wrapped by this development. The Pleasure Ground was the Town Council's sports and recreation hub, and the Town Council was working closely with the Cricket and Football Clubs to obtain grant funding to improve these facilities. This could see the introduction of astro pitches, which would see extensive usage daily. The site already had floodlights, and being a sports hub, the applicant needed to respect this within the layout and design of Seghers Place as the new householders of properties located close to the boundary wouldn't welcome this.
- (ii) Boothland Wood was designated as ancient woodland. It was getting to the point, that in order to protect the woodland, it may be necessary to place up fencing to protect areas of the

woodland. This was incredibly sad, but as a result of the full Ridgewood Farm site not being adequately maintained, new access points had been created by walkers into the woodland at various points.

Councillor Bedwell wished to minute the lack of communication from the applicant. Most of the points that the Town Council had previously raised had been ignored. A number of things had changed despite the original S106 agreement requirements. This was a major application, and needed to benefit both the community moving in, and the existing community.

Councillor Mayhew echoed these points, and further noted that no further engagement had been received in relation to the S106 agreement requirements for Victoria Pleasure Ground footway access.

The Chair, Councillor Jackie Love, referred to Mr Rainbow's response from Wealden District Council, and noted that this officer recognised that Ridgewood Farm was Boothland Wood's only natural connection. The proposed wildlife corridors were not adequate. A meeting would be required between the local planning authority, East Sussex Rights of Way, and the applicant to consider how best to retain green corridors and preserve this important ancient woodland.

The original farmhouse featured priority habitats, and the documentation showed a link from that property to the edge of Boothland Wood, but this hadn't been fully considered. The green corridor that followed the watercourse out of Boothland Wood had a proposed road and footpath crossing it. Ecological connectivity, priority habitats and protection of ancient woodland needed to be discussed in further detail. The same was apparent for the western side of the site by the A22 bypass. The Chair also queried whether a stile access should be installed on the edge of the woodland to restrict the access of bikes/motorbikes/wheels within the woodland. It was acknowledged that the buffer zone had been increased from 15m to 20m. It was also noted that the road layout and orientation of properties had been tweaked.

The second area of 'community' space first outlined in the original application which was granted permission, now appeared to have disappeared. The Town Council needed to understand why this had not been pushed forward and included. This development would be creating a new area of Uckfield, and these residents would need facilities. At present the application was poor in terms of the provision of services for an application of this scale.

It was also noted that the 4G mobile network mast in the far eastern corner of the site was not detailed on the plans or drawings, and currently properties were showing as being present in that location. Clarification from the applicant was required.

Based on the above, members did not feel that the application could be supported in its current form. One member reflected that despite there being 10 years to address the details, it was disappointing to see so much information missing from the application at the reserved matters stage.

P94.05.25 Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to OBJECT to the application in its current form. Members could not support the application based on the lack of detail available on vital aspects of the development – i.e. the inclusion of out of date demographics and statistics and undeveloped considerations for ecological connectivity, preservation of the ancient woodland, full details for bus routes and associated infrastructure, highway access and pedestrian access/active travel.

WD/2023/2935/MRM LAND WEST OF UCKFIELD (SITE SD1), INCLUDING LAND BOUNDED BY LEWES ROAD, NEW TOWN, A22, UCKFIELD SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS AND LAND TO THE WEST OF THE A22 NORTH OF HORSTED POND GATE

Reserved matters application pursuant to Condition 2 of Outline Planning Permission reference no. WD/2015/0209/MEA for land to the West of Uckfield, comprising delivery of 1884 sqm of employment floorspace, public realm enhancements, parking facilities

and associated infrastructure.

Councillor Macve wished to:

- (i) reiterate his comments with regards to the proposed bridge to the employment space, as detailed in response to application no. WD/2023/2939/MRM;
- (ii) note that he could not find any specific detail on the new access into the sewage treatment works to alleviate the need to access it from the town centre. The original application stated that vehicular access would be off the A22;
- (iii) note that the planning use classes listed did not quite align with the plans. The plans suggested that the site may attract retail, and it was noted that one larger unit had a vast number of parking spaces on the drawings. One of the plans even used the term 'retail' but the planning classes associated with the application appeared to omit this class. This led to confusion and it was questioned whether the descriptions for the application were accurate.

Councillor Bedwell wished to:

- (i) reiterate her comments with regards to the lack of fire hydrants incorporated in the design of the site, which had been mentioned by East Sussex Fire & Rescue in their more recent consultee response from April 2025;
- (ii) highlight that there was no clear definition for pedestrian/vehicular access into the employment space off the A22 Bypass;
- (iii) there was no record of a response from the Environment Agency in relation to the bridge across Ridgewood Stream;
- (iv) ensure that the local planning authority engaged Uckfield Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee in the review of this application;

Councillor Bennett wished to:

- (i) put on record his concerns relating to the reinstatement of the Uckfield to Lewes railway line, and lack of reassurance from the applicant that adequate space would be protected which could impinge on the development of the railway. For example – gradient and site levels would need to be factored in to enable any railway bridges to be built, and this could require substantial space in this area;

Members felt the response was the same as that for WD/2023/2939/MRM. Crucial details were missing. There were discrepancies with the application - within the documentation and overall there was a lack of information for such an important major application.

Uckfield Chamber of Commerce were not aware of the application. The Town Council has since shared the application with them, as well as two commercial estate agents. These were all key stakeholders in the design of employment and business space and it was considered vital that they be given adequate time to respond.

P95.05.25 It was therefore **RESOLVED** to OBJECT to the application on these grounds.

WD/2025/0914/MFA LAND SOUTH OF COPWOOD FARM AND TO THE WEST OF THE A22 UCKFIELD BYPASS, UCKFIELD, TN22 3PT

Variation of Conditions 3, 5, 28 & 31 of WD/2021/2001/MFA (variation of Conditions 10 & 11 of WD/2020/1244/MAJ (proposed development of a solar electric forecourt, comprising 24 core electric vehicle charging points, a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm of up to 5.5mw and energy storage.

Councillor Bennett expressed his observations, which included:

- (i) being sceptical of the location of this application outside of the Uckfield development boundary;
- (ii) his dissatisfaction with the impact the application could have on pedestrian safety, which would see local residents seeking to access the facilities, or service users of the forecourt, walking into town having to cross a busy and fast A22 Bypass;

Councillor Bedwell noted:

- (i) the LFA response which highlighted that the application failed to meet requirements to assess and mitigate flood risk;

(ii) the fire risk of the site, and subsequent impact any leaching from the batteries and associated infrastructure would have into the watercourses in this area (up to 13 tributaries were considered to be in this location);
(iii) concerns regarding the volume of water required to address a fire incident onsite;
(iii) the Open Spaces Society and Ramblers Association' objections were based on lack of engagement or detail being established on the adequate space required for re-routing any existing footpaths;

Councillor Macve added:

(i) to the fire risk inherent with these large storage batteries. Councillor Macve had visited the National Grid substation site off Eastbourne Road (Palehouse Common). To create bunds of sufficient capacity around the battery storage would be substantial;
(ii) it was not clear within the application, what size the storage units would be, but these would detract from the current rural setting to the west of the bypass;

Councillor Bennett further added his concern about the close proximity of the site to the A22 Bypass should a fire break out, or incident occur. The Town Clerk asked the Chair if it would be possible to ask if the Emergency Planning Officers for both Wealden DC and East Sussex County Council had been consulted on this application. It was within their remit to understand sites of potential risk within the district and this could become one so close to a main highway. Councillor Bennett, felt a further perimeter track was required for emergency services, around high-risk sections of the site.

Councillor Mayhew as an electric vehicle owner noted that EV charging points in Uckfield were currently underused, due to the cost of the charging bays. It was felt that the location of the forecourt therefore wasn't quite right.

Councillor Love noted that the documentation recorded that there was a toxic risk from these batteries. The number had increased substantially from four to 90. The site was in a flood zone, and adjacent to the River Uck. The wildlife corridor and priority habitats associated with the wetland needed consideration. A suggestion was that similar to the National Grid substation site off Eastbourne Road (Palehouse Common), the units be enclosed in concrete basins for additional protection.

Members felt it would have been helpful if the applicant had approached the Town Council to explain more about their proposals and to answer any questions from members with regards to health, safety and risk. Committee members had too many questions.

P96.05.25 Members **RESOLVED** to OBJECT to the application as members required further information on the risks associated with the substantial increase in energy storage proposed for the site. Members acknowledged that they were not experts on certain aspects of these applications, but yet consultee reports and advice was not present on the planning portal, which hindered their ability to fully understand and consider the applications. This application was also considered industrialisation of a rural setting.

WD/2025/0736/MRM MOCKBEGGAR FARM, LONDON ROAD, BUDLETTS COMMON, UCKFIELD, TN22 2EA

Reserved Matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to outline permission WD/2022/0648/MAO (outline application for the development of 60. no. dwellings)

The Chair, Councillor Love, referred to the statement from the applicant earlier in the meeting. Members also acknowledged the comments from local residents. Previous questions relating to the wildlife corridors, connectivity, and play space had been addressed. Members wished to thank the applicant for their attendance but recognised the impact this development would have on neighbouring households.

The main points members discussed that still needed addressing:

(i) concerns relating to the proposed route of a footpath in and adjacent to the woodland;

- (ii) information was still awaited on the outcome of the CCTV inspection regarding the connection of the drainage system, to Budletts Common;
- (iii) the Lead LFA had objected based on the lack of information. It was urged that dialogue be maintained with Mockbeggar Farmhouse during and following construction to monitor ground water levels;
- (iv) East Sussex Fire & Rescue also noted that information on fire hydrants as missing;
- (v) a robust process was needed for the management of the pumping station;

P97.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application, subject to the above queries being addressed. Although a difficult decision, members felt the application be supported on the grounds that the applicant had listened to feedback from the Town Council and local residents to try and redesign the site despite it being a tight space. There were no valid planning reasons for refusal, and the site was included in Wealden's Local Plan.

WD/2025/1005/F 25 MALLARD DRIVE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5PW

Erection of conservatory to the rear of the property.

P98.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application as there was a precedent already set with similar additions to properties within Mallard Drive.

WD/2025/1026/LB 2 BUCKSWOOD GRANGE, ROCKS ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 3PU

Part re-plastering of the existing lower ground store room and provision of a vent to voided area.

P99.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application, as Uckfield Town Council had supported this application previously, and were uncertain what had changed between the approval received in 2024 and now.

WD/2025/1040/F 28 EAGLE CLOSE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5WL

Single storey rear extension.

P100.05.25 Members **RESOLVED** to support the application.

Councillors Macve and Mayhew left the room for the following planning application.

WD/2025/0957/F LUXFORD DAY CENTRE, LIBRARY WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 1AR

Single storey addition

P101.05.25 Members **RESOLVED** to support the application as it was of no detriment to neighbouring properties, and would provide the Day Centre with the additional space they required.

Councillors Macve and Mayhew returned to the room.

WD/2025/1038/LB 6 CHURCH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1BJ

Partial re-pointing of front of property, up to the top of the ground floor window/shop front. Members were sad to see how the property had deteriorated.

P102.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application to ensure the condition of the property be improved.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Approved:

WD/2025/0541/F

PROPOSED GARAGE CONVERSION INTO BEDROOM,
71 MALLARD DRIVE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5PW

WD/2025/0609/F

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF GARAGE INCLUDING ADDITION OF ROOF LIGHTS AND
CHANGES TO FENESTRATION & INFILL EXTENSION
97 HUNTERS WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 2BB

WD/2024/2955/MAO

OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 145 DWELLINGS WITH
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEM
(SUDS), VEHICULAR ACCESS POINT AND PROVISION FOR SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE

NATURAL GREEN SPACE (SANG). ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR MEANS OF ACCESS.
LAND OFF EASTBOURNE ROAD, UCKFIELD

Appeal decision dismissed:

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/W/24/3350445

The Cedars, London Road, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1HY

7.0 TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

None.

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

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.