



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 15 September at 7.00pm

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

Cllr. C. Macve (Vice Chair)
Cllr. K. Butler

IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Lewis – Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Linda Lewis
3 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.
Cllr. Macve declared a personal interest on agenda item 7.0.as he has known the owner of the business for a number of years.

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

P40.09.25

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow a representative of the applicant to speak on Item 7.0 of the agenda, in regards to application WD/2025/1383/F for change of use from use Class 3(a) (residential flat) to use Class E(C)(I) (financial advisors office) at 4 Framfield Road, Uckfield, TN22 5AG.

The applicant explained that in an appeal they would need to demonstrate to the District Council that the expansion of the office space was worth the loss of a residential property.

He spoke of the growing need for his company's financial services which were easily accessible, being central to the town and to local people. Their services would be increasingly needed by the growing community of Uckfield.

The business had started employing one person in 1997 and now employed five.

They had recently taken a 21year old graduate to be trained as an advisor.

In 1997 there were 24 commercial properties of which only 6 remained.

14 had gone to residential; 3 were empty and 1 was being converted to residential.

He felt that the District Council seemed happy to lose commercial premises to residential but not visa-versa.

P41.09.25

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

3.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. S. Mayhew and D. Bennett.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2025

P42.09.25

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 26 August 2025, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Action List

Members were in agreement that a meeting be organised

Cllr Macve explained that when he and Cllr Love went on a tour of the sub-station they were both very impressed with the way Balfour Beatty were carrying out the works on behalf of the National Grid. The National Grid had confirmed that once the works on the sub-station were complete their involvement would end and it would be handed over to distribution electricity companies, UK Power Networks, EDF and possibly others.

Members raised concerns of how Uckfield and the adjoining parishes would be affected by electrical works and recalled the disruption during the Ridgewood Farm. The area which this would serve was far larger.

Members agreed that the clerk should write to the National Grid and ask them to provide a list of their approved suppliers. From this we would learn who would be allowed to connect into the substation. This may need to be a 'freedom of information request'.

Once this was known members agreed that a meeting should be arranged with the service providers and local parish council's. Members would need to know how they would support farms and businesses impacted by their electrical works. They agreed that the works would have a massive impact on the whole of the area and the wider surrounding communities.

5.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2025/1800/F THE PUMP HOUSE, SNATTS ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AR

Proposed two self-build dwellings connecting to the existing access.

From the papers submitted it was noted that this proposal was for the withdrawn two houses proposed in the original application, WD/2019/0209/F.

At the time of the original application there were safety concerns for additional traffic pulling out onto Snatts Road, although changes were made at the time, these concerns were still held by this committee.

It was noted that a pond which should have been reinstated on the first application for the initial two houses had not been, and it was thought that this was a breach of the first application. Although this pond was currently dry, local knowledge told us that this would fill up at times.

It was noted that the first two houses were set in a dip, so although two-storey, they gave the image of a single-storey, thereby reducing the impact on the street scene and to the buildings behind it, which included a listed building, and the Coach House opposite the site.

A member brought to the attention of the committee that as this was a self-build project there would be no CIL payment. The original two self-build properties avoided CIL, and they had to stay in the property for three years. It was curious that it was now three years since they were built and it was questioned if they were proposing to sell the original houses and then move into these new ones in order to claim self-build CIL exemption.

Members commented that the arboricultural report gave great importance to the existing trees. However, it was to be noted that these were deciduous trees, which would offer no leaf cover during winter. The proposed very tall houses would therefore be extremely dominant when not shaded by the existing trees. In the proposed position the proposed dwellings would be adverse to other properties in the locality and would severely detrimentally impact the street scene.

The Officer's report on the original application stated that biodiversity needed to be increased in this area due to its location. This proposal would strip out this request.

The proposal had parking for three vehicles on what was a turning circle. How would this impact?

In the Design and Access statement it stated that these two properties were for the next generation. It was felt that this would not give us housing to 'add' to the numbers of the five-year housing supply for this area.

Concerns for disturbed badger activities on the Downsland Farm site, which was directly behind this site.

A member referred to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment report and noted this was a desk top survey, where in some cases the tree positions were only approximate.

Concerns that the semi-rural leafy character of Snatts Road would be altered due to the removal of important boundary trees, vegetation and part of a hedge, which were a valuable contribution to the landscape and currently provided screening.

The removal of trees along the boundary would cause a significant and permanent adverse impact to the area.

The proposed dwellings and associated hard standing would intrude significantly into the root protection areas of significant oak trees and would cause irreversible tree damage and loss. The trees were key arboriculture features, within the street scene and showed signs of stress due to soil compaction and there was a risk to their long-term health and survival.

The trees formed part of a habitat network for birds, bats and insects and backed onto Downlands Farm. It would contribute to the decline of a biodiversity corridor.

Concerns for chemical contamination.

In the Design and Access statement it stated that these two properties were for the next generation. It was felt that this would not give us housing to add to the numbers of the five-year housing supply for this area.

P43.09.25 It was **RESOLVED** to strongly object to the application on the following grounds:-

- Over development of the area;
- Adverse impact on the street scene, eroding the local rural character of the road which would look manicured and urbanised;
- Concerns that this would set a precedent for adding more development along this country road;
- The development would have impact on the approach/setting to the listed building of the Oast;
- Concerns for the loss of oaks trees, cause loss to biodiversity, and conflict with key provisions of the NPPF
 - i) Para 130: Loss of amenity and place identity.
 - ii) Para 131: Trees should be retained as key to local character.
 - iii) Para 174: Harm to natural environment and valued trees.
 - iv) Para 179: Biodiversity loss, contrary to requirement for net gains.
 - v) The development would erode local character, risk the loss of three landmark oaks, reduce biodiversity, and conflict with the NPPF and Local Plan policies
- Concern for the loss of natural habitats, birds, bats, insects and badgers and backed onto Downlands Farm;

- The development would have a detrimental impact on the approach to the listed building of The Oast;
- Members were disappointed that ES Highways had not looked at the wider picture as there were road safety concerns for road users and pedestrians due to the result of:-
 - i) An increase in traffic which drove at speed and was detrimental to the rural setting;
 - ii) An increase in vehicles pulling out onto Snatts Road;
 - iii) There was no pavement beyond the public right of way that went through Downland Copse;
 - iv) There would also be more people crossing.

Where the two original houses were built there is now a hardstanding with a shed and vehicles parked. On the original layout on the approved drawings this area was supposed to have natural planting all the way round with a lawn on the inside. It was supposed to have natural woodland design, none of which had not been carried out. This would lead members to question the ecology report, as being a gravel base the ecology could not now survive. Had this been carried out to the original drawing then ecology may have survived. Drawing no. CO1 revision P4 July 2021.

Based on the above, members wished to raise an enforcement issue. The Chair would write a letter regarding this.

WD/2025/1993/LB 122 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1PX

Internal retail fit out, repair and redecoration of existing shopfront and timber fascia with signage.

P44.09.25

It was **RESOLVED** to support the application subject to the works being in accordance with the Conservation Officer's recommendation.

WD/2025/2072/F 63 NEVILL ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1NX

Proposed roof terrace on existing flat roof and new access stair.

The majority of members agreed that the following were of concern:-

- **Loss of Privacy & Overlooking**
The proposed balcony and terrace, even with obscured glazing, would create overlooking issues into neighbouring properties and gardens, significantly reducing residential privacy. This directly conflicted with **NPPF (2023) Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places**, which required developments to ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- **Out of Character with the Area**
The scale and design of the balcony/glazing were unsympathetic to the surrounding built environment. The proposed structure would appear bulky and visually intrusive compared to existing properties, contrary to **NPPF Paragraph 130**, which stressed that developments should be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and maintain a strong sense of place.
- **Impact on Residential Amenity**
The increased use of outdoor balcony/terrace space would generate additional noise and disturbance, particularly affecting neighbouring bedrooms and gardens. There may also be overshadowing or loss of natural light to nearby dwellings, again contrary to **NPPF Paragraph 130(f)**, which required developments to safeguard residential amenity.

Members insisted that the Woodland Trust be consulted on this application as they owned the ancient woodland behind this dwelling. Impacts to the woodland must be assessed by the land owner which was the Trust.

P45.09.25

It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to object to the application on the above grounds, until further information from the Woodland Trust was available.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Refused:

WD/2025/1383/F

CHANGE OF USE FROM USE CLASS 3(A) (RESIDENTIAL FLAT) TO USE CLASS E(C)(I) (FINANCIAL ADVISORS OFFICE)

4 FRAMFIELD ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 5AG

Members noted the decision of the District Council, which they opposed.

7.0 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO LEND SUPPORT TO AN APPEAL PROPOSAL

Members remained in support of the WD/2025/1383/F for change of use from use Class 3(a) (residential flat) to use class e(c)(i) (financial advisors office) at 4 Framfield Road, Uckfield, TN22 5AG.

P46.09.25 Members subsequently **RESOLVED** to send a letter to the agent, to demonstrate for purposes of a proposed appeal, that the expansion of the office space was worth the loss of a residential property, noting that the business provided an important local service for the expanding community of Uckfield, which as it was central to the town centre allowed easy access. It should also state that Framfield Road originally had business premises which had been taken out for residential.

The meeting closed at 8.01pm.