Transport Statement of Common Ground (TSoCG)

Between:

East Sussex County Council
(the Local Highway Authority)

And

Gleeson Land and John Alison Land Limited
(the Appellants)

Appeal ref. APP/C1435/W/23/3321978
Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield,
East Sussex

LPA Ref: WD/2022/1637/MEA

11th September 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000 (as amended), in relation to the Appellant's appeal under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, further to Wealden District Council's refusal to grant planning permission in respect of application WD/2022/1637/MEA, which is described below in further detail.

1.2 A planning application for the development proposal on land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex was submitted to Wealden District Council in June 2022 as follows:

"Hybrid planning application comprising: Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 424 no. Residential dwellings including affordable housing, the provision of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access and separate emergency access from the Uckfield bypass (A22), pedestrian and cycle access from Snatts Road, open spaces including children's play space, sustainable urban drainage systems, associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks; and full application comprising creation of a strategic SANG, associated landscaping and car parking, and demolition of existing residential property and other buildings and provision of pedestrian and cycle access from Rocks Road, associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks"

1.3 Planning permission was refused by Wealden District Council under delegated powers in April 2023. The Decision Notice (CD5/1) lists nine reasons for refusal, of which two (reasons 6 and 7) relate to highways and transport, as follows:

> *"6 The proposal has not demonstrated that a safe and suitable access arrangement can be achieved for all users and to reduce dependence on the private car. The scheme would therefore be contrary to Saved Policies EN1, EN2, TR3 and TR13 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998, Spatial Planning Objectives SPO7 and SPO15 and Policies WCS7 and WSC14 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and the guidance within Chapter 9 of the NPPF."*
>
> *"7 The proposal does not satisfactorily demonstrate that there would be an acceptable impact on the surrounding highway network, particularly (though not limited to) Uckfield town centre which is already heavily congested at peak times, nor that safe access can be secured for all parts of the site and scheme, contrary to, to SPO2, SPO12, SPO13 and Policy WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policies TR3 and TR16 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021"*

1.4 Discussions have been ongoing with East Sussex County Council and the purpose of this Transport Statement of Common Ground is to set out the technical matters that have been agreed along with any technical matters that have not been agreed. Full details of the discussions with East Sussex County Council both prior to and following the determination of the planning application are set out in the Proof of Evidence of Philip Bell.

1.5 This Transport Statement of Common Ground should be read in conjunction with the Main Planning Statement of Common Ground, which includes full details of the site, the surrounding area, the proposal, the planning history and the policy context.

1.6 The following section of this statement list matters that are either agreed or not agreed, and are set out under the following four headings, the first three of which are the grounds of objection identified in paragraph 1.10 of ESCC's Statement of Case:

a. The proposed vehicle site access,
b. Sustainable accessibility,
c. Traffic impact, and
d. Other matters.

2. Technical Matters

2.1 This section sets out the matters that have been agreed between East Sussex County Council in its capacity as local highway authority and Motion acting on behalf of Gleeson Land and John Alison Land Limited, and those not agreed between the parties.

The Proposed Vehicle Site Access

AGREED

- Street lighting at the A22 junction will be in accordance with ESCC's policy with 50% dimming between 22:00 and 06:00.
- The proposals for emergency access are acceptable, subject to final agreement on the location of the removable barrier/bollards, which can be finalised at detailed design stage.

NOT AGREED

- The safety consequences of the proximity of proposed roundabout to the northbound layby.

Sustainable Accessibility – Pedestrian/Cyclists

A22 Route

AGREED

- The proposed pedestrian/cycle route is segregated from vehicular traffic and is generally compliant with the design requirements of LTN 1/20.

NOT AGREED

- The suitability of the A22/B2012 route in terms of safety, comfort, length and attractiveness.

Snatts Road Route

AGREED

- The proposed footway on the south side of Snatts Road and associated informal (dropped kerb) crossing point is acceptable.
- There are limitations in what can be achieved on footpath 3a/3b in terms of widening and lighting.
- Improvements to footpath 3a/3b can be agreed as part of a Section 278 agreement.

NOT AGREED

- The suitability of the Snatts Road route in terms of width, lighting, overlooking, presence of steps, gradients and attractiveness.
- Whether the proposed enhancements to footpath 3a/3b are acceptable for everyday use.

Fir Tree Grove Route

AGREED

- The proposed pedestrian/cycle route through Fir Tree Grove between the site and Rocks Road is traffic-free and has suitable width and gradient.
- The proposed route through Fir Tree Grove is compliant with the design requirements of LTN 1/20.
- Observed 85th percentile vehicle speeds on Rocks Road to the north of the Snatts Road junction are 31.4mph southbound and 30.3mph northbound, and therefore well below the posted speed limit of 60 mph.

- The proposed pedestrian visibility splays of 59 metres at the proposed Rocks Road pedestrian crossing are appropriate for the observed traffic speeds.
- The relocation of the speed limit transition is not necessary to reduce vehicle speeds.
- Vehicle speeds on Church Street are generally low and 85th percentile speeds in the vicinity of Belmont Road/Church Street have been recorded at 23.9mph southbound and 23mph northbound, broadly in line with the 20mph posted speed limit in this location.

NOT AGREED

- The suitability of the Fir Tree Grove route in terms of directness, attractiveness, length and overall level change.
- Whether adequate visual awareness can be achieved at the proposed pedestrian crossing point on Rocks Road.
- The acceptability of the proposed relocation of the speed limit transition.
- The acceptability of the proposed carriageway narrowing/footway widening on Rocks Road at the location of the proposed priority working build-out.
- The acceptability of the proposed carriageway narrowing/footway widening (priority working) on Church Street between Pudding Cake Lane and Church Walk/Belmont Lane and associated pedestrian crossing facility.
- The suitability of Church Street to cater for the projected increase in pedestrians and cyclists in terms of road safety.

Traffic Impact

AGREED

- The proposals will not lead to an unacceptable traffic impact on the A22 corridor.
- Residual traffic impact on the town centre junctions can be mitigated through a financial contribution of £100,000 towards the installation of an enhanced control system, plus 10% of the equipment cost per annum for 20 years towards maintenance of the system.
- Subject to a Section 106 obligation to pay the contribution, ESCC consider that reason for refusal 7 can be withdrawn.

NOT AGREED

- No points identified.

Other Matters

AGREED

- Public transport accessibility is acceptable subject to a public transport service contribution (£1,100/dwelling) and the provision of public transport infrastructure (e.g. bus hub/turnaround and real-time passenger information) within the site. These can be secured via an appropriate legal agreement and planning condition.
- The walk and cycle distances set out in Section 6 of Motion's 'Response to ESCC Highway Comments', December 2022 (CD2/102) and as illustrated on the attached plans are considered to be representative.
- Suitable access to the SANG car park can be achieved from Snatts Road in terms of access position, configuration and driver sightline provision.
- Parking provision within the SANG car park at Snatts Road is appropriate subject to a planning condition requiring individual bays to be marked out.
- A connection to footpath Uck1 forms part of the proposals.
- The proposed footway on Snatts Road in the vicinity of the SANG car park access is appropriate.
- Observed 85th percentile vehicle speeds at the Rocks Road and of Snatts Road are less than 30mph and therefore well below the posted speed limit (60 mph).

- Daily two-way traffic flows at the Rocks Road end of Snatts Road are in the order of 1,300 vehicles and are therefore low.
- Snatts Road provides connections to residential streets connecting to the town centre (towards Uckfield College and leisure centre) and traffic volumes are conducive to cycling.
- There are currently no highway or transport related matters other than those listed in this Transport Statement of Common Ground that would justify the refusal of planning permission.

NOT AGREED

- No points identified.

This Statement of Common Ground is agreed between the following:-

Signed [redacted] Dated: 11th September 2023

Kal Kamboh

Transport Development Control

On behalf of East Sussex County Council (the Local Highway Authority); and

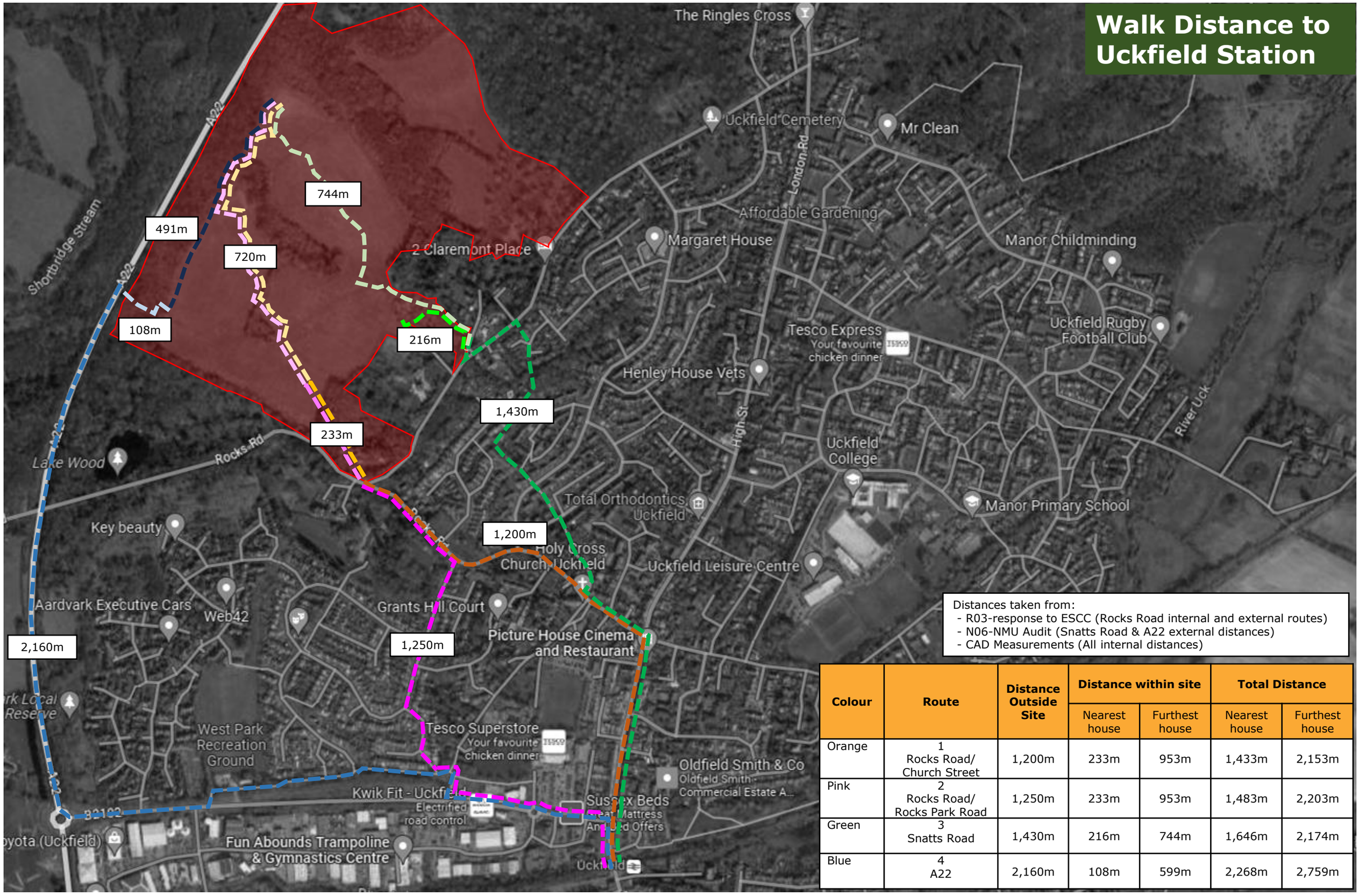
Signed [redacted] Dated: 6th September 2023

Philip Bell

Managing Director of Motion

On behalf of Gleeson Land and John Allen Land Limited (the Appellants)

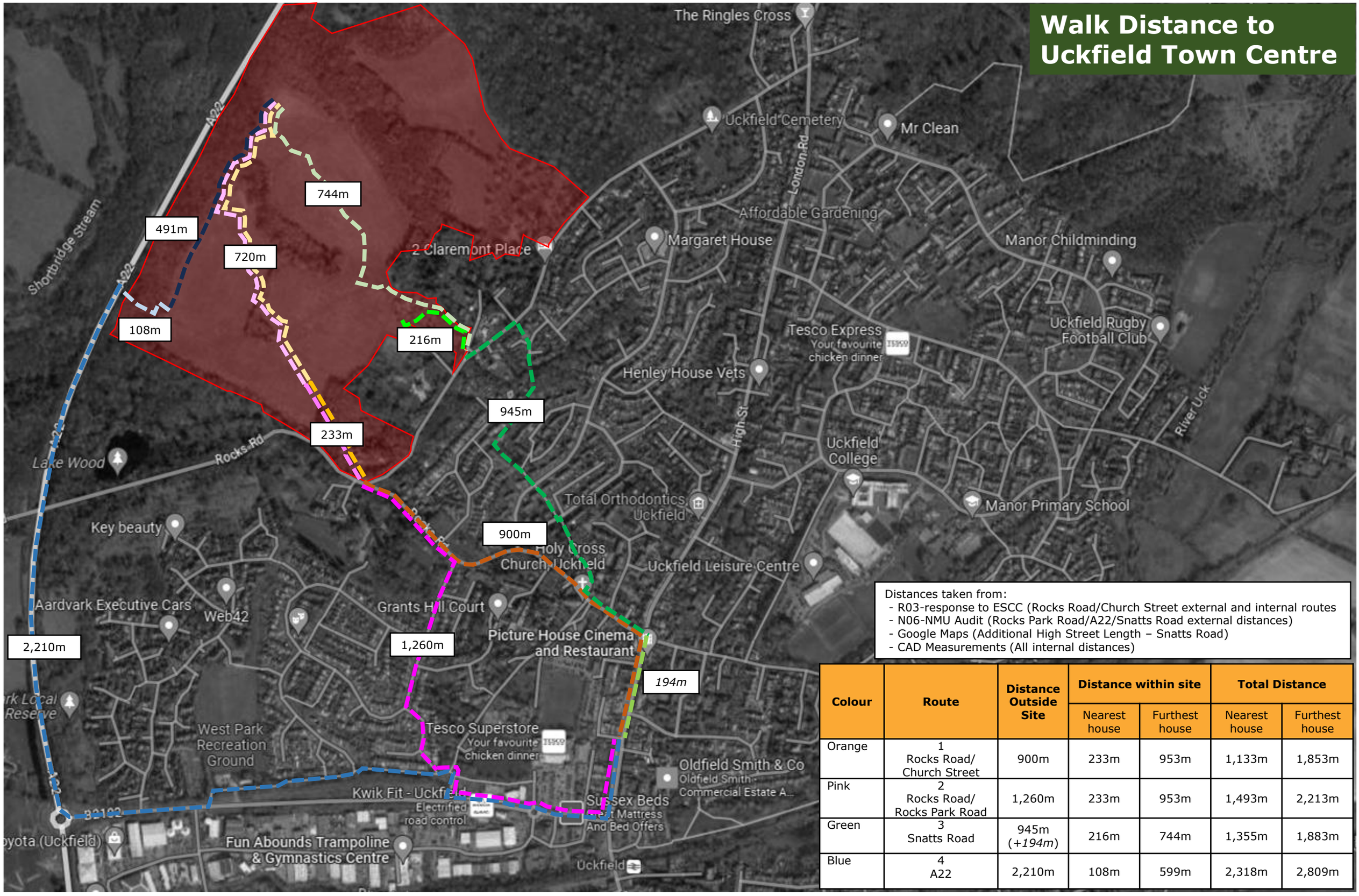
Walk Distance to Uckfield Station



Distances taken from:
- R03-response to ESCC (Rocks Road internal and external routes)
- N06-NMU Audit (Snatts Road & A22 external distances)
- CAD Measurements (All internal distances)

Colour	Route	Distance Outside Site	Distance within site		Total Distance	
			Nearest house	Furthest house	Nearest house	Furthest house
Orange	1 Rocks Road/ Church Street	1,200m	233m	953m	1,433m	2,153m
Pink	2 Rocks Road/ Rocks Park Road	1,250m	233m	953m	1,483m	2,203m
Green	3 Snatts Road	1,430m	216m	744m	1,646m	2,174m
Blue	4 A22	2,160m	108m	599m	2,268m	2,759m

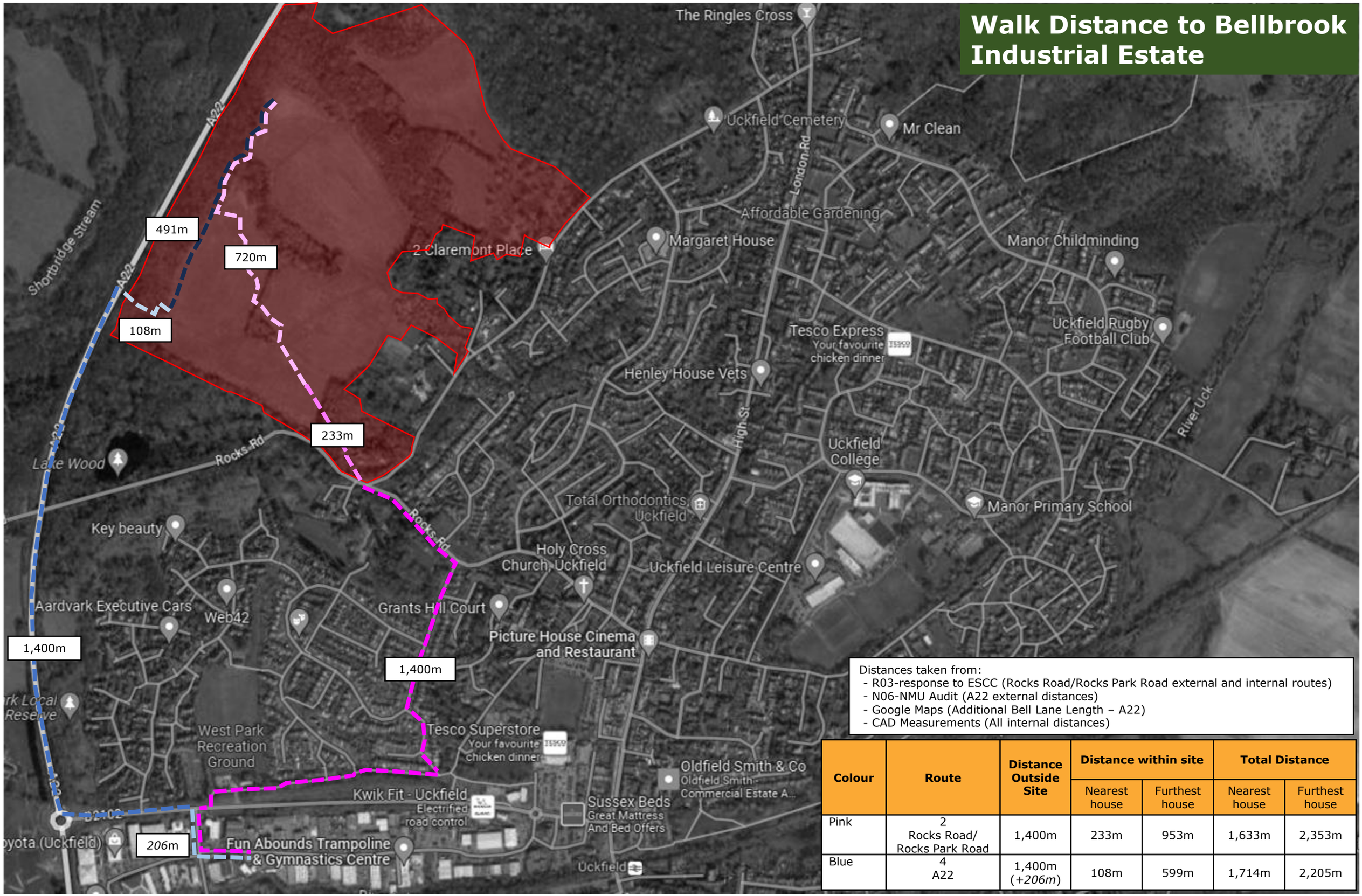
Walk Distance to Uckfield Town Centre



Distances taken from:
- R03-response to ESCC (Rocks Road/Church Street external and internal routes
- N06-NMU Audit (Rocks Park Road/A22/Snatts Road external distances)
- Google Maps (Additional High Street Length – Snatts Road)
- CAD Measurements (All internal distances)

Colour	Route	Distance Outside Site	Distance within site		Total Distance	
			Nearest house	Furthest house	Nearest house	Furthest house
Orange	1 Rocks Road/ Church Street	900m	233m	953m	1,133m	1,853m
Pink	2 Rocks Road/ Rocks Park Road	1,260m	233m	953m	1,493m	2,213m
Green	3 Snatts Road	945m (*+194m*)	216m	744m	1,355m	1,883m
Blue	4 A22	2,210m	108m	599m	2,318m	2,809m

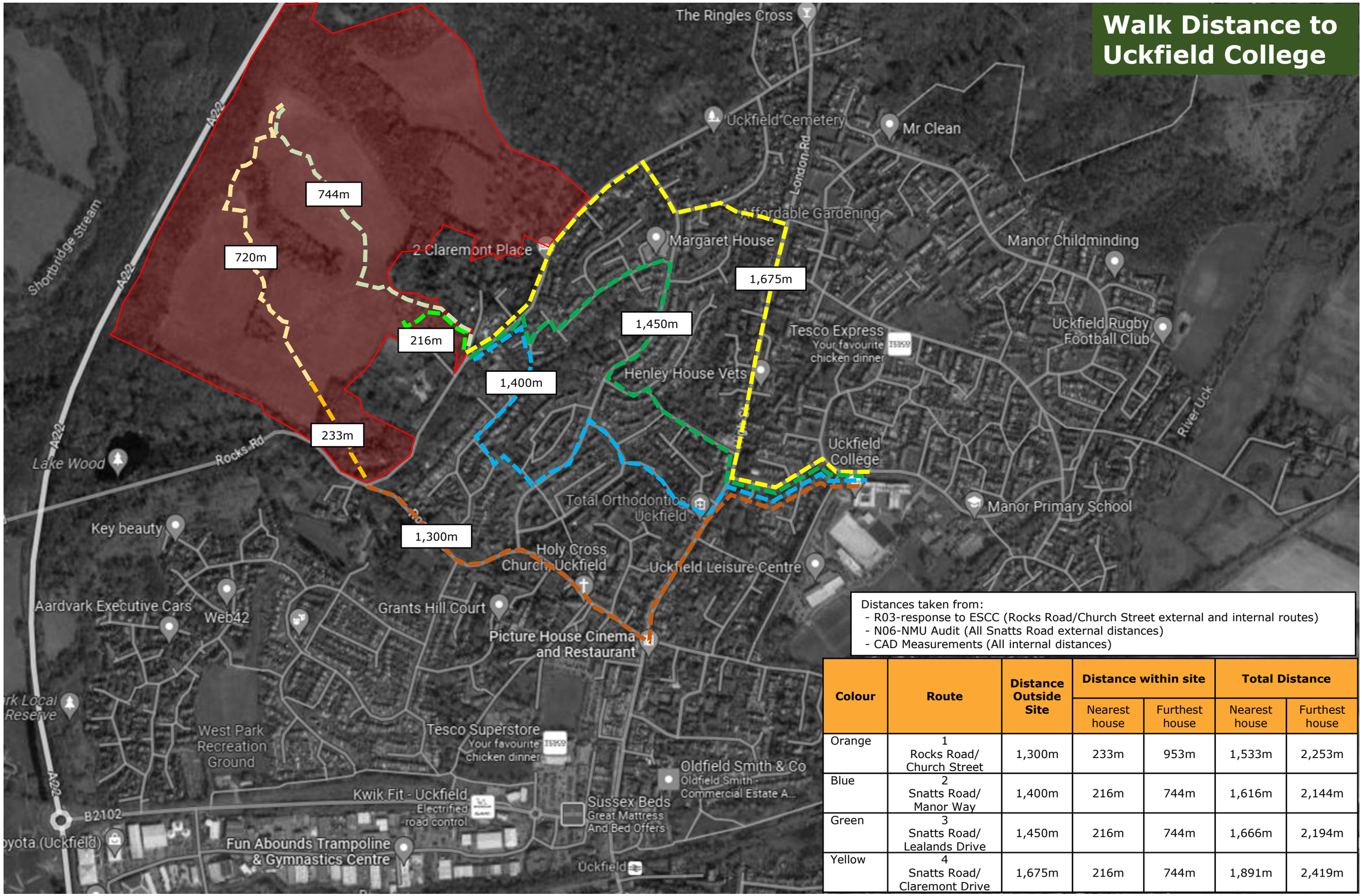
Walk Distance to Bellbrook Industrial Estate



Distances taken from:
- R03-response to ESCC (Rocks Road/Rocks Park Road external and internal routes)
- N06-NMU Audit (A22 external distances)
- Google Maps (Additional Bell Lane Length – A22)
- CAD Measurements (All internal distances)

Colour	Route	Distance Outside Site	Distance within site		Total Distance	
			Nearest house	Furthest house	Nearest house	Furthest house
Pink	2 Rocks Road/ Rocks Park Road	1,400m	233m	953m	1,633m	2,353m
Blue	4 A22	1,400m (*+206m*)	108m	599m	1,714m	2,205m

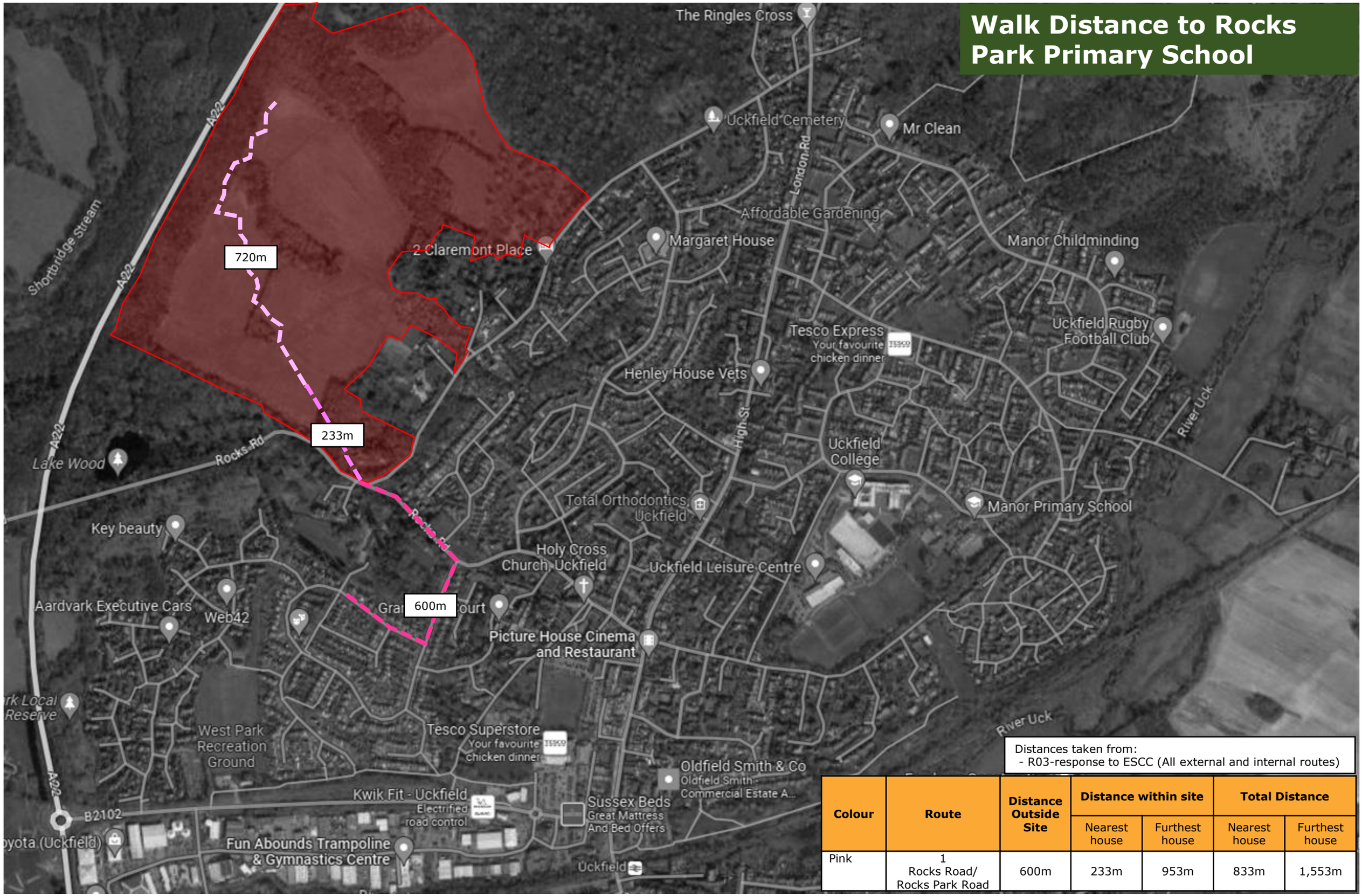
Walk Distance to Uckfield College



Distances taken from:
- R03-response to ESCC (Rocks Road/Church Street external and internal routes)
- N06-NMU Audit (All Snatts Road external distances)
- CAD Measurements (All internal distances)

Colour	Route	Distance Outside Site	Distance within site		Total Distance	
			Nearest house	Furthest house	Nearest house	Furthest house
Orange	1 Rocks Road/ Church Street	1,300m	233m	953m	1,533m	2,253m
Blue	2 Snatts Road/ Manor Way	1,400m	216m	744m	1,616m	2,144m
Green	3 Snatts Road/ Lealands Drive	1,450m	216m	744m	1,666m	2,194m
Yellow	4 Snatts Road/ Claremont Drive	1,675m	216m	744m	1,891m	2,419m

Walk Distance to Rocks Park Primary School



Distances taken from:
- R03-response to ESCC (All external and internal routes)

Colour	Route	Distance Outside Site	Distance within site		Total Distance	
			Nearest house	Furthest house	Nearest house	Furthest house
Pink	1 Rocks Road/ Rocks Park Road	600m	233m	953m	833m	1,553m