LAND EAST OF LONDON ROAD CONSULTATION ASSESSMENT

February 2022

Prepared by Development Intelligence

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INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Community Involvement has been produced by Development Intelligence in support of a planning application for sixty new homes on land east of London Road. The site falls within Uckfield North ward and Buxted parish.

The consultation ran between 25 November and 9 December 2021, and in total 46 people responded with comments and feedback on the consultation material presented.

This document outlines the public engagement and consultation activity carried out to inform local residents and stakeholders about the proposals, and how the submitted scheme has regard to feedback from the public.

CONTEXT

National policy

The government considers pre-application engagement and frontloading of work prior to the submission of a planning application as key to ensuring timely decision making, with reduced delays and cost to the applicant, whilst also achieving quality outcomes. The NPPF refers to the role of pre-application engagement with the community in detail. Paragraph 39 advises that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties, and good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

Planning Practice Guidance

The government's Planning Practice Guidance includes a section on 'Before Submitting an Application' which sets out the process and expectations for pre-application discussions. It advises that pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.

The approach to pre-application engagement needs to be tailored to the nature of the proposed development and the issues to be addressed. It is regarded as a collaborative process between the prospective applicant and other parties which may include the local authority, statutory and non-statutory consultees, elected members and local people. Pre-application engagement with the community is encouraged where it will add value to the process and the outcome.

Local policy

Wealden District Council's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in July 2020. Its principal requirements for pre-application consultations on major schemes are as follows (§§8.8-8.10):

- Prior to an applicant or developer submitting a planning application, applicants or developers are encouraged to discuss the proposals with the owners/occupiers of neighbouring land/premises prior to making an application. This will assist in resolving any objections and conflict prior to a formal planning application being submitted.

- In addition, for significant development schemes, there is a statutory requirement for applicants or developers to carry out their own early consultation with the local community to inform the application process, as set out in the Localism Act 2011. The Council is not involved in arranging these pre application consultations, however, applicants and developers should inform the Council of the details of any such arrangements. Such consultation methods could include community consultation events, public meetings, meetings with district, town or parish Councillors, neighbourhood plan steering groups or making information available either via a website, leaflets and posters or contacting residents and businesses by writing to them. Pre-application consultation, should also

include key consultees such as infrastructure providers and nature conservation bodies as relevant.

- The Council encourages applicants and developers to ensure that if any public meeting is held it should take place in accessible locations that offer accessible facilities. A summary of the consultation method(s), a meeting record and received feedback may also be useful to include in any application submission, for public information.

- On more significant scales of application pre-application advice will urge applicants to conduct their own engagement and SCI.

STRATEGY

The objectives of the project's pre-application consultation plan were:

- to appropriately engage with council officers, local politicians, stakeholders and the wider local community
- to provide the local community and relevant stakeholders with information about the proposals at an early stage before a planning application was submitted
- to understand the aspirations and concerns of the local community and relevant stakeholders and to take these into account in the preparation of the final proposals
- to accord with the guidelines and recommendations in national and local planning policy which set an expectation on developers to effectively consult on significant proposals

The covid-19 pandemic meant that face-to-face engagement would have excluded those who were self-isolating, or otherwise reticent about household mixing. The consultation material was therefore hosted online and on paper by request, with feedback welcomed by web form, email, or telephone.

CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

The public consultation ran from 25 November to 9 December 2021.

Notification leaflet

A leaflet to notify residents about the proposals and the consultation was delivered by Royal Mail to the 302 nearest addresses on 25 November 2021.

This leaflet is included as Appendix A of this report.

A map of the delivery area can be seen at Appendix B.

Informing local stakeholders

Letters were sent by email directly to the following local stakeholders, attaching a copy of the notification leaflet:

- Cllr Peter Waldock, ward councillor for Uckfield North
- Cllr Claire Dowling, county division member for Uckfield North
- Buxted Parish Council
- Uckfield Parish Council
- Maresfield Parish Council

An example of these letters can be seen at Appendix C.

In addition to the notifications, these letters included an offer to meet stakeholders to talk through the proposal, answer any questions, and record feedback.

Local media coverage

The consultation was covered on the local news platform UckfieldNews.com on November 25, helping to further publicise the consultation in the local community. A clipping of this news story is included as Appendix D, and it can be read online at: https://uckfieldnews.com/consultation-on-60-homes-plan-north-of-ringles-cross/

Website

The consultation website can be viewed at: https://www.landeastoflondonroad.com/ and is also reproduced as Appendix E. The website had 210 unique visitors during the consultation period.

The website included:

- Information about the applicant
- A map and description of the site
- Description of the site's transport links
- Number of homes
- Indicative layout of proposed development
- Information on the affordable housing element
- Landscape, screening, and biodiversity improvements
- How to respond to the consultation

FEEDBACK

A variety of methods were provided for people to give feedback:

- An online form on the consultation website https://www.landeastoflondonroad.com/
- Email, to consultation@landeastoflondonroad.com
- By telephone, to a dedicated community line staffed 7 days a week

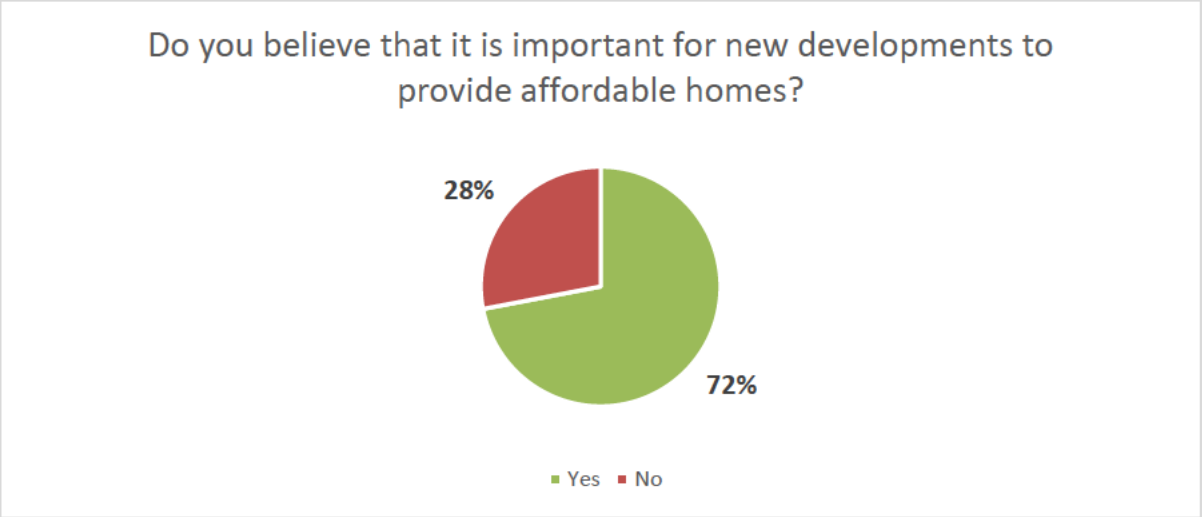
Feedback was counted and considered, no matter how it was received.

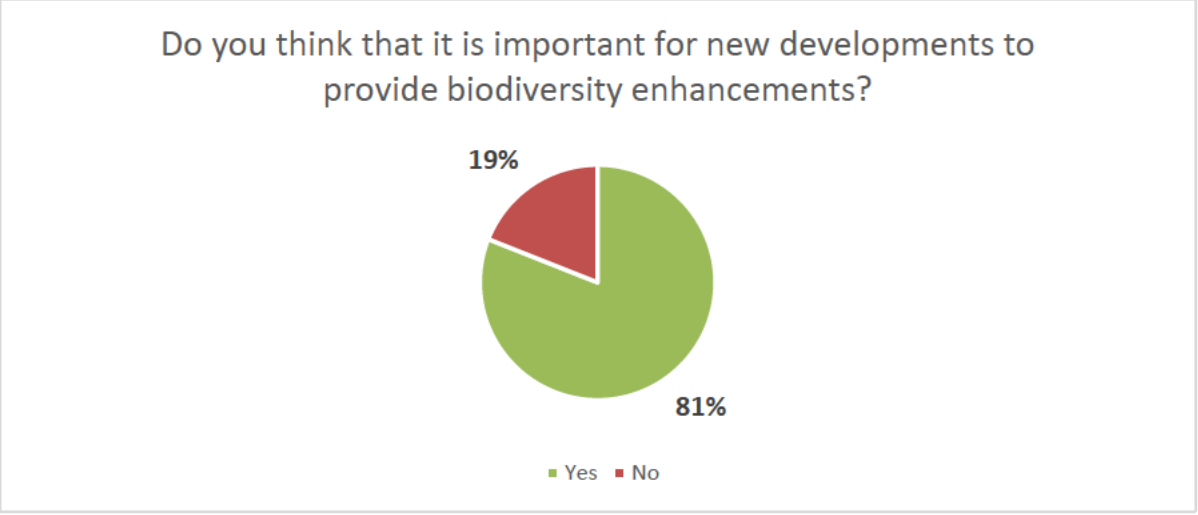
Over the course of this consultation period, 46 members of the public provided feedback directly.

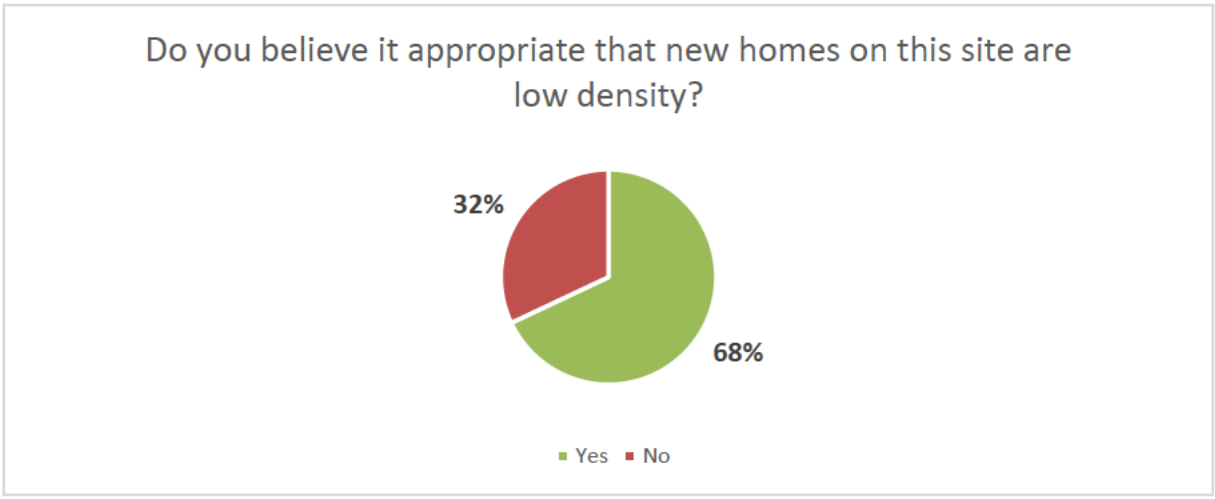
The feedback fell into a number of distinct themes. The major themes, along with a summary of the most common comments that were received, are described in the table below in order of how often they were raised.

Answers to questions

The consultation asked three questions to gauge overall public reaction to elements of the proposals. The results of this survey are show in the tables below.







Comments and project team responses

Theme of comments	Number	Response
Loss of green space • Loss of valuable open fields • Loss of distinction between settlements	22	The scheme has been designed to retain and protect important areas of open space. Landscape buffers are proposed with development set back accordingly. Such open spaces will be protected in perpetuity as public open space, retaining openness. The development is sited such that it will not erode any distinction between the settlements.
Impact on biodiversity • Impact on nearby SSSI • Impact on ancient woodland • Impact on wildlife, including deer, birds, bats, insects, moles, and foxes	17	The proposals are informed by an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and subsequent further studies to establish the existing ecological baseline conditions. The proposed mitigation measures and retention of habitats and features to avoid adverse impacts are set out in the Ecological Appraisal. To prevent impact on ancient woodland, the indicative masterplan provides a 20m buffer to the ancient woodland – exceeding the standard 15m buffer.
Strain on local resources and infrastructure • Schools, medical facilities, shops	13	Where appropriate, contributions to mitigate the impact of the proposals upon services will be provided should

		the application be approved. The development will make a contribution to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
No need for new housing	10	Wealden District Council is unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, with their latest published figures revealing a supply which equates to 3.66 years. The presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies.
Road safety • 30mph limit needs extending to cover site entrance	9	A Transport Consultant has reviewed the most recent five-year Personal Injury Accident data up to 31 August 2021 for the local highway network, and this confirms that there have been no recorded incidents within the immediate vicinity of the proposed access road. A detailed assessment of all reported incidents in the wider local area is provided within the TA. The TA demonstrates there were no particular patterns to the incidents and no requirement for an extension of the 30mph speed limit.
Increase in traffic	8	The Transport Assessment (TA) details the proposed pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access points, and road safety matters. The TA demonstrates that the proposed development can be comfortably accommodated within the surrounding road network. Therefore, the proposal will not result in an impact that would conflict with planning policy. Please see the Transport Assessment for further details.
Light pollution	6	A lighting strategy for the scheme will be developed which minimises light pollution and provides the minimum level of lighting required for security and amenity purposes. The strategy will minimise the potential pollution from glare and spillage, with particular

		consideration of the impact on adjoining residential development and wildlife.
Loss of views	6	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment accompanies the planning application. The document assesses the impact of the development on landscape character and publicly accessible views, and sets out the proposed mitigation measures to minimise landscape and visual impacts. The LVIA highlights the visually well contained nature of the application site, and as a result the limited landscape and visual effects. The site boundaries will also be enhanced which will ensure a robust landscape setting is achieved and views from adjacent rear properties will be minimised. While the proposals would represent a degree of change within the immediately adjoining views, they would not adversely impact the nature or composition of these views and will not appear out of context. The LVIA concludes that the site and receiving environment have the capacity to accommodate the proposals. The proposals will not result in a significant change to the landscape character or visual environment over the longer term and, as such, it is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated in this location and is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.
Affordable housing • How will homes be affordable for local people?	5	A policy-compliant 35% of new homes will be classed as affordable housing. Affordable homes will include two-bedroom starter homes, in line with the council's identified affordable housing requirements. There will also be a provision for three and four-bedroom houses, ideal for young families.
Flooding and drainage	5	The planning application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy. The document

		confirms, subject to several SuDS drainage measures, the proposals will ensure the site retains greenfield runoff rates, thereby ensuring the scheme does not result in an increased risk of flooding.
Noise pollution	3	A residential development will not generate unacceptable noise levels. If the application is approved, one of the conditions would likely be the preparation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The plan will detail how construction traffic and site activity would be managed, including consideration of noise levels.
Overlooking of neighbouring properties • Walking trail runs past gardens • Several proposed homes close to existing properties	2	The applicant has carefully considered all representations relating to the proximity of existing homes to the proposed location of footpaths and proposed new homes in the master plan. Additional planting to buffer any privacy issues has been carefully considered, and the master plan has been amended accordingly.
Construction impacts	1	If the application is approved, one of the conditions would likely be the preparation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The plan will detail how construction traffic and site activity would be managed. It will further detail the routing of construction vehicles, safe parking arrangements, and the fixing of appropriate, sensitive working hours. The plan will be approved by the Local Planning Authority before any construction will commence.
Sustainability • Homes should include solar panels, green heating, electric car charging	1	The application is accompanied by a Sustainability Report which outlines the development surpasses Part L building regulations, going an estimated 20% beyond the minimum requirement across the site. The proposal meets the requirements of sustainability policies WCS13 & WCS14.

		If our application is approved, it is proposed that new homes will incorporate best practices for building fabric and Gas or Air Source for heating and hot water. Each dwelling with a parking space will be provided with an EV Charging Point.

CONCLUSION

The applicant undertook community consultation to allow people to view the proposals and comment prior to the submission of a planning application.

People with an interest in the proposals were able to provide feedback by email, telephone, or via the consultation website.

The feedback was considered carefully by the applicant and the project design and technical teams, and helped guide the final submitted scheme.

The proposals have been developed with the needs of existing residents in mind, as well as the intended new residents. The design and masterplanning approach has been developed sensitively to reflect the constraints of the site and the context of the surrounding buildings and community.

For further details on the design development of this scheme, please see the Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application.

APPENDIX A – Community leaflet

Have your say on new homes on land east of London Road

OBSIDIAN STRATEGIC

Obsidian Strategic is consulting on proposals for up to 60 new homes on land to the east of London Road.

The proposed development would be low density with large amounts of shared amenity space and gardens, in keeping with its surroundings.



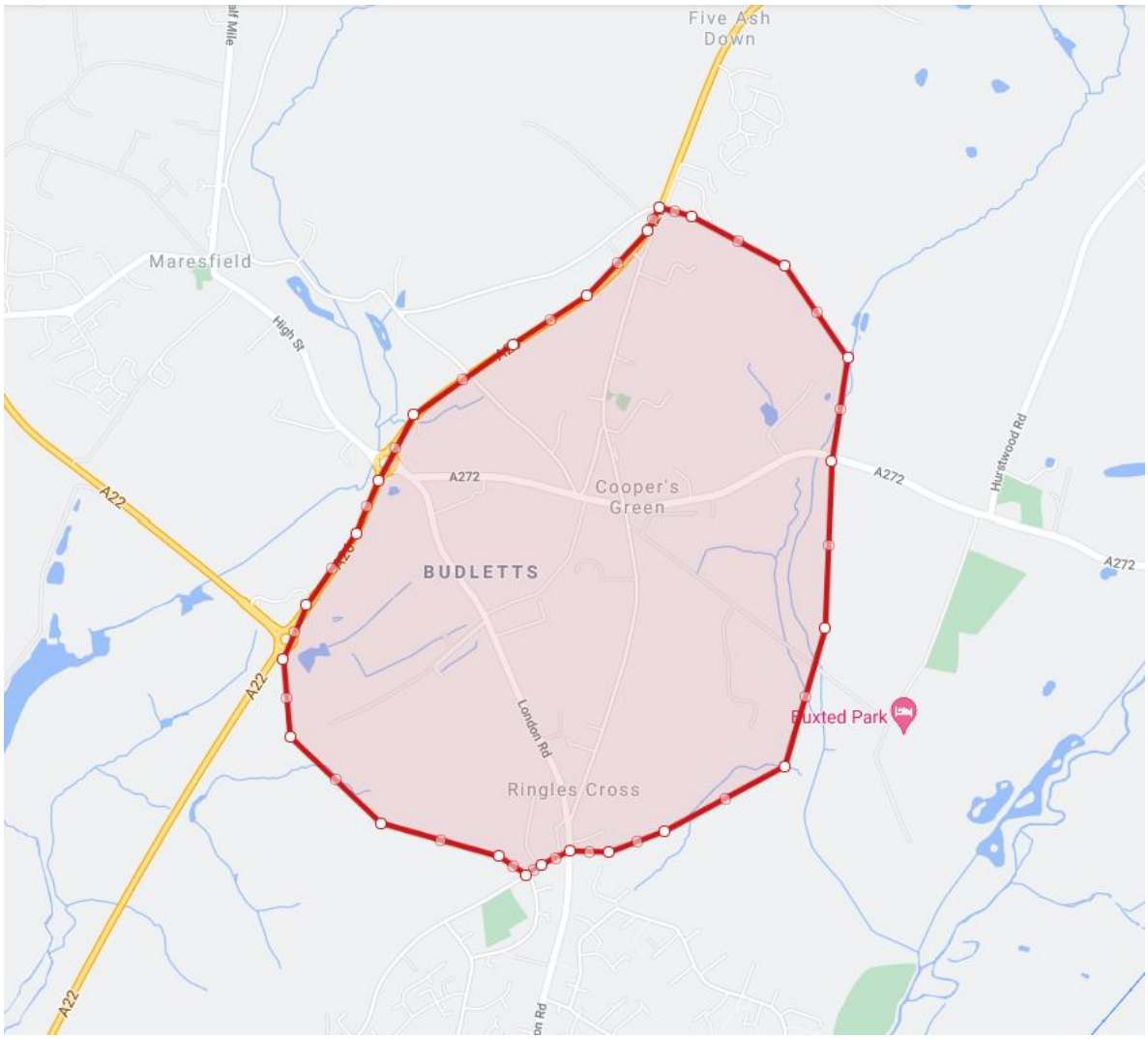
Our proposals:

- 60 new homes, including 21 new affordable homes for local people
- A wide mix of unit sizes for single people, first time buyers, and those with families
- A landscape-led, low density design which respects the character of the wider local area
- Biodiversity improvements, including wildflower meadows and fruit bearing trees
- Space for a children's equipped play area
- Generous 20 metre green buffers to nearby woodland

consultation@landeastoflondonroad.com or 07342 380203


How to have your say
Share your views on our proposals before the consultation closes on **Wednesday 9 December.**
The best way to get in touch is to visit our dedicated consultation website where you can learn more about the proposals. But you can also get in contact by email or telephone. If you do not have access to the internet, please call us and we can supply paper copies of the information on the website.
landeastoflondonroad.com
consultation@landeastoflondonroad.com or 07342 380203

APPENDIX B – Leaflet delivery area



APPENDIX C – Letters to stakeholders

OBSIDIAN
STRATEGIC

Buxted Parish Council
Heathfield
TN21 1BN

SENT BY EMAIL

22 November 2021

Dear Cllr Blandford,

Land East of London Road

I am writing to you on behalf of Obsidian Strategic, regarding our site on land to the east of London Road, and north of Ringles Cross.

We are in the process of preparing an outline planning application for up to 60 new homes and will be consulting and welcoming the views of local residents on our proposals over the next few weeks. As the chair of Buxted Parish Council, I wanted to ensure you were among the first to know of the ongoing consultation process, and would welcome your views on our proposals.

Attached, you will find a leaflet which we will be delivering this week to approximately 300 homes in the local community. This leaflet informs residents of the upcoming consultation and advises them on how they can get involved and meaningfully share their views on our proposals.

Our proposals are for a development that will:

- **Be low density with large amounts of shared amenity space and landscaping, in keeping with the surrounding homes and character**
- **Comply with Wealden's policy on affordable housing, delivering 21 (35%) new affordable homes and 5% Custom and Self-Build plots**
- **Provide an opportunity to create and enhance habitat for local species, whilst carefully respecting the nearby ancient woodland**

We have had encouraging feedback from the district council's planning department, and agree this sustainable site can provide a required contribution of homes towards the council's identified housing land supply shortfall and address a local housing need.

I appreciate that the members of parish council will have questions about the proposals. I would therefore be keen to find a time when the project team and I can talk members through the proposals in more detail, listen to your views and try to answer any specific questions, or concerns you may have.

Registered Address: 2nd Floor, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, EC4R 9AN
Registered Company No. 10430940

In the meantime, if you would like any more information about Obsidian Strategic or our proposals for this site, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Philip Scott
Director of Planning

OBSIDIAN STRATEGIC LTD
Thanet House, 231-232 Strand,
London, WC2R 1DA
0203 874 8718
www.obsidianstrategic.com

Cc: Beccy Macklen
Cc: Claudine Feltham

APPENDIX D – Coverage in Uckfield News

Consultation on 60 homes plan north of Ringles Cross



Land at Mockbeggar Farm to the east of London Road, Uckfield, and north of Ringles Cross where there are proposals for 60 homes.

A consultation is being held about proposals to build 60 homes on nine acres of land north of Ringles Cross, Uckfield.

Obsidian Strategic, which is promoting the site at Mockbeggar Farm, says the homes would have between two and five bedrooms, 35% would be affordable and 5% would be custom and self-build plots.

Obsidian says on a consultation website: "Rising house prices in and around Uckfield have unfortunately priced many people out of the area in which they grew up and where they have local connections.

Community

"Whether it is first time buyers looking to get onto the housing ladder, or young families looking for new homes, affordable homes are vital to ensuring the vibrancy and vitality of the local community."

The company says the majority of the affordable homes would be two-bedroom starter homes, "in line with the council's identified affordable housing requirements". There would also be provision for three and four-bedroom houses.

Obsidian describes the land as "species-poor grazing land" and says it would be replaced with "natural and semi-natural green space incorporating areas of wildflower meadow with native trees and shrubs, with a focus on seed, nut and fruit bearing species to provide a foraging resource for invertebrates, bats, and birds.

Screening

"The vast majority of the hedgerows and trees on site will be retained and enhanced where possible, effectively screening the development and providing habitats for local wildlife.

"The development is arranged around the existing hedgerows and tree belts, and includes a 20m gap to the nearby Ancient Woodland.

"These form part of the extensive open space areas that will run through the development, creating a series of varying sized spaces and environments for the benefit of the new occupants, and existing neighbouring residents."

Website

A website containing the proposals gives people the chance to have their say about the proposals in advance of a planning application being submitted.

A form which has space for comments on the proposals also asks three questions: Do you believe that it is important for new developments to provide affordable homes? Do you think it is important for new developments to provide biodiversity enhancements? Do you believe it is appropriate that new homes on this site are low density?

APPENDIX E – Website

Public consultation for new homes on Land East of London Road

Home About us The site Our proposals Have your say



Welcome to the consultation for land east of London Road, north of Ringles Cross.

This is for a proposed development that would be low density, with large amounts of shared amenity space and landscaping, in keeping with the surrounding character.

There is an identified need for new homes in this area, with house prices increasingly growing out of reach for local first-time buyers and young families. This site will provide a necessary contribution towards meeting that need.

How to have your say.

We are seeking the views of the local community before we submit our application in due course. On this website, you will find information about the proposals as well as a feedback form where you can submit your views to the project team.

Please follow this link to use our feedback form.

If you have any questions about the proposals, you can also get in touch by:

consultation@landeastoflondonroad.com

07342 380 203

Who we are

Home About us The site Our proposals Have your say



OBSIDIAN

STRATEGIC

Obsidian Strategic is a specialist strategic development company, based in the south of England.

We pride ourselves on being industry leaders in environmental and social standards, setting an example for other companies in our field and creating communities that people want to live in and be a part of.

Environmental

We recognise the need for the building industry to cut emissions and provide a greener future for generations to come, which is why environmental standards are of critical importance to us.

Our pledge is to stay at the forefront of our industry, leading the charge to build a sustainable future and setting positive examples for our stakeholders and competitors.

We work with all stakeholders, suppliers, and consultants to encourage a proactive approach to sustainability, using innovative green approaches in the design and construction of our developments. We have a network of homebuilders we work with and trust to develop industry-leading environmentally conscious schemes.

Finally, we have pledged to offset all emissions created in the course of our projects, to ensure that we are a carbon neutral company.

Social

We recognise the importance of being a good neighbour during the different stages of our developments.

We strive, where possible, to incorporate the genuine concerns of communities close to our developments whilst also trying to deliver benefits which local residents want to see.

We want to leave an attractive and lasting legacy for all of our projects which is why we are proud to provide new affordable homes on all our developments. We have a track record in working with locally-based registered providers, making our homes accessible to every demographic in the local community. This proposed development will be no different, with 35% of the homes being affordable.

The site

The site is 3.62 hectares in size and is located on the northern edge of Uckfield. Ringles Cross lies to the south, while Cooper's Green and Five Ash Down are to the north. To the north-west lies Maresfield.

Located on the eastern side of London Road, it is currently divided into two grazing fields. There are homes and other buildings surrounding the site to the south, east, and north.



The hedgerows and trees, the majority of which will be retained and enhanced, provides an opportunity to create habitat for birds, bats and other local species with significant buffers and sensitive lighting to preserve the natural environment.

Transport links

The site enjoys very good access to public transport links and local amenities.

Uckfield town centre is located less than a mile away, taking approximately 15 minutes to walk to the excellent range of shops and services on offer.

Bus routes run close to the site with the nearest bus stop less than 200m away on London Road and on Coopers Green Road to the east. These provide regular bus services to the town centre, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne, Lewes and Brighton.

Uckfield railway station lies on the southern edge of the town with good services to London.

Our vision

Home About us The site Our proposals Have your say

We are proposing to build 60 new homes of between two- and five-bedrooms, with 35% of the new homes being affordable, and provide 5% custom and self-build plots.

The **indicative** site layout is shown below.



Affordable homes

Rising house prices in and around Uckfield have unfortunately priced many people out of the area in which they grew up and where they have local connections. Whether it is first time buyers looking to get onto the housing ladder, or young families looking for new homes, affordable homes are vital to ensuring the vibrancy and vitality of the local community.

The majority of the affordable homes will be two-bedroom starter homes, in line with the council's identified affordable housing requirements. There will also be a provision for three and four-bedroom houses, ideal for young families.

While the site layout is indicative at this early stage, we are committed to pepper-potting our affordable homes throughout the development to foster inclusive communities. We also work with locally based registered providers to ensure that our affordable homes meet the needs of the local community in which our developments are built.

Biodiversity and ecology

The species poor grazing land which currently dominates the site will be replaced with natural and semi-natural greenspace, incorporating areas of wilcflower meadow with native trees and shrubs, with a focus on seed, nut and fruit baring species to provide a foraging resource for invertebrates, bats and birds.

The vast majority of the hedgerows and trees on site will be retained and enhanced where possible, effectively screening the development and providing habitats for local wildlife.

Privacy Policy

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Landscape-led design

The development is arranged around the existing hedgerows and tree belts and includes a 20m gap to the nearby Ancient Woodland. These form part of the extensive open space areas that will run through the development, creating a series of varying sized spaces and environments for the benefit of the new occupants and existing neighbouring residents.

Have your say

Home About us The site Our proposals Have your say

We want to hear your views about our proposals in North Uckfield.

The best way to do this is by filling out the form below. All of the feedback will be collated and analysed by the project team before an application is submitted.

Alternatively, you can also submit feedback by getting using the details below.

consultation@landeastoflondonroad.com

07342 380 203

Register your comments here...

Name*

First Last

Email*

Address*

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City Region

Postal / Zip Code Country

Can we contact you in the future with updates about this proposal?*

Yes

No

Do you believe that it is important for new developments to provide affordable homes?

Yes

No

Do you think that it is important for new developments to provide biodiversity enhancements?

Yes

No

Do you believe it appropriate that new homes on this site are low density?

Yes

No

Do you believe that it is important for new developments to provide affordable homes?

Yes

No

Do you think that it is important for new developments to provide biodiversity enhancements?

Yes

No

Do you believe it appropriate that new homes on this site are low density?

Yes

No

Do you have any comments on the proposals?

Privacy Policy

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