

For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015

WD/2015/0209/MEA - LAND WEST OF UCKFIELD (SITE SD1), INCLUDING LAND BOUNDED BY LEWES ROAD, NEW TOWN, A22, UCKFIELD SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS AND LAND TO WEST OF A22 NORTH OF HORSTED POND GATE.

Summary of Proposal

Major Application with Environmental Assessment application for:-

OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF LAND INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES COMPRISING A RESIDENTIAL-LED MIXED USE URBAN EXTENSION, ENGINEERING WORKS AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES TO PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION (UP TO 1000 NET ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS), UP TO A TWO FORM ENTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS FACILITIES, RETAIL, COMMUNITY, HEALTH, LEISURE AND UP TO 13,495 SQ.M. OF EMPLOYMENT USES TOGETHER WITH ANCILLARY AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING NEW AND ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE ROUTES AND OPEN SPACES, CAR PARKING (INCLUDING REPLACEMENT PROVISION FOR EXISTING LAY-BYS TO BE REMOVED FROM A22) AND VEHICULAR ACCESS - ALL MATTERS RESERVED SAVE FOR FULL DETAILS SUBMITTED FOR ACCESS POINTS AT SITE BOUNDARIES, AND THE CREATION OF SANGS INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, CAR PARKING AND ACCESS ON LAND WEST OF THE A22.

Received date: 3 February 2015
8/13 week date: 5 May 2015

Parish: Uckfield
Ward: Uckfield Ridgewood
Grid Ref: 546982 119540

Recommendation

Subject to:

- (1) Securing the delivery of the required planning contributions via a mechanism to be determined by the Director of Community and Environmental Services and completion of a Section 106 agreement to:
 - Require the provision of the proposed SANGS to be secured in perpetuity, together with the necessary 'set-up' works (including but not limited to car parking and access, footpaths, new planting and signage) for the SANGS (or where necessary secure a financial payment in lieu of said works) and secure contributions towards the ongoing management of the SANGS in perpetuity in accordance with Policy WCS12 of the WCSLP;
 - Secure a financial contribution towards the provision of SAMMS in accordance with Policy WCS12 of the WCSLP;
 - Secure a limitation on the provision of employment floorspace to 12650 sq/m in accordance with Policy WCS3 of the CSLP, unless or until the use of the 'Sawmill' site is ceased by reference to an appropriate S106 legal agreement;

For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015

- Secure the provision of 35% affordable dwellings, in accordance with Policy WCS8 of the WCSLP and emerging Policy AFH1 of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, subject to final conclusions of independent viability testing. Full, independently assessed, viability assessments to be undertaken prior to the commencement of each phase of the development, to inform the percentage of affordable housing deliverable as part of that phase, up to the overall target of 35%. Tenure of the homes to be agreed with reference to emerging Policy AFH1 of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan;
- Provision to ensure that should external finance be found to assist towards infrastructure delivery be found (EG LEP funding), should the Council have accepted affordable housing provision lower than the 35% target, the increased scheme value be put towards increased affordable provision in later phases, or as a financial contribution if this is not practicable, to return the scheme to up to 35% provision.
- Secure the provision of outdoor playing space, allotments, amenity space and landscape buffers together with a mechanism for their future maintenance, in accordance with Policy WCS7 of the WCSLP;
- Require the applicant to enter into a S278 agreement with East Sussex County Council to secure the necessary off-site highway, footway and bus stop improvements considered necessary, to serve the development and/or secure a financial contribution in lieu of direct provision of said works (including the cost of any necessary TRO process), in accordance with Policy WCS7 of the WCSLP. Measures to include;
 - Off-site highway works as listed and agreed (excluding Bell lane widening)
 - Footpath and cycle way improvements as set out the Transport Assessment
 - Bus –re-routed services with appropriate infrastructure internally within the site – bus stops, gates, shelters, RTPI, kerbing
 - TRO for extension of the 30 mph speed limit and traffic calming features on the Lewes Road C58
- Secure the provision of improved footpath connections through Victoria Pleasure Ground, in association with Uckfield Town Council, including but not limited to creation of new and widening of footpaths, associated landscaping and provision of any lighting to be agreed with the Council in consultation with the Town Council (or where necessary secure a financial payment in lieu of said works).
- Secure a financial contribution towards the provision of County Council services including; primary and secondary school improvements within the vicinity of the site, in accordance with Policy WCS7 of the WCSLP, subject to confirmation regarding the necessary costs;
- Provision of a site for a primary school as set out in the application particulars, requiring a minimum provision of a site suitable for a single form

For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015

entry school and associated works, in accordance with Policy WCS7 of the WCSLP;

- Secure contributions towards odour mitigation measures as out in the 'Odournet' study, in agreement with Southern Water;
- Secure the provision and implementation of Travel Plans for each of the various uses (including the inception and management of a car club) and associated monitoring fees.

Outline planning permission BE GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:-

1. STD1A - Outline Planning Permission
2. STD3 - Timescale for Submission of Reserved Matters
3. US01 - Use Class - Use as stated
4. No phase of development shall take place until in relation to that phase the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with the requirements of SPO2, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and paragraphs 129, 131 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

5. The phase development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in relation to that phase and in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition [1] and that provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with the requirements of SPO2, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and paragraphs 129, 131 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

6. CL01 - Contaminated Land - Site Characterisation
7. CL02 - Contaminated Land - Submission of Remediation Scheme
8. CL03 - Contaminated Land - Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme
9. DF02(M) - Details of Foul Drainage - Upgrading of Infrastructure
10. DS03(M) - Drainage: Surface Water - Surface Water Disposal and Regulation

For: Planning Committee North

Date: 11 June 2015

11. No phase of the development shall take place until the new wetland habitat, new ponds and swales as part of the Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS) for that phase, are constructed in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

The scheme shall include the following features:

- wet woodland habitat as part of the tree planting proposals;
- floodplain meadows as part of the wildflower grassland proposals;
- new attenuation ponds and swales;
- provide for connectivity to adjacent ponds and watercourses to enhance the potential for breeding and dispersal of reptiles and amphibians on and around this site and to adjacent habitat;
- to operate as a water filtration system to maintain the quality and quantity of the surface water run-off entering the Ridgewood Stream.

REASON: In order to secure a satisfactory standard of development, having regard to SPO12, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 103 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

12. No phase of development shall take place until a landscape management plan, including long - term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas (except privately owned domestic gardens) in that phase of development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The landscape management plan for that phase shall be carried out as approved and any subsequent variations shall be agreed in writing by the LPA.

The scheme shall include the following elements:

- details of the new ponds and swales;
- details of maintenance regimes;
- details of management responsibilities;
- details of any proposed planting scheme, which should be of native species where reasonably practicable, bearing in mind access for maintenance.

REASON: In order to secure a satisfactory standard of development, having regard to SPO12, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 103 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

13. No phase of development shall take place until a scheme for the provision and management of an 8 metre wide buffer zone alongside the Ridgewood Stream and 5 metres around all ditches and wet woodland for that phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA. Thereafter the phase of

development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and any subsequent amendments shall be agreed in writing with the LPA. The buffer zone scheme shall be free from built development including lighting, domestic gardens and formal landscaping; and could form a vital part of green infrastructure provision. The scheme shall include:

- plans showing the extent and layout of the buffer zone,
- details of any proposed planting schemes (if necessary) which should be of native species and include riparian tree planting where possible; details demonstrating how the buffer zone will be protected during development and managed/maintained over the longer term including adequate financial provision and named body responsible for management plus production of detailed management plan,
- details of any proposed footpaths, fencing, lighting etc. Lighting should be minimal and/or low level to avoid disrupting the natural diurnal rhythms of a range of wildlife using and inhabiting the river and its corridor habitat.

REASON: REASON: In order to secure a satisfactory standard of development, having regard to SPO12, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 103 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

14. No phase of development shall take place until a method statement/construction environmental management plan (CEMP) for that phase that is in accordance with the approach outlined in the Environmental Statement, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. This shall deal with the treatment of any environmentally sensitive areas, their aftercare and maintenance as well as a plan detailing the works to be carried out showing how the environment will be protected during the works. Such a scheme shall include details of the following:

- The timing of the works;
- The measures to be used during the development in order to minimise environmental impact of the works (considering both potential disturbance and pollution);
- A map or plan showing habitat areas to be specifically protected (identified in the ES) during the works;
- Any necessary mitigation for protected species;
- Construction methods;
- Any necessary pollution protection methods;
- Information on the persons/bodies responsible for particular activities associated with the method statement that demonstrate they are qualified for the activity they are undertaking.
- The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved method statement/CEMP.

REASON: In order to secure a satisfactory standard of development, having regard to SPO1, SPO2, WCS12 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local

For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015

Plan 2013 and paragraphs 109, 117 and 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

15. DS05(M) - Drainage: Surface Water - Details of Drainage - Maintenance (A)
16. EA01(M) - EIA Accordance
17. EL02 - External Lighting - No Floodlighting (B)
18. FR01(M) - Flood Risk Assessment (A)
19. HW13(M) - Highways - Details of Internal Estate Roads - Road Design Suitable for Subsequent Adoption
20. NC08 - Nature Conservation - Wildlife Management Plan
21. SS05 - Sustainability - Incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures
22. WP02(M) - Watercourses and Ponds - Preservation of Existing Watercourse
23. C04(M) - Construction - Code of Construction Practice (Major Sites)
24. C06(M) - Construction - Construction Traffic Access (Major Sites)
25. STN40 - Plans Other Approvals

NOTE 1: STN1 - Note `Section 106`

NOTE 2: STN8 - Note `Street Naming & Numbering`

NOTE 3: STN10 - Note `Public Right of Way to Remain Unobstructed`

NOTE 4: STN13 - Note - Wheel Washing

NOTE 5: STN15 - Note - Connection to public sewerage system

NOTE 6: STN16 - Note - Requirement for S278

NOTE 7: Any works in, over, under or within 8 metres from the top of the channel of the Ridgeworth Stream requires the prior written consent of the Environment Agency under the Water Resources Act 1991 and/or our Byelaws.

NOTE 8: The consent of the Environment Agency is required for the use of herbicides within 8 metres of the Ridgewood Stream main river. This is to ensure that the herbicides will not have a detrimental effect on the riverine habitat. A copy of the application form can be found on the following link: <http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/wildlife/31350.aspx>

NOTE 9: ARN3 - Archaeology Note

NOTE 10: EA02(M) - Note: Environmental Statement

Reason for Referral

This application is being referred to this Committee as it falls outside the scheme of delegation.

Executive Summary

Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved, save for main points of access from the adjacent highway network) is sought for the comprehensive redevelopment of land between A22 and Lewes Road/New Town (known as site SD1 Land at West Uckfield) including demolition of existing buildings and associated structures.

Approval of full details of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) located to the west of the A22 is also sought.

The proposed development comprises a residential-led mixed-use urban extension, engineering works and construction of new buildings and structures to provide residential accommodation (up to 1,000 net additional dwellings), a one-form or a two-form entry primary school and early years facilities, retail, community, health, leisure and up to 13,495 sq/m of employment uses, together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes and open spaces, car parking (including replacement provision for existing lay-bys to be removed from the A22) and vehicular access, the creation of a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS), demolition of existing buildings, car parking and access on land west of the A22.

The 'main' site occupies approximately 82 hectares of farmland between the western edge of Uckfield, the A22, the back of properties along New Town and the Lewes Road. The northern edge of the site follows the line of the disused former railway line between Uckfield, Lewes and Brighton. It also shares a boundary with the Uckfield sewage treatment works, which is operated by Southern Water. The eastern edge of the site shares a boundary with several existing homes and properties, the Victoria Pleasure Grounds and Boothland Wood.

Part of the site, measuring approximately 29 hectares, is located on the west side of the A22. This is currently connected to the main site area via the existing cattle underpass.

The application is supported by an Environmental Statement prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and the application has been assessed in relation to the Environmental Statement, which forms the basis of this decision.

Careful consideration has been given to this application having due regard to the details and plans, supporting documentation and representations made by statutory consultees and other interested parties.

The application is seeking outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access. The application is seeking to establish the principle of development on the site and means of access, leaving all details of appearance, scale, layout and

landscaping for later application(s).

Whilst the proposed development would conflict with saved Policies DC17 and GD2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, with regard to the development boundary, these Policies are out of date and have been superseded by Policies contained within the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, in which the application site is included within strategic development area SD1 "Land West of Uckfield" identified under Policy WCS4.

A recent appeal decision at Stone Cross WD/2011/2270/MAO, is also a material consideration where the Inspector clearly concluded that an application within an SDA could not realistically be delayed or resisted on grounds of prematurity, having regard to the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013.

Furthermore the proposed development is sustainable, therefore in line with Wealden's Policy WCS14 and the guidance contained within paragraph 14 of the NPPF, which advises that an application should be granted planning permission unless significant and demonstrable harm arising from the development can be demonstrated. No significant or demonstrable harm arising from the proposed development has been identified through the Environmental Impact Assessment.

It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of conditions and the completion of a S106 agreement to secure the necessary and justifiable infrastructure works, contributions and affordable housing as recommended at the front of this report there are no other material considerations other than to justify recommending approval of this application.

1. Statutory Bodies and Residents - Responses

Highway Authority

NO OBJECTION, CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT

This application is a strategic site proposal intending to provide an urban extension to the town of Uckfield. The submission seeks outline consent for:

- Residential development of 1000 units including affordable homes
- Up to a 2 form entry primary school and early years facility
- Retail, community, leisure and health facilities – check
- Up to 13,495 sq/m employment space
- New and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes,
- vehicular access points – 2 on A22; 3 on A26 Lewes Road (1 existing to be enhanced)
- SANGS provision, including access onto Horsted Pond Road
- Associated car parking
- Amendments to A22 lay-bys

All the above are matters reserved other than the access points at site boundaries, for which there are 5 vehicular accesses and 3 pedestrian/cycle connections.

For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015

1 Bedroom Flats 512m
1 Bedroom wheelchair 612m
2 Bedroom Flats 682m
2 Bedroom wheelchair 812m
2 Bedroom Houses 772m
3 Bedroom Houses 902m
4 Bedroom Houses 1212m
5 Bedroom Houses 125m2
1 bed bungalow 522m
1 bed bungalow wheelchair 62-702m
2 bed bungalow 72-762m
2 bed bungalow wheelchair 912m

WDC Waste Management NO OBJECTION

We have no objection to the proposed development; The Waste Management Strategy (Jan 2015) is very detailed and clearly identifies the refuse provision for all residential dwellings. However there are a couple of minor details that need to be updated at reserved matters stage.

Woodland Trust OBJECT

Ancient woodland is defined as an irreplaceable natural resource that has remained constantly wooded since AD1600. The length at which ancient woodland takes to develop and evolve (centuries, even millennia), coupled with the vital links it creates between plants, animals and soils accentuate its irreplaceable status. The varied and unique habitats ancient woodland sites provide for many of the UK's most important and threatened fauna and flora species cannot be re-created and cannot afford to be lost. As such, the Woodland Trust aims to prevent the damage, fragmentation and loss of these finite irreplaceable sites from any form of disruptive development.

The Woodland Trust objects to the proposed development based on the impacts to numerous areas of ancient woodland within and around the proposed site: Boothland Wood (grid ref: TQ471201), Ridgewood Shaw (TQ472196), Ridgewood Bridge Shaw (TQ474192), and Poundpit Wood (TQ472191).

The Trust acknowledges the implementation and retention of woodland and wildlife corridors within the site. Opportunities for the creation of new woodland and linking up of habitats should be maximised to maintain and protect the quality of the woodland network on the proposed site and prevent fragmentation of the numerous existing woodland habitats.

Development in close proximity to ancient woodland is likely to result in detrimental impacts on the woodland. When land use is changed to a more intensive use such as in this situation plant and animal populations are exposed to environmental impacts from the outside of a woodland. An ancient woodland's stable conditions can easily be altered through detrimental outside influences, or 'edge effects', causing changes to the environmental conditions within the woodland.

The Woodland Trust is concerned about the following:

- Intensification of the recreational activity of humans and their pets cause disturbance to the habitats of breeding birds, vegetation damage, litter, and fire damage;
- Fragmentation as a result of the separation of adjacent semi-natural habitats, such as small wooded areas, hedgerows, individual trees and wetland habitats;
- Development provides a source of non-native plants and aids their colonisation;
- Noise and light pollution occurring from adjacent development and particularly during construction phases
- There can be changes to the hydrology altering ground water and surface water quantities resulting from the development being largely hard-standing. Introduction of water run offs from urban development will result in changes to the characteristics and quality of the surface water as a result of pollution/contamination etc.
- There will inevitably be safety issues in respect of trees adjoining public areas and buildings, which will be threatening to the longer-term retention of such trees.
- Where gardens abut woodland or the site is readily accessible to nearby housing, there is an unfortunate tendency for garden waste to be dumped in woodland and for adjacent landowner to extend garden areas into the woodland.
- Any effect of development can impact cumulatively on ancient woodland - this is much more damaging than individual effects.

In order to preserve the character of the ancient woodlands and minimise disturbance there should be adequate buffer zones implemented between all development and ancient woodland on the site. The buffer could be planted with trees or shrubs or it could be an area of land which the development is not allowed to encroach upon (e.g. a grassy strip). Buffers may also contain man-made structures such as fences, walls and earthworks, but should not include gardens.

The newly published (April 2014) Natural England standing advice for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees paragraph 6.4 states:

“Development must be kept as far as possible from ancient woodland, with a buffer area maintained between the ancient woodland and any development boundary. An appropriate buffer area will depend on the local circumstances and the type of development. In a planning case in West Sussex the Secretary of State supported the arguments for a 15m buffer around the affected ancient woodland, but larger buffers may be required.”

It also further states that:

“The permanent retention of buffer zones must be secured as part of the planning permission. These should be allowed to develop into semi-natural habitat. Developments such as gardens must not be included within buffer zones as there is limited control over how they may be used, or developed in the future; for example, they might be paved or decked without the need for planning

permission or they may include inappropriate species which could escape into the woodland.”

The Trust notes that there is a proposed buffer of 15m to ancient woodland, however due to the proximity, size and scale of the development to ancient woodland we believe this to be inadequate. The Trust recommends that a buffer of no less than 50m is implemented between any development and ancient woodland. Buffers should be planted with 50% semi-natural vegetation so as to provide a phased habitat, thereby minimising disturbance to ancient woodland.

The Trust is also concerned about the plans for a gravel footpath through Boothland Wood. This will significantly increase activity within the ancient woodland and likely result in changes to the woodland conditions through disturbance by pets, littering, trampling, vegetation damage, removal of dead wood and fire damage. In turn this will lead to long-term changes in species composition, particularly ground flora and sensitive fauna, i.e. nesting birds, dormice and reptiles. Further to this we are concerned about the potential widening of the current footpath within Boothland Wood and the subsequent impact on adjoining trees; this raises concerns of the possibility of branches and trees located near to or overhanging the footpath being cut away. Although a small natural track is currently present within Boothland Wood, any gravel footpath should be located outside of the woodland area to prevent unnecessary disturbance to the woodland wildlife.

Light pollution in residential areas is generated from buildings, streetlights, vehicle lights and security lights and includes chronic or periodically increased illumination, unexpected changes in illumination, and direct glare. Artificial illumination reduces the visibility of the moon and the stars, affects species orientation differentially and may serve to attract or repulse particular species. This affects foraging, reproduction, communication, and other behaviour. It consequently disrupts natural interactions between species. Light pollution near to ancient woodland is, therefore, likely to substantially affect the behaviour of species active during dawn and dusk twilight or nocturnal species, such as moths, bats, and certain species of birds, resulting in the decline of some species. Measures should be taken to ensure that external lighting from adjacent properties is directed away from any areas of ancient woodland.

The Trust is concerned about the potentially adverse impacts that the proposed development will have in relation to areas of ancient woodland. Unless due consideration is given to prevent detrimental impacts on ancient woodland then planning permission should not be granted. A buffer of 50m from ancient woodland to any development is required to prevent/minimise edge effects; without a suitable buffer zone ancient woodland will be subject to numerous detrimental impacts.

Pre-Application Matters

The applicant has engaged in a full and detailed programme of pre-application discussions with Officers of both the District and County Councils, together with local representatives of the Town Council and District Ward members.

Officers disagree with the Highways Authority regarding many of their criticisms of the scheme as is explored above, however, ultimately we are united in the overall conclusion that there is no grounds to recommend to the planning committee that planning permission be refused on highways grounds. When considering the wider planning balance, overall it is considered that access and transport matters are at worst neutral, but could equally be considered positive when the sustainability credentials of this site are compared to many of the other sites accepted within the District and further afield.

Ancient Woodland

There are a number of areas of ancient woodland both within and adjacent to the site. The largest of these being Boothland Wood. The parameters plans and indicative layout detail the provision of a 15m buffer zone in order to provide adequate protection to this important woodland.

The 15m standard accords with Natural England standing advice established following a test case on this issue in West Sussex some years back. It is now the commonly accepted standard in almost all cases.

The Woodland Trust have made representations to this application to suggest that this provision is insufficient, instead suggesting that a buffer of 50m be provided, however no detailed justification is provided as to why such an increased standard should be necessary. Consequently it is considered that a 15m buffer is entirely appropriate, with the detail of planting and final locations to be provided as part of the reserved matters.

Ecology, Tree and Landscaping Proposals

Overall, the majority of the site is considered of low ecological value and the proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the ecological interest of the site through the provision of new areas of species-rich grassland within the semi-natural green spaces, to include new native tree and hedgerow planting and the creation of a series of new Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) basins which will provide green links through the Site, linking onsite and offsite habitats. Further, the creation of extensive areas of new wildflower grassland and new native woodland and hedgerow planting within the SANGS area will provide enhanced new habitats for a range of wildlife.

Where possible hedgerows and woodland will be protected as part of the development, however, it will be necessary for small sections of hedgerows and very minor amounts of woodland (but no Ancient Woodland) to be lost to allow for movement and access around the Proposed Development site. These losses would be more than offset by new areas of tree and hedgerow planting within the Site, as well as the extensive new planting of native woodland and hedgerows within the SANGS area.

The existing ponds will be retained within a corridor of semi-natural green space, and will be linked with other ponds through areas of species-rich grassland, which will provide suitable terrestrial dispersal routes for Great Crested Newts.

towards its long term management and provide a contribution towards the Councils SAMMS strategy (once finalised).

Affordable Housing

As set out in detail above and in the Housing Departments comments at the start of this report there is a significant unmet need within the District. Subject to the viability provisions above it is recommended that a contribution as close to the 35% provision as is found to be viable be secured as part of the development.

Noting that the affordable housing percentage is likely to be less, based on current market conditions, than the target 35% it is recommended that provision be made within the legal agreement to ensure that where the financial situation at the site changes, for example if external sources of finance (EG possible LEP finance or free school funding) can be found towards identified infrastructure, the affordable housing percentage can be increased as a priority and the increased scheme value is not lost to additional developer profits.

5. Conclusion

Careful consideration has been given to this application having due regard to the details and plans, supporting documentation and representations made by statutory consultees and other interested parties.

The application is seeking outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access. The application is seeking to establish the principle of development on the site and means of access, leaving all details of appearance, scale, layout and landscaping for later application(s).

Whilst the proposed development would conflict with saved Policies DC17 and GD2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, with regard to the development boundary, these Policies are out of date and have been superseded by Policies contained within the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, in which the application site is included within strategic development area SD1 "Land West of Uckfield" identified under Policy WCS4.

A recent appeal decision at Stone Cross WD/2011/2270/MAO, is also a material consideration where the Inspector clearly concluded that an application within an SDA could not realistically be delayed or resisted on grounds of prematurity, having regard to the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013.

Furthermore the proposed development is sustainable, therefore in line with Wealden's Policy WCS14 and the guidance contained within paragraph 14 of the NPPF, which advises that an application should be granted planning permission unless significant and demonstrable harm arising from the development can be demonstrated. No significant or demonstrable harm arising from the proposed development has been identified through the Environmental Impact Assessment.

It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of conditions and the completion of a S106 agreement to secure the necessary and justifiable infrastructure works, contributions and affordable housing as recommended at

For: Planning Committee North

Date: 11 June 2015

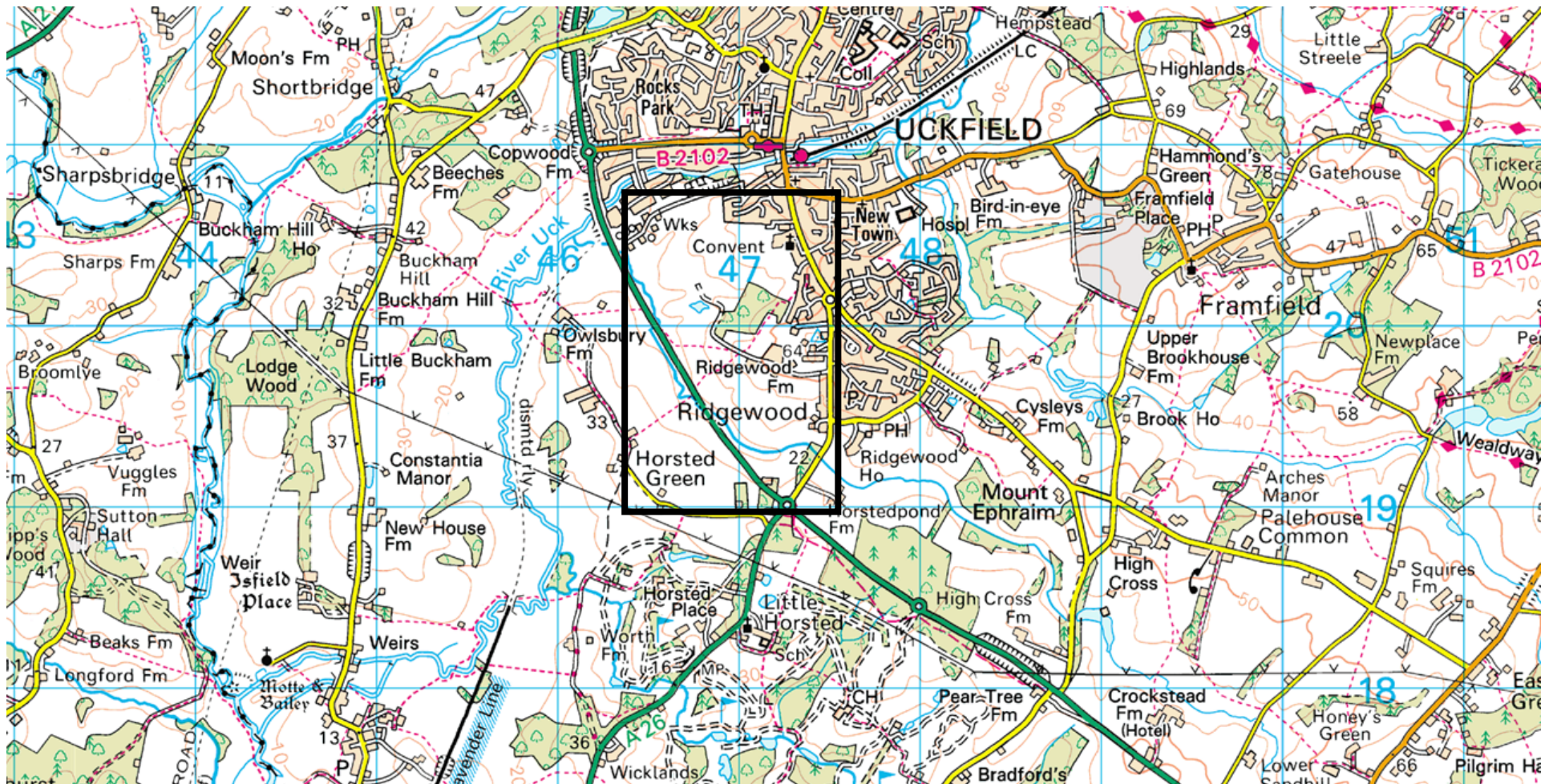
the front of this report there are no other material considerations other than to justify recommending approval of this application.

6. Contact points and references

Team Leader (Majors)	Claire Turner - Tel: 01892 602541
Case Officer:	Chris Bending, Senior Planning/S106 Officer – Tel: 01892 602478
Ward Member:	Cllr B Marlowe



For: Planning Committee North
Date: 11 June 2015



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