

For: Development Control North Sub-Committee
Date: 8 February 2007

WD/2006/2855/MEA - DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD.

Summary of Proposal

Major Application with Environmental Assessment application for:-

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR 750 DWELLINGS; EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT FOR 9,600 SQ.M. OF B1 AND B8 USES; NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL, COMMUNITY HALL, LAND FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SMALL RETAIL FACILITIES; CREATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM BLACK DOWN ROUNDABOUT (A22) AND EMERGENCY AND BUS ONLY ACCESSES FROM SNATTS ROAD; CONSTRUCTION OF ESTATE ROADS AND NEW CYCLE AND FOOTWAY CONNECTIONS; PROVISION OF MANAGED COUNTRY PARK WITH WARDEN'S LODGE/INFORMATION POINT AND EDUCATION/INTERPRETATIVE FACILITY, PUBLIC AND AMENITY OPEN SPACE, PLAYING FIELDS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES OF USE.

Received date: 29 November 2006 **Parish:** Uckfield
8/13 week date: 28 February 2007 **Ward:** Uckfield North
Grid Ref: 546518 122373

Recommendation

Planning permission BE REFUSED for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development represents an unjustified and unacceptable form of development of a site that lies in open countryside outside of the defined development boundary for Uckfield, contrary to Policies S5 and S10 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991 - 2011, Policies GD2 and DC17 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policies GD2 and DC15 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).
2. The proposed development would result in the unacceptable loss of ancient woodland and wetland habitats and lead to the unacceptable fragmentation, isolation and disturbance of natural habitats that support protected wildlife species and other flora and fauna of acknowledged nature conservation importance, contrary to Policies S1 and EN17 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991 - 2011, Policies EN1, EN13, and EN16 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), and Policies NE14 and NE16 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).
3. Insufficient information has been submitted to enable a proper assessment of the archaeological implications of the proposed development, contrary to Policy EN24 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy EN25 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policy BE12 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).
4. The proposal does not satisfactorily demonstrate that adequate provision will be made to facilitate walking and cycling and reduce dependence on the private car, contrary to Policies S1, S3 and TR3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policies TR1 and TR2 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).

5. The proposal does not satisfactorily demonstrate that there would be an acceptable impact on the surrounding highway network, particularly in Uckfield town centre which is already heavily congested at peak times, contrary to Policies S1 and TR3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policy TR2 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).
6. The applicant has failed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority that the proper provision and delivery of the necessary infrastructure improvements can be secured to meet the additional needs arising from the proposed development, contrary to Policy S3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy CS1 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policy CS1 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan (2005).

STN5R - Standard Note - Refusal

Consultations

Environment Agency - OBJECTS. The proposed development would result in unacceptable ecological impacts and loss of habitats, in particular:

- The proposed main access to the development via a new road from Blackdown roundabout will have an unacceptable ecological impact
- The proposed attenuation ponds adjacent to the Blackdown Roundabout will result in unacceptable loss of habitat
- The proposed road network will prevent the movement of Great Crested Newts within the site
- The proposed residential layout will result in the loss of wet grassland and ancient wet woodland
- The effects of increased human and pet access to the Longwood ghyll and Shermanreed Wood ghylls have not been adequately addressed and are likely to be highly detrimental to wildlife
- The ecological impacts on the adjacent SNCIs have not been adequately addressed

Notwithstanding its objection, the Environment Agency has the following requirements from any development:

- The impacts of lighting on the ponds, watercourses, wet and ghyll woodland and other wetland habitats should be considered.
- The impacts of watercourse road and cycle path or footpath crossings and impacts of human/pet access on watercourse ecology have not been addressed. This includes the potential impacts downstream, outside of the development boundary, on high quality watercourses and their associated species e.g. sea trout). Furthermore impacts on species such as otter, which are potentially present in this area, should be considered.
- A suitable surface water drainage scheme to be in place to prevent pollution to Controlled Waters and prevent the risk of flooding.
- A suitable foul water drainage scheme to be in place to prevent pollution to Controlled Waters (Southern Water to be consulted regarding the availability of capacity in the foul water sewer).

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- No development to take place within the 1 in 100 year floodplain.
- A Desk Top Study and Conceptual Model to be submitted to ensure that the proposed site investigations and remediation will not cause pollution of Controlled Waters.
- Measures during and after development to prevent pollution to Controlled Waters.

English Heritage - No adverse comments received.

Woodland Trust - OBJECTS. Downlands Farm contains areas of ancient woodland, including wet woodland and ghyll woodland, forming a rare mosaic of ecologically rich and sensitive habitats. The development proposals would result in unnecessary damage and loss to ancient woodland in conflict with Government guidance and development plan policies.

South East England Regional Assembly

- District Council must be satisfied that release of this greenfield site is not premature and will not prejudice the LDF process, which should give preference to previously developed land in accordance with Policies Q1 and H5 of the RPG9 and Policies CC8a and H3 of the draft South-East Plan.
- District Council should seek to secure appropriate level of affordable housing through a legal agreement.
- If the District Council is minded to grant permission it should secure through conditions and/or legal agreement the phasing and delivery of community and other infrastructure provision; good use of land and a high quality of environment; an appropriate package of transport infrastructure and other measures including a travel plan; an appropriate level of car and cycle parking; mitigation measures to reduce noise pollution and impact on air quality; incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures, and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction; and the inclusion of mitigation measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity assets of the site.

South East Water Ltd - No adverse comments received.

Natural England (formerly English Nature) - NO OBJECTION, subject to the adoption of the proposals suggested in the management strategy, which should be finalised and approved prior to any grant of full consent.

Forestry Commission: The proposed development will have a significant impact on Ancient Woodland within the site. The Government's forestry policies highlight the importance of Ancient Woodland and strongly discourage development that results in its loss, unless there are over-riding public benefits arising from the development. The Commission welcomes the proposals to increase and manage the woodland on the site but has concerns over the impact of the proposals on the ghyll woodlands in the area. These woodlands are of significant ecological interest and are sensitive to changes around and within them. A greater degree of buffering between the housing development and the ghyll woodlands would be welcomed, perhaps in the form of new woodland planting to prevent degradation around the edges of the ghylls.

Southern Water Services - NO OBJECTION, although following initial investigations, there is currently inadequate capacity in the local network to provide foul sewage

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disposal to service the proposed development. The proposed development would increase flows to the public sewerage system, and existing properties and land may be subject to a greater risk of flooding as a result. Additional off-site sewers, or improvements to existing sewers, will be required to provide sufficient capacity to service the development. Conditions and informatives suggested in event of an approval. See main body of report for comments.

ESCC - Strategic Planning - OBJECTS. Provided Wealden District Council is satisfied that the allocated sites in the non-statutory Local Plan will deliver structure plan housing provision within the 2006 - 2011 period, there is no strategic requirement or justification at this stage for further greenfield housing development to accommodate structure plan requirements and therefore no basis to support this application as a departure from Structure Plan countryside policy (S10). If approved, the County Council's requirement for transport improvements, infrastructure contributions and waste minimisation would need to be secured.

Highway Authority - OBJECTS. The Highway Authority recommends that consent be refused for the following reasons:-

The proposal would lead to an unacceptable increase in existing safety hazards and unacceptable traffic conditions in Uckfield Town Centre, an area that is already heavily congested at peak times and the proposal is therefore contrary to Policies TR3 and S1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

The proposal does not demonstrate that there would be an acceptable impact on the surrounding highway network and is therefore contrary Policy TR3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991 – 2011.

ESCC - Development Contributions - In terms of education infrastructure, existing nursery school facilities, primary schools and the secondary school serving the area would not be able to accommodate the additional children that would arise from the proposed development. Contributions would therefore be required towards:

- The costs of providing additional nursery school capacity in the form of new facilities, probably co-located with existing primary schools and/or with a new primary school.
- Without prejudice to the outcome of any future review of primary school needs in the Uckfield area, the costs of providing a new 1 or 2 entry primary school, including land provision and building costs.
- Without prejudice to the outcome of any future review of secondary education needs in the Uckfield area, the costs of providing the extra school places required to meet the demand from the development .

Contributions would also be required towards the cost of providing a new household and recycling facility at Maresfield, rights of way improvements.

ESCC - County Ecologist - No adverse comments received.

County Archaeologist - In the light of the potential archaeological significance of the application site, it is important to follow the advice given in PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* and request the provision of an archaeological assessment of the relevant part

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of the application. This evaluation should be undertaken before the application is determined, so that the archaeological implications can be fully considered before a decision is taken. The evaluation should establish whether significant archaeological remains survive, and if so, their extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date and significance. If archaeological remains are discovered, an assessment of the likely effects of the development proposal should be carried out and a mitigation strategy prepared which states how the archaeology of the site will be accommodated within the proposed development, either by preservation *in situ* or by record where necessary. Following the evaluation, the recommendation would either be that (i) the application is refused because the archaeological remains are of such importance that there must be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation, (ii) that some or all of the archaeological remains are preserved *in situ*, or (iii) that the archaeological remains are preserved by record through a process of excavation, and recording and publication of results. The latter should be achieved by an appropriate condition attached to any planning consent.

Pollution Control - NO OBJECTION. A desk top study has been submitted and is deemed satisfactory but it is recommended that condition CLO3 is attached to any permission.

Foothpaths Officer - OBJECTS. The line of the public footpath Uckfield No 1 shown within the application plans is incorrect and a Diversion Order will be required unless the plans are amended.

Housing Department - The provision of new affordable housing is a key strategic objective of the Council and in general terms the Housing Department welcomes planning applications on schemes which result in the production of much needed affordable housing units.

With regards to this particular scheme Policy HG4 of the Non Statutory Local Plan requires sites exceeding 10 in urban areas to designate 30% of units as affordable housing. In terms of this development that will equate to approximately 225 units. Prior to the submission of this planning application no discussions have taken place with the developer regarding our requirements in terms of the affordable housing units. If planning permission was forthcoming we would welcome discussions as soon as possible in order to help meet the housing need in the area and ensure delivery and management of the units by one of our preferred RSL partners.

The Council can demonstrate a proven need for affordable housing in the area as follows:

- There are currently 718 applicants registered for affordable housing in the Uckfield area (as at 9 December 2006).
- The 2005 Housing Needs Survey identified over 410 households who live in the District require a move to Uckfield.
- And 230 new forming households that will be looking to access the housing market in Uckfield.
- Of the income data supplied by new forming households over 86% have a household income of less than £27,500 per annum and therefore will be unlikely to access the private market within the Uckfield area.

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Whilst we can not see any reference to the use of renewable energy on the new development we would hope that this would be a core aspect of the new homes. All of the affordable homes will have to achieve a minimum level of an excellent eco rating and we would hope the developer will consider reaching a comparable standard on the open market dwellings.

Technical Services - NO OBJECTION, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions to cover the following:-

- The effectiveness of the proposal to use suds/soakaway drainage for surface water disposal to be established by undertaking soil percolation tests at an early stage and then submitting satisfactory design details all in accordance with BRE Digest 365.
- A suitable alternative means of surface water disposal will have to be established if soil conditions are unsuitable for suds or soakaways.
- Disposal of surface water to an existing watercourse, needs to be restricted to an agreed greenfield rate of discharge with provision for storage of excess flows.
- Design calculations and construction details of the proposed surface water storage facility to be submitted for approval. The storage volume provided will need to cater for the 1 in 100 year event, plus a 20% allowance for climatic change.
- Proposed foul and surface water sewer layout for the site is needed on a plan together with proposed offsite routes.
- As much of the foul and surface water sewer system as possible shall be designed and constructed to a standard suitable for adoption by Southern Water in accordance with the Defra Protocol on design, construction and adoption of sewers in England and Wales available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/sewers/new/index.htm>
- Details of the long term maintenance arrangements for any parts of the drainage system which will not be adopted to be submitted for approval.
- Construction details, levels and surface water drainage of any access road/drive/parking area that will not be adopted to be submitted for approval.
- Details of the long term maintenance arrangements for any vehicular areas which will not be adopted to be submitted for approval.
- The provision of land drainage measures should be considered, to intercept run off from unpaved areas or subsoil flows and drain to a suitable point away from new or existing property.
- Unless otherwise agreed, all existing watercourses on the site should be preserved within natural corridors and this may affect the proposed site layout. The diversion or culverting of any existing watercourses will require Environment Agency consent.
- Surveys of the existing watercourses should be undertaken and any maintenance works considered necessary agreed with the EA/Council and carried out during the development. Future riparian owners to be made aware of their responsibilities for these watercourses.

Conservation and Design Officer - NO OBJECTION. The Design & Access Statement establishes appropriate guiding principles, although the village squares proposed as the central focus of the 'satellite' villages are an alien concept to Wealden. The artist's impressions also incorporate alien building types, such as colonaded shops, and there is little to assist in visualising normal streetscapes in all the density types.

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Head of Policy and Environment - OBJECTS. The proposed site is outside of the development boundary defined in both the adopted Wealden Local Plan and the Non Statutory Local Plan and is therefore contrary to Policy GD2 in both Local Plans, which resists development outside the development boundary unless it is in accordance with specific policies in the plan.

Arboriculture and Landscape Section - OBJECTS on the following grounds:

- The application falls within an area of countryside dominated by wide tracts of ancient woodland, including an SSSI Woodland Trust wildlife reserve and the development would have a grave impact on wildlife, including the habitat of European protected species.
- The landscape is a fine example of the High Weald/Low Weald interface and the development would have a significant negative impact upon its character and quality.
- There would be an unsustainable relationship between existing and proposed new trees and the new development.
- Not convinced that the requirements of PPS9 or BS5837 have been met.

Waste Management - Provision will need to be made for two 240 litre bins and one blue box for each house and larger communal bins for flats.

Sussex Wildlife Trust - OBJECTS on the following grounds:

- The site is not allocated in the Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment fails to correctly value the ecological assets of the site and underestimates the resulting impacts, such that the proposed mitigation fails to redress the impact of the development.
- The site is of historic and ecological importance because it has remained largely undeveloped, and is a good example of the Weald landscape being a mosaic of habitats of ancient woodland and unimproved grassland.
- The site is an important link within the larger ecological network of the area.

CPRE Sussex - OBJECTS on the following grounds:

- The site lies outside of the development boundary for Uckfield.
- The application represents a new community isolated from the town of Uckfield.
- 750 homes is an inappropriate number of dwellings for Uckfield and Maresfield.
- The development would reduce the countryside gap which separates Uckfield from Maresfield and Five Ash Down.
- The scale of development would damage the distinctive, unspoilt rural characteristics and landscape of the area.
- the inhabitants of the development would tend to rely on car transport, contrary to Government policy.

Police (Crime Prevention) - It is important that such a large development incorporates recognised principles of crime prevention through environmental design. The lack of any reference to crime prevention within the Design and Access Statement is a serious omission and additional information should be supplied to demonstrate how crime

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prevention will be addressed. It is questionable whether the proposed cycle route tunnel would be successful in this respect.

Uckfield Town Council - OBJECTS on the following grounds:

- The scale and size of the development.
- Lack of necessary infrastructure to support the development.
- Concern over congestion at the access to the site.
- Potential conflict with ecological concerns.
- On-site water treatment is unacceptable and all sewage should go direct to the sewage works.

Maresfield Parish Council - OBJECTS on the following grounds:

- The proposed development would reduce the important countryside gap between Uckfield and Maresfield.
- The site is not allocated for development and is outside of the development boundary in both the adopted and the Non Statutory Local Plans.
- Ecological/biodiversity considerations should be fully assessed prior to any planning decision.
- Insufficient infrastructure to accommodate this size of development.
- Inadequate capacity in the local secondary school.
- The development is opposed to the principles and policies of the non statutory Local Plan relating to the protection of the setting and individual identities of settlements and preventing their coalescence.
- The proposed development would generate an unacceptable level of additional traffic, exacerbating current traffic problems in Maresfield and Nutley.

Local Residents - 215 letters, together with a petition (469 signatures) , OBJECTING to proposed development on the following grounds:

- Site is located outside of the defined development boundary in the adopted and non statutory Wealden Local Plans.
- Number of homes will exceed the provision made at Uckfield and Maresfield in the non statutory Local Plan.
- Adverse landscape impacts.
- Adverse ecological impacts.
- Reduction of the important countryside gap between Uckfield and Maresfield.
- Industrial development is inappropriate in this location.
- Access provision is inadequate.
- Traffic impact on the surrounding highway network would be unacceptable.
- Snatts Road is unsuitable for buses.
- Snatts Road is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Insufficient infrastructure and services.
- Increase in noise, disturbance, air and light pollution.
- Adverse impact on public footpaths.
- Increase in traffic congestion in the town centre.
- Adverse impact on Lake Wood SNCI and West Park Nature Reserve.
- Development is poorly related to Uckfield and will function as a separate community, heavily reliant on the car.

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- Adverse impact on residential amenities of properties at Budletts Common and along Snatts Road.
- Increased flood risk at Budletts Common and downstream of the site.
- A new primary school is unnecessary.

7 letters supporting the proposed development have also been received.

Planning History

Application No.	Description	Decision and Date
T/1956/793T/F	Residential development of 20 houses	Refused 17 January 1957
T/1956/794T/O	Residential development	Refused 29 April 1957

Main Issues

- a) Principle of development.
- b) Impact on the character and quality of the landscape.
- c) Impact on ancient woodland, protected species and other features of nature conservation importance.
- d) Impact on potential archaeological features.
- e) Highway impact.
- f) Accessibility by sustainable modes of transport.
- g) Drainage and water quality.
- h) Adequacy of infrastructure.

Key Policies

- Policies S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S10, S22, H1, H3, TR1, TR3, TR4, TR16, TR18, EN1, EN11, EN17, EN21, EN22, EN24 and EN27 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.
- Policies GD2, EN1, EN2, EN5, EN8, EN12, EN13, EN14, EN15, EN16, EN17, EN25, EN27, DC17, HG1, HG2, HG4, HG5, HG6, HG7, TR3, TR9, TR13, LR1, LR3, LR5, CS1 and CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998.
- Policies GD1, NE1, NE3, NE7, NE14, NE15, NE16, BE1, BE12, HG1, HG4, HG7, HG8, HG9, TR2, TR5, LR2, LR4, CS1, CS2, CS4 and CS5 of the non statutory Wealden Local Plan 2005.

Comments

The Application Site

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The application site is located on the north-western edge of Uckfield, between Snatts Road and the A22 Uckfield Bypass. It extends to the London Road in the north and abuts the Lake Wood Site of Nature Conservation Importance on its southern boundary. The site includes land within the ownership of the applicant on the west side of the A22 that would be used for the purpose of surface water attenuation. It also contains land outside the control of the applicant, including land alongside the A22 and B2102 and areas to the east of Snatts Road and south of Church Street.

The site covers about 85 ha of open countryside, mainly comprising woodland and scrub (50 ha) and agricultural land (35 ha). This land falls in a broad sweep north and west from Snatts Road towards Shortbridge Stream. Its slopes are drained by a series of smaller tributaries that have cut into the general relief to create wooded valleys or ghylls. The northern part of the site around Budletts Common is lower lying and relatively flat compared with the land elsewhere. The site was formerly part of the Rocks Estate, whose main house was Buckswood Grange, and parts of it were laid out as parkland during the 19th century.

The Development Proposals

The submitted application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. In addition to the application form, certificate and plans, the applicant has submitted a supporting Planning Statement, a Design and Access Statement, a Transport Assessment and Safety Audit, a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment, and an Environmental Statement. The latter has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 and the application has been assessed in relation to this document. An illustrative masterplan for the development has also been submitted but does not form part of the application.

The development proposals include the following:

- 750 dwellings at an average density of 41 dwellings per hectare, including 30 per cent affordable housing, and three neighbourhood centres.
- A 1.2 ha employment site for up to 5,380 sq m of B1 and B8 floorspace, as well as up to 4,420 sq m of business and office premises in the three neighbourhood centres .
- A single entry primary school with its own playing field.
- A community hall and doctor's surgery if required.
- 4.4 ha formal recreational space, 8.4 ha of informal open space and 0.6 ha of children's play space.
- A country park open for public access with an employed warden .
- Vehicular access from the A22/A26 Black Down roundabout.
- Segregated bus/emergency vehicle/pedestrian/cycle links to Snatts Road.
- New cycle way alongside the A22 and B2102.

The proposed internal layout and access arrangements for the development are shown on the illustrative masterplan. This indicates three main residential areas separated by woodland in the southern part of the application site, and the main business site at Budletts Common, close to the proposed vehicular access from the Black Down Roundabout. The proposed primary school would be located just west of Snatts Road.

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An outline management strategy for nature conservation is set out in the Environmental Statement, which would include the management of both the retained ancient woodland within the application site and the remaining wet grassland at Budletts Common. The implementation of this strategy would be funded by the development, although its delivery would appear to depend upon a recognised conservation body, such as the Woodland Trust or the Sussex Wildlife Trust, taking on the responsibility for the management.

Policy Context

The application site is located outside of the development boundary for Uckfield, as defined in the adopted Wealden Local Plan, and is therefore contrary to Policies GD2 and DC17 of that Plan. Accordingly, the application has been advertised as a 'departure application' because it is not in accordance with the development plan for the area. However, it is considered that the need to meet the District's housing land requirements over the period to 2011, and to make provision for affordable housing to meet local housing needs, is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Policy H1 of the approved East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 contains a requirement for the provision of 4,400 new dwellings within Wealden over the period 2006–2011, including 3,300 dwellings on new allocations of housing land. The adopted Wealden Local Plan does not make any provision for new allocations of housing land to meet the District's Structure Plan housing requirements over the period 2006-2011, and it is within this context that the non-statutory Wealden Local Plan was approved by the Council for use as an Interim Guide for Development Control on 14 December 2005.

The application site is not one of the areas allocated for development in the non statutory Local Plan and lies outside of the development boundary for Uckfield, as defined on the Proposals Map. The non statutory Local Plan does not form part of the approved development plan for the area, and hence the weight to be attached to it is less than the adopted Plan. However, the extensive work undertaken in its preparation affords the non statutory Local Plan some status as a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications.

Alternative sites for housing development in and around Uckfield, including land at Downlands Farm and Budletts Common, were considered by the Council during the preparation of the non statutory Local Plan, as set out in the reports and minutes of the Wealden Local Plan Review Advisory Panel and the Wealden Local Plan Review Special Review Committee. The specific consideration given to the application site as part of this process is set out below.

The Wealden Local Plan Review Advisory Panel at its meeting on 5th December 2000 considered the relative capacity for housing and business growth in Uckfield by examining broad sectors around the town in relation to accessibility, infrastructure, landscape, planning and environmental constraints, and community services. As set out in report GR0040.0009, it was concluded that any outward expansion of development on the north-western edge of the town, largely comprising land at Downlands Farm and Budletts Common, would cause unacceptable damage to the visual quality, continuity and rural character of the surrounding countryside. It would

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also cause significant harm to the important countryside gap between Uckfield and Maresfield.

Further consideration was given to land at Downlands Farm and Budletts Common by the Council in 2002, when a number of options were considered for progressing the Local Plan Review in the light of the Highway Agency's concerns over the capacity of the trunk road network in the south of the District. A detailed re-appraisal of land on the north-western edge of the town was carried out in order to assess its potential to accommodate major housing growth, but this re-appraisal confirmed the Council's earlier findings in terms of landscape impact, as well as identifying significant concerns in relation to education and transport issues as set out in the Wealden Local Plan Review Background Paper, *A Review of the Council's Distribution Strategy* (September 2002).

Following the publication of the First Deposit Draft Wealden Local Plan Review for consultation purposes in January 2003, ninety one objections were received that argued that land at Downlands Farm should be allocated for housing and/or business purposes. These objections were considered by the Wealden Local Plan Review Special Review Committee on 15 December 2003 when Members examined the relevant planning designations affecting the site, accessibility issues, the potential landscape and ecological impact, and infrastructure considerations. Members resolved that on balance major development in this north-western sector of Uckfield at Downlands Farm was still not favoured, but that the final decision on housing allocations in Uckfield should not be made until the Committee had considered the representations on housing allocations elsewhere in the Low Weald (WLPRSRC Minute 03/13).

Further consideration was given to alternative sites for housing and business development in Uckfield at the meeting of the Wealden Local Plan Review Special Review Committee on 29 March 2004, following the Committee's earlier recommendation that all the land east of Framfield Stream be deleted from the Bird in Eye Hill allocation in the First Deposit Local Plan. The officers' report advised that, having considered all the objectors' alternative housing development sites, Cysley's Farm (land north of Eastbourne Road) was considered to be less damaging in terms of its impact on the surrounding countryside and biodiversity and also had accessibility advantages in terms of its proximity to local primary schools and the railway station.

After examining a number of alternative site for housing and business development in Uckfield, Members endorsed the officers' conclusion that land at Cysley's Farm (north of Eastbourne Road) and land at Sandpits (west of Lewes Road) should be allocated for housing development, subject to a satisfactory resolution of the highway safety concerns at New Road and the overall conclusions on the housing distribution strategy following consideration of the other Low Weald towns and villages (WLPRSRC Minute 04/08

The recommendations of the Wealden Local Plan Review Special Review Committee were subsequently considered by a Joint Meeting of the Development Control North and Development Control South Sub-Committees on 20 May 2005 before being put to the Cabinet on 27 June 2005, when it was resolved to recommend that the Council approve the Revised (Non-Statutory) Wealden Local Plan for use as an Interim Guide for Development Control, subject to the judgment of the current appeal to the Court of

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Appeal on the legality of the Council's decision to abandon the statutory plan and an amendment to Policy BE9 (Decision 41/2005).

Following a favourable judgment from the Court of Appeal, the Revised Wealden Local Plan was considered by full Council at its meetings on 9th November and 14 December 2005. No further amendments were agreed to the sites allocated for housing purposes when the Council approved the non-statutory Wealden Local Plan as an Interim Guide for Development Control on 14 December 2005.

The sites allocated for housing in the non statutory Local Plan are sufficient to meet Structure Plan housing requirements over the period to 2011 and it is not considered that there is a need or justification for development of a greenfield site in this location, or for a departure from the policies of the approved development plan in this instance.

Landscape Impact

The land at Downlands Farm has a distinctly unspoilt, rural character, comprising an unbroken mosaic of gently undulating woods and farmland, cut by a series of small streams. Although the application site is located on the edge of the Low Weald in planning terms, it shares many of the landscape characteristics of the High Weald, including large tracts woodland, wooded ghylls and associated streams, sandstone outcrops, and expanses of birch, gorse and bracken. Much of the woodland is ancient in origin and therefore of considerable ecological value.

The combination of topography and woodland serves to isolate much of the application site from the visual presence of Uckfield itself, the town being almost completely concealed by the woods and tree belts along the ridgeline followed by Snatts Road. However, the higher parts of the site, which rise to 60m AOD, are clearly visible from the countryside to the north and west, often forming a prominent visual feature in views back towards the South Downs. Correspondingly, from the more open, elevated parts of the application site, long views stretch away northwards to the heathland ridges of the Ashdown Forest.

The Environmental Statement submitted with the application acknowledges that, whilst the proposed development would be concentrated below the highest points of the site, it will nevertheless be visible in part above the surrounding woodland from roads or other public rights of way in the vicinity of Maresfield, Five Ash Down, Hendall Wood, Down Street, and the Ashdown Forest. However, the Environmental Statement concludes that the only significant visual adverse impact would be on close range views from publicly accessible locations around the edge of the site and therefore "there would be no overall harm to the landscape character of the surrounding countryside".

Officers are not convinced by this conclusion. On the contrary, it is considered that the visually exposed and rural qualities of the open slopes below Snatts Road make the application site highly sensitive to large-scale development. Any outward expansion of the built form beyond the prominent ridgeline followed by Snatts Road would be highly intrusive in the landscape, breaching a significant visual horizon and exposing the urban area of Uckfield to a wide tract of previously unaffected countryside. It would also erode the open countryside gap between Uckfield and Maresfield, in conflict with the aim of maintaining the separate identities of these neighbouring settlements.

In landscape terms, it is therefore considered that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the rural setting of Uckfield and Maresfield and to the visual quality, continuity and rural character of the surrounding countryside

Ecological Impact

The application site includes a number of habitats of nature conservation importance, including an ancient woodland complex, ghyll woodland, old herb-rich grassland, ponds and streams. The site supports a number European protected species, specifically dormice, Great Crested Newts and bats, together with a range of other species protected by UK legislation, including badgers and reptiles. It also supports Skylark, Song Thrush and Bullfinch, which are priority species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, together with other bird species of nature conservation concern, including the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Marsh Tit.

The principal direct adverse impacts of the proposed development would be the loss of around 0.6 ha of the ancient woodland complex and the loss of around 0.3 ha of acid grassland at Budletts Common. However, there is also potential for indirect adverse impacts through the fragmentation of woodland by the construction of the proposed road network, through possible changes to the local hydrology in the ghylls, and through the exposure of sensitive habitats to urban activities, such as informal recreation, predation by domestic pets, and rubbish dumping.

The Environmental Statement suggests that many of these impacts can be mitigated by measures such as specialist tunnels and tree bridges to link the habitats of Great Crested Newts and dormice, by controlling the quality and quantity of water run-off to the ghylls, and by discouraging public access to sensitive areas. It also proposes a habitat management strategy, which would be funded by the development, in order to maintain and enhance the retained areas of woodland and grassland for their habitat potential. The Statement concludes that, with such mitigation measures and compensatory benefits in place, the overall ecological impact of the proposed development would be 'positive'.

However, officers are not convinced by this conclusion. It is acknowledged that Natural England has not objected to the proposed development, subject to the implementation of the management strategy described in the submitted Environmental Statement, but the Environment Agency, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, and the Woodland Trust have all raised significant concerns over the potential ecological impact of the development. These concerns are summarised below.

Ancient woodland is the closest approximation to natural broad-leaved forest to be found in England and is therefore the most ecologically valuable. It is an irreplaceable resource, both for its diversity of species and for its longevity as woodland. The Government recognises that ancient woodland is declining and becoming increasingly fragmented and should be protected for its value as a biodiversity resource. PPS9, *Biological and Geological Conservation*, states that 'Local planning authorities should not grant planning permission for any development that would result in its loss or deterioration unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location outweigh the loss of the woodland habitat'.

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In addition to ancient woodland, the application site includes areas of wet woodland and ghyll woodland. Wet woodland is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat, whilst ghyll woodland is a nationally rare habitat and virtually unique to South East England. Ghylls are too steep-sided to have ever been cultivated and have often had continuous tree cover maintaining a damp, shady microclimate for hundreds or thousands of years. At Downlands Farm, rare lichens and mosses have been recorded on the sandstone rock exposures in the ghylls. Both ghyll woodland and wet woodland habitats are known for their fragility and sensitivity to human disturbance and water pollution.

The size and connectivity of the network of natural habitats that comprises the application site is also significant in terms of the range and numbers of wildlife species that it is able to support. This important consideration is recognised in PPS9, which states that 'Local authorities should aim to maintain networks by avoiding or repairing fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through policies in plans. Such networks should be protected from development and, where possible, strengthened by or integrated within it'. Such concerns are reflected in Policies EN13 and EN16 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan and Policies NE14 and NE16 of the non statutory Local Plan.

It should be noted that the Environmental Statement submitted with the application fails to use current Government guidance when assessing the ecological assets of the site, and uses outdated guidance published in 2002 by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) to predict the impact of the development. The latter guidance was replaced in 2006 in the light of the new PPS9 and the introduction of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which places a duty on public bodies to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

The Environment Agency consider that the proposed road network will have an unacceptable ecological impact, due firstly to the direct loss of ancient woodland and wet woodland, and secondly, to the disruption and damage to the remaining wet woodland, ghyll woodland, watercourses and ponds. The movement of Great Crested Newts within the site will be restricted as their terrestrial and wetland habitat corridors will be severed and habitats lost. The isolation of sub-populations of Great Crested Newts increases their vulnerability to disturbance and the possibility of local extinction. The EA believes that this also applies to other protected species identified on the site, including dormice.

The proposed water attenuation ponds adjacent to the Blackdown Roundabout will also result in the unacceptable loss of both wet woodland and wet grassland habitats. The EA do not support the creation of a new habitat at the expense of an existing ecologically valuable habitat. The illustrative masterplan also indicates the loss of ancient wet woodland and wet grassland to the residential development areas, which the EA considers unacceptable and unnecessary.

There is also concern that the impact of human and pet activity on the ghyll woodlands has not been adequately addressed by the applicant. The submitted Environmental Statement implies that fencing off the ghyll area would be unnecessary because their steepness would discourage access; however, following a site visit, officers consider that this is unlikely to deter youths and children from accessing these valuable habitats. The submitted Design and Access Statement also proposes raised walkways and

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cycleways across the gylls, which would further increase disturbance and potential pollution.

The EA also consider that the potential ecological impacts on the adjacent Lake Wood SNCI, and on high quality watercourses downstream and outside of the application site, together with their associated species, have not been adequately addressed by the applicant.

The concerns outlined above are also shared by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust. Overall, it is considered that the adverse ecological impacts of the proposed development cannot be sufficiently mitigated, particularly the loss of irreplaceable natural habitats such as ancient woodland, and that the proposed nature conservation management measures would not adequately compensate for the fragmentation and isolation of the remaining habitats or address the impacts arising from increased human activity within the application site. In this respect, it is therefore considered that the development would be contrary to national Government policy set out in PPS9 and to Structure and Local Plan policies that seek to maintain and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of the area,

Cultural Heritage

The proposed development would not impact upon any scheduled ancient monuments and is not considered to have a materially adverse impact on the setting of any listed buildings, the nearest of which are Budletts House at Budletts Common and Oast Cottage and the Barn on Snatts Road. However, a desk-based archaeological assessment and site visit carried out as part of the Environmental Statement has established that earthworks within the application site may represent a medieval moated site. The recovery of a fire-cracked flint elsewhere on the site also indicates the potential for prehistoric settlement.

The assessment concludes that there is reason to believe that archaeological remains may be present within the application site and that the proposed development could have a significant adverse impact on them. The proposed access road from the Blackdown roundabout and the land identified for employment development are coincident with the possible moated site and adjacent earthworks and it is likely that construction activities for these proposed uses may result in the partial destruction of remains.

In the light of the findings above, the Environmental Statement recommends that the archaeological potential of the site should be evaluated in accordance with the established principles and procedures set out in PPG16, *Archaeology and Planning*, and Structure and Local Plan policies that seek to ensure that planning applications affecting areas of potential archaeological interest are accompanied by an adequate assessment of their archaeological implications. The County Archaeologist has also advised that an archaeological evaluation of the relevant part of the site should be undertaken by the applicant before the application is determined by the Council.

However, apart from the findings of desk-based assessment and site visit, no professional evaluation of the archaeological potential of the site or of the archaeological implications of the proposed development, have been submitted to the Council to date.

Transport and Accessibility

The development would be served by a single vehicular access, which would connect to the existing A22/A26 Blackdown Roundabout as a new fourth arm to that junction. Access restricted to buses, emergency vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians is proposed off Snatts Road, with a further emergency vehicle/cycle/pedestrian link also off Snatts Road. East Sussex County Council, as the Highway Authority, has accepted the principle of this access arrangement and notes that it averts the need for a new junction to be created on to the A22 whilst enabling development traffic to conveniently access the primary route network.

In terms of traffic impact, the Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application includes a junction capacity analysis to illustrate that the operation of the Blackdown Roundabout in 2011 would not be worsened as a result of the development proposals. The Highway Authority has confirmed that the necessary modifications to the Blackdown Roundabout can be achieved within land that is either within the application site or forms part of the public highway. However, there would be a need for vegetation to be cleared to the north of the proposed new junction arm in order to ensure that vehicles exiting the new development can see approaching southbound vehicles on the A26.

A junction capacity analysis of the A22/B2102 Copwood Roundabout illustrates that by 2011 this junction will be operating at a level exceeding its intended design capacity without the proposed development. This would result in extensive vehicle queues on the A22 north and B2102 arms in both the AM and PM peak hours. The applicant has sought to mitigate the adverse impact of the additional development traffic in this situation by proposing modifications to the junction that would increase available queuing capacity on all three junction arms. These modifications can be achieved within the limits of the public highway and would ensure that the operation of the junction is not made worse by the development traffic. The Highway Authority regards these proposals to be appropriate mitigation.

The analysis of the Budletts Roundabout has not identified any capacity difficulties in 2011, either with or without the development in place, and the Highway Authority accepts that no highway improvements would be required at this junction as a result of the development.

In respect of Uckfield town centre, the Highway Authority requires any development generating a 2% or more increase in traffic to contribute to a traffic management solution that will overcome congestion in the town centre, as stated in the non statutory Local Plan. However, the Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application does not include any analysis of the traffic impact on the town centre to indicate how the operation of the highway network would be affected by the additional traffic generated by the proposed development. It is clearly essential that the potential impact of the development traffic on the town centre is quantified in order to give this application proper consideration and, in view of this significant omission from the Transport Assessment, the Highway Authority is recommending that consent be refused.

The Highway Authority also advise that the scope of the submitted Transport Assessment should have included a capacity analysis of the A22/A272 roundabout, due

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to the large proportion of development traffic predicted to proceed northwards along the A22, and should have addressed the need for appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that traffic conditions in Maresfield village are not unacceptably worsened as a consequence of the development. The Highway Authority is therefore also recommending that consent be refused on the grounds that the applicant has not demonstrated that the traffic impact of the development can be suitably accommodated on the surrounding highway network.

In terms of pedestrian and cycle access, the application proposes that Snatts Road would be used as the principal route for journeys to and from the town centre. However, Snatts Road has a narrow carriageway, restricted forward visibility and a steep gradient at its southern end. At its northern end there is only a single footpath on the east side, whilst over 400 metres of the road at the southern end has no footpath provision at all and is unlit. Furthermore, there is restricted forward visibility as motorists approach the Snatts Road junction travelling along Rock Road towards Church Street and the town centre. It is therefore unclear how the proposed north-eastern and south-eastern accesses to the site would afford pedestrians or cyclists with an appropriate level of safety.

The applicant's Transport Assessment suggests that an 'enhanced slow modes route' would be implemented along Snatts Road, incorporating traffic calming features and restrictions, but no details have been submitted. A dedicated pedestrian link is also suggested through land on the south-east side of Snatts Road, with a bridge across Rocks Road to link with an enhanced route on the south side of Rocks Road as far as its junction with Rocks Park Road. However, the applicant has not demonstrated that such a route can actually be delivered as part of the development. Such a scheme would appear to involve third party land and two of the current freeholders have objected to the application on the basis of the proposed footpath crossing their land.

Without this new pedestrian route, pedestrian journeys from the proposed development to the town centre would be very inconvenient and circuitous, probably requiring a walk north along Snatts Road before turning into Claremont Drive. Whilst a footpath exists between Snatts Road and Hunters Way, this is considered far too steep and hazardous to be regarded as a viable option. A further concern is that, due to the objective of restricting built development close to the ridgeline followed by Snatts Road, as described in the Design and Access Statement, the proposed pedestrian and cycle links between the residential areas and Snatts Road would not be overlooked by housing or benefit from any form of natural surveillance.

A new dedicated cycle route is also proposed along the eastern edge of the A22 Uckfield Bypass and the northern side of the B2102, linking the Blackdown roundabout with the town centre. Whilst this route would avoid the need for cyclists living or working within the application site to climb the slope up to Snatts Road, Drawing CPOCKFIELD.1/01, submitted as part of the Transport Assessment, shows the proposed new cycleway as located immediately adjacent to the carriageway of the A22. It is questionable whether this facility, involving the close proximity of heavy goods vehicles travelling at speeds up to 60mph, would be perceived as attractive, safe or convenient by the majority of cycle users.

In the light of the above considerations, it is not considered that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that proposed development is will be successful in terms of

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reducing dependency on the car and facilitating more walking and cycling in accordance with national and strategic objectives. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Highway Authority is satisfied that the development would provide pedestrians and cyclists with an appropriate means of access, subject to the resolution of the scope and detail of the accessibility measures.

In terms of public transport provision, the applicant proposes to divert the hourly no.31 Uckfield - Haywards Heath bus service into the development and upgrade its frequency to 20 minutes at peak times and 30 minutes at other times. However, the service would have to perform a U turn within the site and there are concerns that the resulting increase in journey times could have an impact on service punctuality and patronage by existing passengers. The diversion of the no.245 town service, which makes four complete journeys daily, is also proposed by the applicant. This service would also have to perform a U turn within the site and would be upgraded to 4 buses hourly during peak periods and 2 buses hourly at other times. However, the proposed service revisions imply that the service would no longer serve Uckfield Community Hospital, which is an important destination for many passengers.

In the light of the above concerns, the Highway Authority has requested an assessment of the needs of existing passengers and the suitability of specific roads and junctions to accommodate bus manoeuvres as part of the work required to identify revised routes. The Authority has also advised that the proposed improvements to service frequencies would involve substantial contributions to the County Council, who currently subsidise both the no.31 and the no.245. However, the required levels of contributions have not been specified at this stage.

Drainage and Flood Risk

The proposed development site is not at risk from flooding with a return period of 1 in 100 years. A flood risk assessment carried out in 2005 demonstrates that the drainage channels are topographically and geographically situated so as to pose no flood risk to the proposed residential areas shown on the illustrative masterplan, and the Environment Agency has not objected to proposed development on the grounds of flood risk. The main potential impacts of the development therefore relate to changes to the current drainage regime that may result in increases in the volume of surface water run-off and decreases in the water quality.

Government guidance in PPS25 *Development and Flood Risk* states that full consideration needs to be given to using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) as the preferred option for surface water drainage. This is a collective term used in referring to the techniques employed to reduce peak run off flows and improve water quality by either infiltration or attenuation. These techniques can include soakaways, infiltration trenches, permeable pavements, grassed swales, ponds and wetlands. Approved Document Part H of the Building Regulations 2000 sets out a hierarchy for surface water disposal which also encourages the use of SUDS.

As a result of the severe local flooding by the River Uck in October 2000, the Environment Agency recommends a discharge restriction approximating to the existing greenfield run-off for the application site. The proposed drainage design for the development indicates that the principles of SUDS will be incorporated to ensure that the existing greenfield run-off from the site is maintained. However, under current

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legislation and guidance, SUDS rely upon facilities which are not adoptable by sewerage undertakers. Southern Water has therefore advises that the applicant will need to ensure that arrangements exist for the long term maintenance of the SUDS facilities. It is critical that the effectiveness of these systems is maintained in perpetuity.

Overall, Southern Water and the Council's own engineers advise that the approach to surface water drainage could be secured by condition in the event of an approval. The drainage details should specify the responsibilities of each party for the implementation of the SUDS scheme, specify a timetable for implementation, and provide a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development. The latter should include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

In terms of the impact on water quality, the concerns of the Environment Agency have been outlined earlier in this report under the section on 'Ecological Impact'.

In terms of foul drainage, Southern Water has advised the Council that there is currently inadequate capacity in the local network to provide foul sewage disposal to service the proposed development. The proposed development would increase flows to the public sewerage system, and existing properties and land may be subject to a greater risk of flooding as a result. Additional off-site sewers, or improvements to existing sewers, will be required to provide sufficient capacity to service the development. Section 98 of the Water Industry Act 1991 provides a legal mechanism through which the appropriate infrastructure can be requested (by the developer) and provided to drain a specific location. The Council is advised that should this application receive planning approval, an informative should be attached advising of the requirement to enter into an agreement with Southern Water to provide the necessary sewerage infrastructure required to service this development.

Infrastructure Provision

The Planning Statement submitted with the application sets out the proposed Heads of Terms for a Section 106 legal agreement in the event of consent being granted for the proposed development. These cover the provision of affordable housing, the country park, open space, recreational and community facilities; the transfer of land for a new primary school and doctors surgery; the appointment of a country park warden: the preparation of a Travel Plan; and financial contributions towards education infrastructure, transport infrastructure, library infrastructure, household waste infrastructure and maintenance of the country park and open space/recreational facilities.

The most significant issue in terms of infrastructure relates to education provision. The County Council's Director of Children's Services advises that the proposed development would trigger the need to provide additional primary school capacity in and/or around Uckfield, taking account of the residential development either approved, or with a Council resolution to approve, elsewhere in the town. However, the proposed development would not, on its own, generate enough additional children to justify the provision of a new 1 form entry primary school. Accordingly, if the application is approved, the County Council would have to consider the options for providing

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additional primary school capacity in the Uckfield area, although one of these options would be the provision of a new 1 or 2 form entry within the proposed development.

The Director of Children's Services also advises that the proposed development would generate more children of secondary school age (11-18) than could be accommodated at Uckfield Community College, taking account of the residential development either approved, or with a District Council resolution to approve, elsewhere in the town. However, according to the County Council, the recently completed building programme at the Community College has increased the capacity of the College to the upper limit achievable on the existing site. If the application is approved, the County Council would therefore have to review the options for providing additional secondary school capacity to serve the Uckfield area and the development would have to bear the whole cost of providing the additional places required to meet its needs.

As part of the review of the adopted Wealden Local Plan, the County Council were previously consulted about possible alternatives for expanding secondary school education facilities in Uckfield to meet the demand associated with additional housing growth in the town of up to 1,000 dwellings over the period 2004 – 2011. Two potential options were considered at this time, as follows:

- Relocate the post-16 provision to a brand new facility on a separate site elsewhere in the town
- Relocate Manor Primary School to a new site in the town to enable the expansion of the Community College site

The full findings are set out in the Wealden Local Plan Review Background Paper: *A Review of the Council's Distribution Strategy*. In summary, neither options were favoured due to the costs involved and the difficulties in finding suitable sites.

A development of 750 dwellings, in addition to the 400 dwellings allocated on sites in the non statutory Local Plan, would take the overall housing provision on new sites in Uckfield to over 1,000 dwellings. The issue of how the necessary secondary school capacity will be achieved to meet the need for pupil places arising from this level of development is therefore critical. Until a satisfactory resolution to this issue has been reached, officers consider that the proposed development would be in conflict with Structure and Local Plan policies which seek to prevent development proposals unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the infrastructure and facilities required to serve the development are available or will be provided at the appropriate time.

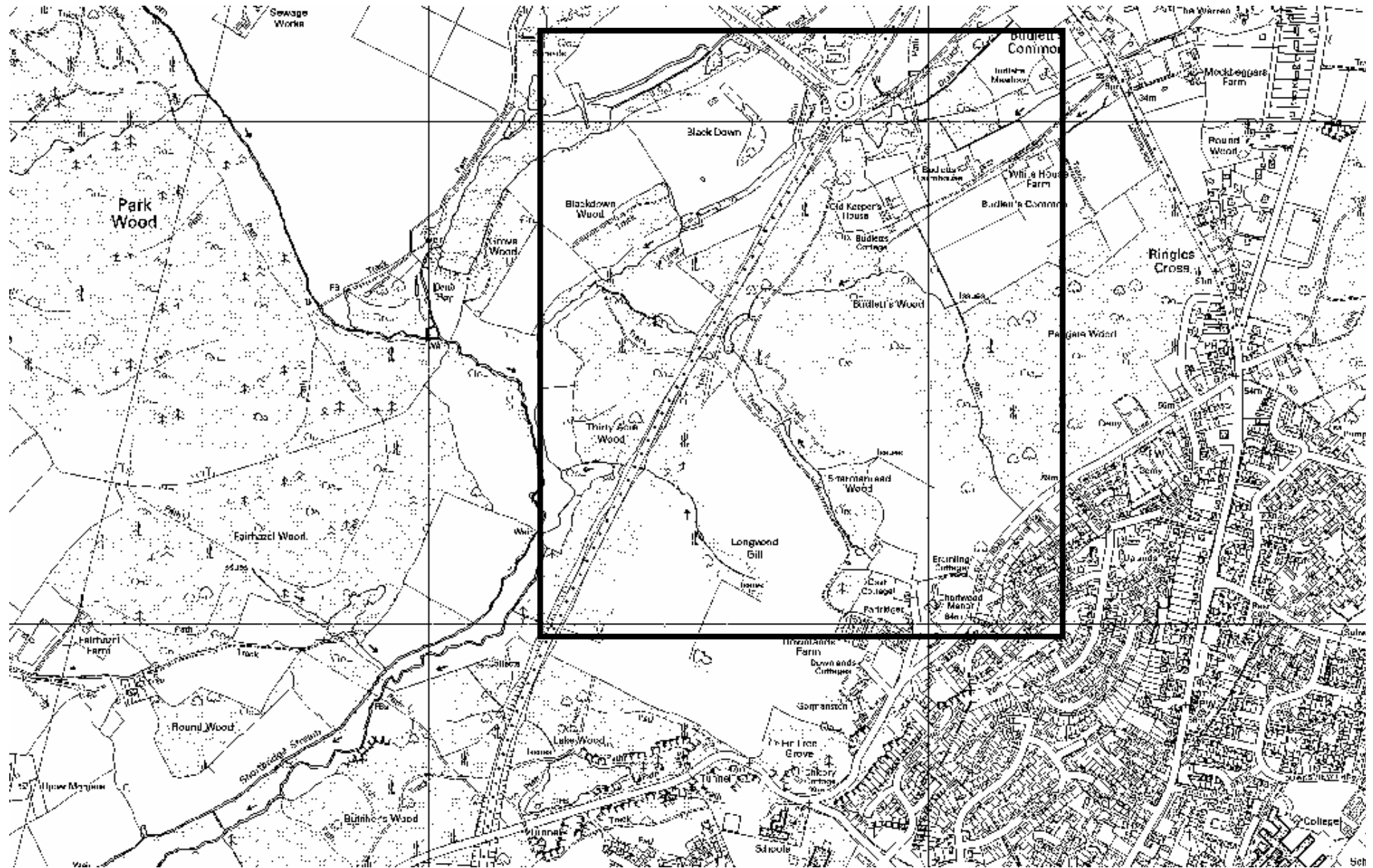
Conclusion

In view of the concerns raised in relation to the potential adverse impacts on landscape character, biodiversity and water quality, archaeological features, traffic and accessibility, and education infrastructure, it is concluded that the proposed development would conflict with the policies of the approved development plan and the non statutory Wealden Local Plan and the application should therefore be refused. The sites allocated for housing in the non statutory Local Plan are sufficient to meet Structure Plan housing requirements over the period to 2011 and there is no need or justification for the development of a greenfield site in this location or for a departure from the policies of the approved development plan.

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