

## Introduction

- 27.1 The village of Handcross is split into two sections by the main A23 London-Brighton Trunk Road. The section to the east is the older of the two, centred on the High Street. The area to the west of the A23 is more modern, comprising mostly 20th century estate development. Although predominantly residential in nature, Handcross has a significant number of commercial properties. These provide important sources of local employment.
- 27.2 The area around the village is particularly attractive, including extensive areas of woodland and farmland, as well as the landscaped gardens of Nymans, a National Trust property located just to the south. Both Nymans and High Beeches (about a mile northeast of the village) are listed in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The village and its surroundings fall within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 27.3 The village does, however, suffer from the effects of traffic, being at the intersection of the A23, the A279 Horsham Road and the B2114 to Cuckfield and Haywards Heath. Traffic flows significantly affect the environment of the village, in particular along the High Street.

## Policies and Proposals

### Built-up Area Boundary

- 27.4 The A23 divides Handcross in two and limits the scope for development. A built-up area boundary is defined which seeks to prevent further development occurring on the edge of the existing built-up area and so to protect the surrounding countryside. The built-up area boundary on the northwest side of Handcross follows the perimeter of Windmill Platt and The Forge but excludes the service area.

### Conservation Area

- 27.5 Despite considerable expansion this century, Handcross retains a historic core centred on the High Street. The majority of the buildings here date back to the 19th century, but a number, including some which are listed, are 18th century or earlier. The High Street is a busy through route and suffers from the effects of traffic. Nevertheless it is still visually attractive and the buildings substantially retain their original character and appearance, and there are a number of interesting features. Further south towards Nymans, as well as several older buildings, trees are important features in the street scene and provide an attractive approach to the village. With the aim of protecting and safeguarding this area from inappropriate development it was designated a Conservation Area in 1990.
- 27.6 The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:
- the 19th Century terraced dwellings and shops on both sides of the High Street which have retained most of their original features;
  - the use of natural and traditional building materials;
  - the variety in ages and styles of the houses, several of which are Listed Buildings;
  - Chodds Farm which is an attractive Listed Building dating back to the 18th Century and is fronted by a visually important line of pollarded limes; and

- the trees bordering the eastern side of Staplefield Road.

### Area of Importance for Nature Conservation

- 27.7 Extensive areas of Harry's Wood and Cow Wood, to the east of High Street, are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### Employment

- 27.8 Generally opportunities for the development of business floorspace are limited, however a number of small firms are located along the Brighton Road. Traffic is able to enter and leave the Brighton Road at the junction with the B2114 Cuckfield Road; it is also able to leave to the south on to the A23. Whilst not an industrial estate this mixed residential/commercial area, particularly on the west side of Brighton Road backing onto the A23 and at the southern end on the east side, provides a significant amount of floorspace for business including a number of industrial operators.

**HA1** In order to retain the industrial floorspace in Brighton Road, Handcross, development which would result in the loss of floorspace which is being used, or is capable of being used, for industrial purposes, will not be permitted.

**Within this area conversion to, or development for, Class B1 use will be considered favourably if the effects of any additional traffic on the surrounding road network and the impact on the amenity of existing residential properties are acceptable.**

### Transport

- 27.9 Chiefly arising from its location adjacent to the A23 trunk road, Handcross is adversely affected by the volume and nature of through traffic. The High Street has in the past been particularly hazardous for both road users and pedestrians because of the volume of traffic using the road and the considerable on street parking. Car parking in this area tends to be largely short term, arising from visitors to the local shops and businesses.
- 27.10 However, the situation in the High Street has improved with the provision, by the Highway Authority, of several crossing points for pedestrians in the vicinity of the shops. Although there is still a lot of traffic using the High Street, the number of vehicles has decreased following improvements to the A23 and the completion of the A264/M23 Crawley southwest bypass. Formerly part of the A279, the High Street at Handcross has now been down graded to a 'B' class road which is intended to make the route less attractive to through traffic. The Council will, in conjunction with the Highway Authority, keep the matter of road safety and congestion in the High Street under review. If necessary, further traffic management measures along the High Street will be considered.

### Community/Recreation Use

- 27.11 The possibility of providing a multi-use area, either on the recreation ground or on adjacent Department for Transport land (previously the A23), has been discussed by the Parish and District Council.