

## Introduction

- 31.1 Originally two separate settlements, the village of Keymer and Hassocks grew considerably after the opening of the railway in the 19th century. It is a relatively compact settlement which lies very close to, and enjoys magnificent views of, the South Downs. It is surrounded by undulating agricultural land which provides an attractive rural setting. A major ridge line runs to the north, where the countryside is prominent in views from the railway.
- 31.2 To the south, the boundary of the built-up area is broadly contiguous with the boundary of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Most of the agricultural land to the south of the village is clearly visible as the foreground in views from vantage points on the Downs, and the designation reflects the importance of this vulnerable downland fringe area in the overall concept of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In December 2002, an order was made for the designation of a South Downs National Park.
- 31.3 The oldest part of the settlement is in Keymer in the vicinity of the Greyhound Public House. Several buildings in this area are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest, of which the Manor House is the oldest, dating from the 15th Century. To the north-east of the built-up area is Oldland Mill dating from the 17th Century. It is one of the few remaining Post Mills still standing in the south-east.
- 31.4 Within the settlement there is a good range of social and community facilities including a local shopping centre, secondary school, primary schools, health centre, community centre, recreational facilities and children's play areas. There are also a number of small units of office accommodation within the village. The settlement's location, range of services and good train links have made it particularly attractive both to residents and tourists.

## Policies and Proposals

### Built-up Area Boundary

- 31.5 A built-up area boundary has been defined for Keymer and Hassocks in order to conserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development.

### Conservation Area

- 31.6 To help conserve the 'historic core' of the built-up area and to preserve the attractive approach into Keymer from Ditchling and along Lodge Lane, the Council designated this as a Conservation Area in January 1989. This part of Keymer has a long history, with evidence of settlement dating back to Roman times.
- 31.7 At the heart of the Conservation Area are seven listed buildings, the only ones within the built-up area of Keymer/Hassocks. Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are over 100 years old, with the Old Manor House (Nos. 102 and 104 Keymer Road) being the oldest and dating from the 15th Century.
- 31.8 The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:
- the small terraced cottages, known as Keymer Terrace, which, together with the

stone wall by the church, create a sense of enclosure as one enters the village from the east;

- the church sited on higher land which can be seen from all approaches;
- the attractive residential properties in The Crescent;
- the variety of properties in Lodge Lane;
- the stone walls, hedges and trees which provide variety to Lodge Lane;
- the bend in Keymer Road at the Lodge Lane junction adds interest to the street scene;
- views into and out of the Conservation Area; and
- the use of traditional building materials.

### **Strategic Gap**

- 31.9 The area between Keymer/Hassocks and Burgess Hill is defined as a strategic gap. The boundary closely follows the northern boundary of the villages between the Hurst Road and the County boundary on the eastern side of Keymer.

### **Local Gaps**

- 31.10 To the west and east there are narrow gaps between the settlement and the neighbouring villages of Hurstpierpoint and Ditchling respectively. Local gaps are defined for these areas.

## **Housing**

### **Highway Depot, London Road, Hassocks**

- 31.11 This is a 0.6 hectare site on the north west edge of Hassocks. The site consists of a group of buildings and hard surfaced areas currently in use by the County Council as a highway depot and workshops. Residential development lies to the south and south west, part of which previously formed part of the depot (Pavilion Close). The layout of any development should respect the amenity of existing residents. A footpath link through Pavilion Close will be required to enable access to the recreation ground.
- 31.12 Access to the site will be from London Road. The existing pedestrian/emergency access to Belmont Close must be maintained in any layout.

**KH1** Land at the highway depot, London Road, Hassocks (approximately 0.6 hectares) is allocated for residential development to provide approximately 20 residential units, 30% to be affordable housing units, comprising a mix of flats and houses. Permission will be subject to the general requirements of the Local Plan, particularly policies G3 (Infrastructure), B2 (Design), H2 (Dwelling Mix), H4 (Affordable Housing), T4 (New

**Development) and R3 and R4 (Outdoor Playing Space).**

**Additionally permission will be subject to the following requirements:**

- (a) access onto London Road;**
- (b) provision of a pedestrian link with Pavilion Close;**
- (c) the provision of a comprehensive landscaping scheme; and**
- (d) financial contributions towards the provision of additional secondary school places, enlarging the existing primary school, and provision towards civic amenity facilities.**

**Land west of Mackie Avenue**

- 31.13 Land to the west of Mackie Avenue and to the north of Queens Drive was identified by the Local Plan Inspector as being suitable for residential development. The Inspector recommended that 6 hectares should be allocated as a reserve site for up to 120 dwellings and should be brought forward for development during the plan period only if it is required to meet the Local Plan housing requirement. He also recommended that the Strategic Gap should be re-defined to exclude the land from the Gap, but that the land should for the time being remain outside the built up area.
- 31.14 The Council accepted these recommendations and the land is shown on the Keymer and Hassocks Inset Map. Land adjoining the public footpath which runs along the southern boundary of the site, which includes areas of existing woodland, should be laid out as Public Open Space. Land to the north of the housing area is suitable for laying out as playing fields.

**KH2**

**Land west of Mackie Avenue (6 hectares gross, 4 hectares net) is allocated as a reserve housing site for approximately 120 dwellings. Development will only be permitted during the plan period if the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the dwellings are needed to meet the Council's overall housing requirement. 30% of the dwellings will be affordable housing units. Permission will be subject to the general requirements of the Local Plan, particularly policy G3 (Infrastructure), B2 (Design), H2 (Dwelling Mix), T4 (New Development) and R3 and R4 (Outdoor Playing Space).**

**Permission will also be subject to the following requirements:**

- a) the principal access shall be from Mackie Avenue. Pedestrian/cycle access shall also be provided from Woodslan Road;**
- b) informal public open space which will include existing woodland, will be provided along the southern boundary of the site;**

- c) the existing woodland alongside the railway shall be retained;
- d) 5.5 hectares within the area identified on the Proposals Map to the north of the site shall be laid out as playing fields, the precise location to be determined by a Development Brief;
- e) financial contributions towards the provision of additional primary and secondary school places, the provision of improved community facilities, sustainable transport initiatives and civic amenity facilities; and
- f) the installation of traffic calming measures in Grand Avenue and other local roads.

## Employment

### Hassocks Goods Yard

31.15 A site of approximately 1.19 hectares lies to the west of the railway line in Hassocks which is presently used as a goods yard and contains a number of buildings, many of which are vacant. However, there is a successful builder's yard at the southern end of the site and the potential exists for further low-key industrial uses to be provided. The Local Planning Authority therefore wishes to preserve this site as a valuable source of local non-retail/non-office employment. However, the site has a substandard access and there should not be any intensification of activity on the site unless highway improvements are carried out. The impact on residential amenity will also be an important consideration.

**KH3 Proposals for the intensification of employment uses at Hassocks railway station goods yard will be considered favourably only where the development includes satisfactory highway improvements.**

## Shopping

31.16 The main shopping area centres on the Keymer Road, and stretches from Woodland Road to Orion Parade, opposite Wilmington Close. It is a popular local centre which provides a good range of shopping facilities and services for residents, particularly those without access to a car, and visitors catering primarily for everyday needs. It also serves the day to day needs of the surrounding rural area.

## Transport and Parking

### Cycle Tracks - Hassocks to Burgess Hill

- 31.17 The District Council, in association with the County Council, recently converted the existing footway along the eastern side of the A273 between Hassocks and Burgess Hill to a cycle track. The adopted Local Plans for both South Mid Sussex and Burgess Hill also provide for a parallel countryside cycleway/bridleway/footpath link. A preferred route was shown on the Proposals Map of both plans based on the information available at the time. This route ran from Woodland Road, Hassocks, through the countryside to the east of the railway line into the southern part of Burgess Hill. Efforts have been made to implement this recreational route and the Local Planning Authority considers that its promotion remains appropriate. The proposed route is shown on the Proposals Map.

**KH4 A recreational cycle track / bridleway / footpath is proposed between Hassocks and Burgess Hill to run through the countryside parallel to the A273.**

### **Cycle Track - Hurstpierpoint to Hassocks**

- 31.18 The District Council, in association with the County Council, will investigate the possibility of providing a cycle route between Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint as there is a particular need to provide a safe route for schoolchildren travelling between the two settlements. It is considered that, owing to the narrow width of the existing footway alongside the B2116, it will not be possible to convert it to a cycle path. Consequently, a countryside route is considered to be a more viable option.

### **Hassocks Railway Station**

- 31.19 The South Mid Sussex area is served by Hassocks railway station from which Govia, current operators of Thameslink, provide services on the London to Brighton main line. The station is used not only by those living in Keymer/Hassocks, but also by those from a wider rural catchment.
- 31.20 Hassocks station is important to the local economy. It is also an essential part of the overall provision of services to the community. The Council is anxious to see the current level of rail services maintained and not reduced. To this end the Council has expressed its support for the Thameslink 2000 project which will allow an increased number of direct services to the north of London, including stops at Hassocks. The Council will also continue to encourage the train operating companies to maintain and where possible improve the level and standard of rail services at Hassocks station. Improvements to the facilities at the station will also be strongly encouraged.

### **Long Stay Commuter Parking**

- 31.21 A survey carried out in 1987 found that over 200 cars were parked all day in the vicinity of Hassocks railway station. Although the majority of these use the station car park a considerable number were also parked in surrounding residential streets, particularly in Semley Road and Stanford Avenue. As there is spare capacity in the station car park the Council intends to investigate measures, in conjunction with the County Council, to restrict on street parking in the most congested areas and to encourage better use of the existing car park. Further consideration will be given to extending off-street parking provision if the need becomes apparent.

### **Heavy Goods Vehicles**

- 31.22 West of Stonepound Crossroads there is a weight restriction on vehicles travelling into Hurstpierpoint. A lorry management scheme was introduced in February 1997 preventing heavy vehicles travelling through Keymer and Hassocks. In addition a number of traffic calming measures have been implemented in an effort to improve traffic conditions in the villages.

### **Leisure and Recreation Use**

#### **Children's Playing Space**

- 31.23 Keymer/Hassocks lacks children's playing space in terms of quantity and distribution. At Adastra Park, which is well located in the centre of the village, the Parish Council would like to enhance the facilities by providing a multi-use hard court play area.

#### **Outdoor Sports Provision**

- 31.24 Playing field provision is concentrated at Adastra Park which has a community hall and associated facilities at its southern end.
- 31.25 The District Council, together with Hassocks Parish Council, has purchased land south of Parklands Road on the southern edge of the settlement in order to protect existing uses comprising allotments and open space. This area is extensively used by residents of the village for recreational purposes. The London Road and Talbot Field Recreation Grounds in the Parish of Clayton also provide recreation facilities.
- 31.26 The 1990 Local Plan and the Deposit Draft Mid Sussex Local Plan 2000 allocated additional land for recreational use in Keymer/Hassocks, due to the popularity of the existing recreation grounds and the intensity of their use. The previously derelict 'Clayton Nurseries' site off London Road was identified as suitable for additional playing fields. Efforts have been made to implement this proposal, but the Council has been unable to acquire the land. New glasshouses have now been developed on the northern part of the allocation and planning permission has been granted for crop protection tunnels. It is therefore no longer appropriate to allocate this land for recreational use, it will be shown as countryside area of development restraint on the Proposals Map. However, the requirement for additional recreational land remains. Land to the south and west of Hassocks Football Club has been identified by the Council as a suitable area to replace the previous allocation. Vehicular access to the site will be from the Brighton Road (A273), but to enable safe pedestrian access it is also proposed to provide a footpath between the playing fields and South Bank. In order to provide pedestrian access from Clayton in the south, a further footpath is proposed from Misty's Bridge. This will also provide a link with the informal open space at Butchers Wood and Lag Wood and with the residential areas east of the railway.

**KH5** Approximately 4 hectares of land to the south and west of Hassocks Football Club off the Brighton Road (A273) is allocated for recreational use and formal sport. Footpaths will be provided from South Bank and Misty's Bridge to allow safe pedestrian access.

- 31.27 Land will be laid out for playing fields as part of the development of the site allocated by policy KH2 (Land West of Mackie Avenue) if the site is needed to meet the council's overall housing requirement.

### **Butchers Wood and Lag Wood**

- 31.28 To the south of Bonny Wood Road there is an attractive woodland area some 16 hectares in extent. This comprises Butchers Wood, Lag Wood and the open land between them. The area is within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty. Both Butchers Wood and Lag Wood are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, and Lag Wood and the open land on its northern edge are covered by an Article 4 Direction under the General Permitted Development Order. Within the woods there are a variety of tree species and other wildlife. The Council considers the area to be an important landscape feature in a sensitive downland fringe location which contributes significantly to the setting of Keymer/Hassocks when viewed from the Downs. Any development proposals would be strongly resisted by the Local Planning Authority.
- 31.29 Public access to the area is limited to a track which passes along its western edge linking Hassocks Station to the Clayton Windmills, a footpath passing along the northern edge of Lag Wood, and another footpath passing the southern edge of Butchers Wood, which has been purchased by the Woodland Trust, with a 50% grant towards the purchase being given by the District Council. There is currently no formal public access into Lag Wood and the open area to the north, which is in private ownership. The Council considers that both Lag Wood and Butchers Wood should be made accessible to the residents of Keymer/Hassocks for quiet, informal recreation. This would provide an invaluable local amenity and would help to preserve the special landscape quality of the area and benefit all forms of wildlife. The Council will therefore investigate means by which public access to Lag Wood can be improved. These investigations will include the possible designation of both woods as a Local Nature Reserve in order to protect nature conservation interest.

**KH6 Butchers Wood and Lag Wood are allocated as informal public open space.**

### **Footpath link between Keymer / Hassocks and Whitelands Reservoir**

- 31.30 The 1990 Local Plan proposed the establishment of a footpath between Parklands Road at Keymer/Hassocks and Whitelands Reservoir. Efforts have been made to implement this proposal and the Council considers that the promotion of such a route remains appropriate. The route will be the subject of discussions between the Local Authority, landowners and walking interests. A suggested route is shown on the Proposals Map.

**KH7 A footpath link is proposed between Parklands Road, Keymer/Hassocks and Whitelands Reservoir.**

## **Community Facilities**

### **Hassocks County Infants School**

- 31.31 West Sussex County Council, as the Education Authority, has identified ways of

improving the existing accommodation available to the Hassocks County Infants School. Any necessary building work will be considered for inclusion in a future capital programme. The first planned improvement comprising a new hall was completed in 1999. The District Council favours the retention of the Infants School at its present location, and if the proposals involve new building, would wish to see the attractive facade of the existing building retained.

### **Library**

- 31.32 In the long term the siting of the Keymer/Hassocks Library, currently in Stafford House, will be reconsidered by the County Council. A more central site nearer to the shopping centre is likely to be sought but in the meantime improvements, such as increased car parking and improved information facilities, will be undertaken when the opportunity arises.

### **Burial Ground Extension at Keymer**

- ~~31.33 The operation and management of local burial grounds is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council of Keymer and Clayton. Burials currently take place at the churchyards in Keymer and Clayton. As the capacity of these churchyards had almost been reached, the District Council acquired land for a burial ground extension to serve Keymer and Clayton only. This land has been transferred to Hassocks Parish Council.~~

~~**KH8** — Approximately 0.5 hectares of land to the south of St. Cosmos and St. Damien Church is allocated for a burial ground extension.~~