

## Introduction

- 25.1 The village of Cuckfield occupies an elevated position to the west of Haywards Heath and is surrounded by attractive Wealden countryside. The village centre, based on South Street and the High Street, is a designated Conservation Area. This contains a mixture of uses including a number of shops, small offices and restaurants, pubs and residential properties, together with the former Elizabethan Cuckfield Grammar School and Church. The small hamlet of Brook Street lies close to the northern edge of Cuckfield.
- 25.2 The village is bounded to the west and north by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the landscape to the south of Cuckfield is considered by the Council to be of equal quality to that of the AONB. The land slopes to the south giving fine views across the Weald towards the South Downs. The area is characterised by small fields broken up by blocks of woodland and small streams that have created steep ghylls in the undulating landscape.
- 25.3 Cuckfield is well served with local shops in High Street and Whitemans Green. The village is also well provided with community and recreational facilities including Queens Hall, Edith Paine Library, museum, meeting rooms. There is also a recreation ground with tennis courts, cricket ground, allotments and playing fields at Whitemans Green.

## Policies and Proposals

### Built-up Area Boundary

- 25.4 A built-up area boundary is defined for Cuckfield which seeks to preserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development. The boundary excludes the scattering of dwellings along Brook Street, to the north of the village.

### Strategic Gap

- 25.5 The area between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield is a strategic gap. The boundary of the strategic gap runs along the eastern side of the built-up area boundary of the village.

### Conservation Areas

- 25.6 In recognition of the special character and appearance of parts of Cuckfield two Conservation Areas have been designated.

#### Cuckfield Conservation Area

- 25.7 The central part of the village which focuses on South Street and the High Street was designated a Conservation Area in 1969 in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest. In 1989 the Conservation Area was extended to include the Courtmead Road area.
- 25.8 Buildings in the historic part of Cuckfield village lie along narrow winding streets. The majority of the buildings are domestic in scale. There are several surviving medieval buildings. The rising ground from South Street northwards gives the lower part of the High Street a distinctive character. The Church dates from the 13th century and is a Grade 1 Listed Building. Ockenden Manor, now a hotel, is a complex structure of three buildings dating from the late sixteenth century. A distinctive landmark in the Conservation Area is the 'Umbrella' cedar in South Street.

25.9 The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

- the variety of buildings both in terms of age and architectural style including timber framing, a variety of brick bonds, original features such as windows, chimneys and doors;
- the use of natural and traditional building materials including clay tiled roofs, sandstone, Horsham Stone roofs, mathematical tiles, tile hanging and stucco;
- the enclosed character of South Street and the south end of the High Street;
- attractive views up and down the High Street; views both inside and outside the Conservation Area towards the Holy Trinity Church spire; views outwards from the Conservation Area towards the countryside including the South Downs and the High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- the attractive historic street lamps;
- several attractive walls particularly along Ockenden Lane;
- the many trees and hedges which make a valuable contribution to the appearance of the Courtmead area; and
- the spacious layout of the buildings and the wide grass verges in Courtmead Road.

25.10 In recognition of the special quality of Cuckfield Conservation Area the Council made an Article 4(2) Direction in 1995 covering part of the Conservation Area. The purpose of making the direction is to enable the Council to control unsympathetic alterations to dwelling houses in the Conservation Area, under Article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Leaflets are available from the Council which provide further details on Conservation Areas and Article 4 Directions.

#### **Whitemans Green Conservation Area**

25.11 In 1989 Whitemans Green Conservation Area was designated. Whitemans Green is an area characterised by small cottages set around a tree lined green. The green with the surrounding residential properties, post office, village store and garage gives the area the identity of a village nucleus. The following features, in particular, contribute to its character:

- tree lined village green with the attractive grouping of buildings around it;
- the variety of buildings of different ages and architectural style;
- the five listed buildings, the earliest of which dates back to the 15th century;
- the many trees and hedges which make a valuable contribution to the appearance of the area;
- the attractive countryside views especially of the South Downs from the western section of the Conservation Area; and
- the lane off Whitemans Green up to Vilders Cottage, which is attractively tree and hedge lined.

## Area of Townscape Character

- 25.12 The Council has designated parts of Cuckfield as Areas of Townscape Character in accordance with Policy B16 of the Built Environment Chapter. The Council will pay particular attention to any proposals for development or redevelopment in these areas, having regard for their special townscape character. It will seek to ensure that this character is protected and where possible enhanced by any new development proposals. These areas have been identified on the relevant Proposals Map.

### **CU1 An Area of Townscape Character has been designated at London Road, Cuckfield.**

## Housing

### Land to West of High Street Cuckfield

- 25.13 Within the village of Cuckfield one site has been allocated for housing. This is a 2.4 hectare site at the northern end of Cuckfield High Street. The eastern side of the site is adjacent to an Area of Townscape Character. The layout of any residential development should respect the character of the High Street. Views of the site from the open countryside to the west are screened by the tree belt along the western boundary. This tree boundary would require careful management and new planting. An area to the north west of the site should be used to form a landscape buffer. This steeply sloping and well wooded area is likely to include a balancing pond and ancillary open space and is not suitable for development. There are a number of preserved trees on the site and development should be undertaken in such a way to ensure that the need for future tree surgery because of unacceptable light loss or shading is minimised. The layout should also include areas of open space along the public right of way through the site and fronting the High Street. Landscaping to allow for the retention of the trees and views into the site from the High Street. Recent investigations in the Cuckfield area have revealed extensive archaeological features. This site may well produce evidence for the northern edge of the Medieval settlement.
- 25.14 Access to the site will be from High Street, but traffic calming measures by way of a mini-roundabout at the junction of London Road and London Lane will be required. The provision of pedestrian crossing enhancements in the village will be investigated.

### **CU2 Land to the West of High Street, Cuckfield (approximately 2.4 hectares) is allocated for housing development to provide approximately 50 dwellings, 30% to be affordable housing units. Permission for residential development 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) satisfactory access from the High Street;
- (b) traffic calming measures by installation of a mini - roundabout and measures to improve pedestrian movements in and around the High Street;
- (c) the retention of the existing preserved trees on the site in such a manner that they will not be adversely affected by future development;
- (d) retention of public right of way across the site including an area of open space along its length;
- (e) the provision of an area of open space fronting the High Street, with housing fronting onto the open space whilst retaining views from the High Street into the site;
- (f) financial contribution towards the provision of additional secondary school places, enlarging the existing primary school, additional library facilities at Haywards Heath, civic amenity facilities and possible contribution towards public transport; and
- (g) the provision of a wildlife survey.

### **Community Use/ Recreation**

25.15 The District Council has identified deficiencies in some aspects of outdoor playing space in the local area compared to the NPFA minimum standards and surveys undertaken in the preparation of the Council's Mid Sussex Playing Pitch Strategy. Consequently the District Council is actively exploring the possibility of bringing additional land in Cuckfield into recreational use. This is shown on the Proposals Map. Careful consideration will need to be given to the Whitemans Green frontage.

#### **CU3 Land immediately west of Whitemans Green Recreation Ground, Cuckfield is allocated for recreational use, as an extension to the existing playing fields.**

25.16 Children's playspace provision within the village has been improved by the introduction of dual use play facilities at the school site on Glebe Road. The development of the Cuckfield Hospital site also included a number of playground areas.

25.17 New England Wood is held in trust as a nature reserve and an area of informal recreation for Cuckfield residents. Newbury Pond to the south of the village is a nature reserve leased by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and is valuable for its aquatic flora and fauna. Cuckfield Churchyard is also of interest for its rich variety of grasses and wild flowers.

25.18 The former site of the village Primary School, north of the Church, is within the Conservation Area and is a Listed Building dating from the sixteenth century. It originally housed the Old Grammar School. This building now provides a venue for activities for

the local community.

~~25.19 In conjunction with the Highway Authority the District Council supports the development of a cycleway from Muster Green and Bolnore Road to Cuckfield. The route would follow the A272 to the Cuckfield By pass and continue along Broad Street. The possibility of upgrading the existing footpath link (running along the southern boundary of Warden Park) to cycleway status to provide direct access to the school will be investigated.~~

~~CU4 A cycleway between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield is proposed.~~

