

A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening Environmental Statement • Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

We plan to widen a 3.8 kilometre section of the A23 in West Sussex between Handcross and Warninglid to make it safer and improve congestion. To help us understand and reduce the impacts on the environment, we have undertaken an environmental impact assessment of the proposals - this is recorded in an Environmental Statement (ES).

This leaflet provides a non-technical summary of the ES. To see the full ES, please visit one of the libraries or offices whose addresses are listed on the page 5.

The need to widen the A23

The A23 is the main route between London and Brighton, and the section between Handcross and Warninglid is the last remaining section of unimproved carriageway. There is a need to increase safety because of the current poor visibility, bends and steep gradients of the carriageway, direct accesses from private and commercial properties, and poor junction layouts with short slip roads.

Every day this section of the A23 carries over 65,000 vehicles (both directions), which is far more than the road was built for, and as a result congestion occurs at peak periods.

This flow is expected to rise to at least 75,000 vehicles per day in 2013. By implementing these works we would improve safety and make journey times more reliable.

What would happen?

We would:

- widen the road from two to three lanes in each direction;
- straighten bends and smooth out the gradient making the road safer by improving visibility;
- close existing direct accesses onto the A23 from properties and side roads, and provide safer alternative routes; and

- improve existing junctions at Handcross, Slaugham and Warninglid.

What would be the outcome of the proposed scheme?

- traffic flowing more smoothly along the A23, resulting in fewer accidents, reduced driver stress and more reliable journey times;
- safer access onto the A23 at junctions;
- improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, including a pedestrian subway and a new cycleway along the A23; and
- improved drainage and treatment of road runoff.

Photomontage View looking south from east verge of the A23 at Chainage 750 near East park

Image: Existing view with mature trees in the central reserve.



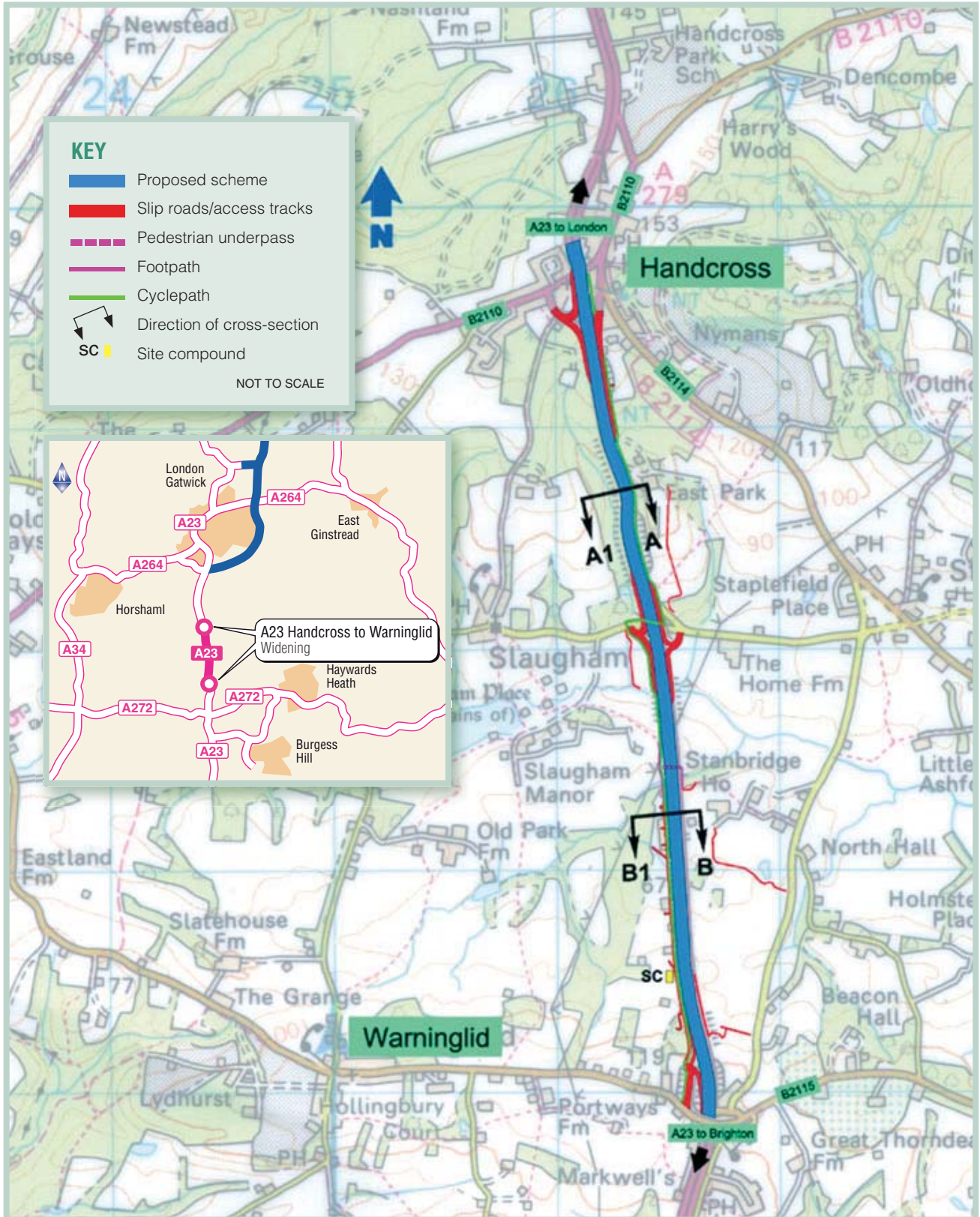
Photograph: View 15 years after completion of construction showing the merging of the southbound on slip from Handcross.



Summary of the Environmental Statement

Topic	Issue	How we would reduce the impact	Long-term impact
Policies and Plans	Potentially adverse impact on some policies to prevent damage to the environment, but potentially beneficial impact on policies to reduce congestion, improve road safety, encourage economic growth, create new habitats, and improve walking and cycling provision.	Mitigation measures would be put in place to reduce or eliminate any potentially adverse impacts on the environment as described below.	Neutral
Air Quality	Air quality could be made worse by increased traffic volume, but there would be a potential beneficial impact due to reduced congestion.	There would be no significant impact on air quality and therefore no additional action would be required.	Neutral
Noise and Vibration	Widening the carriageway, creating new access tracks, and increased traffic volume could result in increased noise and vibration.	Lower noise road surfacing would reduce noise and vibration levels compared with standard asphalt.	Slight adverse impact
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	Risk of damage to archaeological sites during excavations.	An archaeologist would be present for all ground excavations near areas of archaeological interest to ensure that no damage occurred.	Slight adverse impact
Ecology and Nature Conservation	Potentially adverse impact on a number of designated sites, habitats and species, including a local wildlife site, areas of Ancient woodland, and dormouse, bat, bird, great crested newt and reptile populations.	Measures that would be undertaken include creation of new habitat, eradication of introduced species (rhododendron and American skunk cabbage) from local woodland, installing a dedicated tunnel for wildlife under the A23 and widening existing culverts, and using retaining walls instead of embankments to minimise land take of woodland.	Moderate adverse impact
Landscape and Visual	The works would take place wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, potentially causing an adverse impact on the landscape. There would be potential adverse visual impacts on properties, footpaths and access land, road users, and cultural heritage resources.	Landscape input into the proposed scheme includes design of earthworks and structures - for example, stonework on retaining walls and the Slaugham Bridge widening would be made to match local character. Woodland and hedgerow planting would be undertaken as replacement for lost vegetation, and a 1.5m high visual screen fence would be used at some locations.	Moderate adverse impact on landscape character Large adverse visual impact on 1 receptor Moderate adverse visual impact on 8 receptors Slight adverse visual impact on 13 receptors
Land Use	Loss of good quality agricultural land and removal of accesses would affect residential, commercial and farm properties.	Landowners would be financially compensated for the loss of land, and new safer accesses provided where required.	Substantial adverse impact
Geology, Soils, and Geomorphology	Potential problems of ground stability and possible disturbance of contaminated soils would occur. Potential adverse impacts on geomorphology of streams due to stream realignment at culverts.	No significant impacts have been identified. The works would aim to recycle fill material for earthworks. Soil would be chemically tested for pollutants before being reused. Geomorphological input to the culverts and drainage design would ensure that any adverse impacts would be minimal. However, it is anticipated that potential impacts on the upstream geomorphology of the Orange Gill stream could retain a moderate residual adverse impact. While the residual impact on Orange Gill Stream would not directly be mitigated for, beneficial work would be carried out on the River Ouse.	Neutral Slight adverse impact
Road Drainage and the Water Environment	There would be potential for runoff from the road to pollute the River Ouse and Anne's Wood Stream and other small watercourses.	New ponds would be constructed to control runoff from the road, and new water treatment areas together with oil interceptors would treat any pollution from the runoff.	Slight beneficial impact
Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects	The existing A23 is difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to cross and for cyclists to use.	A new subway for pedestrians would link two existing public footpaths. A new dedicated cycleway/footpath would also be built along the entire length of the proposed scheme.	Moderate beneficial impact
Vehicle Travellers	The existing A23 causes high levels of stress on drivers due to the poor road layout, leading to accidents and congestion.	The proposed scheme would improve safety and traffic flow by straightening bends, smoothing gradients, providing an additional lane in each direction, improving junction layouts and closing direct accesses onto the A23.	Moderate beneficial impact

Topic	Issue	How we would reduce the impact	Long-term impact
Disruption due to Construction	<p>During construction, potential impacts would include accidental spillage of chemicals, impacts to water quality from pollution and increased sedimentation.</p> <p>Severance impacts for bats and birds, disturbance of the landscape and land uses, increased levels of dust and noise and vibration due to machinery would also occur.</p> <p>There would be disruption for pedestrians and cyclists and delays to drivers.</p>	A Construction Environmental Management Plan would be put into practice to reduce social and environmental impacts. Traffic management would keep two lanes open in each direction during the works, with some night-time lane closures.	No long term impact



Questions and answers about the work

When would the work take place?

If given the go-ahead, we plan to start in summer 2011 and finish by summer 2013.

How would we manage environmental impacts?

Before we start the work we would prepare and follow a Construction Environmental Management Plan. This would set out the methods of working and meet the UK's environmental laws.

What advanced work would be required for the proposed scheme?

Advanced environmental works would take place prior to the start of construction to manage potential impacts on wildlife. These works would include hedge planting and the management of existing hedges for dormice and bats, installation of wildlife boxes, provision of fencing to exclude wildlife from the construction site and protect vegetation, relocation of protected species and the planting of compensatory habitats areas.

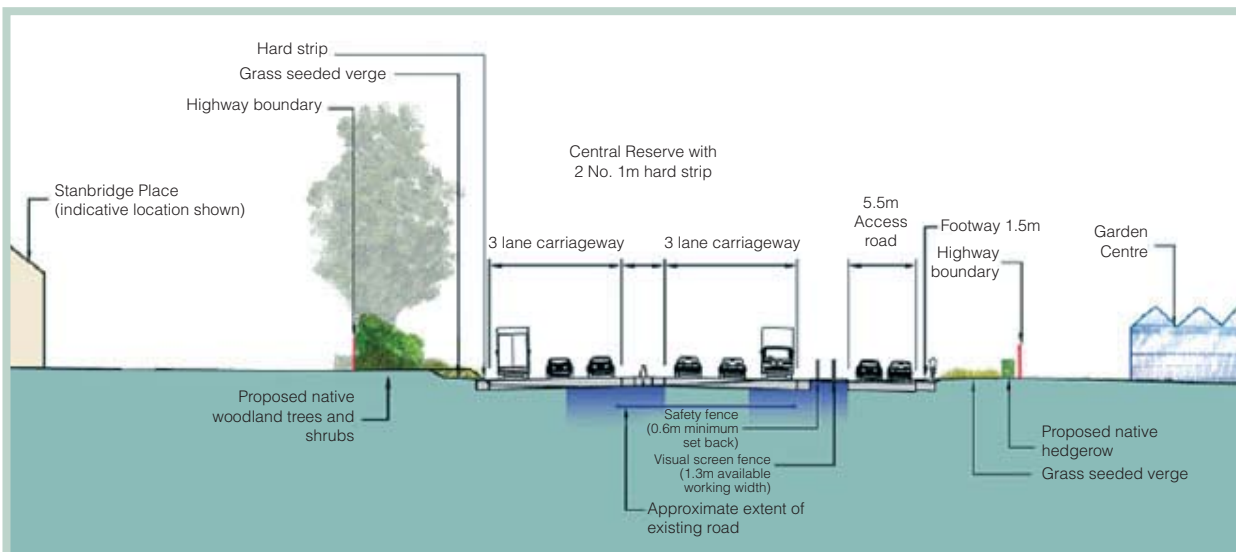
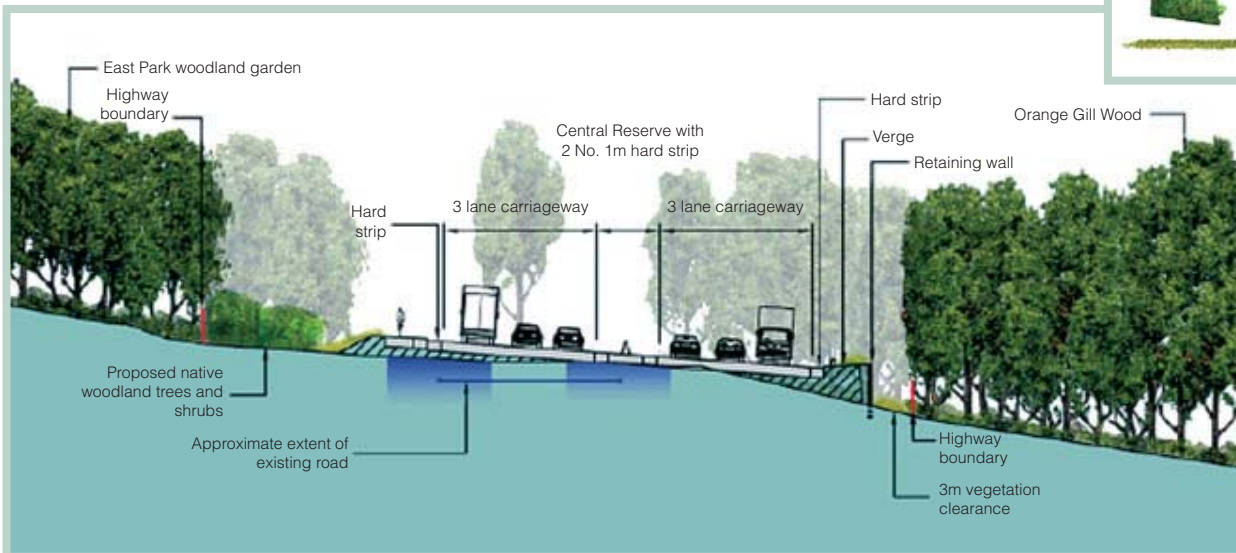
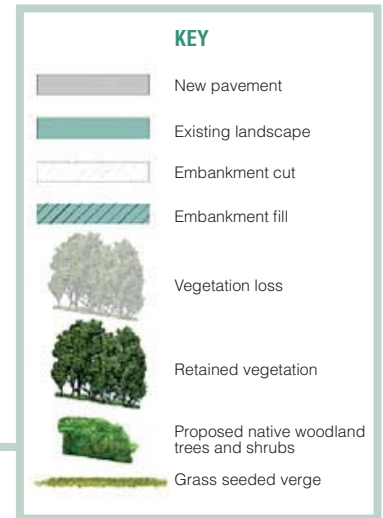
How would we keep traffic moving during the work?

Two lanes would remain open in each direction during the day, for the duration of construction. Some lane closures would potentially take place for night working.

Where would the construction compound and site offices be based?

The construction compound and site offices would be located on vacant land on the western side of the A23 at the southern end of the proposed Scheme, to the south of Stanbridge View properties.

The site would be accessed by constructing a new service road from Warninglid.



How to see the full Environmental Statement

You can see this free of charge during normal office opening hours at the following places:

- Highways Agency, Major Projects (South), Federated House, London Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1SZ
- West Sussex County Council, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RQ
- Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS
- Handcross Post Office, High Street, Handcross, West Sussex, RH17 6BJ
- Whitemans Green Post Office, Whitemans Green, West Sussex RH17 5JU
- Haywards Heath Library, 34 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1BN

Copies of the Environmental Statement may be purchased from the A23 Handcross to Warninglid Team at the Highways Agency address, at the following prices:

- £40.00 for hard copy of Volume 1a
- £45.00 for hard copy of Volume 1b
- £100.00 for hard copies of all supporting Technical Reports
- £5.00 for a CD of the full ES

A digital copy of the Environmental Statement can be downloaded free of charge from the Highways Agency website (www.highways.gov.uk) in PDF format. Please see the website for details of how to view these files.

Come and find out more

Please come to the exhibition about our work where you can see plans and talk to Highways Agency staff about the scheme.

The exhibition will be open as follows:

Friday 7 November 2008 2pm - 9pm

Saturday 8 November 2008 10am - 4pm

St Mary's Church, Slaugham, West Sussex

The free Community bus will operate between Handcross, Slaugham, Staplefield and Warninglid during exhibition opening times.

Your views

If you wish to support or comment on or object to the draft Orders, put forward alternative proposals or comment on the Environmental Statement you should write to:

A23 Handcross to Warninglid Project Team. Highways Agency, Major Projects, Federated House, London Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1SZ

The closing date for comments is 23 January 2009

What happens next?

Depending on the weight and nature of any objections received a Public Inquiry may be held before an independent Inspector in 2009. All those who have responded will be notified individually at least six weeks beforehand and notices will appear in the local press.

All comments received will be made available to the Inspector, who may decide to make them public. Publicity will be given to any alternative proposals received.

Following any Public Inquiry, the Secretary of State will consider the recommendations made by the Inspector in his report before deciding whether or not to proceed with the scheme.

Contacting the Highways Agency

For questions or comments

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 3p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more.)

For live traffic information

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more.)



Safe driving at roadworks

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.



During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.