

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'K': CHAPTER 5 - BUNTINGFORD

Question 27: Growth Options for Buntingford

Please rank the growth options for Buntingford in order of preference. Is there another approach we have not considered?

124 people / organisations provided comments in relation to Question 27. These included:

- 111 Individuals / Residents
- 5 Developers / Landowners / Agents / Businesses
- 7 Stakeholders / Organisations including:
 - Broxbourne Woods Area Conservation Society
 - Buntingford Civic Society
 - Environment Agency
 - HCC Passenger Transport Unit
 - Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
 - Thames Water
 - The Thatching Information Service
- 1 Town and Parish Council (Buntingford Town Council)

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
Support for Buntingford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be given a degree of priority - plenty of land around Buntingford that could be utilised without encroaching on Green Belt • Could accommodate a little infilling • Major roads • Towns are most appropriate especially Buntingford, able to absorb larger developments and improving existing services and facilities; expand Buntingford to an economic size to provide facilities for rural area • Stortford, Hertford Ware are already crammed and overpopulated - room for expansion in Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth • Ware, Hertford and Sawbridgeworth haven't got good roads in rush hour - Buntingford and Stortford have
Objection to Buntingford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not comparable to other towns - small size, lack of infrastructure, no rail link • significant development taking place without future service planning for health and schools, quality of life • Need to update housing figures in document - recent development means that Buntingford has already had 10 years worth • Expansion has been poor quality which does not reflect important historic merit of existing buildings, increasing housing stock will do little to enhance this • Keep rural feel of Buntingford, character, green, character damaged by significant development • No more homes in town; no options suitable • Towns at capacity cannot support extra housing - roads terrible and trains full; road infrastructure is too antiquated/inferior especially A414 Hertford; none of these towns can sustain intensive housing development; towns had more than fair share, already congested • Important for schooling village children but no local employment and poor public transport = commuting and dormitory town
Buntingford - poor infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rail link, leisure (kids have nothing), broadband, drainage/sewage, cars, employment, policing and fire (part time), schools oversubscribed, long way from hospitals, doctors, dentists, sports, allotments, burial facilities - reason for low

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
	values; large numbers of additional housing would increase in commuting, congestion
Buntingford - General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve landscape setting, keep town as compact as possible • Whatever happens will require massive investment in infrastructure esp transport; options can only be ranked based on clear vision for infrastructure including funding • Guided by natural limitations to growth e.g. bypass and land availability. Against uncontrolled growth • Support recognition that development needs to help reduce carbon emissions • Needs housing for maturing families not first/second time buyers • No options are perfect but development is necessary • Ranking based on rail transportation and bus services • Problem with all options is distance from town centre. Need additional parking and shuttle mini-bus • Need to be near to major roads • Preserve some “green fingers” along existing rights of way and river corridors • Must take into account swallow holes (geology) when determining locations for development
Growth option 1: built-up area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity, lack of land to build on, built up a lot, congested; remaining green spaces should be preserved, • Close to existing transport provision and able to enhance provision • Optimum option meet Core Strategy objectives and would concentrate development in sustainable location; redevelopment of existing land, need to preserve land for agricultural use; help keep town as compact as possible • Apply sequential test and approach - development will need to be located outside of flood zone 3. However, redevelopment may help to reduce flood risk for existing properties
Sainsbury's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for carefully planned housing (height); may be able to accommodate all housing and employment <u>need</u>; only remaining location in option 1; access to roundabout; plenty of industrial units to north • Not suitable - not appropriate location, not accessible for housing, • Retain for employment use as recommended by Employment Study; prospect for retaining/redeveloping site for economic development should not be excluded • Standalone option and first preference
Growth option 2: Southwest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect of sewerage, south to the town is most suitable although need to demonstrate to adverse impact on amenity through odour • Unsuitable - spoil nature of Aspenden and Westmill; traffic noise from bypass; conflict with sewage works; narrow lanes, high quality agricultural, segregated from key services, flood zones • Do not support • Dependent upon extent - becoming remote from existing service provision, careful layout required • Relates well to settlement, contained by bypass (not urban sprawl) and less sensitive landscape setting; referred to in HCA & EoSA; South and west scored first and second in SA by Scott Wilson • Near major roads • Apply sequential test and approach - development will need to be located outside of flood zone 3 (River Rib) - natural buffer zone along river • Westwards ok, but not southwards; infill westwards to bypass; Buntingford west outside flood zone • Any new houses should be in areas that are clearly delineated e.g. by a bypass • Available for development, no impact of agricultural loss, access from bypass, can be designed to avoid noise, can include retail, good connectivity, acceptable in

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
	sewerage and water terms, free from significant environmental and technical constraints, surface water balancing
Growth option 3: North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to shopping frontage, well screened, close to employment, defensible boundary, no designations, lack of coalescence, accessible, available, not in flood zone • completely outside accessibility criteria - require diversions and service enhancements - unsustainable in long term • Least preferred as part of transition of town to rural area and exacerbate traffic congestion, public footpaths need to be protected, area of archaeological significance, wildlife site • Would not despoil landscape • Any new houses should be in areas that are clearly delineated e.g. by a bypass • Some space • Apply sequential test and approach - development will need to be located outside of flood zone 3 (River Rib floodplain) natural buffer. Largest area of floodplain to the east of Ermine St only • Unsuitable - presence of swallow holes; noise; do not support • Ensure development does not spread further north than necessary
Growth option 4: Northeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuitable - availability of land?; floodplain; parklands of Corneybury; Remote and difficult to serve • High elevation would ruin landscape and lead to urban sprawl, town's escape route to countryside • Most suitable option. Land is available (dispute statement in Core Strategy), no known environmental or ownership constraints, assist with housing supply, would 'round-off extent of town on lower slope and permanent boundary established, include proposal for CHP and assist with carbon emission reductions • Lots of space
Growth option 5: east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuitable - narrow lanes, high quality agricultural, segregated from key services, flood zones • Logical to go southeast to avoid elongation and spread to west of A10; help keep town as compact as possible • Close to existing transport provision and able to enhance provision • Lots of space • Positively against on rising land to east • Apply sequential test and approach - development will need to be located outside of flood zone 3 (Hailey Hill Main Ditch watercourse) • Snells Mead area is suitable - walkable to co-op supermarket • No topographical or boundary issues, maturing boundary exists which would be comprehensive by time site was developed
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community has to decide • No Green Belt shown for Buntingford • None • Preclude Q22 options d and c? • East to bypass • Expansion compactor • Sawbridgeworth not comparable to Stortford, Hertford, Ware • Besides having somewhere to live, larger population needs something to do esp teenagers and not just sports facilities • Consult Environment Agency • Many • Concentrate on social housing where car use is not priority - rebuild communities • Young and old people like towns but for different reasons • Only people to profit are developers and builders

Comments received to Q27 in respect of other Chapters

Chapter 1: Background and Context

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If building in towns need to provide more infrastructure; depends on available funding and cost of extending infrastructure including public transport, road improvements to cater for increased traffic; growth without infrastructure is stupid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure minimal impact on existing housing stock and infrastructure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure cause difficulties - major demolition and start from scratch

Chapter 2: Key Issues and Vision

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
Theme 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer smaller accommodation to smaller families leaving larger properties for larger families
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only build small properties - people live alone and can be housed in a smaller area - don't need executive houses only rich can afford

Chapter 3: Development Strategy

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
Opposition to growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth and development can't continue forever; not developing; no new houses in any areas - southeast already congested; campaign to limit immigration: fewer people = fewer houses;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration of deprived areas - not destruction of areas of beauty and cultural heritage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target of 8,500 is spurious, reject assumption we need these homes, drastically reduce this number, prefer no growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commuter dormitories - more housing is madness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot keep building on countryside - conserve countryside and rural character
Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For towns surrounded by Green Belt, option 1 is only option
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict to towns to preserve Green Belt, reduce congestion and ensure shops remain open and used by local residents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't build on Green Belt - designated for a reason
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out to natural boundaries e.g. bypasses before using Green Belt
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth should not be outward on Green Belt land: should be upward e.g. flats / maisonettes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If must use Green Belt land, should be on edge of towns
Approach to development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend towns round perimeter of each
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build houses where you would otherwise build offices and supermarkets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion outwards is best - keep centres more open
Approach to development - brownfield land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate empty properties and office blocks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase central densities of all towns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build only or firstly on all available brownfield land (disused office blocks, industrial sites, railway sidings)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-town sites are preferable provided they do not destroy historic fabric, character, layout
Housing targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep pressure off town centre areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fair to rank growth options until robust level of housing need has been established. • Ignore target driven approach and build according to local needs and budgets;

Q27 - Summary Comment	Q27 - Detailed Comment
	demand for housing should be based on population forecasts for this settlement and infrastructure constraints, Green Belt and local job prospects
Q22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread sensible number of homes (no flats) amongst every town, village, hamlet; maybe add a few dwellings to all options • 1: Hertford; 2: East Stortford; 3: Sawbridgeworth • Excludes east of Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage which adds to pressure to the towns on the periphery • North of Harlow • Watton-at-Stone & Stanstead Abbots - both have rail links • New towns near established transport links i.e. old airfields; new town of 8,500 with schools & hospitals or too expensive • Use Olympic stadia • South of Royston • Area between Westmill and Aspenden
Q23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of towns should be proportionate to existing; uniform distribution within existing town boundaries in proportion to their population

Question 28: Approaches to Development in Buntingford

Please rank the approaches to development in Buntingford in order of preference. Is there another approach we have not considered?

11 people / organisations provided comments in relation to Question 28. These included:

- 5 Individuals / Residents
- 3 Developers / Landowners / Agents / Businesses
- 2 Stakeholders / Organisations including:
 - Buntingford Civic Society
 - HCC Passenger Transport Unit
- 1 Town and Parish Council (Buntingford Town Council)

Q28 - Summary Comment	Q28 - Detailed Comment
Higher densities	• Adverse impact on character of Buntingford and views of it from surrounding countryside
	• In terms of transport provision, higher densities favoured as more likely to be commercially viable
	• Caused high land values, congestion and overcrowding
	• Recent developments have been higher density with smaller gardens and inadequate parking, which if it continues, will discourage people from putting down roots
Medium densities	• Range of densities required; providing houses of different densities to attract and keep a balance of population; mix of housing styles and densities to cater for different lifestyles
	• 30-40dph providing a range of housing types and respecting urban design and landscape;
	• Density of 33-35dph is publically and commercially viable
Lower densities	• Protect quality of life; buffer zones, rural character, space for family
Case by case basis	• Density needs to be assessed on an individual basis taking into account site characteristics;
Housing Mix	• Need to build more family housing 2, 3, 4 bed
	• Elderly accommodation (e.g. flats) should be built close to town centre
	• More bungalows, not larger houses
Other	• Need employment opportunities and parking otherwise lead to out-commuting
	• Planning not just for next few years but for generations to come
	• No growth
	• Broad socio-economic mix required
Parking	• Adequate parking should be provided
	• Can't force people not to own cars

Question 29: Buntingford Vision

Do you agree with the emerging vision for Buntingford?

14 people / organisations provided comments in relation to Question 29. These included:

- 3 individuals/residents
- 5 Developers/agents/businesses
- 6 Stakeholders / Organisations including
 - Buntingford Civic Society
 - Environment Agency
 - HCC Passenger Transport Unit
 - Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
 - Natural England
 - The Thatching Information Service

Q29 - Summary Comment	Q29 - Detailed Comment
Purpose of vision	• Core Strategy should not include generic statements and vague aspirations that could apply anywhere; too long and insufficiently precise
	• Needs to set out what, where, when and how development will be delivered
	• Needs to relate more specifically to individual character and nature of place
	• Require LPA to successfully uphold the vision
	• Vision supported in principle
	• Town Council articulate its vision better
Support (with revision)	• Broadly agree
	• Reference to accessibility by sustainable modes of transport
	• Protect natural environment (habitats and species)
	• Emphasis on rural
	• Mix of housing reflecting broad socio-economic mix who are involved in planning process, sufficient green space provided to prevent overcrowding
	• Sainsbury's site includes sports facility, allotments and burial space retained
	• Reference to fact that growth will be accommodated without increasing flood risk, utilise floodplain as green space
	• Inclusion of combined heat and power
• Support reference about additional housing being well connected to the town	
Object	• Not understood nature of town,
	• Not refer to Sainsbury's which should continue for employment (unsustainable location for housing)
	• Object to Sainsbury's site to be developed for housing
	• Buntingford chapter summarises key issues, challenges, historic character, setting features but these are not reflected in vision
	• Question how growth can be accommodated without compromising wider landscape setting - aim must be to minimise impact of development
Object to growth	• Existing new development has already added to congestion, lack of infrastructure, transport, can't cope with new housing
Other	• Town Council concerns ignored