

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'M': CHAPTER 7 - SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Question 33: Growth Options for Sawbridgeworth

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

119 respondents provided comments in relation to Question 33. These included:

- 105 Individuals
- 4 Developers/Landowners/Agents/Businesses
- 9 Stakeholders/Organisations:
 - Broxbourne Woods Area Conservation Society
 - Environment Agency
 - Epping Forest District Council
 - Essex County Council Environment Team
 - HCC Passenger Transport Unit
 - Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
 - Rivers Nursery Site & Orchard Group
 - Stop Stansted Expansion
 - Thames Water
- 1 Town Council:
 - Sawbridgeworth

Q33 - Summary Comment	Q33 - Detailed Comment
Support for growth of the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stortford, Ware and Hertford are already over-developed – Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford have room for expansion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy should focus on towns, especially Sawbridgeworth, which have the capacity to absorb development, are close to services and Airport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good location as it has trains into London, good shops and facilities for all ages plus industrial areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth should be in proportion to existing size
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No options are perfect but development is necessary
Objection to growth of the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawbridgeworth and Stortford constrained by river and railway
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal last place to all four development growth options / not developing at all
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ware, Hertford and Sawbridgeworth have no by-pass therefore have more congestion – better roads in Stortford and Buntingford
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town is a commuter dormitory – more housing is madness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve countryside and rural character – no GB development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispute need for large housing numbers – should be based upon local needs, constraints, Green Belts, prospects for job creation and budgets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertford then Stortford first followed by Sawbridgeworth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to be a village, now a town, sandwiched between Harlow and Stortford, taken its share of housing, don't count it as same as Hertford and Ware
Infrastructure Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough infrastructure of all types to accommodate expansion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No development should occur in the area without necessary infrastructure upgrades, including schools, doctors etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-pass needed or access to M11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served by Rye Meads STW so should consider outcomes of Rye Meads Water Cycle Study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to work closely with utility/infrastructure providers when deciding the development strategy, including neighbouring authorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot rank options until infrastructure delivery plan is tested and established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All options will impact on A1184 and Harlow therefore capacity improvements are needed, particularly to sewerage network
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private housing creates more infrastructure demands than social housing
Pro Growth option 1: built-up area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred option for access to services, facilities etc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still remote from existing transport provision
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase central density of towns within existing built-up area boundary with well-designed higher density flats/maisonettes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use all brownfield land, disused industrial land and empty properties first, rebuild communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more new dwellings than can be accommodated on brownfield land within towns only – no GB development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided no development occurs within flood risk zones 2 and 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need all the land we have for agriculture to feed population
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of adding more supermarkets and offices, putting houses on those sites
Anti Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided historic layout, fabric and character are not harmed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No land available in built up centre of town therefore not achievable without comprehensive redevelopment which will never be deliverable nor realistic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to consider and understand the impact of this option on neighbouring Lower Sheering in terms of functionality and retaining separate characters
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider impacts of this in existing Conservation Areas in Sawbridgeworth and Lower Sheering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of town fall within flood risk zones 2 and 3 and are therefore unsuitable 	

Q33 - Summary Comment	Q33 - Detailed Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand outwards, keep centres more open
Pro Growth option 2: Southwest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on rail and bus services Would be near to services Preferred option, though not in isolation Would engulf High Wych only if all development concentrated in this direction, if developed in part could revitalise the village Would join the two areas of ribbon development to the south and west and connect these areas better to the town Rowney Wood area is ideal for development – would accommodate much of housing need with little effect on traffic Smaller scale form could be accommodated within existing settlement pattern using unattractive countryside, if contained would not lead to sprawl particularly if Harlow North doesn't happen Lots of space Is suitable in terms of flood risk provided sustainable drainage is implemented and surface water run-off rates are capped to green field levels
Anti Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not ideal in terms of access to sustainable transport and accessibility criteria On Wildlife grounds Potential to engulf High Wych if all development for Sawbridgeworth were to occur in this direction and coalescence concern with Harlow
Pro Growth option 3: West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred option only if a by-pass built Lots of space minimal impact on existing housing stock Would be near to services and is available Is suitable in terms of flood risk provided sustainable drainage is implemented and surface water run-off rates are capped to green field levels. Would need to prevent encroachment into flood plain of Sawbridgeworth Brook with 8m buffer zone around the river Land at Rivers Hospital as it's adjacent to the built-up area, is close to centre, services and facilities, takes account of areas of flood risk and makes efficient use of land in employment use, increases employment, provides a mixture of accommodation (including retirement), would make public transport more viable, is deliverable, could aid by-pass and enhance wildlife site through retention of orchard and creation of a nature reserve and public open space
Anti Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Wildlife grounds Would use high quality agricultural land Would not be well connected to either Stortford or Harlow but would be dependent entirely on Sawbridgeworth for services, which is deficient Well used by families for recreational purposes and a well-loved piece of countryside Few barriers to prevent sprawl into attractive countryside as land is open and prominent Not ideal in terms of access to sustainable transport and accessibility criteria
Pro Growth option 4: North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most appropriate using land known as Keckies Farm and land north of Leventhorpe School – would accommodate most of housing need with little effect on traffic Preferred option despite positive and negative aspects Well placed in relation to services and facilities in Stortford which are superior to those in Sawbridgeworth Easier to ensure access to bus services based on north/south corridor and would make service more viable Least risk of coalescence Some space, though not a lot Is suitable in terms of flood risk provided sustainable drainage is implemented and surface water run-off rates are capped to green field

Q33 - Summary Comment	Q33 - Detailed Comment
	levels
Anti Option 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least preferable • Would use high quality agricultural land • Would see an extension to ribbon development and have a poor connection to existing settlement, coalescence concern to Stortford • Few barriers to prevent sprawl into attractive countryside as land is open and prominent • Need to consider and understand the impact of this option on neighbouring Lower Sheering in terms of functionality and retaining separate characters
Alternative option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Herts/Essex zone along M11 corridor where intensive farming has degraded the land and robbed it of character and wildlife interest • New towns near established transport links are preferred • Build to the north of Harlow • Build a new town on 8,500 homes with infrastructure • Only after built-up area is developed should we build outward towards natural boundaries, including a by-pass before using the green belt tight to edge of towns • South of Royston area • Only near to present major roads • Regenerate deprived areas rather than destruction of areas of beauty and cultural heritage • Liaison with Essex authorities – build over the border – could Lower Sheering become part of Sawbridgeworth? • Renovate existing derelict housing stock • A few dwellings in all options, spread development over all towns, villages etc • Many different alternatives • Dual the A10 to A507 roundabout, improving Westmill junctions • Use the infrastructure of the Olympics stadia that will be under-used after 2012 to make efficient use of services, also on a direct route to Stansted Airport • Consider benefits of land at Thomas Rivers, north of High Wych Road and west of The Crest • Limit immigration – fewer people = fewer houses needed • Land to north of Sawbridgeworth Station – ideal for commuter housing • Consider Watton-at-Stone and Stanstead Abbots as they have rail links
General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot hope to prevent both coalescence and severance • Need smaller houses for smaller size households, not executive homes that are unaffordable • Rivers Nursery Site could be transferred to public trust • More housing means more children and teenagers so need to provide more sport, recreation and cultural facilities • Previously allocated land is not coming forward or being built on despite permission • Fails to consider the effects of growth in a combination of directions • Assumes no development to east of Welwyn GC and Stevenage, so more pressure on towns elsewhere • Green Belt Review needs to be undertaken first to enable informed choices to be made on development strategy • Only residents within each town should have the prerogative to determine how their town is developed

Question 34: Approach to development in Sawbridgeworth

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

10 respondents provided comments in relation to Question 34. These included:

- 3 Individuals
- 4 Developers/landowners/agents/businesses
- 3 Stakeholders/organisations:
 - Environment Agency
 - Epping Forest District Council
 - Hertfordshire County Council – Passenger Transport Unit

Q34 - Summary Comment	Q34 - Detailed Comment
Against a blanket approach to density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be considered on a site-by-site basis, intrinsically linked to detailed design
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable communities should have an appropriate mix of accommodation, therefore a mix of density is appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHMA suggests more family size properties are needed – indications are that these could only be accommodated in greenfield locations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature and character of the settlement and potential locations for growth should be considered
Benefits of high density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport provision and other services are more viable with higher densities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoids use of greenfield sites and land of high nature conservation value
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided it does not place large numbers of properties at risk from flooding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower density developments use more land, increasing the likelihood of these occurring in areas at risk of flooding and subsequently increasing surface run-off
Site specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land at Thomas Rivers would be suitable for medium density development, given the surrounding density at High Wych Road and The Crest
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No growth preferred

Question 35: Sawbridgeworth Vision

Do you agree with the emerging LDF Vision for Sawbridgeworth?

17 people/organisations provided comments in relation to Question 35. These included:

- 5 Individuals
- 6 Developers/landowners/agents/businesses
- 5 Stakeholders/organisations:
 - Epping Forest District Council
 - Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
 - Hertfordshire County Council – Passenger Transport Unit
 - Natural England
 - Rivers Nursery Site & Orchard Group
- 1 Town Council:
 - Sawbridgeworth

Q35 - Summary Comment	Q35 - Detailed Comment
Support for vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General support • Welcome the recognition that Sawbridgeworth meets the needs of not only its residents but those living in the rural area. • New developments should be well-connected to the town. • Provided coalescence with surrounding towns and villages does not occur. • Needs more detail to provide certainty on how it can and will be delivered
Disagree with vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic statements and vague aspirations that could apply to anywhere will not lead to a deliverable and worthwhile plan. • Consultation misunderstands the geographical and economic structure of the parish which should refer to the whole civic parish to include Spellbrook.
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought should be given to the potential of the river/canal in the life of the town. • Needs to place more emphasis on protecting wildlife sites and natural environment
Rivers Nursery Site and Orchard - protect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Orchard is a priority habitat in the UK BAP. Recognised as the holy grail of English fruit production. • It is a special place which has contributed to the importance of the town, the past economic and social wellbeing that affects the majority of residents and is a managed community open space.
Rivers Nursery Site and Orchard - develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable some residential development which seeks to protect the nursery and orchard site, create a new nature reserve and provides retirement and market accommodation and hospital expansion
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable travel options should be encouraged
Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to protect and enhance town centre but also provide a flexible approach to uses in order to enable alternative uses that support the town centre and encourage visitors.
Type of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing should be kept completely separate from private housing.
Opposition to development in Sawbridgeworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any directions of growth would require amendments to the Green Belt boundary.
Opposition - option 1 (urban area infill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities to accommodate further development within the built up area without comprehensive redevelopment schemes being pursued. Doubt as to the viability and suitability of these schemes being able to deliver the new dwellings people want.
Support - Option 2 (south west)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale development than implied in the CS could be contained within the existing settlement pattern and would involve unattractive countryside. Smaller scale land releases from the Green Belt would not lead to urban sprawl or coalescence (particularly if no North of Harlow). • Most logical direction for some growth to meet part of the housing requirement for Sawbridgeworth.
Opposition - option 3 (west)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is open, prominent and exposed with few features to contain development. Involves release of land from the Green Belt. Result in urban sprawl into attractive open countryside to the west of Sawbridgeworth.
Opposition - option 4 (north)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is open, prominent and exposed with few features to contain development. Involves release of land from the Green Belt. Result in urban sprawl along the A1184 into attractive open countryside to the north of Sawbridgeworth.