



Part 2

East Herts District Plan

Examination Hearing Statements

Matters and Issues: Part 2

Chapter 8: Sawbridgeworth

Matters and Issues, Part 2: Chapter 8 - Sawbridgeworth

Issues:

Question 1

What is the basis for planning to accommodate 500 new homes at Sawbridgeworth?

1. The Development Strategy Topic Paper (**TPA/001**) sets out the Council's approach to directing development towards sustainable locations.
2. While Sawbridgeworth is one of the District's main settlements, it is considered to be less sustainable than the larger towns due to the limited number of services and facilities that are located there. From the earliest stages of plan making, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) had advised that the delivery of more than 500 dwellings in Sawbridgeworth would likely lead to a requirement to provide a bypass of the town. This advice formed part of the site assessment work as presented within the Supporting Document (**SSS/001**).
3. Following the Preferred Options consultation on the District Plan, the advice from HCC was updated to reflect the fact that development within Sawbridgeworth should be considered in combination with other proposed developments in the locality such as Bishop's Stortford South (BISH5) and the Gilston Area (GA1). Given the amount of development proposed, and the congestion that already exists on the A1184, HCC confirmed that provision of more than approximately 500 dwellings in Sawbridgeworth would not be supported. This position is reflected within the Statement of Common Ground signed with HCC, which forms Appendix E to the Duty to Co-operate Compliance Statement (**SOC/001**).
4. The development strategy for Sawbridgeworth has therefore been shaped by this advice throughout the plan making process.

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Question 2

How and why was the planned level chosen ahead of other potential options? Is the site selection methodology robust and transparent?

Question 4

Is the Plan sound in its choice of sites to be removed from the Green Belt?

The Council considers that these two issues are linked and can therefore be covered by a single response.

1. The Sawbridgeworth Settlement Appraisal (**SSS/005**) identifies the way in which the three proposed development sites were chosen, including through the consideration of Green Belt issues. The document concludes that, of all the site options available, the parcel of land containing Land to the North of Sawbridgeworth (SAWB4) is most preferable in Green Belt terms, as identified within the Green Belt Review (**GRB/001**).
2. The delivery Land North of West Road (SAWB2), will provide land to enable the expansion of Mandeville Primary School. This expansion is required in order to facilitate the delivery of 500 homes within the town.
3. Finally, land to the South of West Road (SAWB3), is better located than the reasonable alternatives in terms of its proximity to services and facilities, including the expanded Mandeville Primary School, Leventhorpe Secondary School and the retail facilities in the town centre. The site area of SAWB3 has also been reduced from that proposed within the Preferred Options version of the District Plan in order to reflect the highways advice from HCC, and also to remove the area of Green Belt considered by Officers to be most sensitive.

Question 3

How does the Plan contribute towards meeting the employment needs of the District and those in Sawbridgeworth? Is the plan positively prepared in this respect?

1. The strategy for Sawbridgeworth does not seek to provide additional employment space within the town. However, Sawbridgeworth does benefit from its proximity

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to Bishop's Stortford to the north and Harlow to the south. In particular, the new Enterprise Zone in Harlow, and the re-location of Public Health England, will provide high quality employment opportunities for residents of Sawbridgeworth. In addition, it is proposed that 5 hectares of employment land be provided nearby within the Gilston Area. Stansted Airport also provides employment opportunities for Sawbridgeworth residents.

Question 5

SAWB5 – is a sports facility necessary and is there a realistic prospect of delivery?

1. This allocation was initially identified within the adopted East Herts Local Plan (2007) in order to address an identified deficit of sports pitch provision in Sawbridgeworth.
2. In recent years this deficit has not been addressed, and as such, the allocation has remained extant. The deficit will also increase with the completion of developments proposed within the District Plan. The recently completed Open Spaces and Sports Facilities Assessment (ED149) confirms that there is a need for 3G football pitches and 11v11 youth football pitches in Sawbridgeworth (Figure 98 of Part 3: Playing Pitch Strategy). The proposed allocation is therefore considered to be necessary.
3. In terms of delivery, the three development sites within the town would be expected to provide financial contributions towards the delivery of off-site sports pitch provision. In addition, a site feasibility assessment is currently being completed on behalf of Bishop's Stortford Community Football Club in order to identify a suitable site to meet their needs. The SAWB5 site forms part of this appraisal. Should the site prove to be the most feasible option, it is likely that the Football Association would provide funding towards the delivery of the facility.

Question 6

Are the allocated sites appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints?

1. Given the relatively modest amount of development proposed for Sawbridgeworth, the infrastructure requirements are not considerable. Where

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they do exist, the requirements have been identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (**IDM/001**). In particular there is a need to provide greater capacity at two key junctions in the town; namely the West Road/Station Road/A1184 junction and the High Wych Road/A1184 junction. The detailed design for these highway works will be considered in collaboration with HCC. However, all three proposed development sites would be expected to make financial contributions towards delivery.

2. In addition, the delivery of 500 homes in the town will require the provision of an additional 1FE of primary school capacity. This will be delivered as part of development to the North of West Road (SAWB2). Again, all three developments will be expected to make financial contributions towards this expansion. Discussions are also ongoing with the NHS with regards to the need to expand existing healthcare facilities in the town.
3. It is not considered that any of the proposed development sites will impact upon any environmental designations.