

Chapter 8

Sawbridgeworth

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8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1** Sawbridgeworth is an attractive and historic market town lying to the west of the River Stort, which forms part of the County boundary with neighbouring Essex. Although located in close proximity to Bishop's Stortford to the north and Harlow to the south, Sawbridgeworth has a strong and distinct identity. Nevertheless, the town has strong links with these neighbouring settlements, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, with a number of residents also commuting to London and Cambridge using the town's railway link.
- 8.1.2** Residents of Sawbridgeworth benefit from access to high quality public green spaces, particularly Pishiobury Park, a designated parkland which was one of Capability Brown's final projects. The historic commercial core of the town is centred on Bell Street, which lies on an east-west axis running from the 13th Century church of St Mary's to London Road, the old stage-coach route that runs north to south. Much of the town centre lies within a Conservation Area and many of the buildings are listed for their historic significance and date from the Tudor, Stuart and Georgian periods.
- 8.1.3** The medieval core of the town is an attractive location which supports local independent retailers, but it also acts as a constraint to larger retailers. The town has only one small supermarket, meaning that a lot of larger shopping trips are conducted outside the town. Sawbridgeworth is therefore regarded as a Minor Town Centre.
- 8.1.4** Being one of the smaller towns in the District, with a predominance of residential development, there is not much potential for brownfield redevelopment within Sawbridgeworth. Therefore, any large scale residential development would of necessity involve Green Belt release. To meet the need for additional housing in Sawbridgeworth, two sites are proposed for development to the west of the town, and one to the north.
- 8.1.5** The main components of the development strategy for Sawbridgeworth are as follows:
- 8.1.6** **Housing:** additional homes will be provided which will consist of a mix of dwelling types and sizes to ensure that Sawbridgeworth's population is able to access a balanced housing market catering for all life stages. The provision of affordable housing will allow emerging households to remain living in Sawbridgeworth in accommodation suited to their needs.
- 8.1.7** **Education:** the educational needs of the town will be met at primary level via the expansion of Mandeville School to 2 forms of entry. Secondary educational provision will be enhanced by the construction of a new school, in the Bishop's Stortford School Planning Area within which Sawbridgeworth falls.

- 8.1.8 Transport:** new development will encourage the use of sustainable travel, particularly through the enhancement of walking and cycling links. The impact of development on the local road network will be mitigated through upgrades to existing junctions and the provision of a new Junction 7a on the M11 which will reduce pressure on the A1184. Consideration will need to be given to the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which is located in the London Road area. The AQMA is supported by an action plan which seeks to improve air quality in this location.
- 8.1.9 Economic Development:** Sawbridgeworth's limited employment offer will be maintained to support local scale employment opportunities. As a Minor Town Centre, Sawbridgeworth's retail offer in the central core will be maintained and strengthened if suitable opportunities arise to serve both the town's residents and its local rural hinterland.
- 8.1.10 Character:** Sawbridgeworth's market town character and the heritage qualities of the town's historic core will be maintained. New development will respect both the local and wider landscape character and will enhance Sawbridgeworth's green infrastructure, through the provision of new public open space.
- 8.1.11 Design:** collaboratively prepared Masterplans for development in Sawbridgeworth (at sites SAWB2, SAWB3 and SAWB4) will form an important part of the delivery of the site allocations. These Masterplans will provide a strong framework for the development, which will ensure the highest quality design and layout of each area and provide a comprehensive approach to the development as a whole, whilst reflecting different character areas across the sites. The Masterplans will accord with the provisions of Policy DES1 (Masterplanning).

8.2 Development in Sawbridgeworth

- 8.2.1** The main features of the policy approach to development in Sawbridgeworth are shown on Figure 8.1 below:

Figure 8.1: Key Diagram for Sawbridgeworth



8.2.2 Reflecting the District Plan Strategy, the following policies will apply to applications for new development in Sawbridgeworth:

Policy SAWB1 Development in Sawbridgeworth

I. Sawbridgeworth will accommodate a minimum of 500 new homes, which will include:

- (a) around 125 homes to the west of the town on land to the north of West Road, as set out in Policy SAWB2 (Land to the North of West Road);
- (b) around 175 homes to the west of the town on land to the south of West Road, as set out in Policy SAWB3 (Land to the South of West Road);
- (c) around 200 homes to the north of the town, as set out in Policy SAWB4 (Land to the North of Sawbridgeworth); and
- (d) a proportion of the overall windfall allowance for the District.

II. New retail and employment development will be directed to the town centre to maintain the vitality and viability of the town.

Development Sites in Sawbridgeworth's Urban Area

- 8.2.3** It is expected that a proportion of the overall windfall allowance for the District will be accommodated in Sawbridgeworth. These sites will be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the policies of the Plan.
- 8.2.4** For the allocated sites, the following policies will apply in addition to general policies in the Plan:

Land North of West Road

- 8.2.5** In order to contribute towards the District's short term housing requirement, and to provide for the housing needs of Sawbridgeworth, development of around 125 homes is proposed on land to the north of West Road.
- 8.2.6** The site provides an opportunity to deliver a range of housing types and tenures in a location that benefits from excellent access to town centre amenities. In addition, the site will provide enhanced walking and cycling links and high quality green space including a new play area.
- 8.2.7** Development in this location will offer benefits for the wider community by providing 1.2 hectares of land in order to facilitate the permanent expansion of Mandeville Primary School to two forms of entry. The school will also benefit from the provision of new off road parking spaces which will help reduce existing congestion on West Road at peak times.
- 8.2.8** In order to help mitigate the impact of development in this location, financial contributions towards the signalisation of the A1184/West Road/Station Road junction will be required along with other schemes as required.

Figure 8.2 Site Location: Land North of West Road

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Policy SAWB2 Land to the North of West Road

- I. Land to the north of West Road will accommodate around 125 homes by 2022.
- II. A Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, landowners, East Herts Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Sawbridgeworth Town Council, and other key stakeholders. This document will further be informed by public participation in the process.
- III. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:
 - (a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
 - (b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);
 - (c) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, in particular to the town centre and railway station, and enhanced passenger transport services;

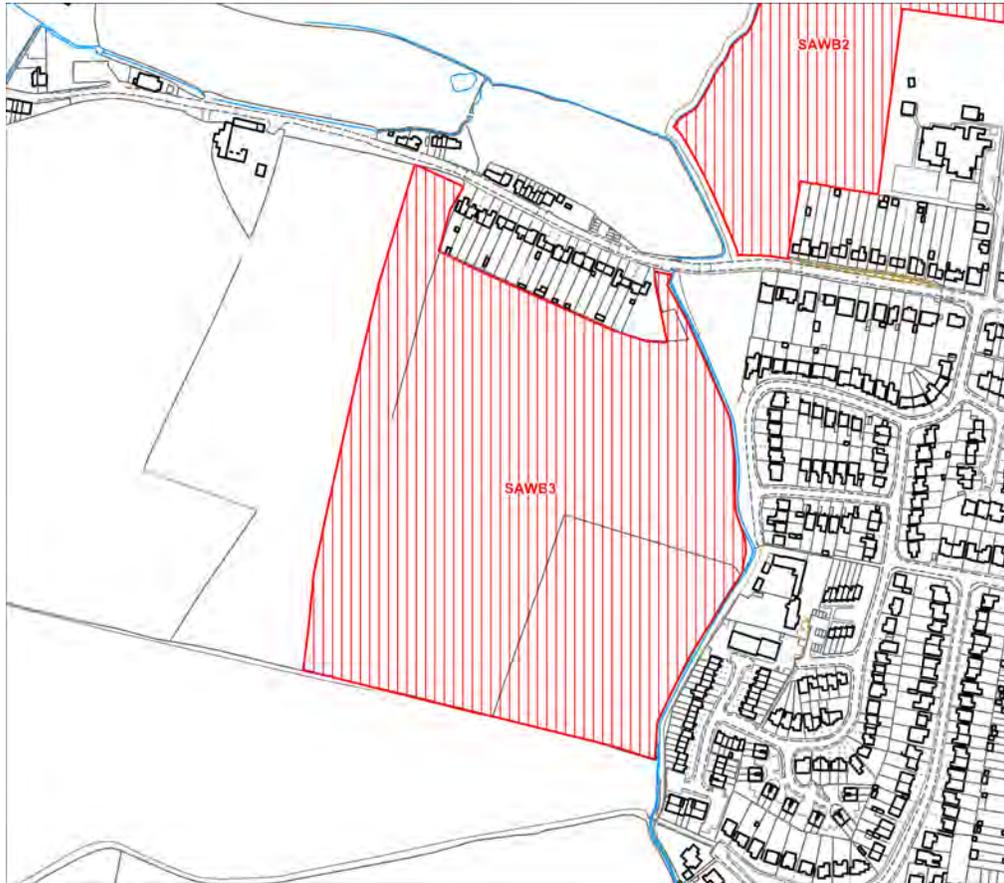
- (d) an enhanced public footpath and cycleway from West Road to enable direct pedestrian and cycle access to Mandeville School and Leventhorpe School;
- (e) the setting aside of 1.2ha of land to facilitate the expansion of Mandeville School to two forms of entry, including the provision of a new access route;
- (f) off road parking spaces to serve Mandeville School;
- (g) necessary utilities, including integrated communications infrastructure to facilitate home working, and upgrades to the localised sewerage network;
- (h) sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
- (i) access arrangements and local highways mitigation measures, including junction improvements at the West Road/A1184 junction;
- (j) quality local green infrastructure throughout the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhancing biodiversity;
- (k) new public amenity space;
- (l) landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, to complement development, as appropriate;
- (m) enhanced landscaping along the western boundary of the site to provide a soft edge to the development and define the new Green Belt boundary;
- (n) the delivery of all other necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure;
- (o) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

Land South of West Road

- 8.2.9** In order to contribute towards the District's short term housing requirement and to provide for the housing needs of Sawbridgeworth, development of around 175 homes is proposed on land to the south of West Road.
- 8.2.10** As with land to the north of West Road (SAWB2), the site provides an opportunity to deliver a range of housing types and tenures in a location that benefits from excellent access to town centre amenities.
- 8.2.11** In order to help mitigate the impact of development in this location, financial contributions towards the signalisation of the A1184/West Road/Station Road junction will be required along with other schemes as required.

Figure 8.3 Site Location: Land South of West Road

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Policy SAWB3 Land to the South of West Road

I. Land to the south of West Road will accommodate around 175 homes by 2022.

II. A Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, landowners, East Herts Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Sawbridgeworth Town Council, and other key stakeholders. This document will further be informed by public participation in the process.

III. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:

- (a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
- (b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);
- (c) quality local green infrastructure through the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets (such as Sawbridgeworth Brook), maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhance biodiversity;

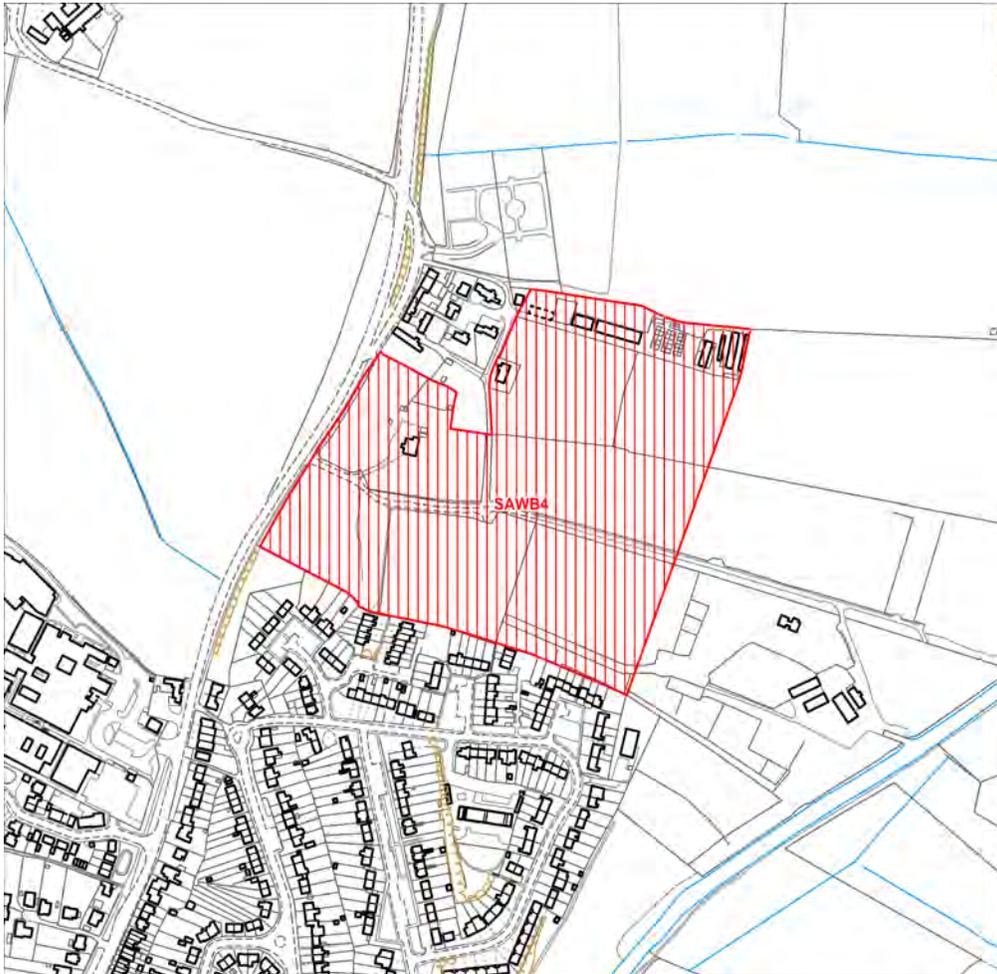
- (d) necessary utilities, including integrated communications infrastructure to facilitate home working, and upgrades to the localised sewerage network;
- (e) sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
- (f) access arrangements and local highways mitigation measures, including junction improvements at the West Road/A1184 junction;
- (g) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, in particular to the town centre and railway station, and enhanced passenger transport services;
- (h) the extension of the existing footpath running along the southern side of West Road to serve the new development;
- (i) new public amenity space;
- (j) landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, to complement development, as appropriate;
- (k) provision of an appropriate structural landscape belt and public open space along the western and southern boundaries of the site to provide a soft edge to the development and define the new Green Belt boundary;
- (l) the delivery of all other necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure;
- (m) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

Land North of Sawbridgeworth

- 8.2.12** In order to contribute towards the District's longer term housing requirement and to provide for the housing needs of Sawbridgeworth, development of around 200 homes is proposed on land to the north of Sawbridgeworth.
- 8.2.13** A range of housing mix and tenures and new public green space will be provided in a location that is in close proximity to primary and secondary education and sustainable transport opportunities. In addition, enhanced walking and cycling opportunities will encourage sustainable travel to town centre amenities.

Figure 8.4 Site Location: Land North of Sawbridgeworth

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Policy SAWB4 Land to the North of Sawbridgeworth

- I. Land to the north of Sawbridgeworth will accommodate around 200 homes by 2027.
- II. A Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, landowners, East Herts Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Sawbridgeworth Town Council, and other key stakeholders. This document will further be informed by public participation in the process.
- III. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:
 - (a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
 - (b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);

- (c) Self-Build and Custom Build Housing in accordance with Policy HOU8 (Self-Build and Custom Build Housing);
- (d) necessary utilities, including integrated communications to facilitate home working, and upgrades to the localised sewerage network;
- (e) sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
- (f) access arrangements and local highways mitigation measures;
- (g) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, in particular to the town centre and railway station, and enhanced passenger transport services;
- (h) quality local green infrastructure throughout the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhancing biodiversity;
- (i) new public amenity space;
- (j) landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, to complement development, as appropriate;
- (k) provision of an appropriate structural landscape belt and public open space along the eastern boundary of the site to provide a soft edge to the development and define the new Green Belt boundary;
- (l) the delivery of all other necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure;
- (m) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

8.3 Employment in Sawbridgeworth

- 8.3.1** Sawbridgeworth is unique in that it is the only town in the District that doesn't have any designated Employment Areas. This reflects its position between two higher order settlements which are considered to be more attractive employment locations.
- 8.3.2** In order to continue to support the town's local commercial, retailing and service businesses, the strategy will seek to maintain Sawbridgeworth's existing employment offer.

8.4 Retail in Sawbridgeworth

- 8.4.1** Sawbridgeworth has a small town centre, consisting predominantly of small independent units and a modest supermarket. Despite its size, the town centre provides a vital role for the residents of the town and its immediate rural hinterland.

- 8.4.2** Recognising its size and relatively limited retail offer, the area centred on Bell Street is designated as a Minor Town Centre with only a secondary frontage. Within this frontage, it is necessary to retain a suitable mix of retail units and appropriate town centre uses in order to ensure the longer term vitality and viability of Sawbridgeworth's town centre. As such, retail development in Sawbridgeworth will be considered in accordance with Policies RTC1 (Retail Development) and RTC4 (Secondary Shopping Frontages).

8.5 Leisure and Community Facilities in Sawbridgeworth

- 8.5.1** New development in Sawbridgeworth will increase demand for local services and community facilities including healthcare and education. It is important that developments in Sawbridgeworth enhance existing, and provide new community facilities in order to ensure existing and new communities can access vital services without the need to travel to neighbouring settlements. In this respect, development proposals will be considered in accordance with Policies CFLR7 (Community Facilities), CFLR8 (Loss of Community Facilities), CFLR9 (Health and Wellbeing) and CFLR10 (Education).