



SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN ACTION PLAN

2016-2020



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INTRODUCTION

There is currently much talk about various different plans.

- East Herts District Council are currently preparing a District Plan. This due to be published in mid-2017 and will replace the current Local Adopted Plan of 2007.
- Towns and Parishes have been encouraged to produce Neighbourhood Plans which examine the detail of planning and infrastructure. These are only acceptable if on public examination they are found to conform to the District Plan.
- A Town Action Plan forms an agenda for Members of the Town Council to follow. It expresses the opinions and wished of parishioners and the actions that the town council needs to take.

This the second Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan and covers the period from 2016 to 2020.

The first Town Action Plan was for the years 2009 to 2013 and the progress made against its objectives was reported on at each year's Town Meeting. This will be the case again for the new Town Action Plan. About 80% of the objectives in the original Town Plan were achieved.

A meeting was held in August 2015 which was attended by 30 parishioners from all parts of the community. From that initial group eight Working Parties were established to examine was were agreed to be the key areas that the Town Action Plan should address. The Working Parties were made up of a mix of members of the public and some town councillors.

The Working Parties performed an initial SWOT analysis of issues relevant to each of the eight areas.

A first Public Consultation Day was held in October 2015 which was visited by around 200 parishioners who were invited to brainstorm the initial analyses and add their thoughts and views.

The Working parties took this input and refined their analyses.

A second Public Consultation Day was held in March 2016 which attracted 60 parishioners who were able to chat to members of the Working Parties and make further comments and observations.

This Town Action Plan is the result of that work. It comprises three parts:

- The SWOT Analyses of the many issues that have arisen and were discussed
- The Action Plan of those areas where we can take action or get others to take action on our behalf
- A Wish List of those items that we would like to see happen but are outside our immediate sphere of influence

As with the first Town Action Plan this new Plan will be monitored and the town council will report on progress with its objectives each year at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Plan is posted on the Town Council web-site and for those without internet access hard copies can be provided on request.



FIVE KEY ISSUES

1. Traffic Management (including Parking)

How do we solve the problems of increasing traffic and the lack of parking?

2. Amenities & Facilities

How do we ensure these are best provided for the community?

3. Housing & Planning

How do we make sure housing is best suited and the infrastructure is catered for?

4. Economic Vibrancy

How do we re-invigorate the town centre and bring people to the town?

5. Open Spaces

How do we best plan and care for our open spaces?

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Amenities & Facilities

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Hailey Centre
- Memorial Hall
- Bullfields
- Sports facilities
- Allotments
- Community buses
- Organisations
- Thomas Rivers land behind The Crest

WEAKNESSES

- No public conveniences in other areas
- Disability access + Push Chairs
- Nothing for teenagers who do not wish to be part of a uniformed group
- PCSO's not enough and very seldom seen
- Library depends on voluntary staff
- Toilet facilities should be thoroughly cleaned, maintained and open at all times, as people try to use Hailey Centre which is not allowed
- No mention of sporting facilities in town i.e. Cricket, Tennis, Bowls club
- Need full-time paid librarians open Mon – Sat
- Lack of well-lit safe environments for teenagers to meet
- Charity bins in Bell Street car park overflowing

OPPORTUNITIES

- Raise awareness of all services (Buses, CAB, Town Diary, Time Banking, STOMP)
- Work with EHDC to improve public conveniences, and make more accessible for all
- Move library into Bell Street to increase footfall as good community asset.
- Produce a comprehensive 'what's on' website to publicise regular & occasional events
- Provide Youth café
- Provide more activities for young people at Memorial Hall
- Utilise wall space on short underpass at Bakers Walk for outreach/connection/communication
- A safe place outreach initiative to vulnerable/isolated people possibly via local surgery/church or therapeutic practice i.e. creative workshop.

THREATS

- Duckling Green
- Funding for buses
- May lose our library which is essential asset
- Antisocial behaviour due to lack of facilities for young people
- Cars parking on pavements hazardous to pedestrians particularly disabled and mum's with pushchairs.
- Children's centre moved into library and now only available during very limited opening hours, leaving parents with young children vulnerable and in isolated position

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1 Toilets	Get them refurbished or replaced	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2016	Budget
2 Raising awareness, about CAB, Buses, STOMP, Time-Bank	Getting stories and articles in CM21 + Church & Town (Web-site More notice boards around the town	EHDC	STC	H	Y	ASAP	Administration capacity
3 Town Green	Landscaped to be accessible space for all. More Seating to make it into a meeting place.	EHDC	STC	M	Y	2016/17	Finance
4 Children's services (Duckling Green)	To be retained in Sawbridgeworth (Find a permanent site)	HCC	STC	H	Y		Finance
5 Youth Facility	Find a suitable meeting place	STC	STC	H	Y	2017	Finance Commitment
6 Access for all	Dropped kerbs	HCC	STC	M	Y		Finance Consultation

WISH LIST

No obstructed pavements
More dropped kerbs
Continuing Community Bus service
More PCSO's to be seen around the town
Keep Library open and for more hours
Publicise events at Memorial Hall
Provide AstroTurf on Vantorts play area to make it useable all year
Stop cars parking on the grass verges near Reedings School
Provide lighting on approach road to Mandeville School
Tighten rules re: drinking in bars
Clear streets of dog ends outside Goose Fat and Garlic
Publicise Time-Banking

Crime & Disorder

ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low crime• Crime Watch e-mails are helpful	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low police presence• Small group of troublemakers• Poor lighting in some streets / areas• Drunks & drug users moved from streets• Lights need to be on all night particularly twitchels/footpaths & parks – unsafe for women• Perception of being unsafe
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More visible police presence• Recruit street Pastors• Use the Hailey Day Centre as a youth café• Erect litter notices/fines along Cambridge Road to keep our town tidy and set a higher precedent• Better information about crimes	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of police / PCSO's = more crime• Drugs and legal highs• Difficult (if not impossible) to contact police

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Lack of police presence	Approach Herts Police	STC	-	M	Y	2016	Police priorities
2	Recruit Street Pastors	Revisit scheme	STC	-	M	Y	2016	None
3	Address litter problems	Arrange litter picks	EHDC	STC	M	Y	2016	EHDC policy
4	Increase levels of street lighting	Approach HCC	STC		M	Y	2016	HCC Policy
5								

WISH LIST

More police
Less drugs

Economic Development

ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Car Parking for one hour • Good core of shops in the town centre • Good footfall to visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doctor’s surgery ○ Cafes ○ Hairdressers 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many vacant shops • Pavements too narrow along Bell Street • Too many charity shops • No bus service from Lower Sheering to heart of town • Need to do more to encourage people to shop local • Shop fronts need improvement • Lack of a Farmers Market
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration • Speed bumps & 20mph limit imposed making it safer for pedestrians along Bell Street, Knight Street, Fair Green & Church Street. • Pedestrianise part of Bell Street • Start a New Business Group • Conduct an independent ‘Fair Price ‘ rent & rates review for shops • Hold a French Market say 3 times per year • Encourage specialist shops i.e. Foodie, Wedding etc. become a ‘Hub’ for same • Reverse flow in Bell Street car park • Enforce use of Free 1 hour parking to avoid congestion on Bell Street • Offer temporary occupation of empty shops for projects/business start ups • Improve Street lighting • Encourage residents to shop local and make aware of impact on town 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant landlord restricts improvement • Rents from significant landlord too high • Shops threatened by planning applications for change of use to residential – Stop this • Retailers affected by empty shops in town forced to close due to lack of footfall • Significant landlord restricts shop occupancy • Shops diversifying and selling mix of cards/stationary & food could affect other retailers in the long run.

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Empty Shops	Lower Rents	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2016/17	EHDC economic environment
2	Pavement not wide enough	Widen one side	HCC	-	-	N	-	Investigated and rejected by HCC
3	Speeding in Bell Street and other town centre areas	Town centre speed limit of 20 mph	HCC	Herts Police	M	Y	2016/17	HCC Policy
4	Fair Green underused	Regain Lordship of the Manor	STC	-	M	Y	2016/17	None
5	Town Green underused	Work with District Council to develop scheme	STC	EHDC	M	Y	2017/18	Funding from s106
6	New traffic management scheme for Bell Street, include traffic fee zone	Work with District Council and Herts Highways to develop scheme	STC	EHDC HCC	M	Y	2018/19	Funding from s106

WISH LIST

Repair broken kerbs & Remove pavement obstructions near Christine's

East Herts District Council change boundary area to include Lower Sheering as wide geographical gap between here and Epping

Environment

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good range of green recreational, play areas and sporting facilities: Pishiobury, Fair Green, Bullfields, Rivers; Stort; Van Torts/West Road play areas; allotments; Forebury Green?; Surgery Green?; fishing lake; nature reserve; cricket/bowls/tennis clubs; school fields; old bowling green; Redricks?• River Stort: banks, towpath, meadows and marshes (environmental and recreational value)• Spellbrook Heritage Village status?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective maintenance of Twitchells and footpaths by EHDC; quality control?• Traffic congestion/parking/air pollution/speed limits• Pollution from Stansted traffic (noise and air - fuel pollution) Keep Planes further west.• Overhanging trees obscuring road signs and street lights (EHDC maintenance plan?)• Flooding (drains, gully maintenance; EHDC/HCC)• River area: East Herts old tip with boundary on tow path; permissive path to Southbrook allotments; appearance/maintenance of Esbies site• Risk of accident on London Road, need 30mph speed camera• Too many overhanging trees obscuring drivers view of Bus Stops• Footpaths need resurfacing as real problem for pushchairs, mobility scooters etc.• Vantorts to Fair Green very badly maintained, regular clearance of leaves, dog excrement needs to be done• Maintenance of area/rubbish clearance behind wire fence leading from Station along station road• Dog fouling problem on school routes

OPPORTUNITIES

- River area: improve access, maintenance, quality of environment (tow path; banks; meadows and marshes; establish ownership of unoccupied land bordering river; permissive paths etc.)
- Provide cycle track from Sawbridgeworth to Bishops Stortford
- Distribute maps showing footpaths & twitchels to encourage more people to walk
- Mitigate impact of proposed M11 new junction)
- Town walks route; improve tourism opportunities and thereby retail support (compare proposals for e.g. Hertford)
- Support 20 mph speed limit in central area: Bell Street, Fair Green and Knight Street
- Sleeping policemen in Bell Street to slow traffic
- Impose Weight limit along Bell Street to cut out pollution from large Lorries.
- Encourage walking and cycling to school to cut down on congestion
- Provide cigarette butt bins especially outside station
- Erect sign at level crossing encouraging motorists to turn off engines
- Enforce clearance of foliage adjacent to footways by property owners.
- Upgrade street & pathway lighting to improve safety
- Town sign needs more colour – very bland
- Provide enclosed area for dog owners to have pets off lead for training purposes

THREATS

- Impact of budget cuts
- Development along riverside
- Water meadows (Sheering Mill Lane); marshes; deterioration of towpath and banks (lack of maintenance)
- Impact of over-development and infilling (services, parking, traffic); impact of EHDC overruling STC objections to planning applications because of National Policy Planning Framework pressure to develop
- Adjacent developments in Essex/impact on conservation area (see wish list)
- Danger of Town becoming urbanised if lose green areas
- Bypass essential if Harlow North goes ahead, serious traffic concerns with new planned houses

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Flight path	Confirm/reconsider routing to minimize pollution	EHDC?	STC	H	Y	2015-7	None
2	Traffic pollution	Speed limit in town centre	HCC	EHDC/STC	H	Y	2015-7	Monitoring and implementation
3	Maintenance of footpaths and Twitchells	Schedule regular maintenance; set up volunteer monitoring group?	EHDC	STC	M	Y	2015-	Monitoring and quality control; budget
4	Permissive paths	Clarify ownership and maintenance responsibility (health and safety)	EHDC	STC	M	Y	2015-	Enforcement/monitoring
5	River area (banks; towpath; meadows; marshes)	Maintain/enhance; avoid over-development	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2015-	Budget
6	Tree protection/preservation	Clarify/monitor procedures/schedule	EHDC	STC	M	Y	2015-	Budget

WISH LIST

More protection for our green spaces; maintain what we've got as a budget priority
Clarify parish boundaries
Status of Spellbrook within parish
Ownership of permissive paths and unoccupied land e.g. in river area.
Traffic volume increase following Harlow North and M11 developments: bypass?
Encourage walking and cycling.
What is happening at the old rubbish tip?
Reduce bureaucracy around control of preserved trees
Control the shooting of Snipe (once populous in Sawbo)
Keep footpaths clear of vegetation
Get more colour in town sign
Reduce air pollution on Fair Green
Make use of the wasted area outside the doctors surgery
Provide a seat at Sheering Mill Lock
Keep airplanes well to the east of Sawbo

People in the Community

ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good facilities for over 55's• Churches• Street Pastors• Existing Youth club at congregational church alternate Fri nights• Good existing uniform groups i.e. Beavers, Scouts, and Brownies etc.• Happiness Club – monthly meetings in place• University of the Third Age (U3A)	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of things for youngsters• Refurbishment of church park needed as equipment ageing and accidents have been caused• Hailey Day centre needs facilities improved• Town Crier needed• Not enough facilities not linked to religious organisations• Lack of utilisation of Town Council controlled facilities for youths
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth café• Expand facilities at Bullfields• Lemonade Pub for teenagers• Introduce Youth council to have their say & express their opinions• Find a way to mix young and older people together – maybe community projects• Encourage youth facilities for non-uniformed groups on Fri & weekend nights to combat boredom on the streets	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vandalism• Teenagers smoking cannabis in bushes in church park while young children are playing. Fences need mending

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Need Youth facilities	Youth Café/ Lemonade Pub	STC	HCC	M	Y	2017/18	Finance
2	Bullfields centre	Develop for more activities	SYPRC Trustees	STC	M	?	2016/17	Availability for bookings
3								
4								
5								

WISH LIST

Museum or Gallery to provide a history of Sawbo and hold archives (e.g. River Orchard)

Why aren't people of all ages using the facilities at the Memorial Hall? There is no age restriction for the cinema.

Planning and Housing

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good town centre basis: retail opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• congested environment• in-filling• Implications (of over-development) for parking etc.• loss of town's 'character' new buildings should reflect their surroundings• need to plant more wild flowers along roadside together with more effective and regular litter picking• Inadequate parking at Sawbridgeworth Station• Lower Sheering should come under Herts CC to properly reflect the demands on the town's infrastructure• Housing Association new flats/housing being given to people outside area• Joint sign needed junction to Much Hadham on A11 – individual signs cluttering roadside / unsightly

OPPORTUNITIES

- Phased development on town fringes/Spellbrook
- Improved infrastructure and services including more schools & doctors
- Provide more school places for local children
- Provide affordable housing for young people & first time buyers who are already local
- Co-ordinated defence with EHDC to prevent Harlow North development
- Avoid building on green belt around Sawbridgeworth but a development in Spell brook would breathe life into this village
- Improve traffic flow on 'T' junction at Bell St lights crossing

THREATS

- Gridlock
- Increased air pollution/health issues
- Lack of sufficient infrastructure/service to cope with development
- Erosion of Green belt (Green Belt Review August 2015) what are Town Council doing about proposal north of Leventhorpe
- Traffic from Chalks Farm development
- Residents parking NOT good idea – cause more problems
- People parking on dropped kerbs
- Inconsiderate parking in Bullfields

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Parking	Additional parking for station; residents' parking schemes	EHDC/HCC	STC	H	Y	2015-20	Cost (Section 106?) and enforcement
2	Over-development of central areas of town	Smaller phased developments on town fringes/Spellbrook with affordable and senior citizen housing	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2015-20	Developer funding
3	Infrastructure	Plan for additional/wider access roads and improved traffic flow; health services; school places	EHDC/HCC	STC	H	Y	2015-20	Developer funding? S106?
4	Air quality	Reduce traffic flow through central parts of town; 20mph speed limits [but impact of Harlow and BS developments??]	EHDC/HCC	STC	H	Y	2015-20	As above
5	Conservation Area	Monitor and preserve/extend [link to Neighbourhood Plan] Extent interest into Essex to provide fuller planning management	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2015-	????
6	Green Belt Review	Monitor implications of GB Review of August 2015 in context of District Plan	EHDC	STC	H	Y	2015-17	None

WISH LIST

Explore possible further commissioning of conservation area where it overlaps with Essex as a possible buffer against over-development (as part of existing duty to co-operate while formulating the District Plan?). Protect green areas e.g. beyond railway crossing.

Monitor impact of Harlow North development and proposed additional M11 junction and flyover. Sound and vision proofing?

Allocate two off-road car parking spaces to each new flat or house.

Use Kecksys area for housing

Provide affordable parking at the station

Sort out traffic congestion resulting from new housing developments

School places problems should have been addressed year ago

Spellbrook

ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural• Lots of undeveloped land• There is now a café in Spellbrook	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not really a village• Overdevelopment• Lack of infrastructure and facilities• No shops or health facilities
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plenty of potential opportunities for development• Expansion of primary school• Expand Spellbrook School to 1 Form entry to ease over subscription in Sawbridgeworth & provide school bus from Sawbridgeworth to Spellbrook• Maintain Spellbrook as a Green Area and only build on 'Brownfield' site when use changes• Encourage sensitive development	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overdevelopment• Too much traffic in rush hours

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Too much traffic	Bypass	HCC	-	L	?	2020 on	Massive
2	Too much traffic	Provide a pelican crossing	HCC		H	Y	2020	High
3								
4								
5								

WISH LIST

Sensitive development

Traffic & Transport

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Good train links to London/Cambridge
- Twitchels available around town to avoid main roads
- Community bus service (Sawbobus)
- Self-drive bus available for groups (e.g. football/scouts)
- Dial-a-ride service for hospital/dentist appointments for elderly

WEAKNESSES

- Cars speeding on certain roads (e.g. Station Road, Knight Street, Bell Street). Congestion on Cambridge/London road
- Imposed parking restrictions – reducing resident parking. Lack of permit schemes in place at present as alternative
- Pavement widths are narrow
- Increase in number of cars per household causing parking issues
- Better lighting needed in Twitchels to encourage use
- Pot holes around the area
- Vantorts Road to Fair Green no footpath, speeding cars cause danger to pedestrians at school times
- Road surfaces unacceptable
- Inadequate parking at station for commuters
- Enforcement needed to prevent cars parking on zig-zag lines near to schools
- Pedestrian lights – time needs adjusting to allow elderly/disabled to cross safely
- Lack of and cost of parking at the station

OPPORTUNITIES

- Resident parking schemes and a survey of the town's residents parking options.
- Junction at Bell St/London Road suggested mini roundabout to ease congestion
- Speed restrictions where narrow pavements in place for pedestrians
- Consider over ground/underground parking options
- Expand community bus service to wider groups (e.g. stay at home mums/dads)
- Improve cycle path along river to Harlow Mill
- Junction Brook Rd/London Rd suggested mini roundabout
- Bypass to ease congestion/pollution
- Introduce bike motorway for school children to encourage health, ease congestion. Suggest visit to Kesgrave where scheme is in action
- Pedestrianise Bell Street
- A414 Harlow North to St James Way needs dual carriageway to promote through traffic & faster access to airport

THREATS

- Housing developments with limited parking is compounding current issue
- Lack of support from East Herts District Council – no funding for resident permit schemes
- Lack of resource to undertake surveys/planning considerations
- Service on trains has declined
- Lack of support to erect bollards to stop parking on grass verges

ACTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED AND MONITORED

	Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Group	Support	Priority H/M/L	Feasible Y/N	Time-scale	Resource implication
1	Speeding	Speed restrictions on certain roads	HCC	Herts Police	H	Y	6-12 months	Survey required – Police currently monitoring Station Rd, already done?
2	Parking (residential)	Resident permit schemes. Analysis of current parking available compared with no. of households	EHDC	-	H	Y	Asap	Wardens may be required but will provide income from the permits
3	Pot holes/road and pavement maintenance	Improved maintenance - fill in holes	HCC	EHDC	M	Y	6 mos from reporting issue	Budget
4	Traffic congestion	Consider mini roundabout Bell St with London Road	HCC	EHDC	M	N	1-2 years	Study required by highways. Budget constraints
5	Expanding community bus service to other groups	Investigate needs of neighbouring parishes and groups	STC	EHDC EFDC	M	Y	2016	Vehicle and driver costs
6	Shared spaced in Bell Street (like Buntingford and Bishops Stortford)	Work with District Council and Herts Highways to develop scheme	STC	EHDC HCC	M	Y	2017/18	Funding from s106

WISH LIST

Underground parking facilities
Clarify ownership of permissive paths and maintenance responsibilities
Stop people mounting the kerb to park
Maintain surface drains to prevent flash flooding
One way system at end of Fair Green with a pedestrian priority
More co-operation between Cyclists and pedestrians on tow paths
Better maintenance of Twitchells (e.g. opp. Budgens, Roseacres)

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