

Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan 2023-2027



Town Action Plan & Community consultation survey results

November 2023

Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan

Background

This is the fourth Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan and covers the period from 2023 to 2027. The previous Town Action Plans covered the years 2009-2013; 2016-2020; and 2020-2024.

In July 2023, Sawbridgeworth Town Council resolved to update the Town Action Plan earlier than planned, for two main reasons: Firstly, due to the significant changes in the Town in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and following the construction of hundreds of new homes on the two sites off West Road; and secondly to better align it to four-year election cycles, and therefore set a clear agenda for Councillors at the start of their term.

What is the Town Action Plan?

The Town Action Plan seeks to identify the current strengths and weaknesses of our town, and what changes people from across the community would like to see in the years ahead. The Plan is intended to be an evolving document which outlines how the community would like to see the town develop over the next five to ten years.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council will use the Action Plan as a document of reference, to guide the priorities of the Council and its work with other bodies – such as East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police, housing developers, utilities companies, leisure providers, local groups etc.

The Plan covers a wide range of aspects of life in Sawbridgeworth - from roads to rivers, housing to health, sports to services, and buses to businesses.

What were the steps to creating this new Action Plan?

The Action Plan incorporates views from across the community, and seeks to reflect a broad consensus of the challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement in Sawbridgeworth. Therefore the first step in creating this new Plan was to conduct a community consultation survey. This consultation was undertaken between 1st September and 5th October 2023, and the results of the survey can be found on the following pages.

Following that consultation an analysis was made of the key issues. Subsequently a list of proposed actions was created, and discussed by members of the Town Council.

A version of the plan was published on Town Council website and social media for further community consultation. This step encouraged residents to explore the results of the survey, see the analysis, read through the proposed actions, and then provide feedback on whether they feel the Action Plan reflects their views, is missing anything - or not giving anything sufficient attention - or could be improved in any way.

Now that the final consultation has concluded, the Plan has been updated with some minor changes to reflect comments from the community and members of the Town Council. This plan will be formally adopted at the Town Council meeting on 20th November 2023; after which the Plan will then be published on the Town Council's website. Hard copies of the Plan will also be made available in the Town Council offices, The Hailey Centre, and Sawbridgeworth Library.

What happens next?

The Amenities & Town Action Plan committee of the Town Council will continually monitor progress against the actions in the Plan, and discuss any updates at the committee's quarterly meeting, to which residents are invited to attend and ask questions about progress. A progress report will also be presented to the Annual Town Meeting in each year of the Plan.

Community Consultation

The community consultation for the 2023-2027 Town Action Plan launched on **1st September 2023** and closed on **5th October 2023**. The consultation consisted of the following elements:



A **flyer** was delivered to more than 90% of households in Sawbridgeworth between 2nd-11th September, featuring a QR code and website link for completing the survey online, plus details of two drop-in sessions. The flyer was also displayed by a number of local businesses including the Tuck Shop, Co-op and Village Pharmacy; and in the Town Council reception.

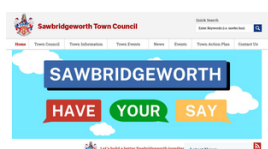


Two **public open drop-in sessions** took place on Tuesday 12th September at 5.30-8pm at the Bullfields Centre; and on Saturday 16th September at 10am-12pm at Sawbridgeworth Town Council

A series of **Facebook posts** with a graphic and link to the survey were promoted on pages and groups including: Sawbridgeworth Town Council page; SAWBRIDGEWORTH group; SAWBRIDGEWORTH COMMUNITY group; and various Councillor pages.



The survey was also sent via email to a wide range of **community groups and networks**, including the Sports Association, Hailey Centre, Scouts, Leventhorpe School, Air Cadets and others.

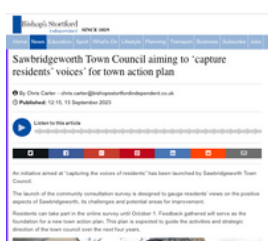


A graphic and link promoting the survey also ran as the lead item on the **Sawbridgeworth Town Council website**, and on the Town Action Plan sub-page; from 4th September onwards.



The survey was also promoted at **Fun on the Field** on Saturday 2nd September; and at the **Community Connections**/Town Walk event on Saturday 30th September.

Plus a number of **banners** were displayed around the town from 7th-17th September advertising the survey.



Additionally, an article about the survey featured on the online version of the **Bishop's Stortford Independent** on 13th September. The article included the link to complete the survey, and a reminder to do so before 1st October. The article was also shared in local Facebook groups.

Who completed the survey?



There were **503 responses**. This includes those who completed paper surveys, the results of which were added online.



Sawbridgeworth's total population (2021 Census) is 8,700 people.
Therefore **5.8%** of Sawbridgeworth residents participated in the survey.



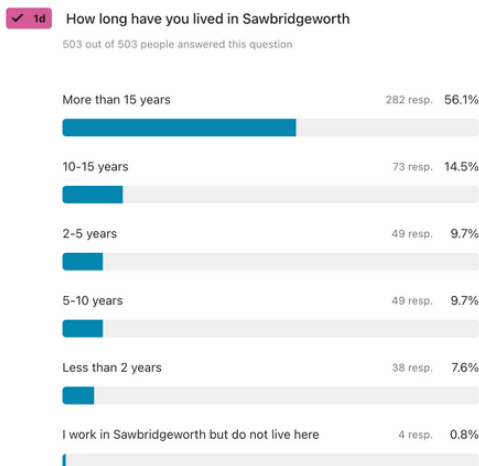
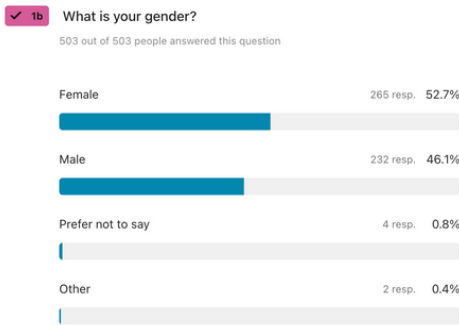
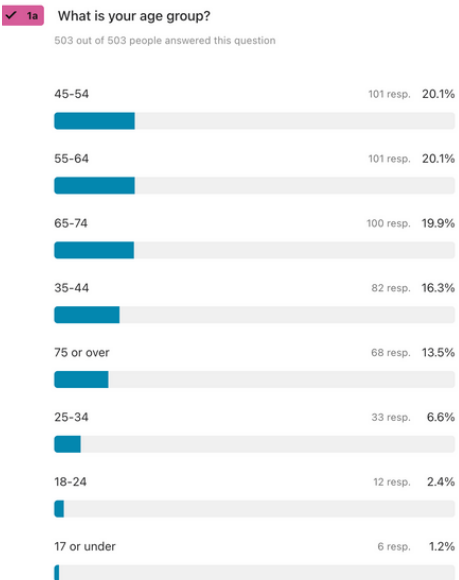
40.2% of respondents were aged 45-64
33.4% were over 65
10.2% were under 34



52.7% of respondents identified as Female
46.1% as Male
1.2% as Other / prefer not to say.



56% of respondents have lived in Sawbridgeworth for more than 15 years;
17.3% less than 5 years.



What do residents think?

The **Top 3** elements of life in Sawbridgeworth:



Access to green open spaces



The quality of life



The quality of local schools

The **Bottom 3** elements of life in Sawbridgeworth:



The affordability of local housing



Our preparedness for future population growth



Traffic conditions

Elements of life in Sawbridgeworth	Average score
Access to green open spaces	7.8
The quality of life	7.7
The quality of local schools	7.7
Community events (e.g. May Fayre, Fun on the Field, River Day)	7.6
The sense of community	7.5
The maintenance of the cemetery (at Three Mile Pond)	7.4
Your personal feeling of safety	7.3
The range of activities and facilities for older people	6.9
The safety of public spaces (e.g. parks, car parks)	6.9
The range and quality of public transport options (e.g. buses, trains)	6.8
The cleanliness of our streets	6.5
The maintenance of parks, play areas & open spaces	6.5
The provision and maintenance of allotments	6.3
The range of activities and facilities for children (0-12)	6.0
Car parking provision	5.9
The provision and quality of sports and leisure facilities	5.9
Communication from Sawbridgeworth Town Council and Town Councillors	5.8
The quality of local healthcare services	5.8
The provision, range and maintenance of footpaths and walking routes	5.7
Access to cultural activities (e.g. live music, art)	5.6
The range of activities and facilities for families	5.6
The variety of local businesses	5.5
Air quality in Sawbridgeworth	5.4
The provision of CCTV and crime-prevention measures	4.9
Local job opportunities	4.6
Neighbourhood policing (e.g. by PCSOs)	4.5
The provision, range and maintenance of cycle lanes and cycling routes	4
The range of activities and facilities for teenagers (13-19)	3.9
The affordability of local housing	3.6
Our town's preparedness for future population growth	2.9
Traffic conditions	2.8

In your own words...

We put the responses to the 4 long-form questions into word clouds to highlight the most regular responses. The larger a word appears, the more times it was mentioned by respondents.

1 - What do you love most about Sawbridgeworth?



2 - What are the key challenges you face in Sawbridgeworth?



3 - What additional/new services or amenities would you like to see in the town?



4 - Are there any specific locations in the town that you feel need improvement?



What do you love most about Sawbridgeworth?

1. Community Spirit & Atmosphere

Many residents appreciate the community spirit, describing Sawbridgeworth as having a friendly atmosphere and a strong sense of community. They value the "village feel" even though it is a town.

2. Accessibility and Transport

There's a high appreciation for the town's strategic location with easy access to major cities like London, train and road access, and links to larger towns e.g. Bishop's Stortford.

3. Green Spaces

Residents love the natural spaces like Pishiobury Park, the River Stort, and other green fields. They appreciate the walks, open spaces, and the connection to nature.

4. Amenities

Several residents mention the convenience of having a good variety of shops, schools, pubs, and other essential services close by. There's also a preference for independent businesses and a desire for diverse shopping options.

5. Safety

Many residents feel that Sawbridgeworth is a safe place to live and bring up children.

6. Cultural & Historical Aspects

There's a recognition of Sawbridgeworth's history, architectural beauty, and the presence of older communal establishments like churches and pubs at its centre.

7. Events & Activities

Residents appreciate the variety of community events, local activities, clubs, and the range of opportunities to get involved.

8. Size & Atmosphere

The town's size is often mentioned, with residents liking that it's not too big or overpopulated but offers the facilities and feeling of a larger community.

9. Schools

The quality and accessibility of schools in Sawbridgeworth receive praise.

10. Pubs & Restaurants

The town's dining and drinking establishments, particularly its pubs, are also popular among residents.

11. Connection to Place

Many have deep-rooted connections, with some having lived in Sawbridgeworth their entire lives or for a significant duration, contributing to a sense of home and belonging.

What are the key challenges you face in Sawbridgeworth?

1. Traffic and Transportation

- Heavy traffic and congestion
- Speeding cars
- Constant roadworks, especially by utility companies
- Poor road conditions (e.g., potholes)
- Vehicle noise and pollution
- Parking issues, including people parking on pavements

2. Housing and Development

- Overdevelopment and rapid housing expansion
- Affordability of houses
- Loss of green spaces
- Concern about infrastructure not keeping pace with development

3. Infrastructure and Services

- Difficulty accessing health services (e.g., doctors, dentist)
- Concerns about capacity of local amenities (e.g., schools)
- Lack of sports and recreational facilities
- Limited resources for youth and teens

4. Safety and Security

- Increasing crime, including burglaries and drug use
- Antisocial behaviour and rowdiness
- Feeling of intimidation or unsafety, especially at night
- Street lighting issues in a number of areas (insufficient number or not working)

5. Environmental and Health Concerns

- Poor air quality and pollution
- Noise from road traffic and aircraft
- Flooding issues, and concerns over snow/ice
- Littering

6. Community and Social Issues

- Limited activities for youth
- Lack of communication about town events
- Challenges in integration for new residents
- Loss of small-town charm and feeling

7. Pedestrian and Footpath Concerns

- Poor maintenance of footpaths and pavements
- Overgrown paths
- Narrow, obstructed, or uneven pavements
- Cars parking on pavements

8. Local Business and Commerce

- Decline of the high street (Bell Street)
- Too many similar shops (e.g., hairdressers, charity shops)
- Loss of independent businesses

What additional/new services or amenities would you like to see in the town?

1. Youth and Teen Facilities

- A dedicated social space or youth cafe.
- Evening activities for the 13-17 age group.
- Gaming cafe, arcade, better skate park, basketball court.

2. Roads, Traffic, and Transport

- Bypass or ring road mentioned multiple times
- Speed limits and better traffic management
- Better maintenance of roads and footpaths
- More parking provision
- Improved train and bus services (e.g. more regular, later running)
- EV Charging points
- Consideration of accessibility needs (e.g. drop-kerbs, play areas, bus, maintenance)

3. Shops and Commercial

- A broader range of shops, making the town a shopping destination.
- Return of a weekly market or farmers market
- More variety in shops – suggestions included delicatessen, greengrocer, fishmonger.
- Fewer hairdressers, more independent shops.
- More diverse eateries, high-quality restaurants, family restaurants.

4. Sports, Leisure & Culture

- Better swimming pool, gym, sports facilities.
- Updated playgrounds, outdoor park gyms, play areas, soft play
- Evening entertainment, live music options, cinema, bowling alley, arts centre.
- Access to river for water sports.
- More sports clubs for children.
- Better library facilities

5. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- More visible police presence, foot patrols, police station
- Better access to GPs and dentist, increased health facilities
- Improved public toilets
- Better lighting around town.

6. Environment and Maintenance

- More clearing of overgrown pathways, maintenance of large trees.
- Measures to improve air quality.
- More litter bins, street cleaning.
- Better access options like a boardwalk along the river.
- Green spaces protection: cycle paths, footpaths.

7. Civic Improvements and Community

- More community events, more local events
- Better promotion of events (town events, sports events)
- Improved places for gatherings, spaces for hire.

Are there any specific locations in the town that you feel need improvement?

1. West Road

Mentioned most frequently. Concerns include potholes, parking, road surface condition, and issues due to construction site lorries. Residents also mentioned the state of pathways and overgrowth in this area.

2. Vantorts Park

Issues with Vantorts Park maintenance, play area conditions, and concerns about anti-social behaviour were raised.

3. A1184 / London Road / Cambridge Road

Among the many issues mentioned: traffic congestion, speeding, potholes, flooding, general appearance (especially around the Co-Op and bus stops), safety of pedestrians, air quality, parking on pavements, footway conditions. A number of residents also suggested removing the double mini-roundabouts to help traffic flow.

4. Station Road

Overgrowth issues, darkness, and general maintenance were noted. Additionally, the road's condition, parked cars, and safety were mentioned.

5. Bell Street

Parking issues, the state of some buildings, the need for more diverse shops, and road surface concerns were common.

6. Bullfields

Overgrowth, parking, visibility, and flooding were concerns raised by residents. The need for an improved Centre, less litter, better play equipment and more focus on safety were also mentioned.

7. Sheering Mill Lane

Concerns about it not yet being one-way, poor lighting, and issues at its junction with Vantorts were raised.

8. Knight Street

Concerns include parking, road condition, and the general appearance. The old Barclays Bank building was frequently mentioned as needing attention or repurposing.

9. Church Park

Improvements for play areas, better maintenance, and concerns about anti-social behaviour were noted.

10. Various other areas:

- Leventhorpe – the swimming pool was frequently mentioned for improvement
- Footpaths & walkways - across Sawbridgeworth, many residents mentioned the poor condition of footpaths, especially with overgrown hedges, weeds, and litter. Some specific areas like the canal paths, Station Road, and walkways near Vantorts Road and Bell Street were highlighted.
- Various other streets were mentioned for improvements, including: Northfields, Fair Green, Lawrence Avenue, Sayesbury Avenue, Brook Road, and the town centre in general.

What are your hopes and ambitions for the future of the town? What would you like it to be like in 10 years?

1. Community and Atmosphere

- Maintaining community spirit, a sense of familiarity, and the friendly, welcoming 'village' atmosphere.
- Continued and improved community events, with support for other local events.
- More police presence and reduced crime.

2. Housing and Development

- Concerns about the town becoming too big or overcrowded, suggest limit new house building
- Infrastructure needs to be expanded with the population.
- Maintain green space to avoid joining up with Bishops Stortford or Harlow.

3. Traffic and Transportation

- Bypass to alleviate traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles. Better management of flow.
- Better cycle routes and pedestrian paths. Better promotion of sustainable transport modes.
- Concerns about congestion and air pollution from vehicles.
- Improved road conditions (fix potholes) and footway conditions (less uneven).

4. Environment and Green Spaces

- Protection of green spaces and parks, and access to them.
- Cleaner air and less pollution.
- Protection of green belt areas and open fields.

5. Amenities and Services

- Better sports and leisure facilities, looked after and maintained.
- Improved medical facilities (doctors, dentists), schools, and public services.
- Enhanced facilities for youth and teenagers.
- Prioritise cleanliness, general maintenance and upkeep, and beautification projects.

6. Local Governance and Decision-making

- Better decision-making by planning departments.
- More consultation with local residents.
- Desires for Town Council to have more say and influence on developments.

7. Economic and Business Growth

- Support for local small businesses and avoiding takeover by national chains.
- A more vibrant town centre with more variety in shops, eateries, and recreational activities.
- A hub that supports local entrepreneurs and startups.

8. Cultural and Historical Preservation

- Maintaining the town's identity and heritage.
- Celebrating local traditions and culture.
- Not becoming too commercialised or losing its unique character.

Do you have any other comments you would like to add about life in Sawbridgeworth, and what you would like to see?

1. Infrastructure and Development Concerns

- Concern over too much new housing without accompanying infrastructure.
- The need for road maintenance, with many citing potholes.
- Concerns about increasing traffic congestion.
- Call for improvements in public transport, particularly reliability of buses and timing of trains.

2. Community and Safety

- Desire for more police presence and better enforcement of speed limits.
- The community cherishes the sense of community spirit and many wish to preserve this.
- There's a consistent request for maintaining and enhancing green spaces.
- Call for a reduction in anti-social behaviour, with a desire for more policing.
- Community cohesion and initiatives that foster community spirit and give people a sense of ownership in the town.

3. Amenities and Services

- Desire for better sports and leisure facilities, particularly swimming pool, football club, cricket club.
- A wish to see more variety in shops, and fewer vacant shops.
- Call for more recreational facilities for children and teenagers, with suggestions ranging from youth clubs to improved sports facilities.
- The community values its current events and wishes for them to continue and be better promoted.

4. Environmental Concerns

- Emphasis on improving air quality.
- Requests for more focus on sustainability, including EV charging points and better recycling.
- Concerns about the impact of increased housing and traffic on the environment.
- A call to protect the river, green spaces and trees.

5. Local Governance and Communication

- Some members of the community feel that there is not enough transparency or engagement from local councils, or communication about events or meetings.
- There's a desire for better advertising of community events and ways to get involved.

In general, while many residents appreciate the qualities of Sawbridgeworth, there's a shared concern about the town's future, particularly in relation to **overdevelopment, traffic, and the preservation of community spirit**. There's a clear desire for **proactive measures** to address these concerns and **better communication** from local authorities.

What are the 5 key issues?

1. Transport, traffic & associated infrastructure

- **Increasing traffic and congestion**, particularly on A1184/London Road/Cambridge Road
- **Speeding cars and dangerous driving** in a number of areas e.g. Bullfields, Vantorts
- **Regular roadworks**, especially by utility companies, but also **poor road conditions** generally (e.g. potholes) particularly on West Road and on Essex county borders.
- **Noise and air pollution** from vehicles, particularly along the main road (A1184).
- **Public transport** provision could be improved in particular the frequency and routes of some local bus services; and the timing and frequency of trains late at night.
- **Active travel** not being encouraged or supported - footpaths/pavements poorly maintained and overgrown, cycle routes practically non-existent, river path not maintained.
- **Climate impacts** causing more regular repeat issues e.g. flooding (Parsonage Lane, Bullfields, Spellbrook, Harlow Road); and lack of gritting on pedestrian routes.

2. Housing, planning & preparedness for the future

- **Changing character** of the town and community cohesion through overdevelopment.
- **Loss of green space** - residents really value the green space around Sawbridgeworth, and don't want to lose this to development
- **Affordability of new homes** - new properties feel unaffordable for some local residents, and attract people from London instead.

3. Provision, maintenance and development of local community facilities

- **Investment in local essential services** is required to address current shortages and keep pace with population growth e.g. doctors, dentists, school capacity
- **Lack of facilities for youth and teens** - suggestions included a social space, youth cafe, gaming cafe, arcade, improved skate park and basketball court.
- **Lack of sports and recreational facilities** - the swimming pool, football club and cricket club were mentioned in particular as needing upgrades/improvements and expansion.
- **Better consideration of accessibility needs** - drop-kerbs, ramps, play areas, buses.

4. Safety, policing & social issues

- **Increasing crime** (or at least perception of it) including burglaries and drug taking could be deterred by more regular, targeted foot patrols and a visible presence from police.
- **Antisocial behaviour** was noted particularly on Bell Street, Church Park and Vantorts Park.
- **Lack of street lighting** (or not working) makes some parts of the town feel much less safe at night e.g. Forebury, Twitchells, Lawrence Avenue, Hoestock/Gilders.
- **Litter, graffiti and minor damage** are spoiling the appearance of the town.

5. Civic pride, community engagement & supporting local businesses

- **Decline of the high street** (Bell Street) - in part due to the above issues of litter, care etc.
- **Variety of shops** - residents like independent businesses, but feel there are too many similar shops (e.g., hairdressers, charity shops) and want greengrocer, restaurant etc.
- **Parking issues** - including a lack of parking spaces around town, concerns about potential future parking charges in Bell Street; and people parking on pavements.
- **Lack of communication** about what is going on in the town - particularly town events and town council meetings, but also clubs, activities, sports fixtures etc.

Town Action Plan 2023-2027

	Issue	Suggested action(s)	Responsibility	Priority	Feasibility	Timing	Resources	Action(s) for STC (if not primarily responsible)
Traffic, roads & parking	Traffic and congestion, particularly on A1184/London Road/Cambridge Road	Explore a range of traffic alleviation options - including weight limits, traffic flow, and new routes (opportunities in District Plan review?)	HCC, EHDC	Higher	More Difficult	Over 4 years	Significant budget (HCC, EHDC)	Work with HCC Cllr, Highways and traffic experts to explore options
	Traffic flow along main road (too many stopping points)	Review plans for removing double roundabouts; and subsequently explore options for changes to other crossings on main road to improve traffic flow	HCC	Medium	Possible	Over 4 years	HCC budget	Work with HCC Cllr to get an update from Highways and develop plans
	Speeding cars (e.g. Bullfields, Vantorts) and dangerous driving (e.g. Fair Green/SML)	Actions arising from 20mph consultations and introduction of one-way at SML, but in any case encourage active monitoring and enforcement by Police.	Herts Police / HCC	Higher	Likely	Ongoing now	Police resources	Continue to work closely with Police to monitor safety issues. Explore option of a community Speed Watch and support creation and development if requested
	Regular unplanned roadworks by utility companies on main road and Bell Street	Better planning and coordination of works (where possible), preventative works to avoid emergency fixes, and better communication with HCC, STC & community	Utility Companies / HCC	Medium	Likely	Ongoing now	Time, admin, comms	Build on new relationships with utility companies to improve communication
	Poor road conditions e.g. West Road, A1184 near Harlow	Resurfacing works on A1184 scheduled (2023/24); but consider scheduling for West Road after developments completed	HCC	Higher	Likely	Start in 2023/24	HCC budget	Work with HCC Cllr & Highways for update. Develop relationships with Essex County Council
	Public transport - frequency & routes of buses, timing & frequency of trains at night	Review current bus routes/destinations and frequency (STC to review for Sawbobus); review train times and capacity with GA.	Arriva / HCC, Greater Anglia, STC	Lower	Possible	2024 onwards	Time, admin	Review SawboBus route and frequency. Support engagement with Arriva and Greater Anglia to examine bus/train frequency
	Repeat flooding on roads (e.g. Parsonage Lane, Bullfields, Spellbrook, Harlow Road)	Investigate issues thoroughly to identify causes; consider works to improve drainage and run-off; plant more trees; and comms around non-flushables.	HCC, Thames Water	Medium	Possible	Ongoing now	HCC budget	Continue to support engagement with Thames Water & residents. Support comms around ways to help reduce blockages
	Insufficient gritting of pedestrian routes during cold weather	Review A/B priority routes; ensure salt bins are full at start of winter; assist with STC supply where possible; and communicate responsibilities to businesses/groups/residents	HCC, STC	Medium	Likely	Ongoing now	STC Rangers, time, comms	STC Rangers to ensure bins are topped up, and if necessary assist in gritting pathways to town centre. STC to support in communicating routes and responsibilities.
	Accessibility around town (uneven, narrow pavements; not enough drop kerbs)	Conduct assessment of town centre pavements to identify areas for resurfacing and additional drop kerbs.	HCC	Higher	Possible	2024 onwards	HCC budget, STC budget, time, admin	Assist in identifying pavement issues, and support HCC Cllr to highlight to HCC. Explore feasibility of adding a wheelchair ramp to SawboBus.
	Lack of parking provision around the town	Identify areas of insufficient parking provision; explore options for additional bays; changes to yellow lines; and consider longer-term options e.g. layout changes, permits	HCC	Higher	Possible	2024 onwards	HCC budget, time, admin	Assist in identifying key areas, and work with HCC Cllr to highlight to HCC
	Concerns about Bell Street parking charges	Maintain free parking periods on evenings and weekends; and keep daytime costs low. Some costs could be offset by partnering with an EV charging supplier	EHDC	Medium	Possible	Ongoing now	Time, admin, EHDC budget	Continue to voice community's concerns about any possible future increases to EHDC and support local businesses
	Cars parking on pavements	Assess locations and timings for likely issues (e.g. school pick-up/takeaways), and discuss enforcement with HCC and Herts Police.	HCC / Herts Police	Higher	Possible	2024 onwards	HCC & Police resources	Assist in identifying issue areas and highlight to HCC and police. Work with residents and Police on Priority Setting to include this.

	Issue	Suggested action(s)	Responsibility	Priority	Feasibility	Timing	Resources	Action(s) for STC (if not primarily responsible)
Sustainability & Environment	Noise & air pollution from vehicles	Encourage alternatives e.g. walking, cycling, EVs (see points below); promote a 'Don't Be Idle' comms campaign; and monitor air quality on main road	EHDC, HCC	Medium	Likely	Ongoing now	EHDC budget	Continue to push EHDC for updates on EV chargers; footpath repairs, and air quality monitor
	Lack of Electric Vehicle charging points in Sawbridgeworth	EHDC to move forward with over-due installations in Bell Street Car Park; also consider options for private investment e.g. at Shell Garage, and local car parks	EHDC	Lower	Likely	Ongoing now	Time, admin, EHDC budget	Continue to push EHDC for updates on EV chargers; and support in identifying possible additional sites
	Overgrown paths and footpath maintenance	Cut back overgrowth in key areas (Station Road, Twitchell, main road route to Spellbrook); and repair and reinstate Footpath 22	EHDC	Higher	Possible	Ongoing now	STC Rangers, EHDC budget	Push EHDC for update on FP22. Assess where STC Rangers may be able to support in clearing pathways. Encourage residents & Cllrs to continue to report issues online immediately.
	Better footpaths along river (e.g. boardwalks)	Conduct feasibility assessment of boardwalk installation (or other permanent alternatives) from Osier Bed (Pishiobury Park) to Keckys's; and possible access to Saffron Crescent.	EHDC / Canal & River Trust	Lower	Possible	Ongoing now	Comms, EHDC/C&T budget	Support engagement between EHDC and Canal & River Trust; and continue to develop relationship between STC and C&RT
	Greater provision of cycle paths	Assess where new/improved routes would have the greatest impact (e.g. to BS/Harlow) and explore development opportunities (including as part of District Plan review)	HCC / EHDC	Medium	More Difficult	2024 onwards	Time, admin, comms	Assist in identifying needs, and make representations to EHDC and HCC
	Loss of green spaces	Explore where green spaces can be better maintained, protected, and made accessible for sustainable use (e.g. River, between West Road/Leventhorpe, behind the Crest, Keckys's)	EHDC	Higher	Possible	2024 onwards	EHDC work, STC Rangers, time	Support maintenance of access (e.g. via footpaths), and support local groups e.g. Friends of Pishiobury Park
Housing & Planning	New homes feel unaffordable to local residents	As part of the District Plan review, review housing affordability targets and opportunities to prioritise local residents, particularly first-time buyers	EHDC	Medium	More Difficult	2024 onwards	Time, admin	Help to ensure residents views' are included in District Plan review (via EHDC Cllrs and local groups)
	Protecting character of town, whilst integrating new residents	Continue to develop community events, and improve the promotion of these and local groups to all residents, particularly those in the newer developments on West Road.	STC	Higher	Possible	Start in 2023/24	STC budget, comms	Develop community events and ensure better communication and engagement across town
Development of local facilities	New/improved facilities for youth and teens e.g. youth café, games arcade	Identify possible sites for new/improved youth-focused facilities; and consider as part of District Plan review. Also consider possible uses of SYPRC/Bullfields.	EHDC, STC	Higher	Possible	Over 4 years	EHDC budget, STC time, budget	Explore options at existing facilities (e.g. Bullfields), and assist in identifying possible new sites
	Investment in local essential services (doctors, dentists & school capacity)	HCC to continue monitoring statutory provision, and work with EHDC to assess future impacts as part of any developments, in line with S106 requirements.	HCC, EHDC	Higher	More Difficult	Over 4 years	HCC budget	Monitor demand, resident feedback, and future S106 assessments
	Expansion of sports facilities, especially football and cricket	Identify possible sites for new/improved sports facilities; and consider as part of District Plan review	EHDC	Medium	More Difficult	Over 4 years	EHDC budget, STC time	Support expansion of sporting provision as part of District Plan Review (via EHDC Cllrs)
	Improvements to Leventhorpe Pool and continued operation	Assign any unallocated S106 monies for 'Grange Paddocks/Leventhorpe' to upgrade facilities at the swimming pool, and provide certainty over the future of the pool.	EHDC	Medium	Possible	2023/24 onwards	EHDC budget, STC time	Push EHDC for update on S106 money, and work with EHDC Cllrs to support Pool maintenance
	Play areas lacking shade and accessible activities	Explore opportunities and means to add trees (or shade sails) and accessible and/or sensory play equipment to play areas	EHDC, STC	Medium	Possible	2024 onwards	EHDC budget, STC budget, time	Explore feasibility and budget for implementing at STC-managed sites (e.g. West Road); and engage with EHDC on other sites
	Library facilities need upgrading	Continue to explore most sustainable location for library and associated investment in facilities	HCC	Medium	Possible	2023/24 onwards	HCC budget, STC time	Support HCC & Cllr in finding a permanent, sustainable home for the library and/or upgrade to facilities

	Issue	Suggested action(s)	Responsibility	Priority	Feasibility	Timing	Resources	Action(s) for STC (if not primarily responsible)
Safety, policing & social issues	Increase in crime (or perception of it), particularly burglaries and antisocial behaviour	Reassure residents with more visible presence; comms around preventative action; continued use of CCTV to deter and identify	Herts Police	Higher	Possible	Start in 2023/24	Police resources, STC comms	Continue to support police comms; support CCTV monitoring; consider future increase to CCTV footprint around town centre
	Lack of visible police presence & not enough patrols	Identify hotspot areas for increased presence and/or regular patrols e.g. Bell Street, Vantorts Park, Bullfields	Herts Police	Higher	Possible	Start in 2023/24	STC time	Work with residents to assist in identifying areas that may benefit from more regular police patrols. Build on STC/Police working relationship e.g. through shared space
	Lack of street lighting, and a number of lights not working	Identify where lights are not working, and repair; and then longer-term consider needs and requests for additional lighting	HCC	Medium	Possible	Start in 2023/24	HCC budget, STC time & admin	Work with residents & HCC Cllr to identify and report areas of concern
	Overflowing litter bins and insufficient street cleaning	Review frequency of bin emptying and street cleaning, and ensure they are being followed; increase frequency if required.	EHDC, STC	Medium	Likely	Start in 2023/24	STC Rangers, budget, time, EHDC resources	Assess where STC Rangers may be able to support
	Litter, graffiti and minor damage spoiling town appearance	STC to work with EHDC to establish a sustainable long-term plan for minor fixes and tidying	EHDC, STC	Lower	Possible	Start in 2023/24	STC Rangers, budget, time, EHDC resources	Assess where STC Rangers may be able to support
Civic pride, engagement & businesses	Decline of Bell Street and low variety of shops	Explore methods to attract new businesses and encourage start-ups (facilities, rates); support existing businesses to revitalise frontage	EHDC, STC	Medium	More Difficult	Over 4 years	EHDC time, budget, STC time, budget	Work with EHDC to explore ways to attract new businesses; support existing businesses to revitalise frontage; consider establishing a business forum/network.
	Lack of weekly market/farmers market	Revive plans for a weekly market, and identify new possible sites and traders.	STC	Medium	Possible	2024 onwards	STC time, budget, comms	Revive plans for a weekly market, and identify new possible sites and traders.
	Requests for more evening entertainment e.g. live music, arts	Improve promotion of existing entertainment/venues; work with venues to encourage more music and arts events; explore possible food/drink festival idea	STC	Lower	Likely	2024 onwards	STC time, budget, comms	Improve promotion of existing entertainment/venues; work with venues to encourage more music and arts events; explore possible food/drink festival idea
	Lack of communication about town events and STC meetings	Review all STC communications (responsibility, platforms, reach), and how STC can support and promote other events/groups across the community	STC	Medium	Likely	Start in 2023/24	STC time, budget, comms	Review all STC comms methods; consider idea for town website to support and promote other events/groups across the community; plan periodical councillor surgeries/drop-ins
	Public toilets could be improved, and perhaps more installed	STC Rangers to continue maintenance of Bell Street toilets; STC to monitor demand for any additional toilets e.g. in Pishiobury Park car park (discuss with EHDC)	STC	Lower	Possible	Ongoing	STC Rangers, time, budget, comms	STC Rangers to continue improved maintenance of Bell Street toilets; STC to monitor demand for any additional toilets e.g. in Pishiobury Park car park (discuss with EHDC)
	Gathering places and spaces for hire could be improved and/or better signposted	As part of communications review, STC to consider better promotion of existing venues for hire. Also consider in development of Jubilee Gardens, Memorial Hall & Bullfields	STC	Lower	Likely	2024 onwards	STC time, budget, comms	As part of communications review, STC to consider better promotion of existing venues for hire. Also consider in development of Jubilee Gardens, Memorial Hall & Bullfields
	Residents on the edges of Sawbridgeworth feel less involved, and are impacted by lack of co-ordination over any works e.g. highways	Work to develop better relationships with neighbouring councils (e.g. Essex County, Uttlesford District, Harlow, Sheering, High Wych), with a view to ensuring better communication and collaborative working	STC	Lower	Likely	Ongoing	STC time	Following planned meeting with Sheering PC, work with HCC Cllr to build relationships between HCC and Essex CC as a priority given highways impact.

Responsibilities for actions

All proposed actions are subject to feasibility - that is to say that, owing to budgets, resourcing, facilities, political leadership, ownership etc., it may simply not be possible to deliver on some of the actions. This Action Plan is an evolving document which will allow for alternative actions to be proposed, if required, in order to tackle some of the challenges outlined.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council is responsible for monitoring the progress of the Action Plan (via the quarterly Town Action Plan & Amenities Committee) and providing a progress report at the Annual Town Meeting. The Town Council and its councillors also have a key role to play in identifying issues and opportunities across the community, and communicating with other tiers of local government (e.g. East Herts District Council / Hertfordshire County Council). This Action Plan should be used to help steer this engagement.

However, it should be reiterated that the Town Council is not responsible for a number of the actions contained within this plan; nor for some of the infrastructure, facilities, or services mentioned throughout this document. To assist in understanding who may be responsible for any current or future actions, please see the graphic below which outlines the responsibilities of each level of local government:



Hertfordshire County Council

- Roads & pavements - including roadworks, potholes, gritting, traffic, street lights
- Recycling centres (tips)
- Social care
- School admissions, free school meals & school transport
- Children's centres
- Fostering & adoption
- Disability support services & disabled parking
- Libraries
- Grass cutting and verge maintenance

More info: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk



Sawbridgeworth Town Council

- Allotments
- Cemetery
- Civic Events & Town Events (e.g. Fun on the Field, River Day)
- Hanging Baskets, Planters, and Christmas Lights/Trees
- Sawbobus and Minibus Hire
- Crime Prevention Initiatives
- Grants to voluntary organisations
- Planning Matters (statutory consultee)
- Promotion of the town
- West Road open space & play area
- Town Rangers

More info: www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk



East Herts District Council

- Rubbish & recycling collections
- Fly-tipping and litter
- Planning & development
- Anti-social behaviour
- Parking & car parks
- Abandoned vehicles
- Homelessness
- Social Housing Register & allocations
- Council tax & benefits
- Licensing & Hackney Carriages
- Nuisances (including noise and odour) and pollution control
- Business support (food and health & safety inspections)
- Housing standards
- Environmental standards
- Clean air
- Elections
- Play areas

More info: www.eastherts.gov.uk