

Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036

STRATEGIC **E**NVIRONMENTAL **A**SSESSMENT

SEA Screening Request

September 2022



Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036

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Pre-submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with
Regulation 14 of Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012



The Parish Council received professional planning support from NEIGHBOURHOOD-PLAN.CO.UK during the production of this Neighbourhood Plan.



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For any query relating to the Neighbourhood Plan contact:

Clerk to Sawtry Parish Council

The Old School House

37 Green End Road

Sawtry

Huntingdon

PE28 5UY

Tel: 01487 831771

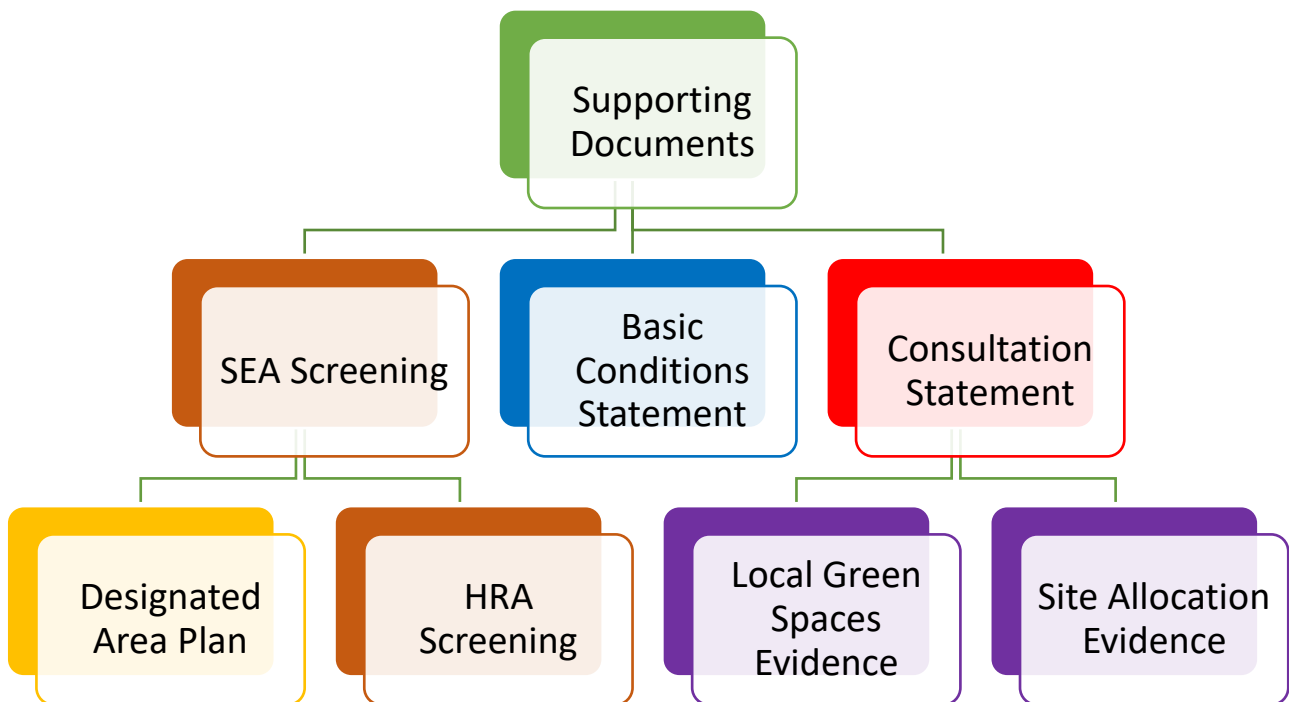
Office Open 09.30 – 13.00 (Monday – Friday)

E mail: clerk@sawtry-pc.gov.uk

www.sawtry-pc.gov.uk

Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036

The Neighbourhood Plan



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Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036



SAWTRY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SEA SCREENING REQUEST: SECTIONS

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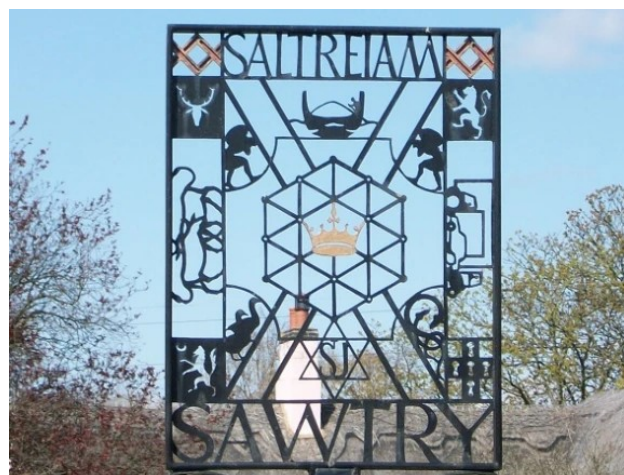
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Introduction

1. Sawtry Parish Council have undertaken this SEA screening statement request. It is the role of Huntingdonshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to undertake a screening of the Neighbourhood Plan to determine whether or not the contents of the Sawtry Neighbourhood Development Plan require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
2. This document has been produced to assist the LPA undertake the screening in collaboration with the three designated environmental bodies, namely the Environment Agency; Natural England; and Historic England.
3. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will need to be undertaken for certain development plans that would have a significant environmental effect. An SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan, dependent on what the plan is proposing.
4. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 require that the need for an SEA is to be determined by a screening process. This must meet the criteria of Schedule 1 of the Regulations (Appendix 2).
5. For Sawtry, it is the responsibility of Huntingdonshire District Council to determine whether an SEA is required. To make this decision the District Council are required to consult with three statutory consultation bodies: Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England.
6. This SEA screening statement request comprises two parts: part one assesses the Neighbourhood Plan against the steps that should be taken to determine the need for SEA in accordance with the Directive and associated regulations, part two assesses the likely significant effects on the environment of the Neighbourhood Plan.
7. This Statement has been prepared to accompany the Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations"). The relevant local planning authority is Huntingdonshire District Council. The Neighbourhood Plan has been drawn up by Sawtry Parish Council which is the designated body for the plan area.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Development Plan

8. The Sawtry Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan. This means that Huntingdonshire District Council will determine planning applications within the Parish in accordance with the development plan which includes this Neighbourhood Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise (see [section 38\(6\)](#)¹ of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
9. Designation of Neighbourhood Planning Area. Sawtry Parish Council's application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area relating to the whole of the parish was [approved](#)² on 23 October 2019. Sawtry Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the designated neighbourhood area in order to develop a neighbourhood plan. The area of the Neighbourhood Plan is based upon the parish boundary, which was seen as appropriate as this

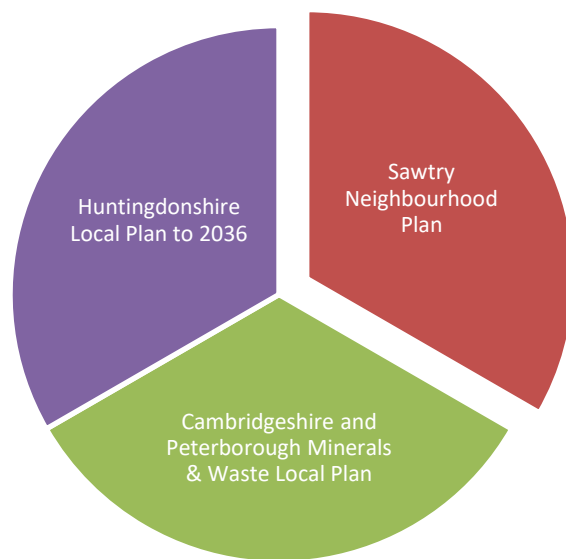


¹<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/38>

²<https://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/4040/sawtry-designation.pdf>

area is recognised as the distinct community of Sawtry. This Neighbourhood Plan is a Community Led Plan. It has been prepared by the Parish Council with professional support. It has been informed by public participation and early consultation with the local community. The formal Neighbourhood Plan preparation process involves two statutory periods of public consultation as prescribed in [Regulations](#)³.

10. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Sawtry Parish Council, a qualifying body, (Section 38A (12) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004) for the Neighbourhood Area covering the Parish of Sawtry, as designated by Huntingdonshire District Council. The name of the neighbourhood area is the 'Sawtry Neighbourhood Area'. It does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and there are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the neighbourhood area.
11. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area only. The document sets out the period of the Neighbourhood Plan which is from 2022 to 2036.
12. The '**Development Plan**' for Sawtry is made up of 3 main components as follows:



13. All policies within the Neighbourhood Plan should be read in conjunction with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. When determining proposals for development, no policy will be applied in isolation and account will be taken of all relevant policies.
14. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. Huntingdonshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority defines which policies are to be considered 'strategic' with regard to the production of a neighbourhood plan. They consider that some of the policies and all the allocations within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 are to be considered 'strategic' for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. Details of which policies are deemed 'strategic' is set out in the introduction of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036⁴.
15. **The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036** adopted in May 2019 provides a framework for sustainable development and is complementary to the NPPF. The [Local Plan](#)⁵ includes some 38 policies under which planning applications are considered and also identifies areas of land (allocations) for development. The purpose of the Local Plan is to set out: the strategy for development in the whole of Huntingdonshire;

³<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

⁴See the yellow box between paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 on Page 4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

⁵<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/3872/final-adopted-local-plan-to-2036.pdf>

policies for managing development; and details of sites for development to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire. Sawtry is designated as a 'Key Service Centre' (KSC) in the Local Plan and as such has a role in meeting the development needs of the district through a series of allocations for development in the Local Plan. The strategy also sets out a role for further sustainable development at KSCs in contributing to the social and economic sustainability of these settlements and supporting a thriving rural economy.

16. The system of neighbourhood planning allows Parish and Town Councils to produce neighbourhood plans to guide development at a local level. One of the requirements of such plans is that they should be in line with the 'strategic policies' of the adopted development plan for the local area.
17. Huntingdonshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority defines which policies are to be considered 'strategic' with regard to the production of a neighbourhood plan. They consider that for the purposes of neighbourhood planning that some of the policies and all the allocations within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 are to be considered 'strategic' for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. Details of which policies are deemed 'strategic' is set out in the introduction of the Local Plan. A neighbourhood plan can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a particular area. Plans can include local priorities, planning policies, proposals for improving an area or providing new facilities or infrastructure and allocation of key sites for development.

Stage One: Establishing the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment

18. The Government published Planning Practice [Guidance](#)⁶ states there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to have a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, a qualifying body, in this case Sawtry Parish Council, must demonstrate how its plan or order will contribute to achieving sustainable development. Planning Practice Guidance also states, in some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Consequently, a SEA screening statement has been undertaken using guidance from the Government published advice in 'A Practical [Guide](#) to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (2005)⁷.
19. The document 'A Practical Guidance to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' was published by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It sets out guidance on how to comply with the European Directive 2001/42/EC known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive that applied at that time. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 embeds the same aspects into UK law. Figure 2 of this practical guidance shows the Directive's field of application in the form of a diagram (Appendix 2), which provides an outcome of whether a plan does or does not require an SEA.
20. Sawtry Parish Council, as the designated body, have to "Determine whether a plan or Order is likely to have significant environmental effect". In order to do this, we are providing an assessment of the NDP against the diagram provided in Appendix 2 to establish whether an SEA is required. Each stage of the diagram provides a criterion which a 'yes' or 'no' response is required to progress to the next stage.
21. The table below shows the assessment of whether the NDP will require a full SEA. The questions below are drawn from the diagram in Appendix 2 which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied and provides justification for the particular path considered suitable by us on behalf of Sawtry Parish Council.
22. The views of Huntingdonshire District Council as the relevant Local Planning Authority will be sought as will the views of the statutory environmental bodies through the consultation on the draft plan and the SEA

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans>

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

Screening Statement. It is the responsibility of Huntingdonshire District Council to determine whether an SEA is required, this screening has been produced to assist them in this process.

Table 1: Establishing the Need for SEA

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes to criterion 1	The preparation of and adoption of the plan is allowed under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NDP is prepared by Sawtry Parish Council (as the 'relevant body') and will be 'made' by Huntingdonshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority. The preparation of the NDP is subject to The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	No	Communities, such as Sawtry have a right to be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. Instead, if 'made' the plan would form part of the statutory development plan. Therefore, it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes to criterion 1 No to criterion 2	The NDP is prepared to set out for town and country planning purposes; the NDP set out policies which will influence future development within the parish of Sawtry, including development of housing, employment and community land uses. However, the plan will be used as a tool which manages the design details of development rather than the principles of land use. The NDP does not allocate any sites for housing or employment development but does provide a village centre opportunity site and allocates some sites for community use. It does however safeguard land for open space, local green space and for community use. Furthermore, the NDP will not be a tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	No	A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening assessment, has considered the potential impacts of the NDP on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. This HRA screening assessment concludes that a HRA is not required for the NDP.
5. Does the PP Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes	The NDP does determine a small number of the land uses within Sawtry as it contains limited land allocations for community uses and an opportunity site. Also, the NDP does provide details of the community's preferential locations for local green space and community use at local level.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Yes	Once the NDP is 'made' by Huntingdonshire District Council it will form part of the statutory development plan against which planning applications will be determined.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	No	The NDP does not deal with any of these issues.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No (See stage 2 below)	Stage 2 of this SEA Screening Statement will consider the potential effects of the NDP on the environment. This considers the effects of the NDP against the criteria referred to in Article 3.5 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

Stage Two: Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

23. The table below shows the assessment of the potential significant effects of the environment, as required by Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive.

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary	Likely Significant effect? (Y/N)
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The NDP would form part of the Statutory Development Plan and therefore would set a framework for future development projects in Sawtry. However, the plan sits within a wider framework set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.</p> <p>The policies of the NDP are in general conformity with the NPPF and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. In addition, the projects for which the NDP contributes to setting a planning framework are very local in nature.</p>	No

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The NDP has a low hierarchical position within a number of statutory development plans; therefore the NDP will respond to, rather than influence, other plans or programmes. Policies set out in the NDP are in conformity with the NPPF and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.	No
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of The TSP will work to protect and enhance the natural environment and landscape of the plan area	<p>The NDP will work to protect and enhance the natural environment and landscape of Sawtry, including statutory environmental designations. The policies of the NDP provide protection for areas of high environmental value, including Local Green Space. The NDP will work to protect and enhance the natural environment of Sawtry, including statutory environmental designations. The policies of the NDP will not affect the protection for areas of high environmental value, including the SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites outside of but within the catchment of the plan area. The built environment of Sawtry is also sought to be protected through the NDP.</p> <p>A number of NDP policies will contribute to the social sustainability of Sawtry as a distinct village community. Therefore, the NDP will provide socially sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.</p> <p>Through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), new residential development is seen as essential to fund important services required for socially sustainable development.</p> <p>Therefore, it is considered that the NDP will have a positive impact on local environmental assets and therefore will promote sustainable development.</p>	Yes
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	There are no environmental problems directly relevant to this plan. There will be an increase in the number of houses in the plan area as a result of new development planned for within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. However, the NDP will help to address wider environmental problems as highlighted in the NPPF at a local level, including provision of green space and community facilities.	No
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The NDP is not directly relevant to the implementation of retained European legislation. This legislation is taken into account by the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 with which the Neighbourhood Plan complies.	No

SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary	Likely Significant effect? (Y/N)
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The NDP will result in positive environmental effects through policies that seek to protect the built heritage character from coalescence and green spaces. The plan will result in positive social effects through policies which seek to support the development of community facilities.</p> <p>The duration of the positive effects outlined above are likely to be long term. However, due to the small scale and nature of the issues considered in the NDP, it is considered that any effects will be low in frequency and reversible.</p>	No
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	<p>A combination of this neighbourhood plan which seeks to protect and enhance the character, environment and setting of Sawtry, and wider environmental policy of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, is likely to have cumulative positive environmental effects will have cumulative positive benefits for the area of Sawtry.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, as the NDP deals with issues which are of a small scale and nature, it is considered that the impact of the neighbourhood plan will be limited.</p>	Yes
(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects	All effects will be very local in impact, having negligible impacts on neighbouring areas.	No
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment. Instead, the plan aims to enhance the environment and to provide the infrastructure required to meet the social needs of local residents.	No
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The Neighbourhood Plan relates to an area of approximately 2,537ha. This is a relatively modest geographical area with a population estimate ⁸ of approximately 5,825. Therefore, the magnitude and spatial extent of the plan is small.	Yes
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or - intensive land-use	<p>The Parish of Sawtry contains one National Nature Reserve (Monks Wood). The Plan area contains two Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Monks Wood and The Odd Quarter SSSI and Aversley Wood SSSI. The Odd Quarter part of the SSSI is recorded as being in favourable condition; whereas the Monks Wood part of the SSSI is recorded as being in unfavourable – recovering condition. The Aversley Wood SSSI is partly recorded as being in unfavourable – recovering condition and partly being in unfavourable – no change condition.</p> <p>In the vicinity of the Sawtry Neighbourhood Plan area the key ‘National Sites Network’ and Ramsar sites of interest</p>	Yes

⁸ This is a 2020 Cambridgeshire County Council population estimate

	<p>are the Fenland Special Area of Conservation, and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site; the Portholme Special Area of Conservation; the Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation; and Upper Nene Valley Special Protection Area, and Upper Nene Valley Ramsar.</p> <p>The closest to the Neighbourhood Plan area are Fenland SAC/Woodwalton Fen Ramsar lying approximately 2km to the east of the Parish; Orton Pit SAC lying approximately 8km to the north of the Parish; and Portholme SAC (Huntingdon/Godmanchester) lying approximately 9km to the south.</p> <p>The plan area contains four Scheduled Monuments and 17 Listed Buildings (no Grade I; 1 Grade II*; and 16 Grade II), it also contains the Sawtry Conservation Area. These heritage assets will also be protected by higher tier documents, such as the NPPF, and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.</p>	
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognized national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>The Parish of Sawtry contains one National Nature Reserve (Monks Wood). The Plan area contains two Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Monks Wood and The Odd Quarter SSSI and Aversley Wood SSSI. The Odd Quarter part of the SSSI is recorded as being in favourable condition; whereas the Monks Wood part of the SSSI is recorded as being in unfavourable – recovering condition. The Aversley Wood SSSI is partly recorded as being in unfavourable – recovering condition and partly being in unfavourable – no change condition.</p> <p>In the vicinity of the Sawtry Neighbourhood Plan area the key 'National Sites Network' and Ramsar sites of interest are the Fenland Special Area of Conservation, and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site; the Portholme Special Area of Conservation; the Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation; and Upper Nene Valley Special Protection Area, and Upper Nene Valley Ramsar.</p> <p>The closest to the Neighbourhood Plan area are Fenland SAC/Woodwalton Fen Ramsar lying approximately 2km to the east of the Parish; Orton Pit SAC lying approximately 8km to the north of the Parish; and Portholme SAC (Huntingdon/Godmanchester) lying approximately 9km to the south.</p> <p>The NDP contains policies aimed at protecting open space outside of designated sites such as the SAC and SSSIs and the creation of new recreation and leisure opportunities within new development to help reduce visitor pressure on the SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites.</p>	<p>No</p>

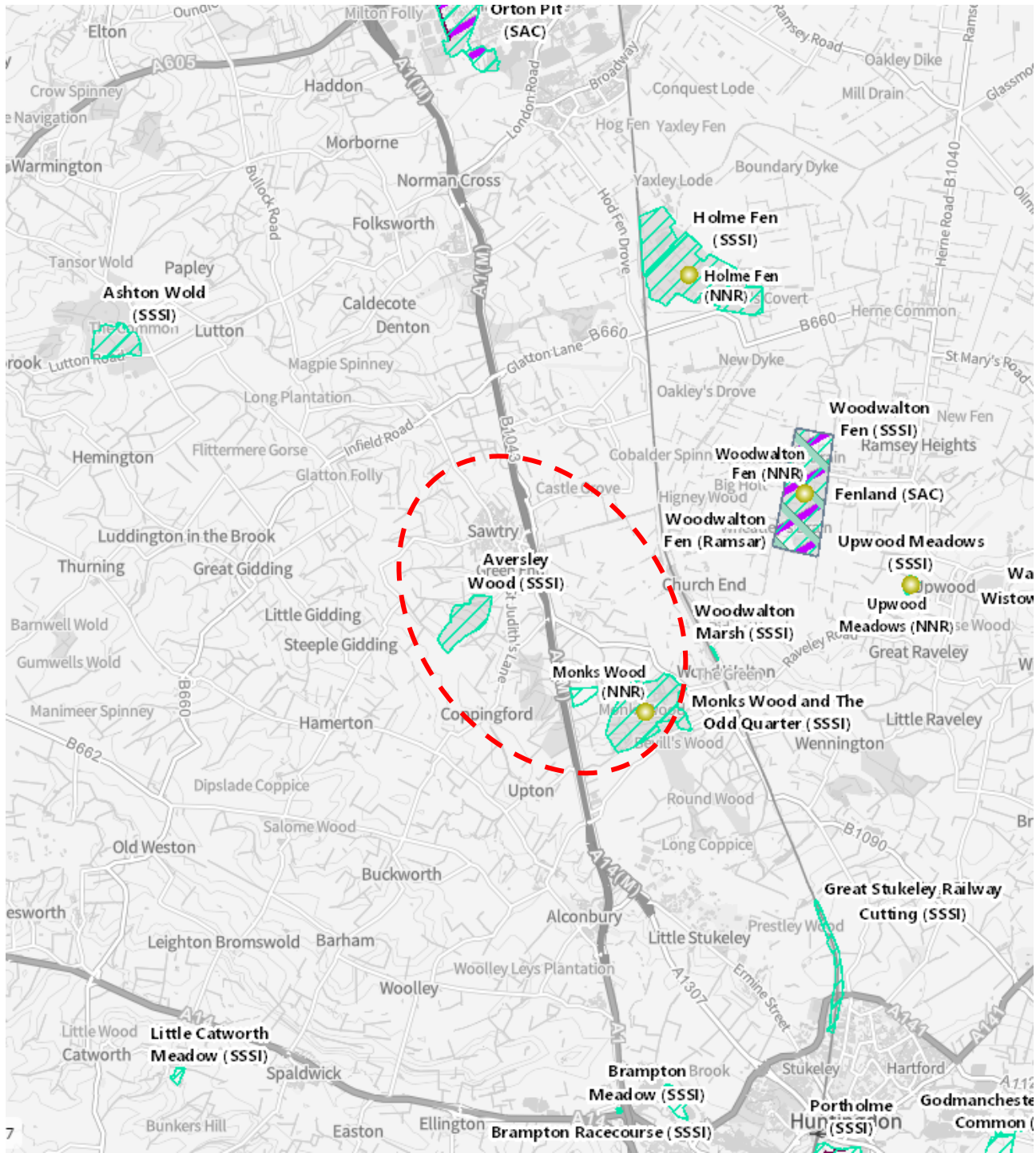
Consultation and Conclusion

24. As a result of the assessment, based on Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive, Sawtry Parish Council considered that there would be no significant environmental effects arising from the NDP. As such, in the view of the Parish Council the NDP does not require a full SEA to be undertaken.


25. Consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents will take place; this will include a draft of this SEA Screening Request. Consultation will be undertaken with Huntingdonshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority; and the Environment Agency; Natural England; and Historic England as the three statutory environmental bodies.

Appendix One: Environmental and Heritage Assets

Nature Conservation Sites

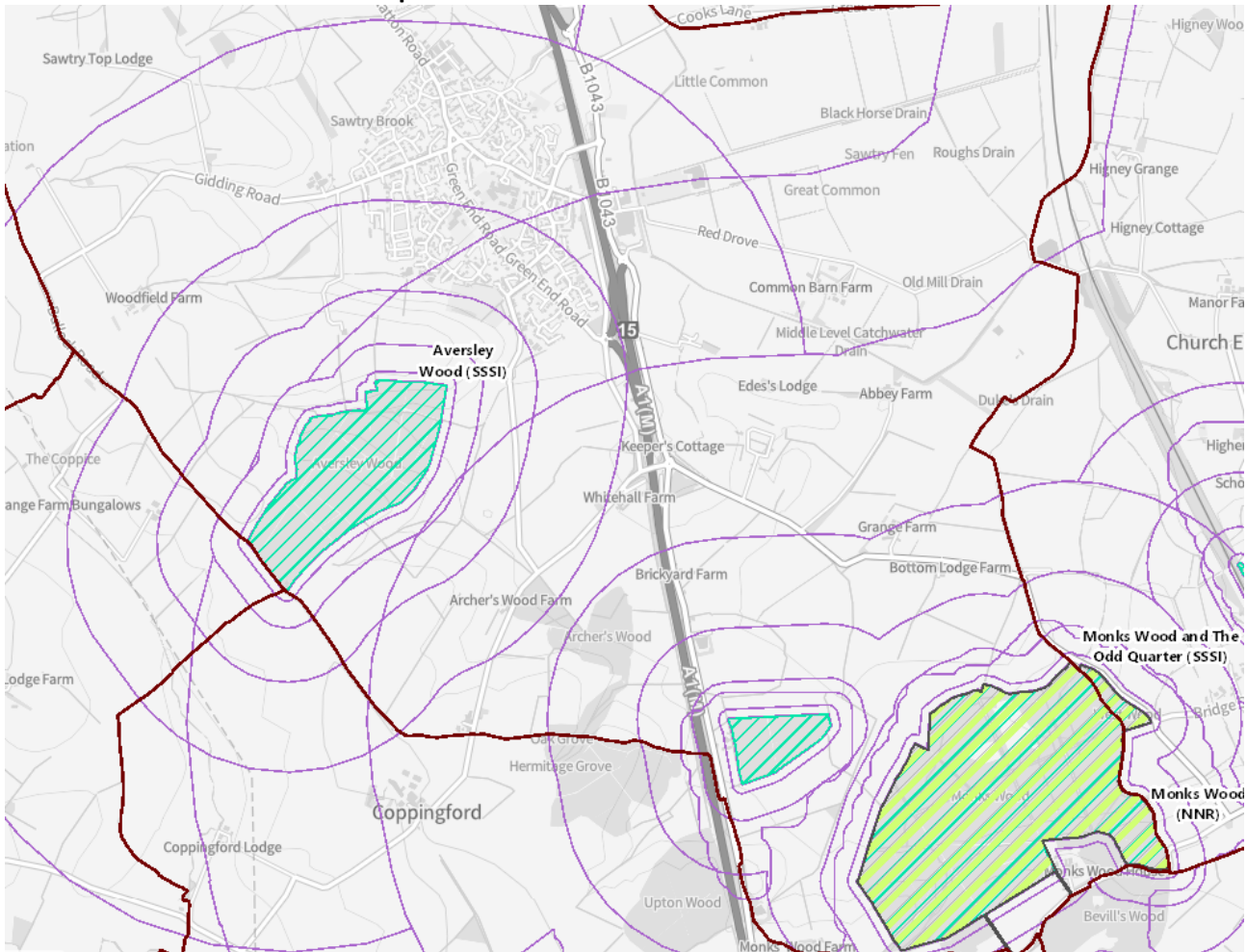


Extract from Magic [website](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)⁹ © Defra

 Broad Area of Sawtry Parish

⁹<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Nature Conservation Sites and Impact Zones



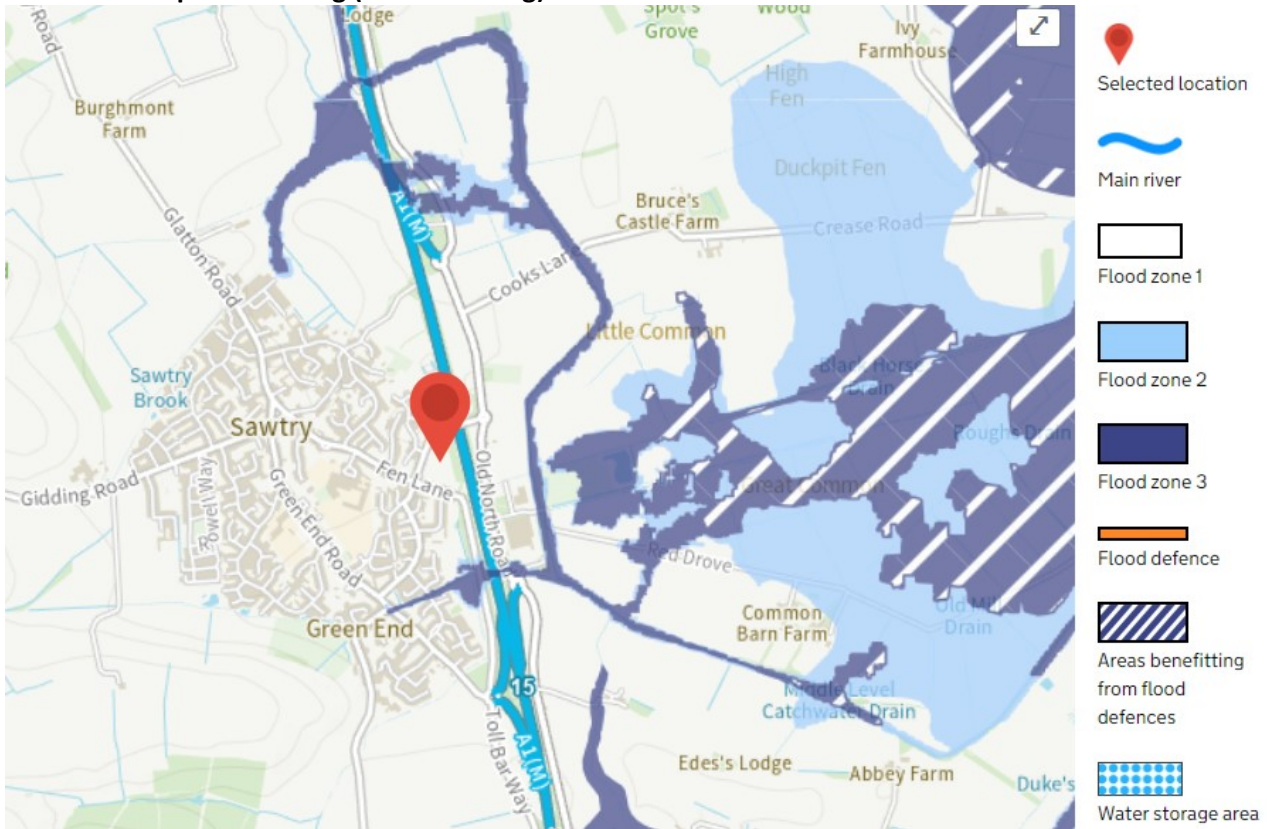
Extract from Magic [website](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)¹⁰ © Defra

Parish Boundary
 Impact Zones

Natural England defines Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for SSSIs and has undertaken amendments across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to the IRZs to introduce a recreational pressure 'zone of potential risk' for SSSIs of either 2km or 5km. Sawtry village falls within the impact zones of both the Monks wood and the Odd Quarter SSSI and the Aversley Wood SSSI.

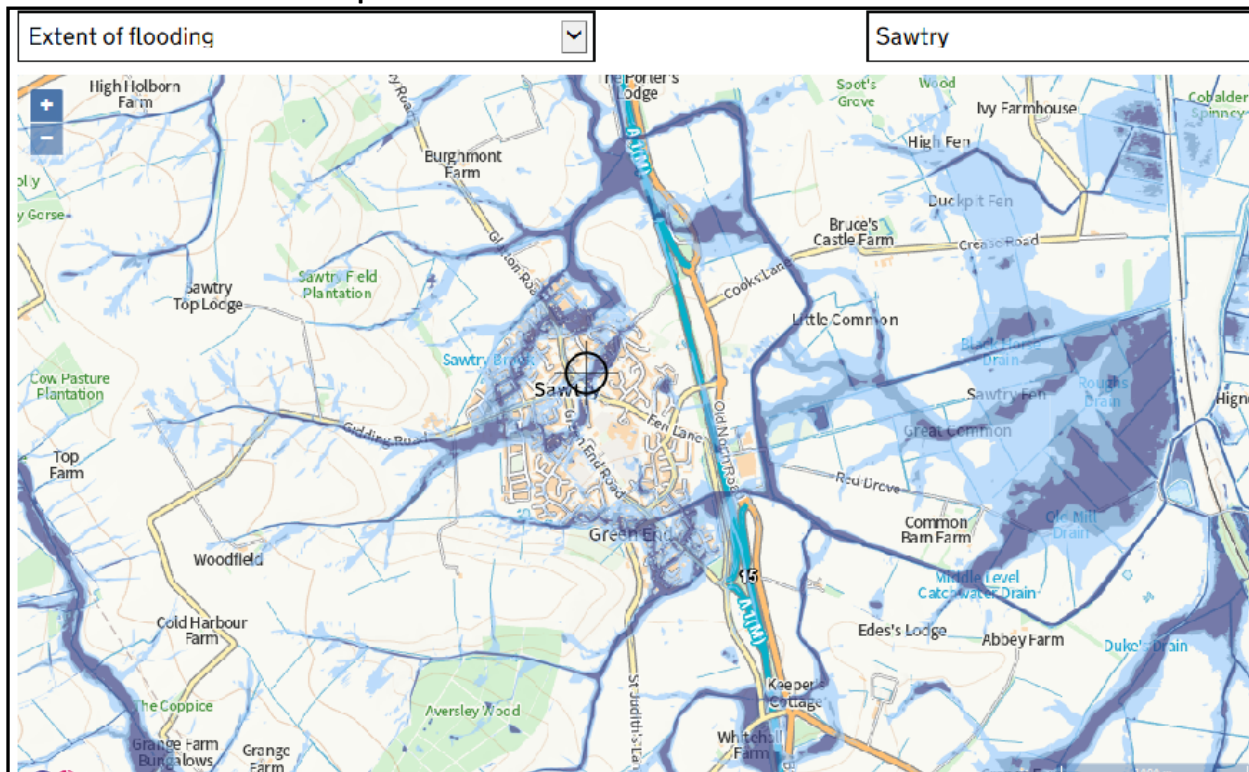
¹⁰<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Flood Risk Map for Planning (River Flooding)



© Environment Agency

Surface Water Flood Risk Map

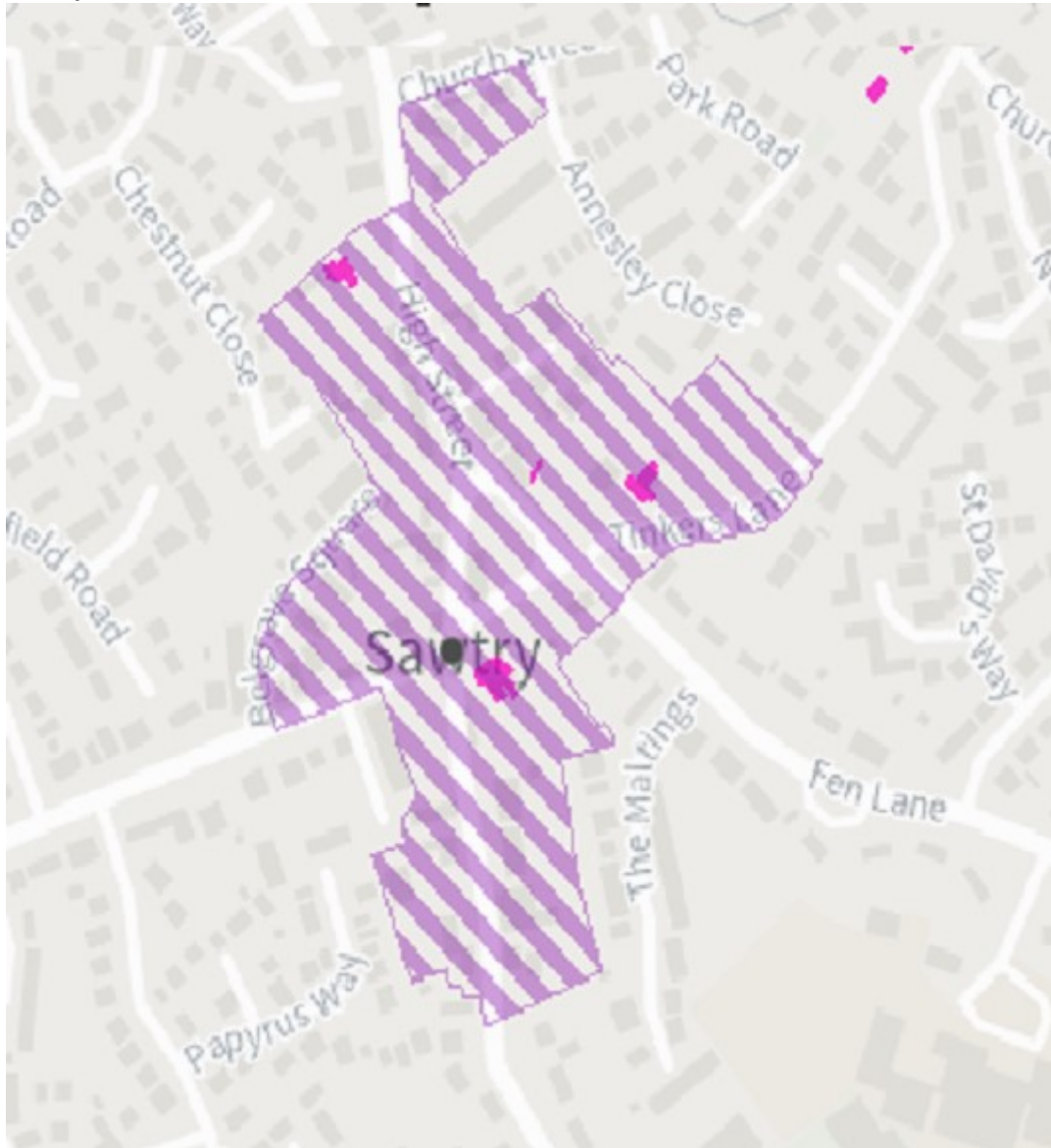


Extent of flooding from surface water

● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low ⊕ Location you selected

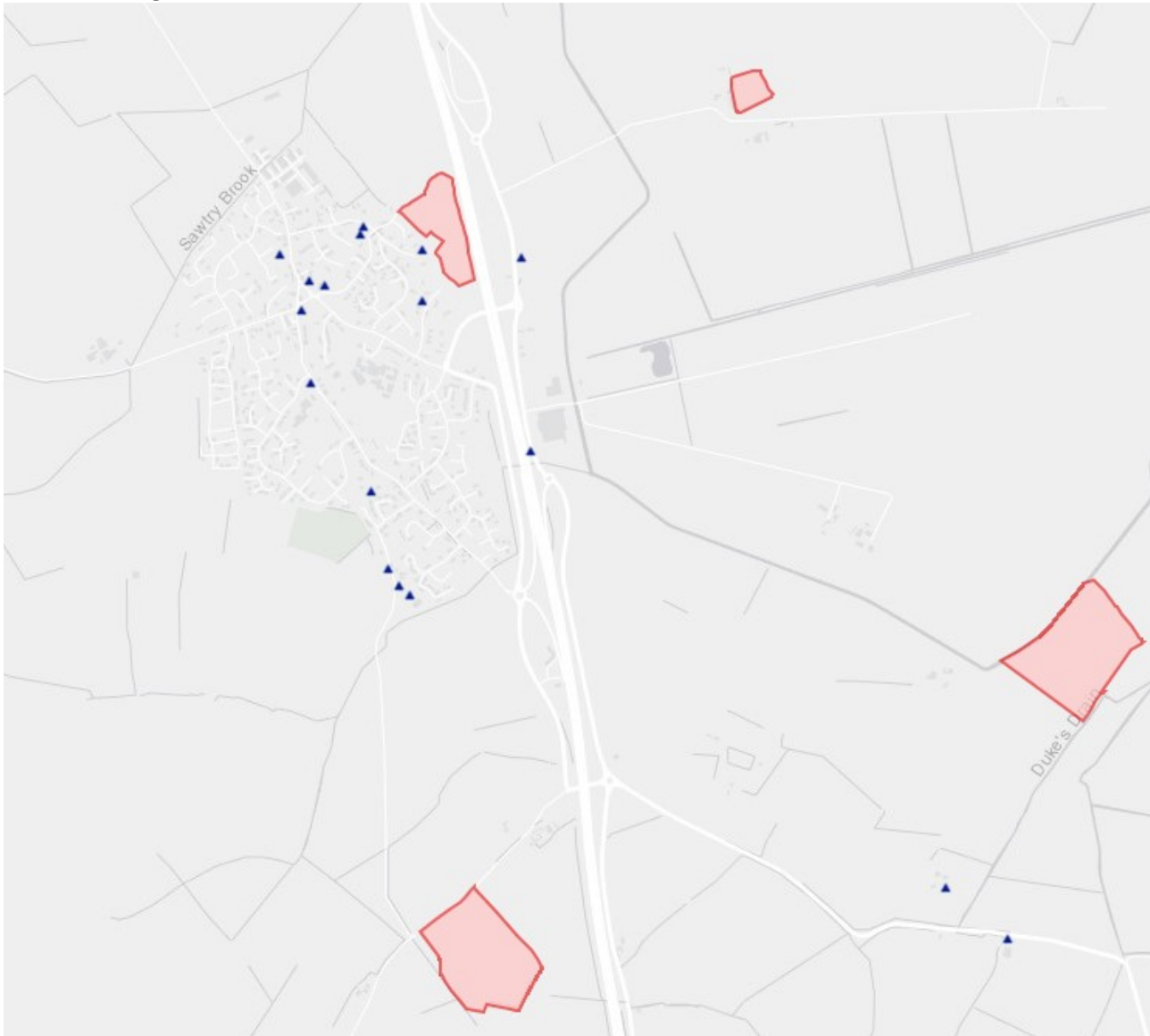
© Environment Agency

Sawtry Conservation Area



© Huntingdonshire District Council

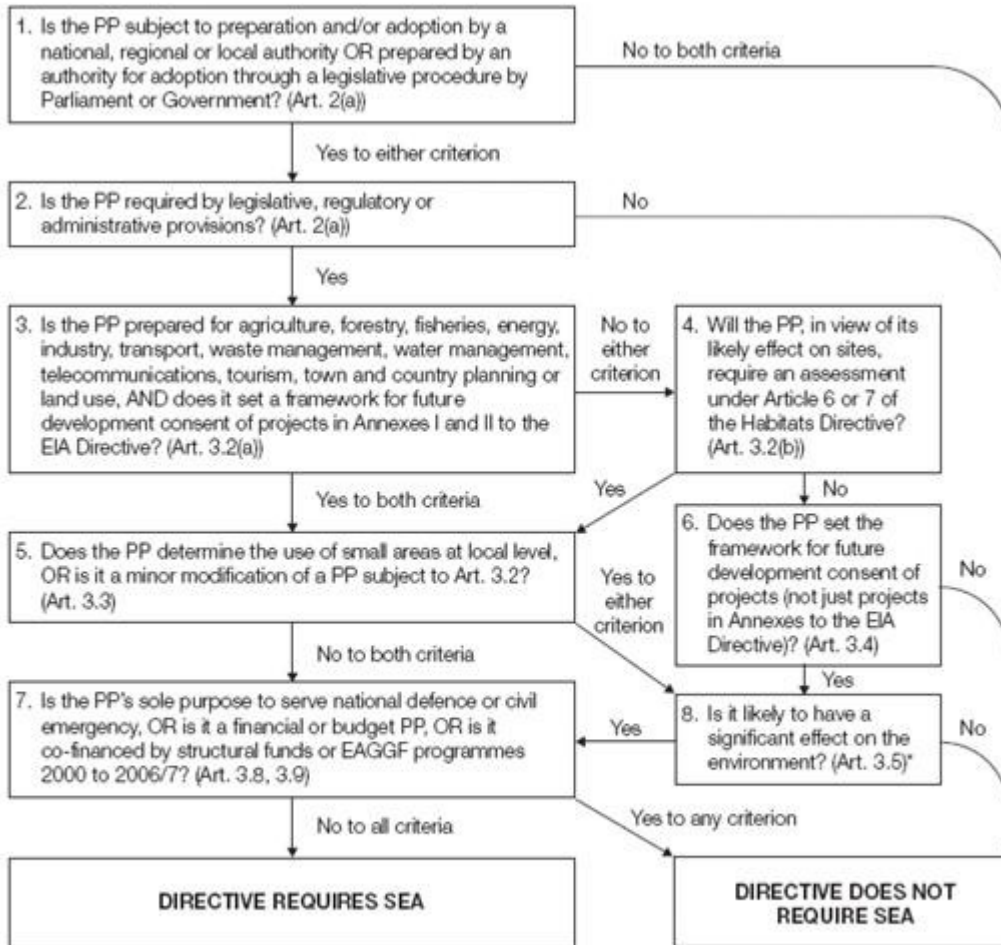
Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments



Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments © Historic England

Listed Building ▲ Scheduled Monument □

Appendix Two: Diagram of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.