



David Hogger  
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3 Princes Street,  
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BA1 1HL

28 June 2023

Dear Mr Hogger (BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT)

**RE: Independent Examination of Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan Examination**

Sawtry Parish Council and Huntingdonshire District Council received procedural matters and questions on 8 June 2023. Please find below a joint response, as requested to questions 1 to 3 of the procedural matters and questions.

- 1. Paragraph 009 ID: 41-009-20190509 of the Planning Practice Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning, advises that ‘where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date local plan is in place (i.e. the Updated Local Plan for Huntingdonshire – scheduled for adoption in 2028<sup>1</sup>), the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan, the emerging local plan and the adopted development plan. Could the Councils confirm whether or not such discussions have taken place at this early stage in the preparation of the Updated Local Plan, summarise the conclusions that were drawn, and confirm that at this stage there are no issues of concern regarding the compatibility of the Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan and the Updated Local Plan 2028?**

The Local Plan is still considered up to date and the Development Plan Document that Parish and Town Councils are advised to comply with. Approval to commence an update to the Local Plan was granted on 24 January 2023. The plan is at a very early stage of production and is in evidence gathering/survey phase with an issues consultation underway concluding on 5<sup>th</sup> July. As such no development strategy or policy formation has yet to take place and therefore cannot be taken into consideration in the development of this neighbourhood plan.

- 2. The Environment Agency (Ref: SNPS:22) raise a number of issues regarding flood risk, water demand and water efficiency. Are both Councils satisfied that these issues are satisfactorily addressed in other planning documentation (e.g. the Local Plan) or is there a need for these issues to be referred to in the SVNP?**

It can be confirmed that the Environment Agency were contacted at both Regulation 14 and 16 stage of the Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan preparation.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 4 of the Local Development Scheme March 2023

It is noted that the Environment Agency have provided comments which identify opportunities to strengthen the Plan and enhance the scope of environmental Objectives considered. With regard to the proposed extension to St Andrew's cemetery, we accept the need to satisfy the required tests and standards as part of the planning application process. The following amended policy text has been provided:

*'Land east of St Andrew's cemetery shown on Map 8 in Section 10 is identified for cemetery use and proposals to create new or enhanced cemetery facilities will be supported. An appropriate risk assessment will need to accompany planning application. Proposals to use this land for any alternative use will not be permitted.'*

If the examiner considers it necessary, reference to or signposting to the relevant environment agency guidance as provided in the Environment Agency's response to the consultation could be included within the supporting text.

Pages 8 to 12 of the *Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan Site Allocation Evidence* document confirms that five sites were considered for sport and recreation purposes. Huntingdonshire District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 was used to assess the flood risk of these areas. Of five the potential sites that were considered appropriate for sports and recreation in Sawtry, the majority of sites 2, 3 and 5 were located within Flood Zone 3. Site 4 was ruled out due to the sloping topography meaning there was little land to facilitate additional sports pitches or built facilities. The formally laid out sports pitches would also conflict with the parkland character which is considered of particular importance to the village, this is reflected in its designation as Local Green Space 17 St Judith's Field and Dog Walking Area.

Local Plan policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 would also be used in the determination of planning applications to ensure that development has been sequentially located within the site to avoid flood risk. Reference to these policies could be included in the text if the examiner thinks it relevant.

The Environment Agency notes in their consultation response that new development should as a minimum meet the highest levels of water efficiency standards, as per the policies in the adopted Local Plan. Local Plan policies 5 and 6 are strategic policies, this will ensure that these standards are met and the policies used in the determination of planning applications. For clarity the local plan policies could be referred to in the supporting text if the examiner considered this would assist in the interpretation of policies.

**3. The District Council (Ref: SNPS 15) raises the issue (with regard to electric charging point provision) of whether or not the fourth clause of policy SNP9 (page 34) meets the Basic Conditions. If possible, could an agreed approach on this matter be formulated between the two Councils? If not, separate responses to the matter should be submitted.**

The Councils have provided the suggested text amendments to policy SNP9. The inclusion of an additional text relating to the Landscape Townscape SPD has also been included to provide a means of assessment for 'areas of significance'.

*Proposals to develop on-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure including through the use of existing street furniture across Sawtry will be supported subject to:*

- *They should not adversely affect the historic environment or highway or pedestrian safety.*

- *They are in compliance or compatible with other relevant legislation for example section 278 of The Highways Act 1980.*
- *They do not detrimentally impact areas of significance as referenced in the HDC Landscape Townscape assessment SPD (adopted 17 March 2022).*

Regards

**John Potter** – Sawtry Parish Councillor

**Frances Schulz** – Senior Planning Policy Officer, Huntingdonshire District Council