



# Huntingdonshire Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Site Summary

Site CfS:52

## Final Report

Prepared for  
Huntingdonshire District Council

Date  
November 2025

## Document Status

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# Contract

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This report describes work commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council by an instruction via email dated 21 July 2025. The Client's representative for the contract was Frances Schulz of Huntingdonshire District Council. Freya Nation of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by JBA in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken between 21 July 2025 and 6 November 2025 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate.

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## Acknowledgements

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# 1 Background

This is a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) site screening report for Local Plan Site CfS:52. The content of this report assumes the reader has already consulted the 'HDC Level 1 SFRA' (2024) and read the 'HDC Level 2 SFRA Main Report' (2025) and is therefore familiar with the terminology used in this report.

## 1.1 Site CfS:52

- Location: Land East of Glatton Road and North of Brookside Industrial Estate, Sawtry
- Existing site use: Agricultural, including existing farm buildings, barns
- Existing site use vulnerability: Less vulnerable
- Proposed site use: Residential
- Proposed site use vulnerability: More vulnerable
- Site area (ha): 6.8
- Watercourse: Sawtry Brook and ordinary watercourse (no detailed model)
- Environment Agency (EA) model: N/A
- Summary of requirements from Level 2 SFRA scoping stage:
  - Flood Zone 3b present onsite
  - Subject to the exception test as more vulnerable development proposed in Flood Zone 3a
  - Assessment of fluvial flood depths, velocities and hazards
  - Assessment of surface water flood extents, depths and hazard
  - Assessment of all other sources of flood risk

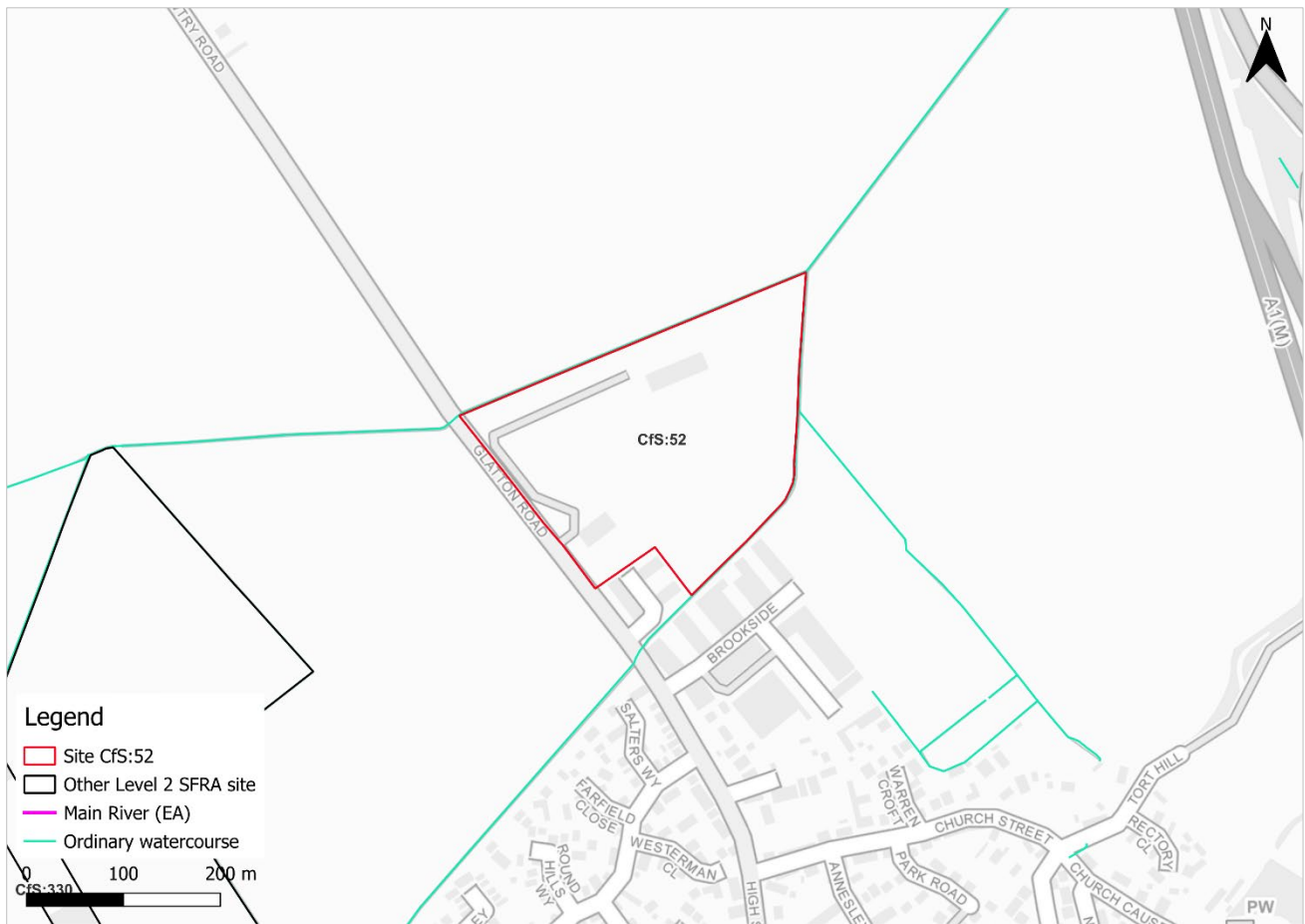


Figure 1-1: Existing site location boundary



Figure 1-2: Aerial photography

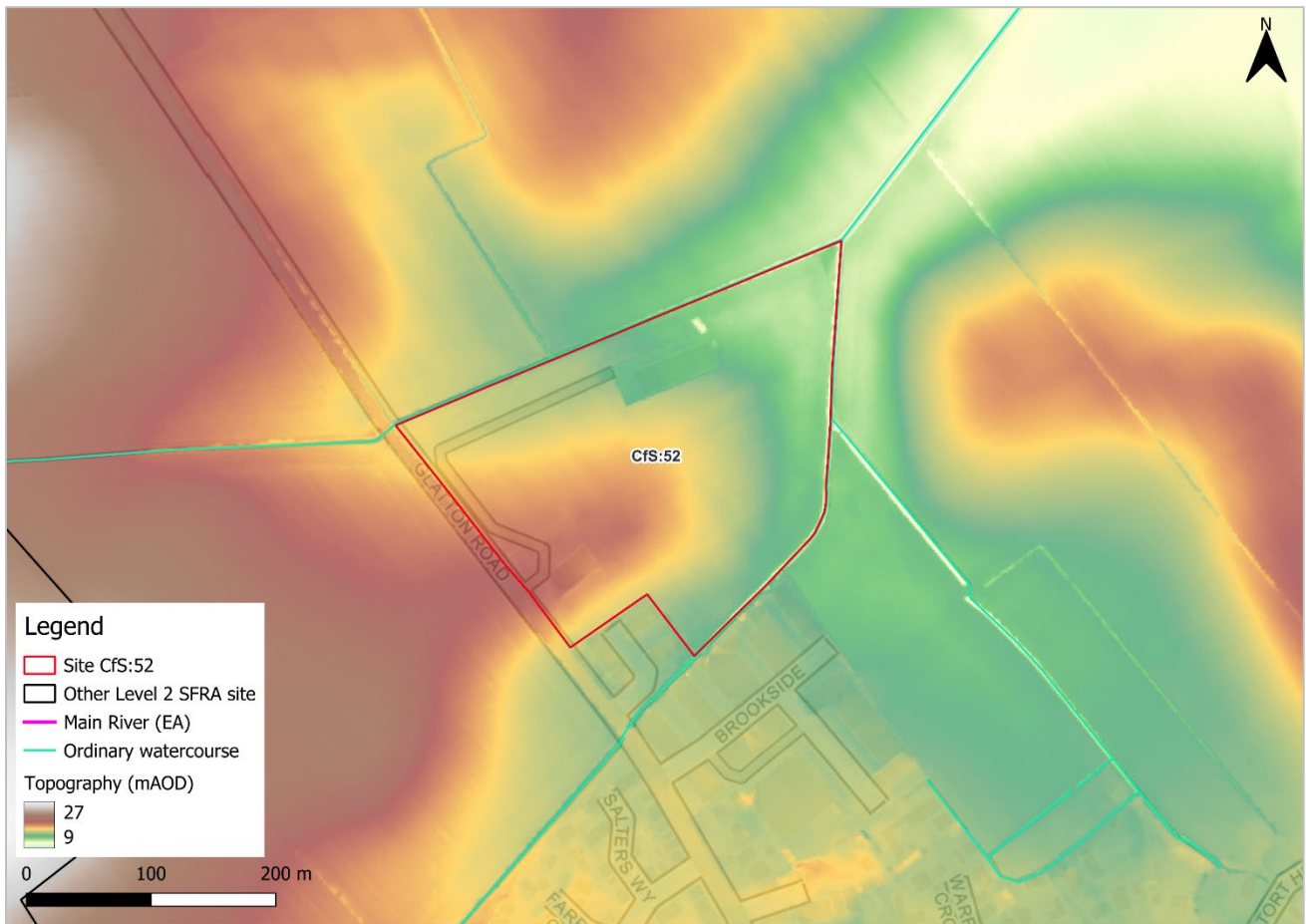


Figure 1-3: Topography

## 2 Flood risk from rivers

### 2.1 Existing risk

#### 2.1.1 Flood Map for Planning and functional floodplain

Based on the EA's Flood Map for Planning (accessed July 2025) and Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain), as updated in this Level 2 SFRA, the percentage areas of the site within each flood zone are stated in Table 2-1 and can be viewed on Figure 2-1. This version of the Flood Map for Planning does not consider flood defence infrastructure (Section 2.2) or the impacts of climate change (Section 2.3).

The site is largely within Flood Zone 1 indicating a low risk from rivers and the sea. However, the eastern side of the site is partially located within fluvial Flood Zones 3b, 3a and 2 due to the presence of the Sawtry Brook which flows northeasterly along the site boundary. There is no detailed model available for Sawtry Brook, therefore the risk is likely based on the EA's New National Model and fluvial flood depths and hazards cannot be assessed.

Table 2-1: Existing flood risk based on percentage area of site at risk

| Flood Zone 1 (% area) | Flood Zone 2 (% area) | Flood Zone 3a (% area) | Flood Zone 3b (% area) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 82                    | 4                     | 1                      | 13                     |

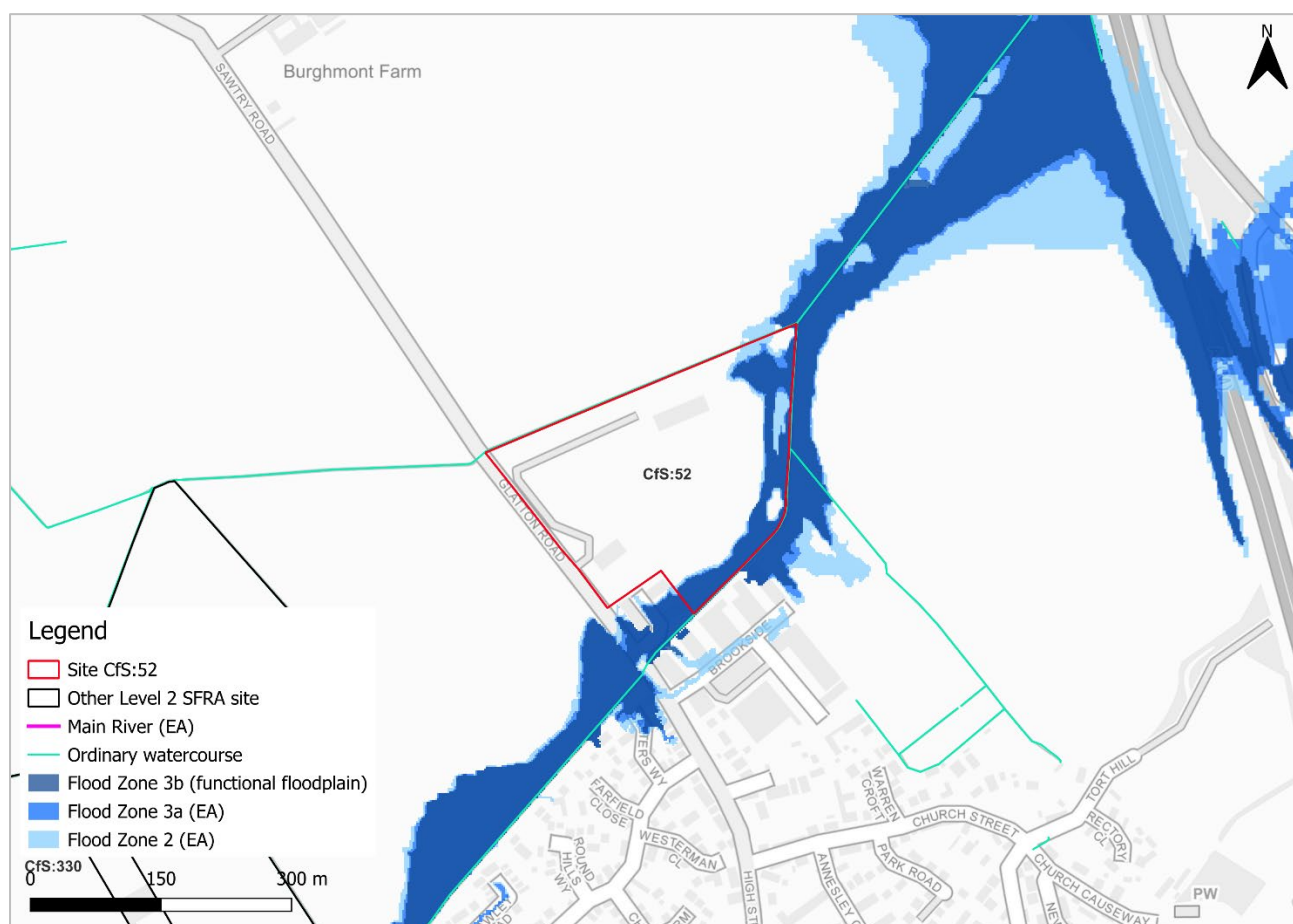


Figure 2-1: Existing risk

## 2.2 Flood risk management

### 2.2.1 Flood defences

There are no flood defences that provide protection to the site, according to the EA's Spatial Flood Defences dataset.

### 2.2.2 Working with Natural Processes

The EA's Working with Natural Processes (WwNP) dataset has been interrogated to identify opportunities for Natural Flood Management (NFM) to reduce flood risk to the site and surrounding areas. These areas are shown in Figure 2-2. Note, the WwNP mapping is broadscale and indicative, therefore further investigation will be required for any land shown to have potential for WwNP. There is potential for floodplain and riparian woodland planting along the northern and eastern (along Sawtry Brook) site boundaries. Tree planting can help to reduce runoff.

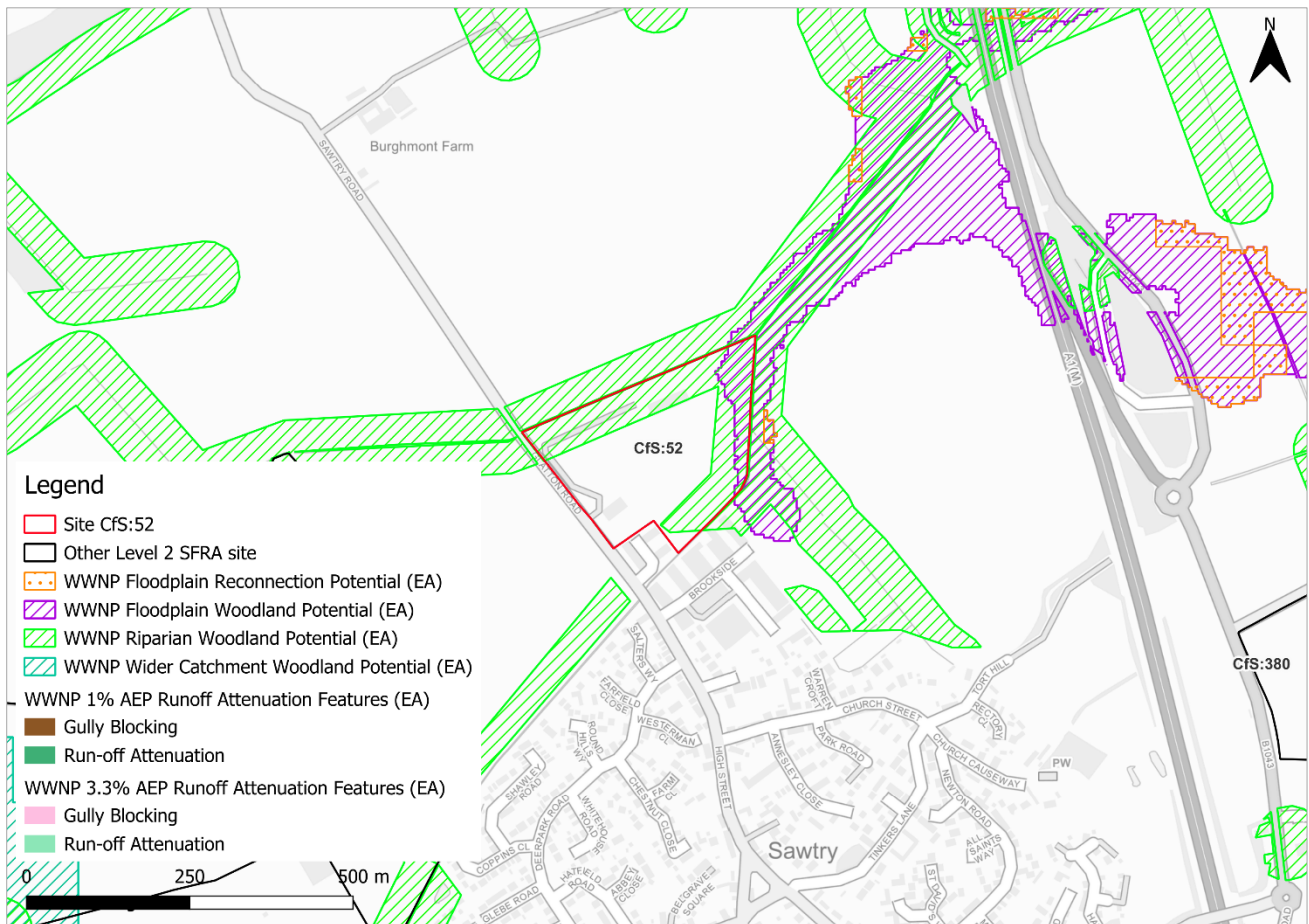


Figure 2-2: Natural Flood Management (NFM) potential mapping

## 2.3 Impacts from climate change

### 2.3.1 Fluvial

The EA's SFRA guidance states that SFRAs should assess the central allowance for less, more, highly vulnerable, and water compatible development. The higher central allowance should be assessed for essential infrastructure. However, as there is no existing detailed model of Sawtry Brook, modelling of climate change has not been possible.

The impacts of climate change on flood risk from Sawtry Brook have been modelled by the EA through the New National Model which models the central allowance (+6% on peak river flows for the Old Bedford and Middle Level EA management catchment) for the 3.3% AEP defended, 1% AEP defended and undefended, and 0.1% AEP defended and undefended fluvial events. The flood extents for the defended and undefended events are similar. For the defended climate change events, risk is modelled to be similar to that shown in Flood Zones 2 and 3a, largely impacting the area along the eastern site boundary, in the floodplain of Sawtry Brook, as shown in Figure 2-3.

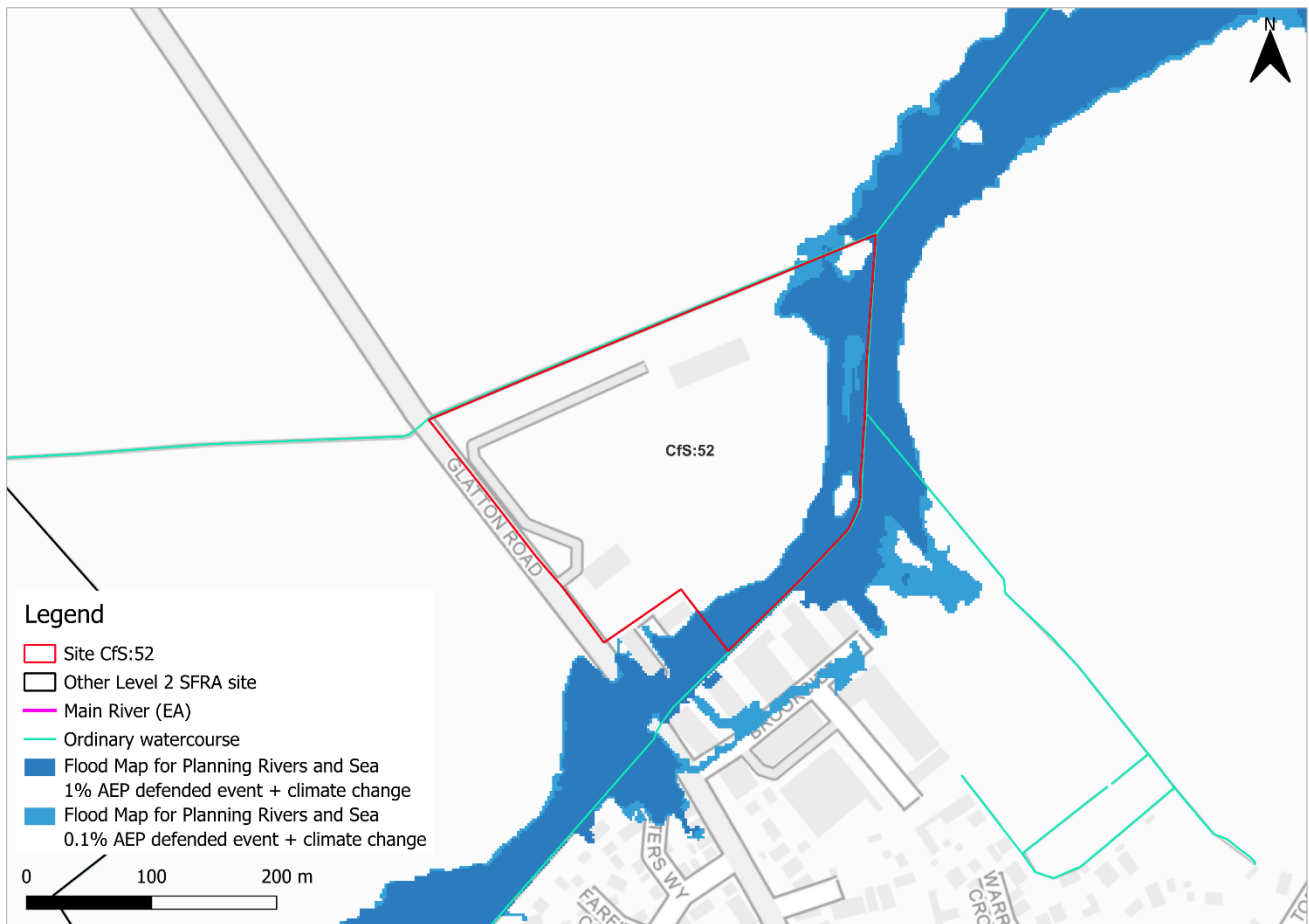


Figure 2-3: Flood Map for Planning 1% and 0.1% AEP defended flood events +6% (central climate change allowance)

### 2.3.2 Tidal

The EA's Flood Map for Planning shows the site is not at risk from tidal climate change.

## 2.4 Historic flood incidents

The EA's Historic Flood Map (HFM) and Recorded Flood Outlines (RFO) datasets have been considered. There are no recorded historic flood events within the vicinity of the site.

## 2.5 Emergency planning

### 2.5.1 Flood warning

The EA operates a Flood Warning Service for properties located within a Flood Warning Area (FWA) for when a flood event is expected to occur. As shown in Figure 2-4, this site is located within a FWA, namely the Middle Level Commissioner area at Pondersbridge, Turves and Upwell FWA.

Flood alerts may be issued before a flood warning for properties located within a Flood Alert Area (FAA) to provide advance notice of the possibility of flooding. A flood alert may be

issued when there is less confidence that flooding will occur in a FWA. As shown in Figure 2-4, this site is located within a FAA, namely the Middle Level of the Fens in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk FAA.

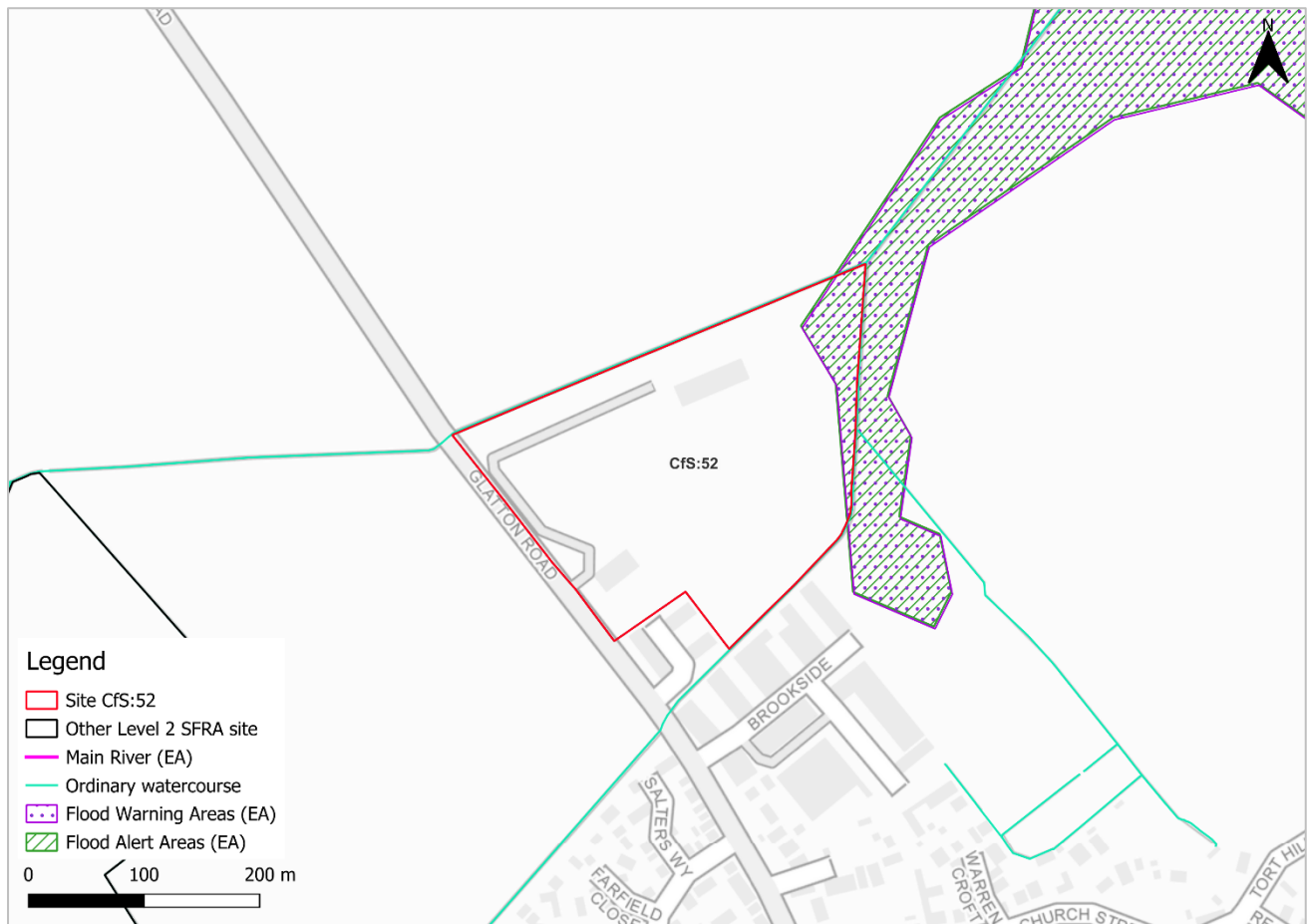


Figure 2-4: EA Flood Warning Areas and Flood Alert Areas

### 2.5.2 Access and escape routes

Based on available information, safe access and escape routes from the western side of the site could likely be achieved during a flood event via Glatton Road, travelling north, as shown by the orange circle in Figure 2-5. Flood warnings and alerts should remain in place to ensure site users can be safe and evacuate the site during the 0.1% AEP fluvial event plus climate change.



Figure 2-5: Potential access and escape route

## 2.6 Observations, mitigation options, site suitability, sequential approach to development management - fluvial

- Observations:
  - The proposed development of the site would see a change in the risk classification from less vulnerable to more vulnerable, according to the NPPF.
  - A large proportion of the site is within Flood Zone 1, therefore at low risk from rivers and the sea. Additional risk from climate change is nominal.
  - There is no detailed model available for Sawtry Brook. The flood zones, including for climate change, are therefore likely to be based on the EA's New National Model.
  - The extent of fluvial risk from the unmodelled ordinary watercourses in close proximity to the site is currently unknown. Using the 0.1% AEP surface water event as a proxy, risk from the ordinary watercourses on the northern boundary could impact the site significantly.
  - The area of the site at risk should be left as open greenspace.
- Defences:
  - There are no defences protecting the site, according to the EA's Spatial Flood Defences dataset.

- Mitigation:
  - The site-specific FRA should develop a model of Sawtry Brook and the unnamed ordinary watercourse on the northern boundary to fully understand the onsite fluvial risk and potentially look to include the channels and risk areas within a blue green corridor.
  - Given the proximity of the site to Sawtry Brook and other ordinary watercourses, a flood risk activity permit for development may be required. The type of permission required must be sought from the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority or Internal Drainage Board.
- Access and escape:
  - Safe access and escape routes must be available at times of flood and appear to be available from the west of the site, via Glatton Road, travelling north. A FWA and FAA are in place at the east of the site. These should provide advanced warning for site users to evacuate ahead of a flood event in the short term.
  - EA flood warnings and alerts should continue to be in place to ensure early evacuation of site users before an extreme flood event occurs.

## 3 Flood risk from surface water

### 3.1 Existing risk

The NaFRA2 Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFSW) mapping received a significant update and was published January 2025, including for surface water flood extents and depths. However, at the time of writing, the EA has confirmed that the depth information available is not structured in a way that is suitable for planning purposes. Therefore, this Level 2 SFRA considers the third generation RoFSW depth and hazard mapping in addition to the NaFRA2 extents, as agreed with the EA. Surface water depth and hazard should be modelled at the site-specific FRA stage.

#### 3.1.1 Risk of Flooding from Surface Water - NaFRA2 extents

Based on the EA's national scale RoFSW map, as updated in January 2025, surface water flood risk across the site is varied. 15% of the site is modelled to be at risk during the high risk event, a further 20% is at risk in the medium risk event and another 26% is at risk during the low risk event. 39% of the site is at very low risk of flooding from surface water, as shown in Table 3-1. Risk is largely confined to the northern site boundary where a large flow path follows the channel of the unnamed ordinary watercourse. There is also a small area of ponding at the southern corner of the site, likely associated with Sawtry Brook, as shown in Figure 3-1.

Table 3-1: Existing surface water flood risk based on percentage area at risk using the NaFRA2 RoFSW map

| Very low risk (% area) | Low risk (% area) | Medium risk (% area) | High risk (% area) |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 39                     | 26                | 20                   | 15                 |

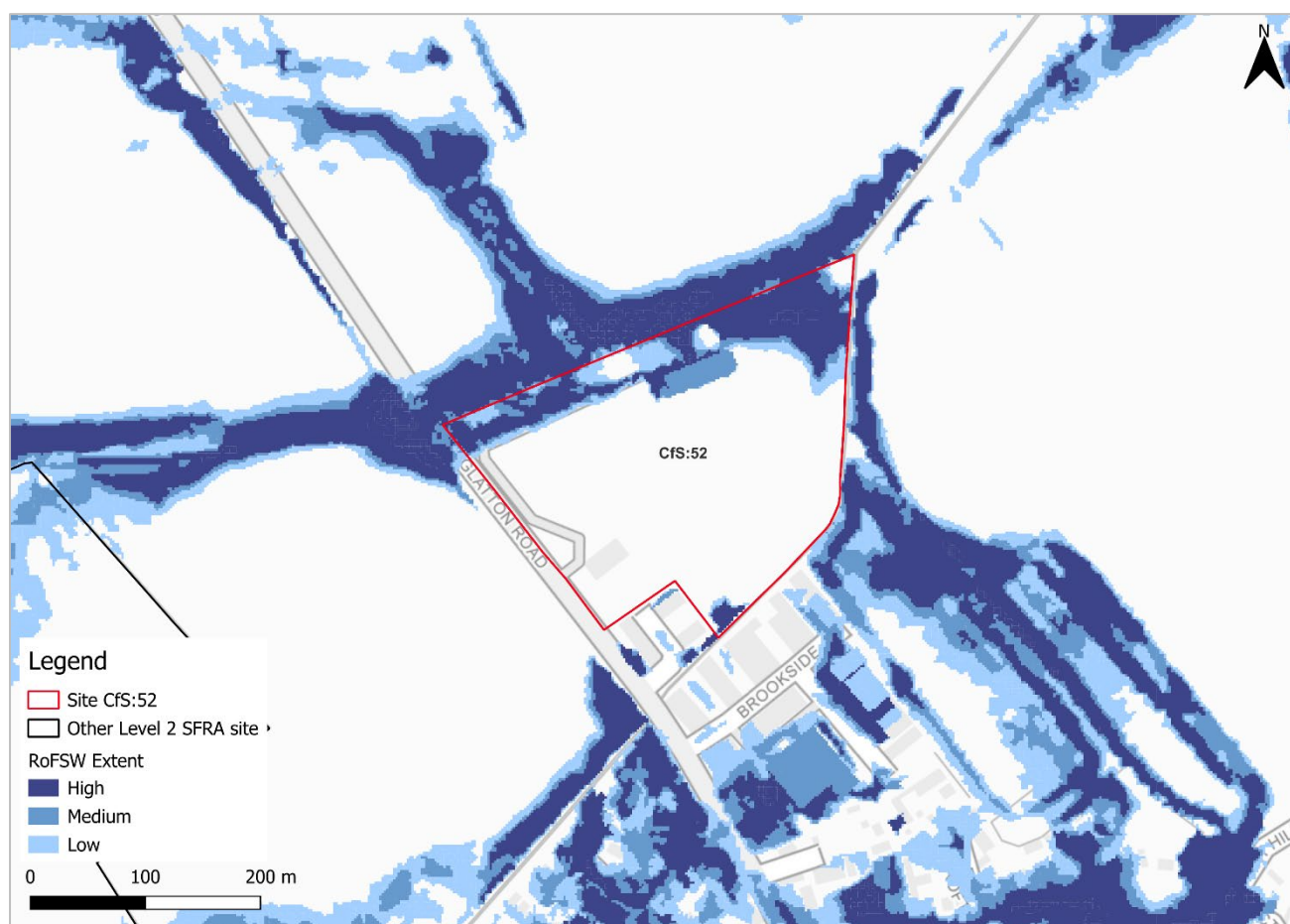


Figure 3-1: Surface water flood extents (NaFRA2 - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)

### 3.1.2 Risk of Flooding from Surface Water - third generation depths and hazard

The flood extents from the NaFRA2 RoFSW and the third generation map are similar. Based on the EA's national scale third generation RoFSW map, flood depths, outside of the Sawtry Brook channel along the eastern site boundary, during the medium risk event range from less than 0.15m to between 0.3 and 0.6m, at the southern corner of the site (Figure 3-2). Flood hazard rating during the medium risk event is largely low to moderate though there are some areas of significant hazard in the southern corner of the site and along the northwestern site boundary (Figure 3-3).



Figure 3-2: Medium risk event surface water flood depths (Third generation - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)



Figure 3-3: Medium risk event surface water flood hazard<sup>1</sup> (Third generation - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)

### 3.2 Impacts from climate change

The NaFRA2 RoFSW mapping now includes one modelled climate change scenario, the 2050s central allowance for the high, medium and low risk events. However, the upper end allowance on peak rainfall for the 2070s should be assessed in SFRAs. Therefore, at the time of writing, the available national surface water climate change mapping is unsuitable for consideration in development planning. This Level 2 SFRA considers the low risk surface water event as a conservative proxy for the medium risk event plus climate change, as agreed with the EA. The impact of climate change on surface water flood risk should be fully accounted for at the site-specific FRA stage.

Based on the information available, surface water flood risk to the site may increase with climate change. The flow path across the northern site boundary may also expand, though the depths and hazards mapping do not represent the NaFRA2 RoFSW map, therefore the depth and hazard mapping (as shown in Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6) may not be fully

<sup>1</sup> Based on Section 7.5 Hazard rating. What is the Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map? Report version 2.0. April 2019. Environment Agency

representative of potential risk. This reinforces the requirement for detailed assessment of surface water at the FRA stage. However, hazards are mostly significant.



Figure 3-4: Low risk event surface water flood extent, as a proxy for the medium risk event plus climate change (NaFRA2 - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)

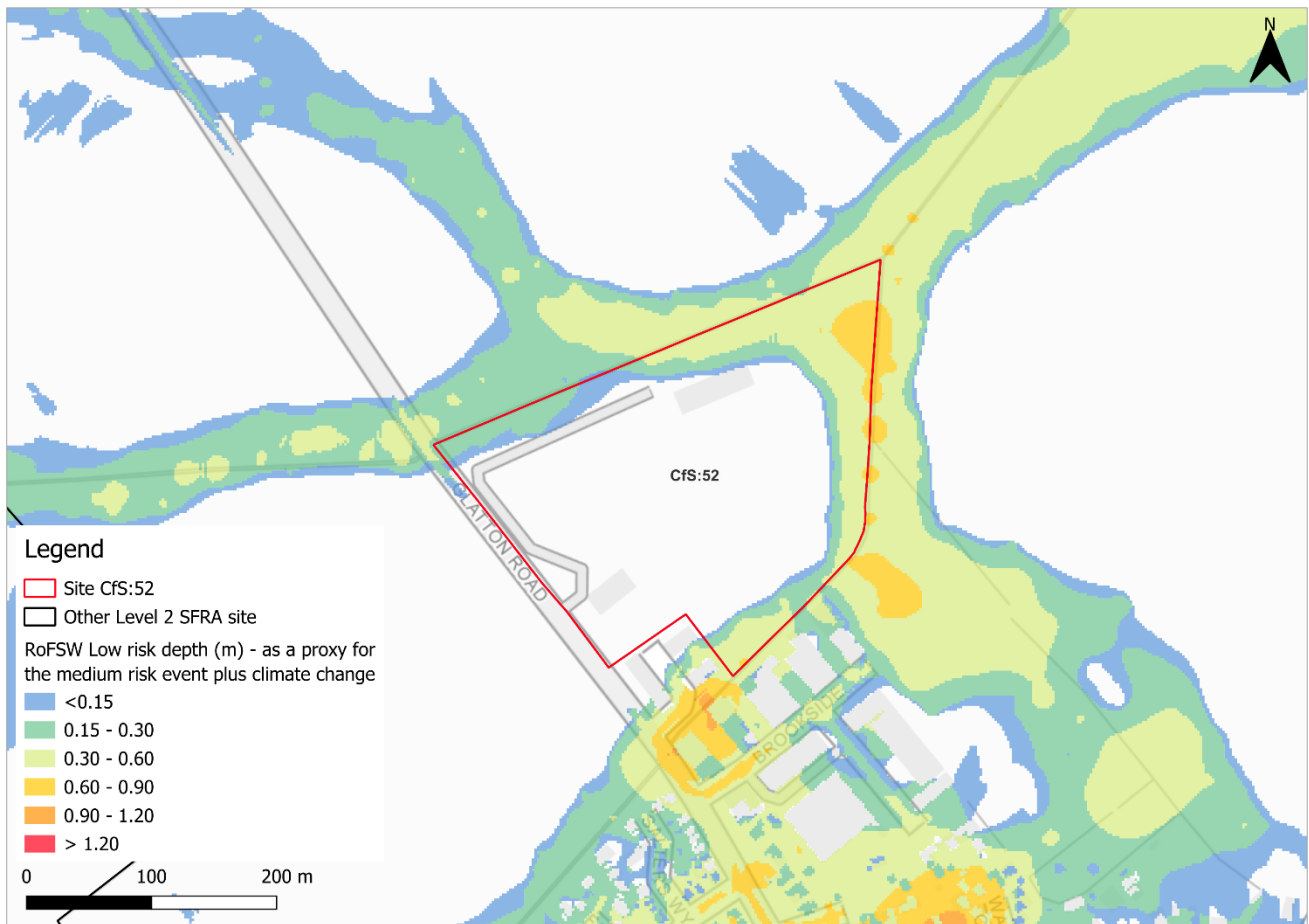


Figure 3-5: Low risk event surface water flood depths, as a proxy for the medium risk event plus climate change (Third generation - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)



Figure 3-6: Low risk event surface water flood hazard, as a proxy for the medium risk event plus climate change (Third generation - Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map)

### 3.3 Observations, mitigation options, site suitability, sequential approach to development management - surface water

- Current risk to the site is varied. Surface water risk in the high, medium and low risk events is generally confined to the northern site boundary where a flow path follows the course of an unnamed ordinary watercourse. There is also a small area of ponding at the southern corner of the site in the Sawtry Brook floodplain.
- The effects of climate change on surface water have not been modelled for this SFRA, however the low risk surface water event has been used as a proxy for the medium risk event plus climate change. Risk is greater than in the medium risk event, with a greater extent of ponding along the northern boundary and at the southern corner of the site.
- The areas of surface water flood risk are potentially significant. Based on current information, these risk areas should not be developed and should be left as open greenspace or included within blue green corridors along the watercourses. There can be ecological, amenity, and social benefits, alongside flood risk management.

- Surface water flood depths, hazards, including for the impact of climate change should be considered further through the site-specific FRA and drainage strategy. Any surface water modelling at the FRA stage should consider flood depths and hazards.
- The drainage strategy must ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result of new development. Greenfield rates will apply, and the developer should follow the National SuDS guidance and any local guidance available from the LLFA.
- Safe access and escape routes via Glatton Road may be challenging to achieve based on the surface water risk. Safe routes must be established which may involve upsizing of the culverts under Glatton Road.
- The RoFSW map is not suitable for identifying whether an individual property will flood and is therefore indicative. The RoFSW map is not appropriate to act as the sole evidence for any specific planning or regulatory decision or assessment of risk in relation to flooding at any scale without further supporting studies, modelling, or evidence.
- The LLFA are concerned that a significant proportion of this small site is at surface water flood risk (over 60%). The LLFA strongly agree with these recommendations.

## 4 Cumulative impacts assessment and high risk catchments

### 4.1 Level 1 cumulative impacts assessment

A cumulative impact assessment was completed through the Huntingdonshire Level 1 SFRA (2024), which aimed to identify catchments sensitive to the cumulative impact of new development. This site is located within one catchment, namely, the Middle Level catchment. This catchment is ranked as a medium sensitivity catchment. Planning considerations for sites at medium sensitivity to the cumulative impacts of development can be found in Appendix G of the Level 1 SFRA. Cumulative impacts of development should also be considered as part of a site-specific FRA.

## 5 Groundwater, geology, soils, SuDS suitability

Risk of groundwater emergence is assessed in this SFRA using JBA's 5m Groundwater Emergence Map. This dataset is recommended for use by the EA in the SFRA Good Practice Guide<sup>2</sup>. Figure 5-1 shows the map covering this site and the surrounding areas. Table 5-1 explains the risk classifications.



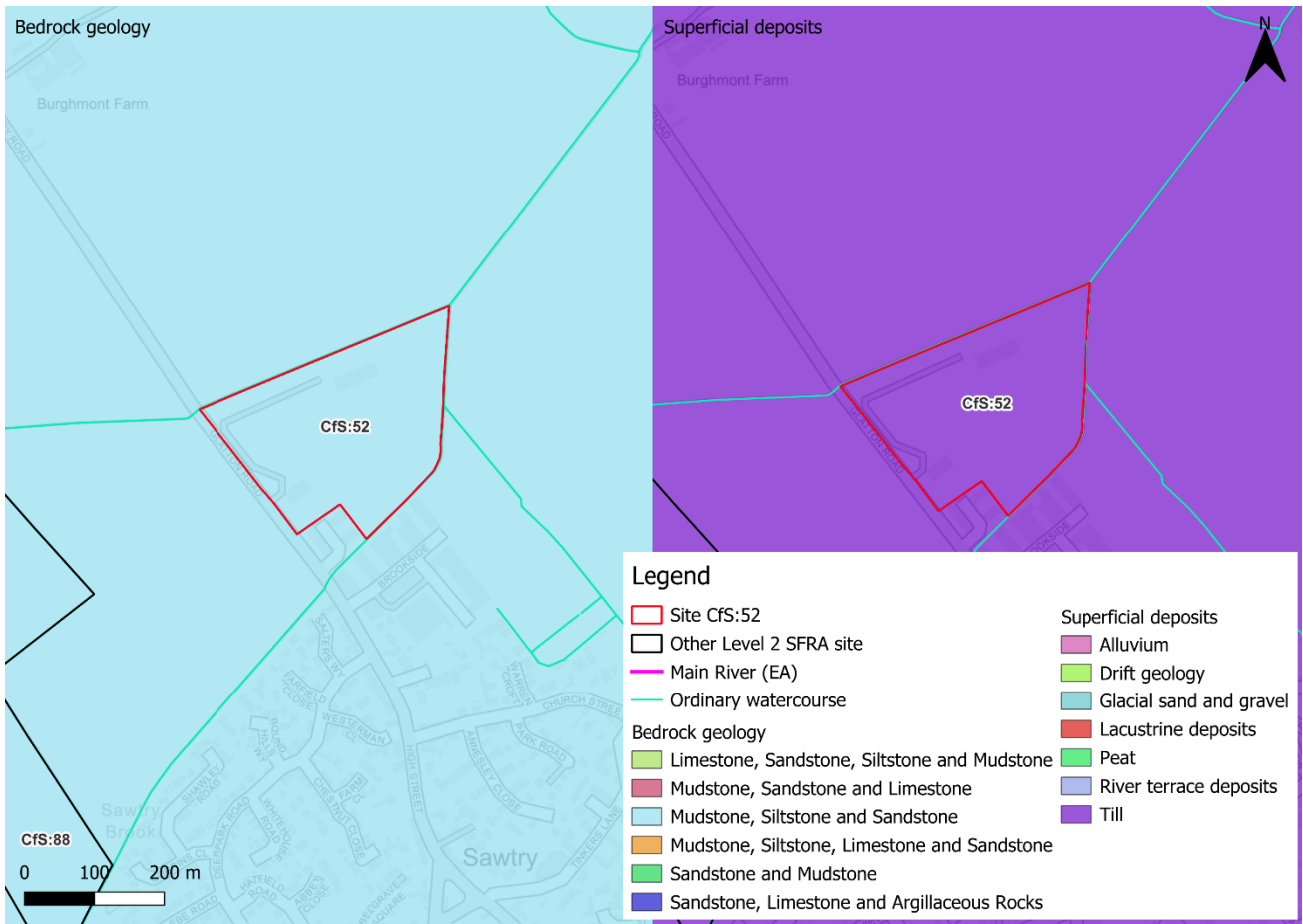
Figure 5-1: JBA 5m Groundwater Emergence Map

The entire site and surrounding area are classified as no risk of groundwater emergence. Any infiltration SuDS should therefore be suitable across the whole site.

<sup>2</sup> [Strategic flood risk assessment good practice guide. ADEPT. December 2021.](#)

Table 5-1: Groundwater Hazard Classification

| Groundwater head difference (m)*                                                           | Class label                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0 to 0.025                                                                                 | Groundwater levels are either at very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface in the 100-year return period flood event.<br>Within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets. Groundwater may emerge at significant rates and has the capacity to flow overland and/or pond within any topographic low spots. |
| 0.025 to 0.5                                                                               | Groundwater levels are between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface in the 100-year return period flood event.<br>Within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets. There is the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally.                                                                      |
| 0.5 to 5                                                                                   | Groundwater levels are between 0.5m and 5m below the ground surface in the 100-year return period flood event<br>There is a risk of flooding to subsurface assets, but surface manifestation of groundwater is unlikely.                                                                                                                                       |
| >5                                                                                         | Groundwater levels are at least 5m below the ground surface in the 100-year return period flood event.<br>Flooding from groundwater is not likely.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| N/A                                                                                        | No risk.<br>This zone is deemed as having a negligible risk from groundwater flooding due to the nature of the local geological deposits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| *Difference is defined as ground surface in mAOD minus modelled groundwater table in mAOD. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



### Figure 5-2: Soils and geology

## 6 Residual risk

Although a site may be afforded some protection from defences and / or drainage infrastructure, there is always a residual risk of flooding from asset failure i.e. breaching / overtopping of flood defences, blockages of culverts or drainage assets.

Residual risk at this site comes from the potential blockage of the culverts beneath Glatton Road along an unnamed ordinary watercourse and Sawtry Brook.

### 6.1 Potential blockage

A blockage of either of the culverts beneath Glatton Road may cause flooding to the site, depending on the severity of the blockage and the magnitude of the flood event. Such a scenario should be investigated at the FRA stage. Culvert course and condition surveys may be required, including for consultation with the culvert owners.

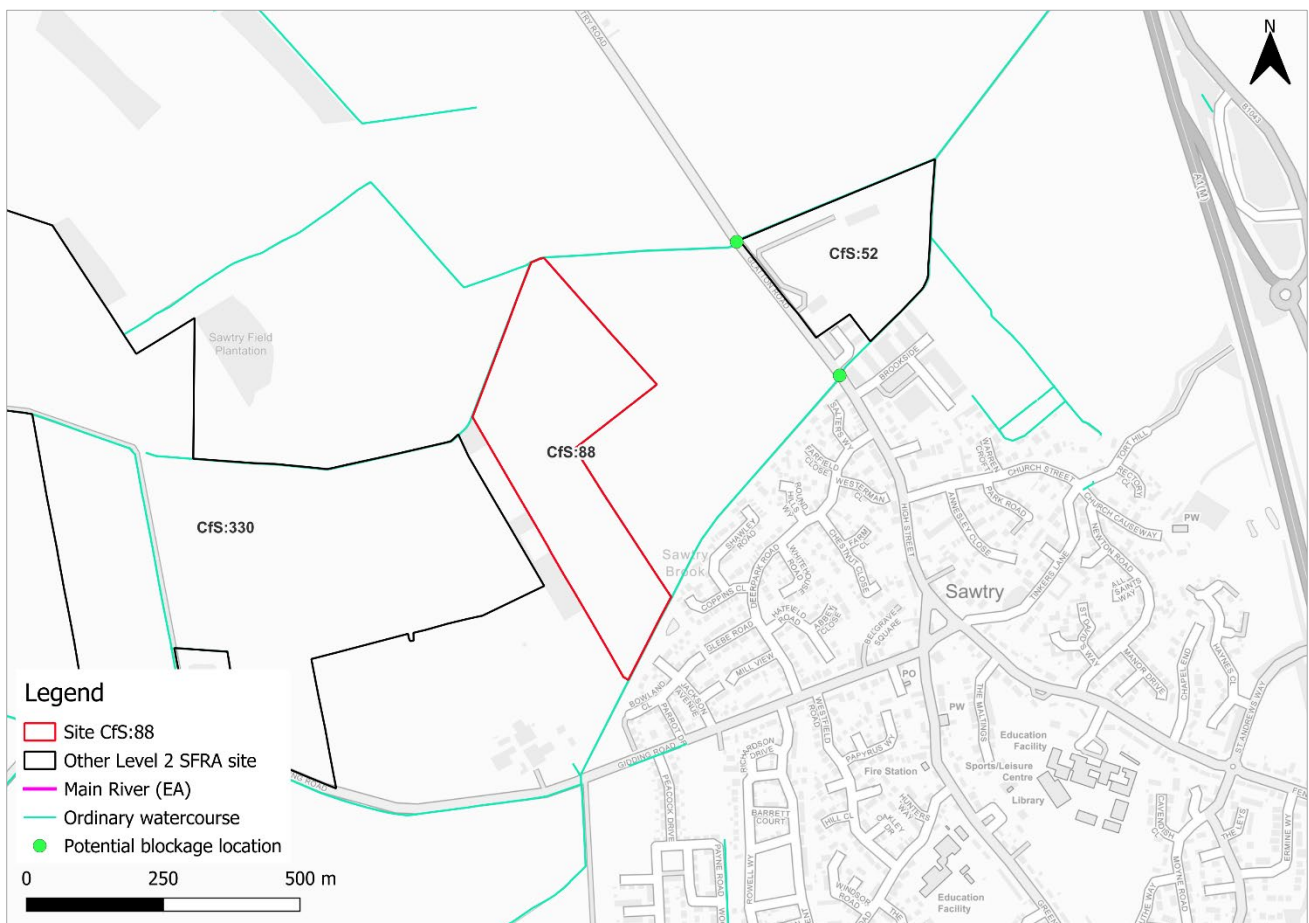


Figure 6-1: Potential blockage locations

### 6.2 Flood risk from reservoirs

The EA's Reservoir Flood Maps (RFM) (2021) show where water may go in the unlikely event of a reservoir or dam failure. A 'dry day' scenario assumes that the water level in the

reservoir is the same as the spillway level or the underside of the roof for a service reservoir and the watercourses upstream and downstream of the reservoir are at a normal level. A 'wet day' scenario assumes a worst-case scenario where a reservoir releases water held on a 'wet day' when local rivers have already overflowed their banks.

The site is not modelled to be at risk from reservoir flooding.

## 7 Overall site assessment

### 7.1 Can part b) of the exception test be passed?

This site is required to pass part b) of the exception test as it is proposed for more vulnerable development and is located within Flood Zone 3a. Based on the information presented in this Level 2 SFRA, the exception test could be passed and the site allocated, assuming the risk areas can remain as open greenspace. However, the test should be reapplied at the application stage as some flood risk information has not been available for consideration in this Level 2 SFRA, as outlined below. The test should also be reapplied if more recent information about existing or potential flood risk becomes available at application stage.

### 7.2 Recommendations summary

Based on the evidence presented in the Level 1 SFRA (2024) and this Level 2 SFRA:

- It should be appropriate to develop the site for more vulnerable purposes should the risk areas be left as open greenspace and allowed to flood whilst accounting for climate change.
- The risk areas should be included within design as blue green corridors.
- Detailed modelling of Sawtry Brook and the ordinary watercourse on the northern boundary should be carried out at the FRA stage. This should include for potential residual risk from the two culverts. This modelling should inform site layout and design.
- There is potential residual risk to the site from blockages of the two culverts beneath Glatton Road along Sawtry Brook and an unnamed ordinary watercourse which must be investigated.
- A detailed drainage strategy will be required for any new development, given the site is currently greenfield.
- The area of the site at fluvial risk should be left as open greenspace.
- The areas of surface water flood risk are potentially significant. Based on current information, these risk areas should not be developed and should be left as open greenspace or included within blue green corridors along the watercourses. There can be ecological, amenity, and social benefits, alongside flood risk management.
- Safe access and escape routes must be established via Glatton Road. Upsizing of the culverts could be an option.
- Opportunities for NFM features to reduce flood risk to the site and surrounding areas should be explored at the site-specific FRA stage.

### 7.3 Site-specific FRA requirements and further work

At the planning application stage, the following should be considered:

- Full detailed flood modelling of Sawtry Brook and the unnamed ordinary watercourse, including residual risk, to assess up to date risk to the site.
- Further modelling to understand the impacts of climate change on fluvial and surface water flood risk to the site.
- Capacity and condition assessments should be carried out on the culverts.
- Further consideration of surface water flood risk, including a drainage strategy. Discharge rates should remain at greenfield rates at a minimum.
- FRA should be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF; FRCC-PPG; EA online guidance; the HDC Local Plan, and national and local SuDS policy and guidelines.
- Throughout the FRA process, consultation should be carried out with, where applicable, the local planning authority; the lead local flood authority; emergency planning officers; the Environment Agency; Anglian Water; the highways authorities; and the emergency services.

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