

## Opening statement

Norfolk County Council, as the Minerals Planning Authority, must plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Norfolk's Minerals Site Specific Allocations Plan was adopted in 2013, with the requirement for a Single Issue Review of Silica Sand.

The purpose of the Silica Sand Review is to address the predicted shortfall in the quantity of silica sand extraction sites allocated in the Minerals SSA, by designating a specific site and areas of search which would be suitable to meet this shortfall and supply silica sand to the existing processing plant at Leziate.

The existing processing plant site at Leziate principally produces glass sand for clear container and flat glass. The Silica Sand Review allocates one specific site at Bawsey and five broad areas of search in West Norfolk within which a further silica sand extraction site or sites could potentially be developed, if a suitable planning application was submitted by a landowner/mineral operator, and approved.

Only one specific site for silica sand extraction was proposed in response to a 'call for sites'. The estimated mineral resource in this site is not enough to meet the silica sand shortfall on its own and therefore we have defined areas of search to meet the shortfall, in accordance with the methodology set out in the Initial Consultation document.

The purpose of the areas of search process was to allocate those parts of the silica sand resource which are least constrained; and where a suitable future planning application for silica sand extraction may be approved. The process excluded designations considered to be the most significant constraints to the potential deliverability of future extraction locations. The designations were the AONB, ancient woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, designated heritage assets (listed buildings and Scheduled monuments), common land, agricultural land grades 1 and 2, and sensitive receptors to amenity impacts.

The defined areas of search allocated in the Silica Sand Review cover a significantly larger area than is required for silica sand extraction over the plan period to 2026. This situation is to be expected due to the purpose and definition of areas of search. National Planning Practice Guidance defines areas of search as "areas where knowledge of mineral resources may be less certain but within which planning permission may be granted, particularly if there is a shortfall in supply".

The Silica Sand Review has been subject to public consultation at the following stages in its preparation:

- Initial Consultation in March and April 2015
- Preferred Options Consultation in November and December 2015.  
There has also been two formal representations periods:
- The Pre-Submission representations period took place in May and June 2016
- The Addendum of Modifications representations period took place in September and October 2016.

Mineral companies wanting to extract silica sand from a specific site or land within an area of search allocated in the Minerals Site Specific Allocations Plan will still need to obtain the landowners' permission and apply for and be granted planning permission before mineral extraction can take place. Planning applications are determined in accordance with relevant local and national policies and legislation. Planning permissions are often granted subject to conditions to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts from extraction operations.

NCC considers the Silica Sand Review to be sound and legally compliant.