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# Steeple Renewables Project

## Mineral Resource Assessment

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# Mineral Resource Assessment

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Proposed Development

1.1.1 This Mineral Resource Assessment ('MRA') has been prepared on behalf of Steeple Solar Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') in relation to an application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') for the Steeple Renewables Project (the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development comprises the installation of a ground mounted solar energy generating station, associated Battery Energy Storage System ('BESS'), and associated development comprising substation and a grid connection integral to the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of the development for the delivery of over 50 Megawatts ('MW') of electricity. The Proposed Development has a design life of 40 years, after which time it will be decommissioned.

1.1.2 The DCO Application **Order limits [REP2-005]** comprises 888.31 hectares ('ha') of land (the 'Site') located on land to the east and west of Sturton-le-Steeple, south of West Burton Power Station, within the county of Nottinghamshire.

1.1.3 The Proposed Development is defined as a National Infrastructure Project ('NSIP') under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the PA 2008 because it is for the construction of an onshore generating station in England, which does not produce electricity from wind, with a capacity exceeding 50 megawatts ('MW'). Therefore, the Proposed Development requires development consent through a DCO to be able to proceed.

1.1.4 DCO applications are determined in line with Section 104 of the PA 2008 where a relevant National Planning Statement ('NPS') has effect in relation to the development.

1.1.5 It is considered the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1), the NPS for Renewable Energy (EN3) as well as the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) have effect in relation to the Proposed Development and are, therefore, relevant NPSs for the purpose of Section 104(2)(a) of the PA 2008. Consequently, it is considered that the Proposed Development should be determined in accordance with Section 104 of the PA 2008.

1.1.6 A more detailed explanation of the legislative and policy context of the Proposed Development is set out in Section 4 and Section 5 of the **Planning Statement [REP2-040]**.

1.1.7 Whilst relevant NPSs are the primary basis for decisions on applications for development consent, the SoS may consider other matters important and relevant to decision making, such as the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.1.8 Section 104 and 105 of the PA 2008 both include Local Impact Reports ('LIR') as a document the SoS must have regard to their decision-making process. LIRs are informed by local planning policy. Paragraph 4.1.12 of NPS EN-1 acknowledges policies outlined in the Development Plan documents and other Local Development Framework documents may hold significance and relevance in the decision-making process of planning. In cases where conflict arises, this paragraph stipulates that the NPSs take precedence for the purpose of SoS planning decision making.

1.1.9 This Assessment, has, therefore, been prepared with regard to NPS EN-1, NPS EN-3 and NPS EN-5, and important and relevant considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) ('NPPF'), Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan and relevant district Local Plans.

## **1.2 Minerals Context**

1.2.1 The Order Limits are within the Administrative area of Bassetlaw District Council ('BDC') and Nottinghamshire County Council ('NCC'). NCC is the Minerals Planning Authority due to the fact minerals (and waste) form a county matter.

## **1.3 Report Purpose**

1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to address the requirement of national and local policies relating to minerals and provide an assessment of the Proposed Development impacts on the safeguarded mineral resource.

- Section 2 – Provides a review of relevant national and local mineral policies;
- Section 3 – Provides an assessment of impact of the Proposed Development on mineral resource; and
- Section 4 – Presents the conclusions of the assessment.

## **2 Minerals Policy Review**

### **2.1 National Policy Statements**

2.1.1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)<sup>1</sup> (December 2025) sets out the current national policy delivering NSIP energy infrastructure in England and Wales

2.1.2 With regards Minerals, paragraph 5.11.19 states “*Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place*”. In this case the Proposed Development is of a temporary nature that can be removed without sterilisation of underground mineral.

2.1.3 Paragraph 5.11.28 states “*Where a proposed development has an impact upon a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate mitigation measures have been put in place to safeguard mineral resources*”. Ground disturbance in this case is minimal and limited.

2.1.4 National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)<sup>2</sup> (December 2025) includes section (section 2.10) which specifically covers policy for solar photovoltaic generation. This section recognises that solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation worldwide. There are no specific references to mineral safeguarding in NPS EN-3.

2.1.5 National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)<sup>3</sup> (December 2025) relates specifically to electricity networks, and whilst relevant to the project as a whole there are no specific reference to minerals safeguarding in NPS EN-5.

<sup>1</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6915ba42bc34c86ce4e6e726/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

<sup>2</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3). Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2025-0795/NPS\_for\_Renewable\_Energy\_Infrastructure\_EN-3.pdf. [Access on 20/01/2026].

<sup>3</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5). Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d12e1b5c46330350ed9a1/national-policy-statement-for-electricity-networks-infrastructure-en-5-web-accessible.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

## 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.2.1 Paragraph 222 of the NPPF<sup>4</sup> (2025) highlights “*it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation*”.

2.2.2 At Paragraph 5.5.5 of Nottinghamshire County Councils **Local Impact Report [REP1-014]**, the mineral planning authority raised the importance of Sturton-le-Steeple quarry, safeguarding its operation and potential expansion. Only part of the access track to the quarry falls within the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**. The Applicant has held meetings and is aiming to have a cooperation agreement with the quarry operator so that both developments can proceed unconstrained. Mineral beneath the Order Limits will not be sterilised. A separation distances of 300 metres or more is proposed between the consented mineral extraction, processing and storage areas and the Proposed Development. Subject to further planning permission, the quarry could extend further into the MSA in any direction even if the DCO for the Proposed Development is granted.

2.2.3 Paragraph 223 of the NPPF<sup>5</sup> (2025) sets out planning policies should provide for the extraction of mineral resources of local and national importance; so far as practicable, take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials; safeguard mineral resources by defining MSAs and Mineral Consultation Areas; set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals; safeguard existing, planned and potential sites; set out criteria or requirements to ensure that permitted and proposed operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts; recognise that some noisy short-term activities are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction; and ensure that worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place. In this case only an access track to an allocated mineral site falls within the

<sup>4</sup> National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\_December\_2024.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

<sup>5</sup> National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\_December\_2024.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

Order Limits. No land within the **Order Limits [REP2-005]** is allocated in the local plan nor benefits from planning permission to allow mineral extraction to take place.

2.2.4 Paragraph 225 of the NPPF<sup>6</sup> (2025) states “*Local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working*”. It is important to note that the Proposed Development is temporary, does not permanently sterilise land beneath and will not be determined by the local planning authority as set out previously in paragraph 1.1.8.

## 2.3 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.3.1 Reference 007 of the NPPG<sup>7</sup> states “*Mineral planning authorities are encouraged to plan for minerals extraction using Ordnance Survey-based proposals maps and relevant evidence provided by the minerals industry and other appropriate bodies.....*

2.3.2 *This approach will allow mineral planning authorities to highlight areas where mineral extraction is expected to take place, as well as managing potentially conflicting objectives for use of land*”.

## 2.4 Local Policy – Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan (March 2021)

2.4.1 The Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan<sup>8</sup> forms the land use planning strategy for mineral development within the County up to 2036, but also seeks to ensure the protection of mineral resources from the risk of sterilisation by non-mineral development which potentially prevents future extraction.

2.4.2 Policy SO4 (Safeguarding Mineral Resources, permitted mineral reserves and associated minerals infrastructure) and Policy SP7 (Mineral Safeguarding, Consultation Areas and Associated Minerals Infrastructure) are the policies relevant to the Proposed Development.

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\_December\_2024.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

<sup>7</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/minerals> . [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

<sup>8</sup> Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/5079375/adoptedmineralslocalplancompressed.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

2.4.3 Policy S04 aims to “*Protect the County’s potential mineral resources of local and national importance, permitted mineral reserves and associated minerals infrastructure from development which would prevent or hinder their future use*”.

2.4.4 Policy SP7 states:

“*Mineral Safeguarding Areas*

1. *Locally and nationally important mineral resources, permitted reserves, allocated sites and associated minerals infrastructure will be safeguarded from needless sterilisation by non-minerals development through the designation of minerals safeguarding areas as identified on the Policies Map.*

2. *Non-minerals development within minerals safeguarding areas will have to demonstrate that mineral resources will not be needlessly sterilised as a result of the development and that the development would not pose a serious hindrance to future extraction in the vicinity.*

3. *Where this cannot be demonstrated, and where there is a clear and demonstrable need for the non-minerals development, prior extraction will be sought where practicable.*

*Minerals Consultation Areas*

4. *District and Borough Councils within Nottinghamshire will consult the County Council as Minerals Planning Authority on proposals for non-minerals development within the designated Mineral Consultation Area, as shown on the Policies Map.*

5. *The Minerals Planning Authority will resist inappropriate non-minerals development within the Minerals Consultation Areas.*

6. *Where non-minerals development would cause an unacceptable impact on the development, operation or restoration of a permitted minerals site, mineral allocation, or associated minerals infrastructure, suitable mitigation should be provided by the applicant prior to the completion of the development.”*

2.4.5 Paragraph 3.84 of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan states:

“*Not every non-mineral development proposal within or close to a Minerals Safeguarding and Consultation Areas represents a risk to future minerals extraction. The main risks will arise from proposals to extend built up areas and new development in the open countryside, as such; the following categories of development are exempt from both consultation and safeguarding:*

- *Development which is in accordance with adopted District/Borough Local Plan allocations which took account of minerals sterilisation and where prior extraction is not feasible or appropriate;*
- **Temporary development;** (**bold** and underline added for emphasis)
- *Householder planning applications (except for new dwellings);*
- *All applications for advertisements;*
- *Infill development;*
- *Reserved matters; and*
- *Prior notifications (telecoms, forestry, agriculture, demolition)”.*

2.4.6 As previously mentioned no mineral development is proposed within the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**. In terms of Mineral Safeguarding Areas ('MSA'), the Proposed Development affects a relatively small area of sand and gravel deposits with the majority of the **Order Limits [RE2-005]** falling outside a MSA. It is therefore very unlikely that these small areas would be required for mineral extraction during the temporary operational life of the Proposed Development.

2.4.7 The Proposed Development is unlikely to sterilise any significant volumes of safeguarded mineral due to the limited amount of ground disturbance at depth.

2.4.8 At the end of its operational life, the Proposed Development will be decommissioned, ground structures removed and the site restored. Deep foundations or excavations are not required by the Proposed Development. Therefore disturbance is limited to surface layers rather than underlying deposits, thus underlying mineral deposits would not be permanently sterilised and available to exploit if required at a future date.

2.4.9 Part of the **Order Limits [REP2-005]** , along with large areas of Nottingham fall within Petroleum Exploration and Development License ('PEDL') areas issued by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA). In this case only part of the site falls within PEDL 140<sup>9</sup>.

2.4.10 Oil and gas deposits are found at much greater depths than other minerals and therefore surface development has less potential impact in terms of exploiting the resource. There are no safeguarding areas for hydrocarbons. Existing oil fields are identified and safeguarded with mineral consultation zone around each one. The

<sup>9</sup> UK Onshore Geophysical Library. Available at <https://ukogl.org.uk/map/?e=-93599,7047032,-81216,7054006&l=0,1115463,0&sm=true&b=2> . [Accessed 20/01/2026].

Proposed Development does not affect an existing oil field or come within a mineral consultation zone. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not considered to have any implications for existing or proposed exploration and eventual exploration of oil and gas resource within PEDL 140.

- 2.4.11 Sterilisation of mineral resources have been demonstrated not to occur and part of the Proposed Development within the defined MSA will be available for future extraction should this be necessary.
- 2.4.12 The Proposed Development therefore complies with Policies SO4 and SP7.

## **2.5 Industry Guidance and Advice**

- 2.4.1 Mineral Safeguarding in England : Good Practice Advice, British Geological Survey Open Report OR/11/046<sup>10</sup> (2011) is referred to in the Planning Practice Guidance for detailed advice on mineral safeguarding.
- 2.4.2 Paragraph 1.1.4 on page 1 of Mineral Safeguarding in England : Good Practice Advice Report states “*The presence of a MSA neither precludes other forms of development being permitted nor conveys any presumption that the mineral will be worked. MSAs simply provide a policy tool which will be an alert to the fact that minerals may be sterilised by the proposed nonmineral development and that this should be taken into account by the planning process, both when making site allocations in development plans and during development management*”.

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<sup>10</sup> Mineral Safeguarding in England : Good Practice Advice, British Geological Survey Open Report OR/11/046 (2011). Available at <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/download/mineral-safeguarding-in-england-good-practice-advice/> . [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

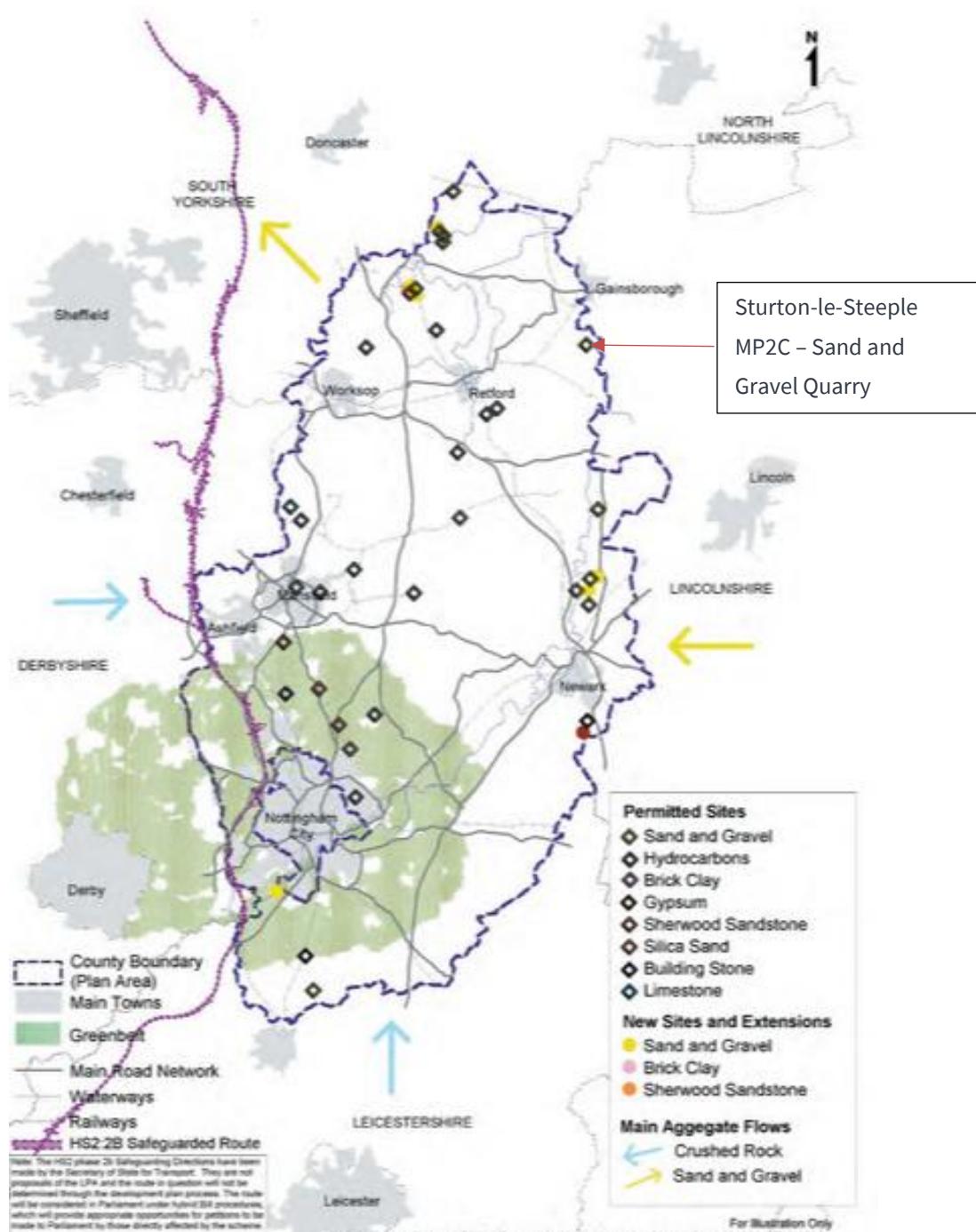
### 3. Assessment of Impact of the Proposed Development on Mineral Resource

#### 3.1. Mineral allocations relevant to the Order Limits

3.1.1 The Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan<sup>11</sup> (March 2021) details sites that are permitted and allocated for mineral development. They are also identified in Plan 3 on page 18 of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan shown at **Figure 1** on the following page:

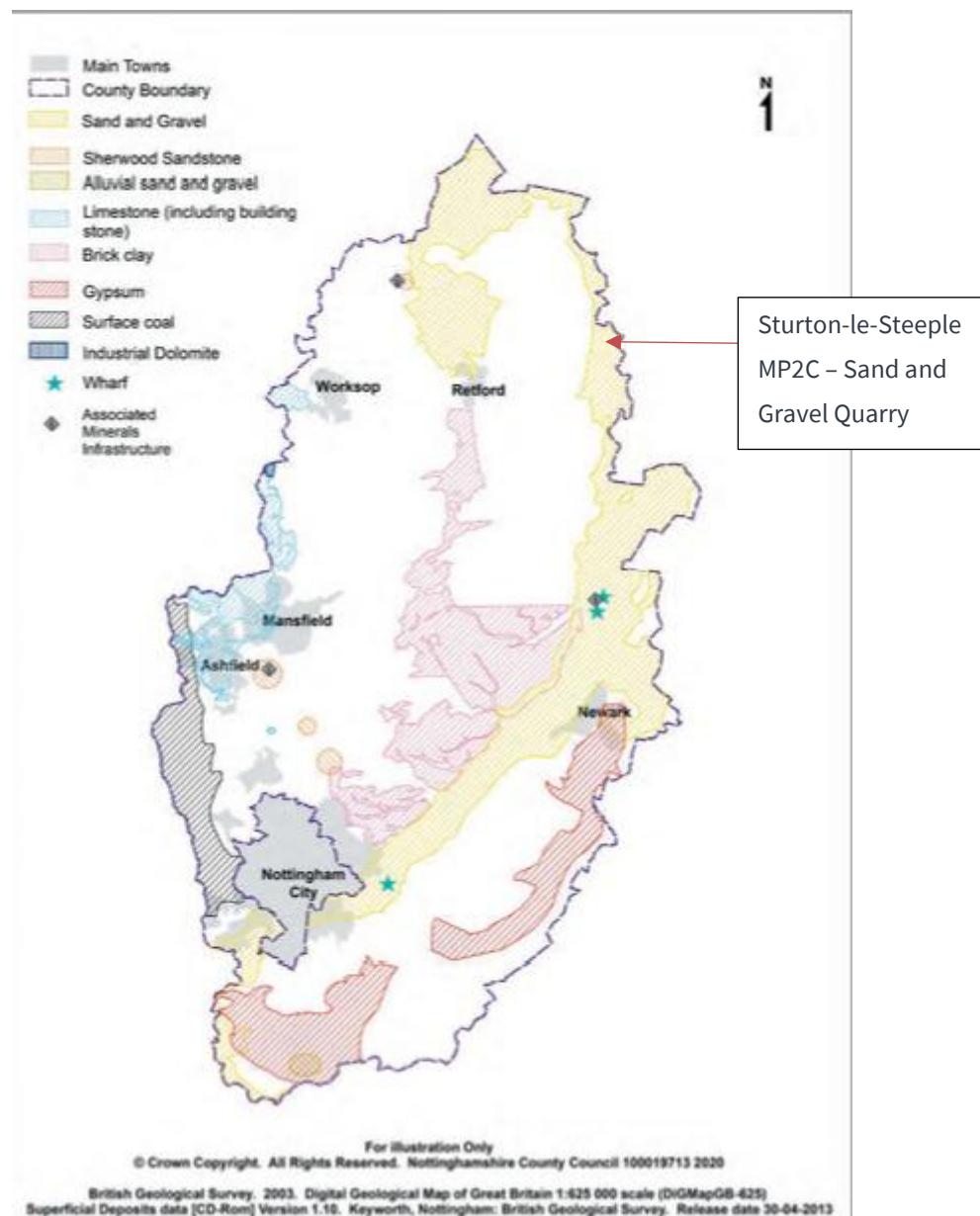
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<sup>11</sup> Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/5079375/adoptedmineralslocalplancompressed.pdf. [Accessed on 20/01/2026].



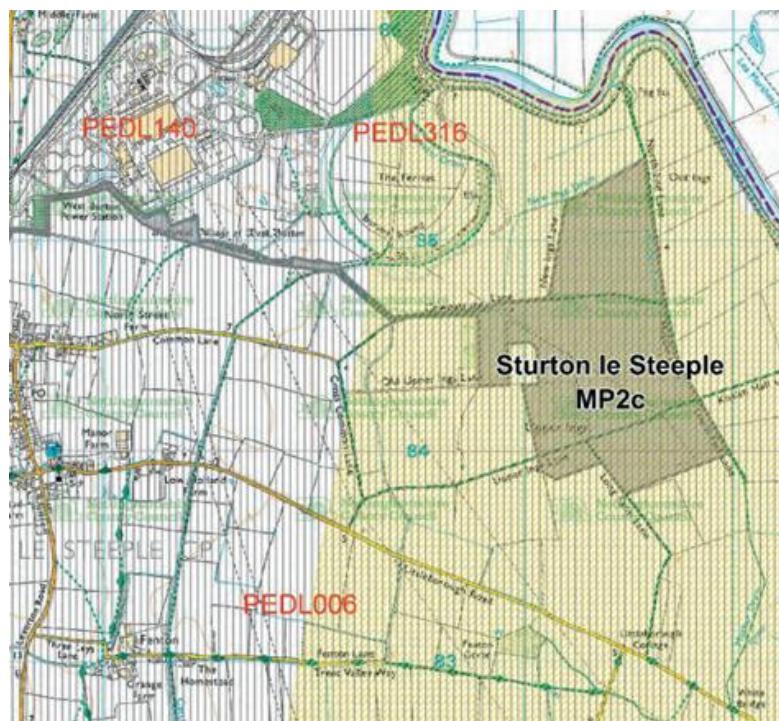
**Figure 1 - Permitted and allocated mineral sites in Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan.**

3.1.2 Plan 4 on page 44 Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan shows areas of Mineral Safeguarding and infrastructure shown at **Figure 2** on the follow page:



**Figure 2 - Mineral Safeguarding and infrastructure from Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan.**

3.1.3 Mineral allocation MP2c of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan for sand and gravel is located within the defined MSA (yellow shading that extends a large area north of Retford, along the eastern county boundary to Newark before heading south west across the county of Nottinghamshire to Nottingham City and the south west boundary of Nottinghamshire) for sand and gravel. Only the access track to the quarry falls within the Order Limits. An extract of the allocation policy map is shown in **Figure 3** on the following page:



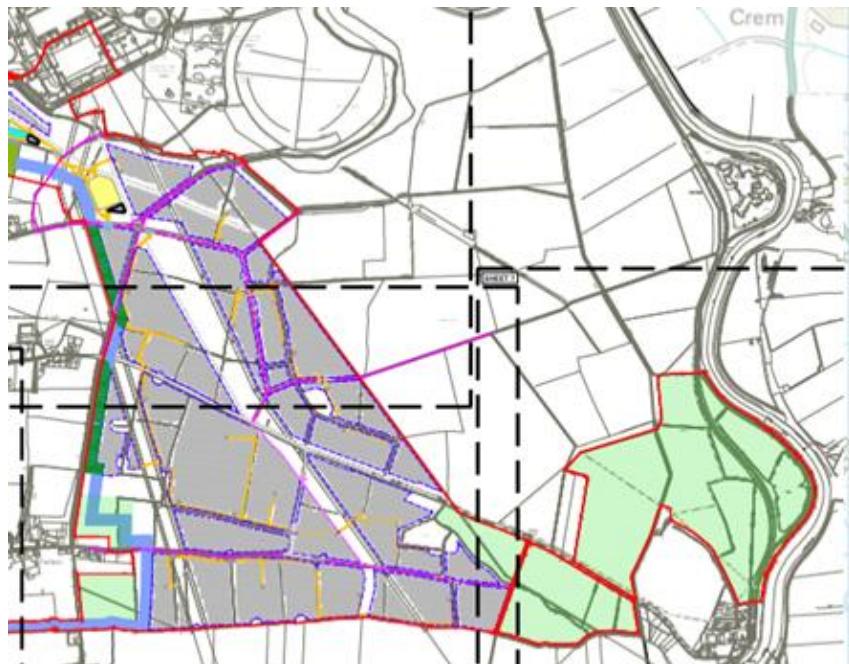
**Figure 3 - Extract of the allocation policy map from Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan.**

3.1.4 The extent of the quarry planning permission shaded orange and the Proposed Development (prior to formal submission of the application, shaded pink) are shown in the **Order Limits and Surrounding Projects Plan [AS-022]** and an extract of the plan is shown at **Figure 4** below:



**Figure 4 - Extract of the Applicants Order Limits and Surrounding Projects Plan [AS-022].**

3.1.5 An extract of the **Site Layout Plan [AS-009]** submitted as part of the Steeple DCO Examination is shown at **Figure 5** below:



**Figure 5 - Extract of the Applicants Site Layout Plan [AS-009].**

3.1.6 As can be seen on **Figure 4** above, pink areas under consideration for solar panels have been reduced, notably a small circular area to the east of the quarry, two triangular areas adjoining the north and western boundary of the green biodiversity mitigation area and circular area adjoining to the southern boundary of the green biodiversity mitigation area. This clearly shows a reduction in the land that was under consideration at pre-submission stage in comparison to the proposed Site Layout Plan submitted as part of the Application.

3.1.7 A separation distance of 300 metres or more is proposed between the mineral extraction, processing and storage areas and the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**. The only direct interaction is the shared private access road. As mentioned previously, the Applicant has held meetings and is aiming to have a cooperation agreement with the quarry operator so that both developments can coexist.

3.1.8 It is noted that the Sturton-le-Steeple quarry's planning permission is temporary and time limited until 2035.

3.1.9 The Proposed Development is proposed to utilise the existing private access track during all phases of development with most traffic generated in the construction and decommissioning phases. During operation staff would not be permanently based at the Proposed Development. Traffic generated during operation is limited. Decommissioning would likely take place after the quarry ceases to operate in 2035.

3.1.10 **ES Chapter 13: Transport and Access [APP-071]** has assessed the impact of vehicle movements generated by the Proposed Development in terms of severance; driver delay; pedestrian delay; pedestrian and cyclist amenity; fear and intimidation; accidents and safety; abnormal and hazardous loads. There are not expected to be any significant residual effects to Transport and Access receptors. Significant cumulative effects are also not expected to arise.

3.1.11 **ES Appendix 13.2 outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [APP-129]** has been submitted in support of the Proposed Development. It includes measures to manage construction vehicle access and routing to the order limits. This includes traffic routing avoiding Sturton-le-Steeple village and routing for abnormal loads to ensure access roads are suitable for transportation of components to the site. The oCTMP is secured by Requirement 8 of the **dDCO [REP2-007]** and also includes a construction worker plan that sets out measures and controls for staff vehicles. This includes measures to discourage and limit access to the Order Limits by car, and instead promotes the use of a shuttle bus from local worker accommodation and car sharing to minimise additional vehicles on local roads.

3.1.12 In light of this, effects on accidents and highway safety, severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay and amenity and hazardous loads during the operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be negligible, not significant and no cumulative impacts anticipated.

3.1.13 During operation, Requirement 9 Part (b) of the **dDCO [REP2-007]** (Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) secures associated traffic movements, including delivery vehicles and staff operation/vehicle movements details.

3.1.14 A Decommissioning Plan based on measures in **ES Appendix 4.2 outline Decommissioning Plan (oDP) [APP-090]** will be submitted to the local planning authority for approval prior to decommissioning as secured by Requirement 21 of the **dDCO [REP2-007]**.

3.1.15 The Applicant notes comments at paragraph 5.5.5 from Nottinghamshire County Council **Local Impact Report [REP1-014]** that the private access track is due to be removed when the quarry is restored at the end of its operational life currently time limited to 2035. The DCO, however, secures separate consent for this access road with powers of the Applicant to maintain it as necessary for the operation of the Proposed Development. The Applicant considers, therefore, that the DCO would in effect override this requirement of the quarry to de-commission the access track should the Proposed Development/DCO be in operation. The Applicant would note that it had included an article in the DCO (inconsistent planning permissions) seeking to control this overlap, to ensure that the quarry operator is protected from enforcement for breach of their condition. Due to a trend of DESNZ to remove such drafting the Applicant has removed the article from the DCO. It would be for the LPA to determine whether enforcement is appropriate in that circumstance given the access track is authorised by the DCO.

3.1.16 It is noted that Sturton-le-Steeple quarry is also required to operate under an Environment Agency (EA) permit and dust is controlled through a dust management plan (as part of the EA permit) that prevents excessive dust emissions. This will ensure operation of the quarry will not be detrimental to the operation of the Proposed Development and vice versa with the quarry. There is no 'agent of change' in the Applicant's opinion.

## 4 Impact on Supply of Minerals

4.1.1 Consideration is given below to the availability of permitted reserves of minerals in order to assess whether the Proposed Development may prevent a sufficient supply of minerals from coming forward.

4.1.2 A landbank is a stock of planning permission for mineral extraction. The Government requires MPAs to have landbanks for aggregates such as sand and gravel and raw industrial minerals such as crushed rock, gypsum, limestone and clay.

4.1.3 Landbanks are principally a monitoring tool to provide an early indication of possible disruption to the provision of an adequate and steady supply of minerals in the county and indicate when new planning permissions are likely to be needed. Government policy requires provisions to be made for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel, 10 years for crushed rock as well as provisions of a stock of permitted reserves (of at least 15 years) to primarily support the maintenance of cement production and secondary materials to maintain an existing plant.

4.1.4 In this case it is the sand and gravel land bank that is of interest to the Proposed Development. Important sand and gravel (river alluvial) deposits are found in the Trent and Ide Valleys resulting in Nottinghamshire becoming an important producer of sand and gravel in the East Midlands. Limited extraction of glaciofluvial deposits also takes place near East Leake, south of Nottingham. Sand and Gravel extracted in Nottingham is mainly used in mixed concrete production.

4.1.5 The Nottingham Local Aggregates Assessment<sup>12</sup> (December 2025) ('LAA') reported that the sand and gravel landbank has gradually increased and stands at 15.47 years which is well above the NPPF minimum 7 year requirement.

4.1.6 The landbank is calculated by dividing existing permitted reserved by the level of production based on average sales over the last 10 years. This is in line with guidance set out in the NPPG.

<sup>12</sup> Nottingham Local Aggregates Assessment (December 2025). Available at:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/minerals-local-plan/local-aggregate-assessment> . [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

4.1.7 Permitted reserves currently total 19.19 million tonnes, with average sales over the last 10 years standing at 1.24 million tonnes per annum, that created (as of December 2024) a sand and gravel landbank of 15.47 years.

4.1.8 There are eight permitted sand and gravel quarries in Nottinghamshire, although at present only five are in full production reflecting the ongoing site operations and market demand for aggregates.

4.1.9 Of the three sites noted as inactive (Girton, Sturton-le-Steeple and Scrooby Quarry) it is noted that Girton is at minimal activity, working only stockpiles. However, these sites are included within the permitted reserves to calculate the landbank as per paragraph 083 (Reference ID: 27-083-20140306) of the NPPG. For Sturton-le-Steeple, extraction is expected to commence in 2026 with the operator taking active steps to commence work, therefore future reports will reflect this activity.

4.1.10 It is noted that additional reserves will be required over the plan period to 2036 in order to replace existing quarries as they are worked out. Provisions are provided within the adopted Minerals Local Plan for a mixture of extensions to existing permitted quarries and one new quarry to provide these reserves. None fall within the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**.

## 4.2 East Midlands Aggregates Working Party (EMAWP)

4.2.1 Nottinghamshire is part of the EMAWP which provides technical advice about the supply and demand for aggregates (including sand and gravel) to the mineral planning authorities in the East Midlands working with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to do so.

4.2.2 The role of the Aggregate Working Party is to:

- Consider, scrutinise and provide advice on Local Aggregate Assessments of each mineral planning authority in its area;
- Provide an assessment on the position of overall demand and supply for the Aggregate Working Party Area, including whether, in its view, the area is making a full contribution towards meeting both national and local aggregate needs; and
- Obtain, collect and report on mineral activity data in their area. This includes annual data on sales, permissions and mineral reserves in their area, and data on recycled and secondary sources.

4.2.3 The most recent WMAWP Annual Report<sup>13</sup> (2024) confirms the biggest issue for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham over the plan period is the provision of sand and gravel. The 10-year sales average has fallen from 2.05 million tonnes in the LAA published in 2014 to 1.29 million tonnes in the 2024 LAA. This decline is largely attributed to the impact of the recession in 2007, followed by a slow recovery in construction activity and changing market demands. Despite the presence of significant sand and gravel resources in the Trent Valley, ongoing economic uncertainties and shifts towards alternative materials in construction continue to suppress sales figures.

4.2.4 Additional reserves will be needed over the plan period to 2036 to replace existing quarries as they are worked out. The expected commencement of quarrying at the large Sturton le Steeple quarry is welcomed.

4.2.5 Several significant infrastructure projects are planned in Nottinghamshire, but implementation is uncertain caused by changes to public sector funding arrangements. Whilst an increase in housing development is forecast, housing completion rates may remain unpredictable due to economic conditions.

4.2.6 Resource depletion in the Idle Valley is likely to be offset by the expected working of Sturton-le-Steeple quarry which will influence future exports to South Yorkshire. The extent of the impact will depend on the level of demand, due to economic conditions, and the increasing trend of replacing sharp sand with crushed rock in concreting products.

### 4.3 Summary of availability of mineral reserves

4.3.1 In summary, Nottinghamshire has a sufficient permitted reserves of sand and gravel to provide more than double the required 7-year land bank. Even if reserves are required, the MSA extends well beyond the **Order Limits [REP2-005]** and therefore there would be significant opportunities for environmentally suitable mineral extraction sites to be identified in other areas.

### 4.4 Impact on Safeguarding Resource

4.4.1 As previously confirmed part of the eastern part of the Order Limits is situated within a MSA. Policy SP7 of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan require that development must not permanently sterilise mineral resource in MSA's, as well as

<sup>13</sup> WMAWP Annual Report (2024). Available at: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy/east-midlands-aggregate-working-party-emawp> . [Accessed on 20/01/2026].

ensuring that existing mineral sites and associated infrastructure are safeguarded to allow continued operation on site without constraint or impacts.

- 4.4.2 The Proposed Development is expected to be operational for a temporary 40 year period. When the operation ends, the Proposed Development will require decommissioning. All solar PV modules, mounting structures, cabling, inverters and transformers will be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market condition at that time.
- 4.4.3 Therefore, the site will be restored to its current condition, allowing the ability to extract minerals if needed after the operation of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development works are not directly interfering with or sterilising the identified potential of the mineral reserves, given the works proposed are predominantly above ground, and the location of resources below underground.
- 4.4.4 This outlines how the Proposed Development can demonstrate that it will not sterilise mineral resources and demonstrate that it complies with policy SP7 of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan.

## 4.5 Summary of the Impact on Safeguarded Resource

- 4.5.1 Only part of the eastern side of the **Order Limits [REP2-005]** falls within a MSA designated by Nottinghamshire County Council. There are no allocated minerals sites within the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**.
- 4.5.2 A separation distances of 300 metres or more is proposed between the mineral extraction, processing and storage areas of the neighbouring Sturton-le-Steeple quarry to the east and the **Order Limits [REP2-005]**. The only direct interaction is the shared private access road. The Applicant has held meetings and is aiming to have a cooperation agreement with the quarry operator so that both developments can coexist.
- 4.5.3 Due to the separation buffer of at least 300 metres the existing quarry could extend in any direction subject to necessary planning permissions and Environment Agency permits even if the Steeple DCO is granted.
- 4.5.4 Nottinghamshire has sufficient permitted reserves of sand and gravel to provide more than double the required 7-year land bank. Even if reserves are required, the MSA extends well beyond the **Order Limits [REP2-007]** and therefore there would be significant opportunities for environmentally suitable mineral extraction sites to be identified in other areas.

4.5.5 The expected operational life of the Proposed Development is 40 years. When the operation ends, the Proposed Development will require decommissioning. Decommissioning will include removal of all above ground structures, including the BESS and Substation foundations. Permissive paths will be removed. Underground cabling may remain in situ but would be redundant and able to be removed if mineral working so required. Trees and hedgerows planted as part of the Proposed Development as well as ecological mitigation areas created, are expected to remain in situ when the land is returned to the landowners.

4.5.6 Following decommissioning, the landowner has the right to use their land as they would now. Minerals within the **Order Limits [REP2-007]** would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to extract if required at a future post-decommissioning date (subject to future planning permission and environment agency permits being granted).

4.5.7 The Proposed Development therefore complies with NPS EN-1, NPPF, NPPG and Policy SO4 and SP7 of Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan.