nenevalley
Destination Nene Valley Strategy
Destination Nene Valley (DNV) is a new pathfinding partnership project which aims to build on existing frameworks to better position and promote the Nene Valley.

The project will demonstrate that the Nene Valley is a competitive, sustainable destination offering world class wildlife to a mixture of local, national and international audiences.
Foreword
Chair Andrew Langley

I am a passionate advocate of our great county and one of its most outstanding natural assets, the Nene Valley.

I was born and raised less than half a mile from the River Nene in Irthlingborough, and I can still see it from my bedroom window in Little Houghton. I believe that we can do more to promote its virtues, celebrate its offerings and encourage visitors, both local and from further afield, to share with us one of England's hidden gems.

To that end, I am proud to Chair the Destination Nene Valley Board, which has been formed by partner organisations, and which aims to enhance, communicate and promote the attractiveness of the Nene Valley. It will improve access points, enhance visitor attractions and increase people's awareness of the area, as well as promoting tourism, the environment, economic growth and healthy lifestyles.

This document outlines the Destination Nene Valley vision, some of its work to date, the next steps we have to take and the future investment that we hope to secure. It is intended as an introduction to the area for funders and sponsors, and for general information to inform planning authorities and businesses in the area.

This is a shared vision, and we would welcome help and support from as many people as possible, financial or otherwise. If you are able to assist us in realising our vision, we would love to hear from you.

In the meantime, please take a look at our website, connect with us on our social media platforms and most importantly - go and see for yourself all that the Nene Valley has to offer us all.

Follow us on Twitter @_NeneValley
Northamptonshire welcomes 20 million visitors each year. Tourism contributes over £965 million to the local economy.
The Nene Valley will be recognised as a destination of choice for world class wildlife, it has a connected green corridor for walking and cycling and a flourishing tourism economy that creates opportunities for visitors and residents to enjoy outdoor recreational activities whilst protecting the environment and wildlife.

Destination Nene Valley will:

- Guide strategic development to support green infrastructure
- Develop a brand that communicates the Nene Valley’s unique identity to visitors
- Work with partners to strengthen the valley’s tourism assets and increase people’s enjoyment of these
- Support new and existing tourism businesses locating in the Nene Valley
- Identify opportunities to improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing
- Work with partners to develop and promote sustainable tourism principles in all activity
- Attract funding resources and partners to assist in the implementation of the strategy
The Nene Valley is only 1 hour from London, Birmingham, Oxford & Cambridge
Background

Covering more than 41,000 hectares, the Nene Valley commands an area three times that of the Great Fens.

The valley is a beautiful part of Northamptonshire, extending for around 35 miles between Northampton and Peterborough.

Throughout history, the area has been of vital importance to the county’s industries, including agriculture, gravel extraction and the well-known leather and shoe industry.

Once an important artery for freight and passenger traffic, linking England’s canal system and the Fen waterways network, the River Nene is today a playground for boating enthusiasts.

The serene natural landscape offers the perfect backdrop for a range of activities including canoeing, kayaking, boating, cycling and fishing.

The peaceful countryside has a quintessentially English character and embraces exquisite country houses, wonderful gardens and countless historic curiosities. Visitors can follow the Nene Way along the banks of the river or across hills and dales.

The valley is comprised of a myriad of natural habitats including wildflower meadows, wetlands, marshes, woodlands and wet grasslands. This diversity of habitats makes the valley one of the most important inland localities in England for a range of wildlife including kingfishers, herons, otters and dragonflies.

This is recognised by the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area as a designated site of European importance for over 20,000 over-wintering birds with species including gadwall, golden plover and bittern.
Create an enterprising approach to the rural economy

Destination Nene Valley will:

- Support new business and growth
- Develop greener and cleaner technology opportunities
- Create an enterprise zone for cultural and creative industries in the valley
- Encourage inward investment
- Support the provision of good quality accommodation in the valley
- Promote tourism development opportunities
Priority Strand 2

Improve access to the Nene Valley by identifying and developing solutions to existing barriers

Destination Nene Valley will:

• Secure external funding to create a green corridor for walking and cycling, linking key sites with gateway towns and villages
• Create a unified wayfinding system to encourage exploration and discovery
• Support Nature Improvement Area partners to enhance awareness of, and access to, the Nene Valley for growing local communities in a sustainable and sympathetic way
• Enhance and promote the River Nene corridor

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Priority Strand 3

Attract visitors and spend from local, national and international markets

Destination Nene Valley will:

• Create a unique identity for the Nene Valley based on its strong outdoor and recreational offer
• Develop and implement thematic marketing and PR campaigns, with a focus on wildlife tourism
• Continue to develop the Nene Valley website
• Work with tourism businesses to develop packages, enhancing the visitor experience
• Optimise the use of digital media to promote and improve the tourism offer
• Identify external funding opportunities to develop cultural and sustainable tourism projects
• Significantly increase the number of national and international visitors holidaying in the Nene Valley using the 2012/2013 Nene Valley NIA Visitor Survey as a baseline
Encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles and promote green transport

Destination Nene Valley will:

- Develop and promote outdoor recreational events
- Produce promotional material to encourage walking, cycling, canoeing and horse riding
- Support local community groups to promote local events through the Nene Valley website
- Encourage community groups to develop local walks and projects
- Develop a Nene Valley Festival

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The outdoor environment is important for increasing levels of physical activity
There is potential for Destination Nene Valley to exploit the domestic and European wildlife tourism market, and to promote enhanced enjoyment of the valley’s natural and cultural assets. Several existing initiatives / strategies will help to achieve this aim:

**The Northamptonshire Arc** is a spatial concept covering the whole county, which represents an integrated approach to economic development, the environment and connectivity and is one of the first concepts of its type in the country. Its priorities include incentivising low-carbon travel, enabling countywide broadband access and town centre regeneration, as well as creating a naturally resilient Northamptonshire.

**The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy** seeks to promote green infrastructure by enhancing existing assets and creating new multifunctional areas of green space. It will encourage recreation and tourism, public access and biodiversity, as well as supporting the green economy and sustainable land management.

**The Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area** recognises the valley as one of 12 flagship locations in England, and aims to enable enhancements which benefit wildlife, people and the economy. It focuses on the use of natural resources, as well as creating, restoring and connecting wildlife habitats.

**The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA)** is a protected wildlife site of European importance for over 20,000 over-wintering birds, including populations of gadwall, golden plover and bittern.
New Developments in the Nene Valley

There are a number of exciting developments in the Nene Valley which will contribute to the realisation of Destination Nene Valley’s aims.

**Chester Farm** is an important heritage site and Northamptonshire County Council are developing plans to ensure its long-term preservation, as well as opening up the site for learning and community activities.

**Greenways** are an important means of linking open spaces and providing safe and accessible routes for walking and cycling. The East Northamptonshire Greenway Project aims to develop a greenway network in East Northamptonshire, with aspirations to link with Wellingborough Train Station in the future.

**The Wellingborough East Development** is a proposed mixed-use scheme which includes plans for new public transport links, enhanced walking and cycling routes, improved road networks and new parks.
Changing Tracks is a multi-national cultural project which will use European funding to install temporary railway-related artwork by upcoming artists on the former Northampton to Peterborough railway route. Due to be installed in spring/summer 2014, this will enhance the cultural offer in the Nene Valley.

There are several business clusters along the River Nene which have a tourism focus and are becoming more established. These include:

- **Becket’s Park Marina** in Northampton, which links the River Nene and the Grand Union Canal
- **Willy Watt Marina** in Woodford, which includes a tea shop and self-catering units
- **Oundle Wharf** which features a cycle shop, outdoor recreation outlet and brewery
- **Other** adventure and accommodation providers along the river corridor
Investment in green infrastructure, recreation and tourism generates significant employment and health related benefits.
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What are you waiting for?
www.nenevalley.net
Key partners in the Nene Valley

Supporting Destination Nene Valley are:

**Borough Council of Wellingborough** - The Borough Council of Wellingborough is proud to be working with Destination Nene Valley and associated partners in highlighting all the natural and historical assets this county has to offer. The Wellingborough 2020 Vision Strategy identifies continued investment in heritage and conservation projects, supporting the ambitions of Nene Valley.

**East Northamptonshire Council** - East Northamptonshire Council will continue to work alongside Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership to lead the Destination Nene Valley project. This work supports the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for the district.

**Environment Agency** - The Environment Agency’s principal aims are to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development. It plays a central role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government and the Welsh Government. It is also the Navigation Authority for several rivers across a number of regions including the River Nene and manages the new Northampton Marina at Becket’s Park.

**Northamptonshire County Council** - The council improves access to and awareness of the River Nene on both a local and national scale and is very much at the heart of the strategic ARC programme.

**Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP)** - NEP has promoted the Nene Valley and its outstanding natural assets through the development of gateway signage at key sites, a website - www.nenevalley.net - and an integrated marketing and PR campaign. It has marketed the area as a competitive ecologically sound destination offering world-class wildlife, ideal for the staycation trend, to a mixture of local, national and international audiences.

**Rockingham Forest Trust** - The trust is an environmental charity which works on projects across the county that bring people closer to the environment, both to conserve the area’s heritage and to create green spaces for the local community to enjoy. Stanwick Lakes, a countryside attraction and nature reserve, is a key site in the Nene Valley.

**The River Nene Regional Park (CIC)** - RNRP is the implementation body for green infrastructure, supporting the growth areas in Northamptonshire. Since its inception in 2004, the RNRP has secured £20 million of government funding to support the delivery of green infrastructure projects in Northamptonshire.

**The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire** - The Wildlife Trust manages 13 nature reserves along the Nene Valley and aims to link these together, creating a living landscape for wildlife and people.