



North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

May 2014

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Introduction

This document summarises many of the green infrastructure (GI) projects planned and underway in North Northamptonshire. These projects will provide a wide variety of benefits, meet a range of policy objectives and improve the overall GI network. This plan identifies the need for significant investment to provide a net gain in GI and improve existing provision. Its successful delivery will lead to improved:

- biodiversity
- habitat connectivity
- tourism and green business opportunities
- walking and cycling links between key locations
- community engagement with green infrastructure
- Improved quality of life
- more attractive places in which to live, work and invest.

The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan demonstrates how specific actions will deliver strategic policies to increase the amount and benefits of green infrastructure across North Northamptonshire in line with local and national policy.

Purpose of this document

This document has been produced for planners to use when discussing green infrastructure with developers, in particular where a development scheme has an impact over a broad catchment. Some of the projects outlined here will in whole or in part be resourced through grants and other funding sources. However the planning process offers other funding streams which may also be used to deliver priority green infrastructure. Specifically, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (where adopted) are important funding sources that Local Planning Authorities can direct to identified projects.

Appendix 3 includes details on many of the projects outlined in Table 1 below. It illustrates how projects meet the three legal tests¹ and includes links for further information.

What is green infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of

¹ 1) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; 2) directly related to the development; and 3) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure can include parks, natural open spaces, wildlife sites, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.²

Green infrastructure planning

Green infrastructure networks have been identified at both strategic (i.e. sub-regional) and local scales across Northamptonshire (Figure 1).³ The sub-regional network is embedded in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted 2008).⁴ It consists of a series of interlinked corridors which broadly follow the main river valleys and tributaries. These corridors connect areas of particular natural heritage, greenspace, biodiversity or other environmental interest. The sub-regional corridors are priority areas for investment and enhancement.

The sub-regional GI network is complemented by local GI corridors. These cover a variety of land uses and provide opportunities for projects and investment at a smaller, more local scale.

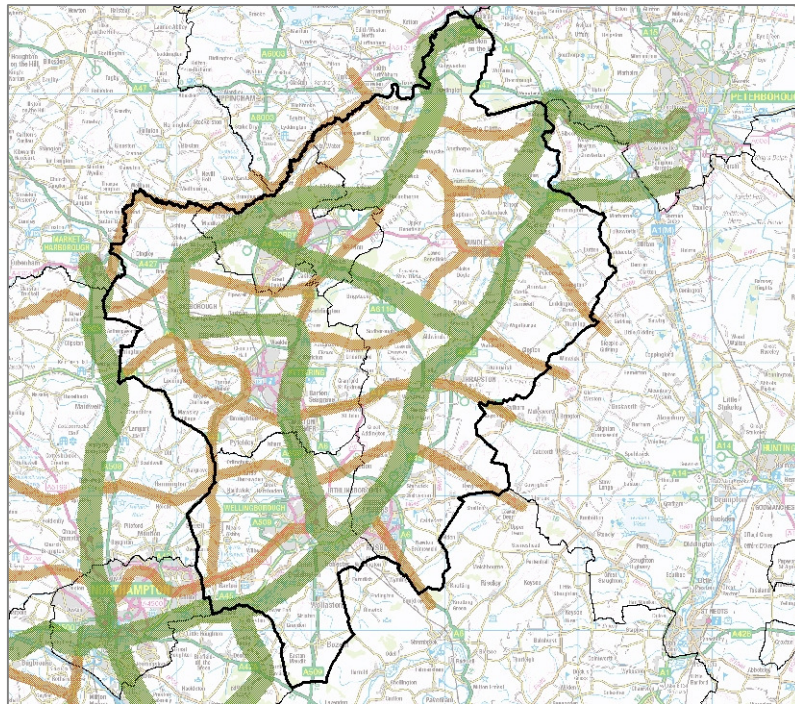


Figure 1 North Northamptonshire sub-regional (green) and local (brown) green infrastructure corridors

² Natural England. 2013. Planning and development: Green infrastructure [ONLINE]. <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx>. Accessed 28 January 2013.

³ River Nene Regional Park. 2009. Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite. Part 5.0 Green Infrastructure: Making the Connection [ONLINE]. <http://www.rnrpenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk/>. Accessed 29 January 2013.

⁴ North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. 2008. North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy. Thrapston, Northamptonshire: North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit.

Green infrastructure delivery

Table 1 presents many of the green infrastructure projects planned or underway in North Northamptonshire. Project funding comes or is expected to come from a variety of sources. Each of these will need to be explored and capitalised to secure enough resources for successful delivery:

- Planning obligations
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Central and local government funding streams
- Charitable trusts and other third sector agencies.

Projects will be delivered by a wide range of partners, who must be prepared to take ownership of and commit to taking forward the specific projects they have proposed for implementation. There must be reasonable certainty that projects will have both human and monetary resources available over a realistic timescale.

This Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be reviewed periodically as listed projects are completed and new projects come forward.

Projects within the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area

Any project that may have an adverse effect on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is not supported by this Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Any project likely to have a significant effect on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA will be subject to appropriate assessment as part of any permission necessary to allow the project to proceed.

Some projects include operations listed within the notification package of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA as requiring consent from Natural England. Projects which do not require planning consent but take place within the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, or are adjacent to the SPA and likely to affect it, will still require written consent from Natural England before they can legally proceed.

North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Table 1 Green infrastructure projects planned or underway in North Northamptonshire. Those in *Italics* are presented in detail in Appendix 3.

LPA	Project	Description	Responsibility for provision	Potential funding source(s)	Start date	Duration	Initial cost	Annual cost
All	<i>Leftover Spaces: Greener Places</i>	Development of community-led greenspaces in major settlements	Groundwork	CIL	2012	3 years	£216,000	£20,000
BCW	Ise Valley Park	Creation of park and visitor centre	Developer	s.106	2014	7 years	£490,000	
BCW	Green open spaces	BCW aspiration	BCW	CIL	TBD	TBD	TBD	
BCW	<i>Sywell Country Park</i>	Improvements to visitor park facilities	NCC	CIL	TBD	3 years	£267,650	
BCW	<i>Wilby Way Orchard, Stream and Meadow</i>	Condition and management improvements to 3 Local Wildlife Sites	WTBCN		2016	ongoing	£150,000	
CBC	<i>King's Wood Corby</i>	Improvements to path network	WTBCN		2016	1 year	£25,000	
CBC	<i>Upgrade ancient woodlands</i>	Management of and improvements to ancient woodlands	CBC	CIL/s.106/HCA	2012		£835,000 (remaining)	
CBC	Weldon Local Wildlife Sites	Mitigation of habitat degradation and provision of quality greenspace	WTBCN		TBD		£50,000	
CBC	<i>Woodland Linkage</i>	Carbon sequestration and provision of quality greenspace	WTBCN		TBD		£2,500,000	
ENC	<i>Barnwell Country Park</i>	Expansion of country park by 20 ha, provision of cafe	NCC		TBD	3 years	£619,750	
ENC	<i>Ditchford Lakes and Meadows</i>	Access and infrastructure improvements to existing nature reserve	WTBCN		TBD	3 years	£200,000	
ENC	<i>Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows</i>	Expansion and linkage of existing nature reserves	WTBCN	CIL, grants	2012	9 years	£297,000 (remaining)	
ENC	<i>King's Cliffe LNR expansion</i>	Expansion of existing nature reserve to accommodate more visitor pressure	WTBCN		TBD		£150,000	
ENC	<i>Ringhaw</i>	Access and infrastructure improvements to existing nature reserves	WTBCN	CIL	TBD		£100,000	

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LPA	Project	Description	Responsibility for provision	Potential funding source(s)	Start date	Duration	Initial cost	Annual cost
ENC	<i>River Nene Backchannels</i>	Habitat improvements for water quality and recreation	WTBCN		TBD		£300,000	
ENC	<i>Rushden Nene</i>	Expansion and linkage of existing nature reserves	WTBCN	Developer	2012	Ongoing	£1,000,000	£100,000
ENC	<i>Summer Leys and Mary's Lake</i>	Expansion and linkage of existing nature reserves	WTBCN	HLF, LIFE+	2016	15 years	£1,550,000	
ENC	Thrapston Carr expansion	Expansion of existing nature reserve to accommodate more visitor pressure	WTBCN	CIL	2021	10 years	£150,000	
KBC	<i>Barford Wood and Meadows</i>	Bridge construction to permit livestock access to SSSI for habitat management	WTBCN	TBD	2016		£40,000	TBD
KBC	Broughton and Mawsley	Provision of a new amenity greenspace in Broughton and Mawsley	KBC	s.106	TBD		£50,000	
KBC	Burton Latimer Greenspace	Council to investigate changing an amenity greenspace to natural/semi-natural provision in south Burton Latimer	KBC	s.106	TBD		£50,000	
KBC	Burton Latimer Park	Provision of new park and garden in south Burton Latimer	KBC	s.106	TBD		£200,000	
KBC	<i>Desborough Greenspace</i>	Provision of >20 ha greenspace in north Desborough	KBC	s.106	2011	10 years	£400,000	
KBC	Desborough Parks	Provision of new park or garden in east and west Desborough	KBC	s.106	TBD		£100,000	
KBC	Kettering outskirts	Long term aim for the council to provide 3 new natural and semi-natural sites on the outskirts of Kettering	KBC	s.106	TBD		£75,000	
KBC	Desborough pocket parks	Creation of two pocket parks in Desborough	KBC	s.106	TBD		£200,000	

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Table 1 Green infrastructure projects planned or underway in North Northamptonshire. Those in *Italics* are presented in detail in Appendix 3.

LPA	Project	Description	Responsibility for provision	Potential funding source(s)	Start date	Duration	Initial cost	Annual cost
KBC	Geddington greenspace	Provision of natural or semi-natural greenspace in Geddington	KBC	s.106	TBD		£50,000	
KBC	Kettering amenity space	Creation of 3 new amenity greenspaces in Kettering: one in the northwest and two in the south	KBC	s.106	TBD		£75,000	
KBC	Pytchley	Provision of accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace in Pytchley	KBC	s.106	TBD		£50,000	
KBC	Rothwell amenity	Provision of a new amenity greenspace in north Rothwell	KBC	s.106	TBD		£25,000	
KBC	Rothwell park	Provision of a new park and garden in west Rothwell	KBC	s.106	TBD		£200,000	
KBC	Tailby Meadow expansion	Expansion of existing nature reserve to accommodate more visitor pressure	WTBCN	Developer, other	TBD		£200,000	
KBC	West Kettering	Greenspace creation in south and northwest Kettering	KBC	s.106	TBD		£400,000	
KBC	Westfield Gardens	New Residential Quarter development: greenspace remodelling to include community outdoor flexible space near brook that includes street skate use. Part of town centre redevelopment	KBC	Cs.106	TBD		£500,000	
KBC	<i>Wicksteed Park Nature Reserve: connection to Southfield Farm Marsh</i>	Linkage of existing nature reserves and improved measures to protect water quality	WTBCN		TBD		£1,000,000	
KBC	Wilbarston	Provision of a new natural or semi-natural greenspace in Wilbarston	KBC	s.106	TBD		£50,000	

North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Table 1 Green infrastructure projects planned or underway in North Northamptonshire. Those in *Italics* are presented in detail in Appendix 3.

LPA	Project	Description	Responsibility for provision	Potential funding source(s)	Start date	Duration	Initial cost	Annual cost
Var.	<i>NorthNorthamptonshire Greenway</i>	New cycling and pedestrian routes linking Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irchester and Wellingborough	NCC, LPAs	Growth area funding, grants, developer	Ongoing		£2,585,644	
Var.	<i>Rockingham Forest for Life</i>	Tree planting for carbon sequestration, wood fuel supply and public access	RNRP, WTBCN	s.106, CIL, other	TBD	ongoing	£6,999,300	TBD
Var.	<i>Upper Nene Valley access infrastructure</i>	Access infrastructure improvements to improve visitor experience and protect the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	WTBCN, NE, RNRP, RSPB	HLF, other	2016	15 years	£2,000,000	

Green infrastructure policy links

Green infrastructure is addressed in Policy 5 of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and is therefore a significant planning consideration in North Northamptonshire. A range of further policies and initiatives from the local to national level are relevant to GI delivery. These include but are not limited to:

- Access to Natural Greenspace Standard
- Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area
- Upper Nene Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site
- Northamptonshire Arc - A Naturally Resilient Northamptonshire

Access to Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)

Natural greenspace is defined as 'places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate'.⁵ ANGSt recommends that everyone, no matter where they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m from home
- at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km of home
- one accessible 100ha site within 5km of home, and
- one accessible 500ha site within 10km of home.⁶

There are currently no accessible 500ha sites in North Northamptonshire, reflecting a key greenspace deficit. Sites larger than 100ha are mainly restricted to open access woodlands of Rockingham Forest and wetland areas in the Nene Valley.

Local authorities can help achieve ANGSt targets by promoting projects that will reduce accessible greenspace deficits and/or fill gaps in provision. Guidance on implementing ANGSt is available from Natural England.⁷

Areas which currently have poor or no access to significant (>20 ha) accessible natural greenspace include (Figure 2):

- West Kettering
- Desborough (poor access), Rothwell (no access)
- Burton Latimer
- Oundle
- Bozeat, Wollaston
- The villages east of the A605⁸

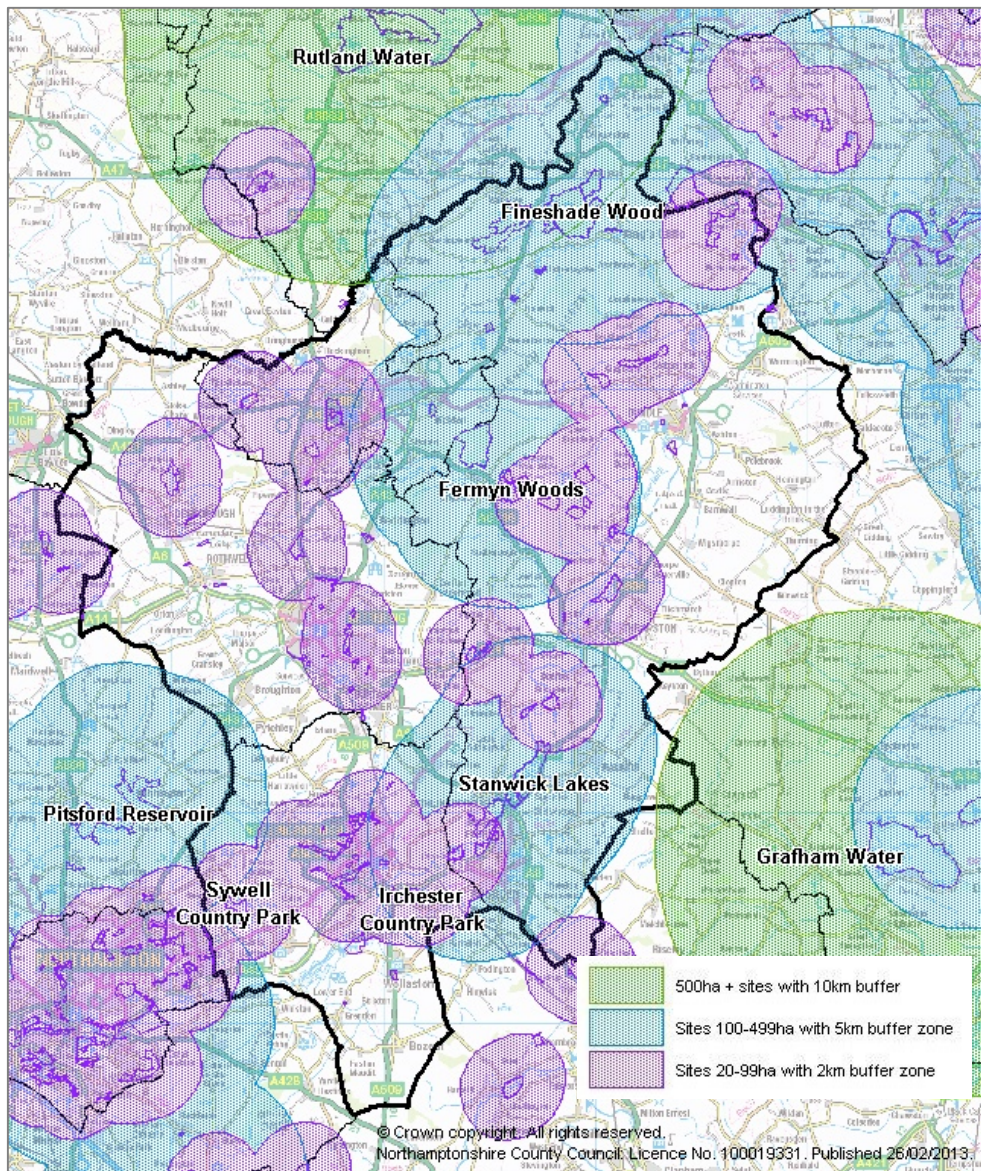
⁵ Natural England. 2010. 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance. Peterborough: Natural England, p. 8.

⁶ Ibid, p. 12.

⁷ Natural England. 2010. 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance. Peterborough: Natural England.

⁸ With the exception of Warmington, Polebrook and Barnwell the villages east of the A605 each have a relatively small population and are generally located more than 2km apart. Greenspace would therefore need

Figure 2 Accessible natural greenspaces >20ha in North Northamptonshire



The following projects will address some of these greenspace deficits:

1. The Living Nene – combined with the existing Stanwick Lakes complex – will provide a 500ha site for Wellingborough and eastern Kettering
2. Desborough Greenspace will provide accessible amenity and natural greenspace for people in the Desborough area
3. The Barnwell Country Park expansion will increase the site area to over 20ha, increasing its catchment to cover Oundle and part of Barnwell.

to be located within each settlement. Providing an accessible greenspace in these areas would not be cost effective, especially when considering the access that they have to the rights of way network in the local area and the surrounding countryside.

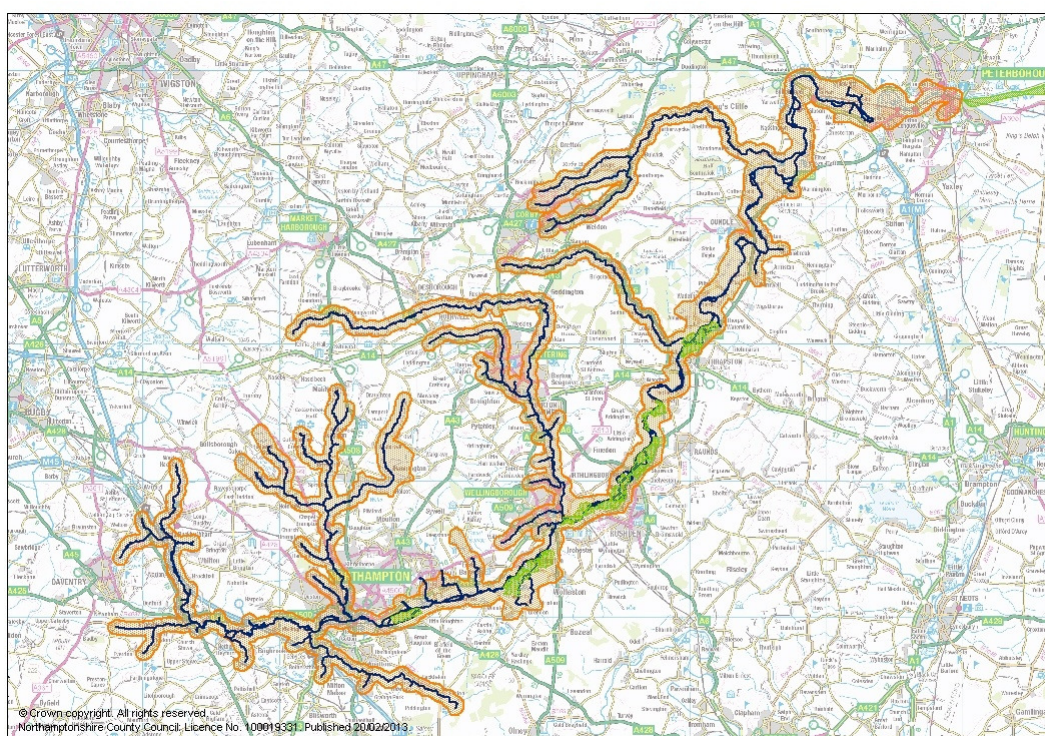
Many other accessible greenspace projects are being planned for North Northamptonshire and are among those presented in Table 1. Some of the projects including those listed above are described in detail in Appendix 3. Remaining areas of deficit will need to be considered as this document is reviewed.

Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area

Nature Improvement Areas (NIA) were a flagship policy in the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice'.⁹ The paper described goals to improve the quality of the natural environment across England, halt the decline in habitats and species, and strengthen the connection between people and nature. It committed the Government to supporting partnerships working at the local level to restore and connect nature on a significant scale.

The Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area is one of 12 NIAs designated by Defra in February 2012; it extends from Daventry to Peterborough and includes the River Nene and its main tributaries (Figure 3). The NIA covers 41,340 ha and covers the 1 in 100 year floodplain plus a buffer around tributaries and core sites. At the heart of the NIA is the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.

Figure 3 The Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site is indicated in green.



⁹ Defra. 2011. The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature. London: TSO (The Stationery Office).

The Nene Valley NIA project is working to reverse the decline in biodiversity and restore the ecological network within the NIA. It aims to meet the ecological challenges of a growing population, changing climate and the need to produce food.

Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site covers 1,358 ha of disused sand and gravel pits extending along the River Nene from Northampton through to Thrapston. Designated in 2011 under the Birds Directive and the Ramsar Convention, the SPA is protected and internationally recognised for its important wild bird populations and waterfowl habitat.

With these designations comes great responsibility. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 require that plans, projects and proposals do not adversely affect the integrity or conservation objectives of a European site or the features for which it was designated. As such an Appropriate Assessment (screening stage) has been completed for this Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan¹⁰. The Assessment examines whether the Plan's proposals are likely to have any adverse effect on the SPA after mitigation has been taken into account. The results of the screening assessment indicate that with appropriate mitigation no adverse effect will occur in the Upper Nene Gravel Pits and affect the designations that cover this area.

Northamptonshire Arc

Northamptonshire Arc is a countywide integrated approach to economic development, the environment and connectivity.¹¹ The aim of its environmental strategy is to build 'natural resilience' to the likely impacts of climate change.¹² The strategy includes the creation of a 'biodiversity corridor' of accessible and connected green spaces. To focus activity, Northamptonshire Arc identifies seven key 'natural resilience' themes:

- Agriculture and food production
- Biofuels and renewables
- Protecting and reconnecting habitats
- Flood and water management
- Recreation and tourism opportunities
- Micro-climate control
- Community and place making.

¹⁰ North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. 2011. Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan Appropriate Assessment (DRAFT). Thrapston, Northamptonshire: Borough Council of Wellingborough, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council.

¹¹ Northamptonshire County Council. 2011. Northamptonshire Arc: A Prosperity Plan for Northamptonshire. Northampton: Northamptonshire County Council.

¹² Northamptonshire County Council. 2011. Northamptonshire Arc: Towards a Naturally Resilient Low Carbon Northamptonshire. Northampton: Northamptonshire County Council.

Projects outlined in this delivery plan will help meet objectives under many of these themes, each of which has an overall objective and key actions (Appendix 2).

Other policies and plans

Other policies addressing green infrastructure in North Northamptonshire include the Nene Valley Strategic Plan¹³ and the North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Investment Plan.¹⁴

¹³ River Nene Regional Park C.I.C. 2010. River Nene Regional Park – Nene Valley Strategic Plan Final Report. Northampton: River Nene Regional Park C.I.C, ALSF Natural England, Bee Bee Developments Ltd., Environment Agency, Natural England and North Northamptonshire Development Company.

¹⁴ Stannard K. 2009. North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Investment Plan. Northampton: River Nene Regional Park.

APPENDIX 1

Benefits of green infrastructure

A robust GI network provides a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits, summarised in Table 1-1. The projects identified in this delivery plan (Table 1/Appendix 3) will provide many of these benefits.

Table 1-1 Benefits of green infrastructure

1	Health and well being	Spaces for recreation, relaxation, leisure and reflection; encourages more people to increase their activity levels.
2	Movement networks for people	Improved sustainable transport choices
3	Accessible natural greenspaces	Unrestricted access to natural areas
4	Education	Innovative and inspiring places to learn
5	Inward Investment	Increased appeal of North Northamptonshire for tourism and green business
6	Food and food production	Improved and efficient farm management for local food production
7	Flood and water management	Flood attenuation, water filtration and storage
8	Air and air quality	Reduced car travel and improved micro climate control
9	Cultural Heritage	Protection, management and enhancement of historic sites, archaeology and built heritage assets
10	Landscape setting	Management, protection, conservation and improvement of the local and historic landscape
11	Climate change and the carbon challenge	Carbon sequestration and the promotion of renewable energy
12	Movement networks for biodiversity	Improved habitat connectivity to reduce the isolation of plant and animal populations
13	Natural greenspace for biodiversity	Habitat management, creation, connection and restoration

APPENDIX 2

Themes from *Towards a Naturally Resilient Low Carbon Northamptonshire*

1. Agriculture and food production

a. Biodiversity sensitive agriculture

Agriculture is a key economic activity in the county but the intensification of agricultural processes has led to habitat fragmentation and significant biodiversity loss. There are, however, opportunities to strike a better balance. Agri-environment schemes pay farmers for environmentally beneficial management practices like field margins, buffer strips and habitat restoration. Woodland grants are also available for creating and managing woodland.

b. Urban growing

Living in urban areas can reduce our connection to food production. Access to allotments and growing space is increasingly of interest to Northamptonshire's residents, and opportunities to provide growing space should be explored.

2. Biofuels and renewables

There is potential for Northamptonshire to produce from the land other resources in addition to food. Plants can be grown that produce low carbon fuel alternatives. For example Northamptonshire already has one of the few *Miscanthus* fuel processing plants in the UK. Other opportunities for bio-fuel production include short-rotation coppice woodland or waste wood from forest management, both of which also have biodiversity benefits. The first *Miscanthus* fuelled public sector biomass system was piloted in the County in 2011, with the fuel supply being locally sourced for added local economic benefit. Consideration will be given to including measures to improve the biodiversity of this crop, with the intention that best practice be disseminated nationally.

The Rockingham Forest in the north of the county has been selected by Defra as one of only five national climate change projects that will support the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and the government's Carbon Plan to pilot a Carbon Sink Forestry Project (Rockingham Forest- Forest for Life). The pilot aims to sequester carbon and explore opportunities to establish wood fuel supply chains with wider recreation, biodiversity, health and economic benefits.

Resource opportunities from biofuels and renewables will have to be balanced with food production needs, but focus on such land uses should be on lower grade agricultural land and incorporate opportunities to increase biodiversity.

3. Protecting and reconnecting habitats

Northamptonshire has a number of important environmental assets. The county has a wide range of habitats that need to be protected, maintained and enhanced to reverse the decline in biodiversity and build natural resilience as identified in the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan. To achieve this we must conserve and

extend the existing resource through appropriate on-site management, as well as offsite activities such as the creation and maintenance of habitat corridors and ‘stepping stones’, to create a ‘bigger, better, more joined-up ‘Living Landscape’.

Development pressures have also had an impact on the environment. It is important to ensure that ecosystems are meaningfully integrated into urban landscapes through street trees, pocket parks, interconnected greenspaces, waterways and living roofs.

4. Flood and Water Management

a. Natural management and habitat creation

Fluvial and surface water present a significant flood risk to people in Northamptonshire, with potentially high economic impacts and disruption. With greater winter rainfall and drier summer periods, climate change will increase pressures on the River Nene and its tributaries. Targeted habitat creation to increase wetlands and other habitats including woodlands will help restore a more naturally functioning ecosystem. This is not only important for maintaining wetland ecology and improving water quality but also in meeting our obligations under the European Water Framework Directive.

b. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The 2010 Flood and Water Management Act removes the automatic right to connect to storm water drainage sewers and means that on-site collection, storage and treatment of water through SuDS will be required for all new development and re-development. SuDS features should mimic the natural drainage of the site and provide more natural attenuation, storage and treatment of water. This has multiple benefits, such as reducing pollution, controlling surface water run off and can support ecological networks, provide open space and help control micro-climate. There are a range of different types of SuDS, suitable for a range of applications, from small scale rain gardens through to large site-scale drainage ponds. For SuDS to be most effective, their planning and design needs to be considered early in masterplanning and use a range of professionals (landscape architects, ecologists etc.) who would not previously have been involved in drainage management.

5. Recreation and tourism opportunities

Northamptonshire’s natural environment already attracts many people for recreation, particularly to sites like Country Parks, the Brampton Valley Way, Salcey Forest and Stanwick Lakes. The Northamptonshire countryside offers much more that could be promoted to attract longer staying visitors and improve access to greenspaces for residents. Further enhancements of the Nene Valley, and wider recognition of the SPA status and Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site) of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits could help raise the area’s profile. There are also considerable opportunities for the county’s environmental assets to provide greater access and connectivity to support recreation and tourism but also local movement, as identified in RNRP’s interactive Environmental Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure suite (see www.rnrp.org).

6. Micro-climate control

Climate change is likely to increase peak summer temperatures. This will be exacerbated by the urban heat island effect, where built up areas with a high concentration of paved surfaces hold greater amounts of heat, increasing the localised temperature. Trees, vegetation and open water can help to manage the local micro-climate. Natural features such as green roofs or walls can be integrated into buildings: managing the heating / cooling of buildings will help reduce energy costs and emissions. The vegetation can also help manage stormwater and play an important role in improving air quality, resulting in numerous associated health benefits. As such, green roofs/walls offer an effective way of contributing to ecological networks through urban areas. It will be increasingly important to integrate these measures into developments in the key growth towns of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Daventry and Northampton in order to maintain comfortable temperatures.

7. Community and place making

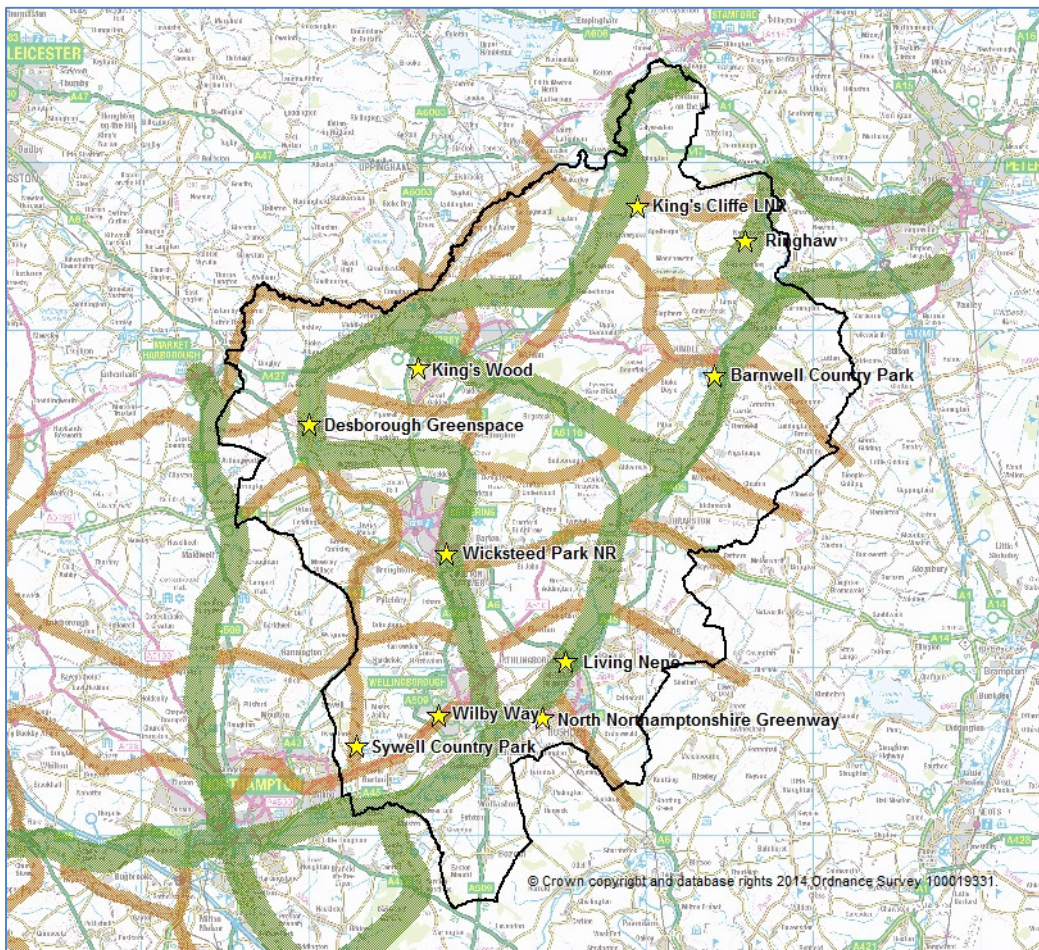
Consideration of ecosystems and natural assets should be central to developing new settlements associated with growth, and features should be restored in regeneration schemes. Natural interventions can become distinctive features in their own right and can be used to define a sense of place. With the introduction of the Localism Bill and the concept of the 'Big Society', there is likely to be an increasing role for communities in delivering environmental projects. Although overarching guidance may be required from national level, local social enterprises and community management groups could prove to be the driving force behind local environmental improvements. The County Council's own Pocket Parks Scheme provides a well established model of this principle in action.

APPENDIX 3

Green infrastructure projects

There are a number of projects ready to be delivered and which will provide a wide range of benefits to North Northamptonshire (Figure 3-1). These projects will make key improvements to the GI network as set out in Policy 5 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted 2008). These projects are at different stages of development and some will be easier to achieve than others. As time progresses and projects are completed others will be added to this list.

Figure 3-1 Location of the first deliverable projects within North Northamptonshire green infrastructure corridors (green = sub-regional corridors; brown = local corridors)



Benefits delivered by each project are illustrated in Table 3-1.

North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan Draft v2

Table 3-1 Benefits to be delivered by North Northamptonshire green infrastructure projects. Primary benefits are indicated with ✓✓ and secondary benefits are indicated with ✓.

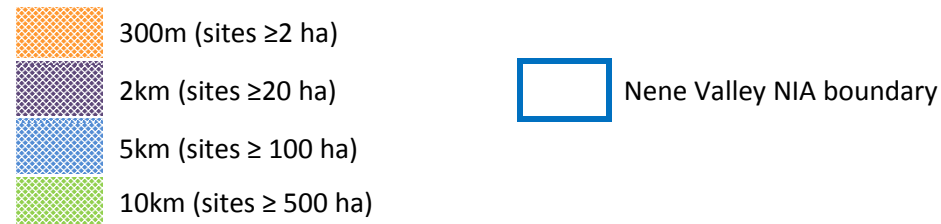
Project	Health and wellbeing	Movement networks for people	Accessible natural greenspaces	Education	Inward investment	Food and food production	Flood and water management	Air and air quality	Cultural heritage	Landscape setting	Climate change and the carbon challenge	Movement networks for biodiversity	Natural greenspace for biodiversity
Barford Wood and Meadows													✓✓
Barnwell Country Park	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Desborough Greenspace	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓							✓	✓✓	✓
Ditchford Lakes and Meadows	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓
Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓
King's Cliffe LNR expansion	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
King's Wood Corby	✓	✓✓	✓✓							✓			✓✓
Left Over Spaces: Greener Places	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓		✓
North Northamptonshire Greenway	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓					✓			✓✓		
Ringhaw	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓									✓✓
River Nene Backchannels	✓	✓	✓✓	✓			✓			✓		✓✓	✓✓
Rockingham Forest for Life	✓	✓✓	✓✓					✓			✓✓	✓	

North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan Draft v2

Table 3-1 Benefits to be delivered by North Northamptonshire green infrastructure projects. Primary benefits are indicated with ✓✓ and secondary benefits are indicated with ✓.

Project	Health and wellbeing	Movement networks for people	Accessible natural greenspaces	Education	Inward investment	Food and food production	Flood and water management	Air and air quality	Cultural heritage	Landscape setting	Climate change and the carbon challenge	Movement networks for biodiversity	Natural greenspace for biodiversity
Rushden Nene	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓✓	✓✓
Summer Leys and Mary's Lake	✓	✓	✓✓	✓						✓		✓✓	✓✓
Sywell Country Park	✓✓	✓	✓✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓
Upgrade Ancient Woodlands Corby	✓		✓✓					✓		✓			✓✓
Upper Nene Valley Access Improvements	✓	✓✓	✓✓										✓✓
Wicksteed Park NR: connection to Southfield Farm Marsh	✓	✓	✓✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Wilby Way Orchard, Stream and Meadow	✓	✓	✓✓			✓	✓✓	✓		✓		✓	✓✓

The above projects are described in detail below. Descriptions of projects involving an increase in accessible natural greenspace include maps illustrating the Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) catchment without and with the project. Catchment zones are depicted as follows:



Barford Wood and Meadows

Contact: *Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire*

www.wildlifebcn.org

Project drivers

- **Deterioration of River Ise & Meadows SSSI:** recent road improvement works have made the southern part of the site inaccessible for a cattle trailer. The site can no longer be grazed, which threatens the wildlife interest in this part of the SSSI.

Project description

A new bridge is required over the River Ise to allow a cattle trailer to access the site.

The main entrance to the nature reserve is a dangerous turning off the dual carriageway of the A6003. Safety improvements and resurfacing are needed, which would require negotiations with Northamptonshire Highways and involve increased costs.

Project aims

- Provide site access for livestock needed for habitat management
- Improve the safety and usability of the site entrance

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust BCN

Northamptonshire Highways (for road access improvements)

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Bridge | £40,000 |
| • Road improvements: upgraded access | TBD |
| Total | £40,000 |

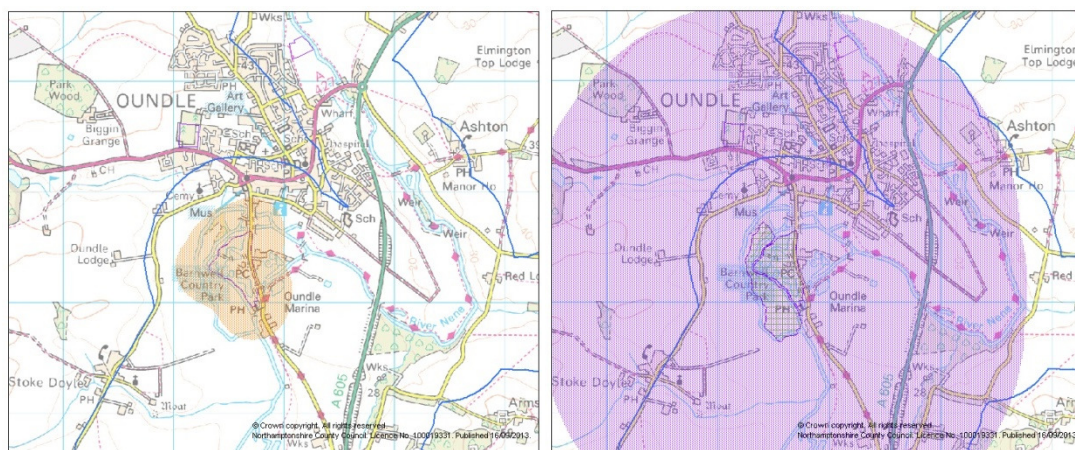
Project status

Not started

Barnwell Country Park

Contact: Countryside Services, Northamptonshire County Council

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk



Without project

With project

Project vision

To provide additional accessible natural greenspace for Oundle and surrounding area by doubling the size of Barnwell Country Park and by maximising its visitor services through the provision of a cafe.

Project drivers

- **Providing additional open space for Oundle Town and surrounds:** Despite its rural setting Oundle has very little public open space and falls well below Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt).
- **Increasing visitor capacity:** The existing country park is small (c. 15ha) and receives many visitors for its size (c. 200,000 visits/year). The project would allow the park to accommodate more visitors while spreading the visitor pressure over a larger area and providing a quieter, more natural experience.
- **Improving visitor services:** Developing a cafe is the single most important step to developing the park. This could be achieved cost effectively through the refurbishment and change of use of the existing country park shop.
- **Impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** A 2014 study of visitor impacts on the SPA recommends enhancing Barnwell Country Park, to draw recreational pressure away from the sensitive SPA.
- **Improving flood management:** Should the Environment Agency consider it beneficial to their flood management strategy, the project could add flood retention capacity by the removal of sections of levee on the river Nene backwaters.
- **Existing opportunity:** The landowner has previously indicated a willingness to sell the land to the park. The Environment Agency has indicated that they would likely have no objection in principle for a bridge over the Nene backwater to connect the park to the field.

- **Improving the economic viability of Barnwell Country Park:** It is anticipated that the costs involved in its management would be met by revenue raised from increased visitor numbers to the park and catering income.
- **Maximising educational potential:** The project will encourage further uptake of ranger-led outdoor environmental activity sessions by schools and groups of all ages and abilities.

Project description

This project involves the purchase of an adjoining field to expand the park by c. 20 ha, providing a new wilder extension to this small but extremely popular country park.

The existing all-weather car park will be expanded by c. 15 spaces.

Habitat creation and landscaping work will be undertaken to create an attractive mosaic of species rich grassland and small woodland planting that will be both attractive to wildlife and accessible to the public.

Access bridges will be built across the River Nene backwater to link the land to the existing park. Mown grass paths will provide access around the new land.

A new cafe will be provided through the refurbishment of an existing building. It is expected that the cafe will be leased to a catering business.

Project aims

- Help Oundle meet its ANGSt targets by doubling the size of the park and providing an extra 20 ha of accessible greenspace
- Improve biodiversity by creating 15 ha of new lowland meadow and five hectares of new woodland, and by improving riverside habitat
- Link up the park's grassland habitats with an existing River Nene Regional Park project on adjoining land
- Provide new business opportunities and employment through a new park cafe
- Encourage local recreation and tourism
- Encourage increased participation in healthy outdoor activities
- Increase the number of schools and groups using the park for environmental activities
- Develop new access trail and seek to include public art to encourage exploration

Delivery partners

Environment Agency

Wildlife Trust

River Nene Regional Park

Natural England

Friends of Barnwell Country Park and other volunteers

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

• Land purchase (@£7,500/acre)	£367,500
• Bridges and access work	£120,000
• Habitat creation	£25,000
• Car park expansion	£10,000
• Cafe building (via refurbishment)	£40,000
Total	£619,750

No sources of funding have yet been identified.

The potential for Higher Level Stewardship and Woodland Creation Grants could be explored.

Project status

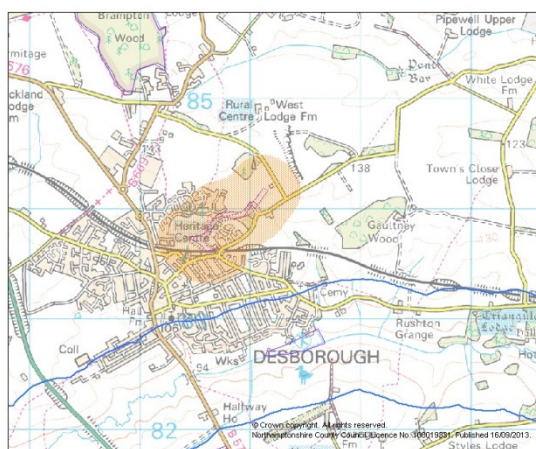
Currently at concept stage. Indicative timetable below following award of full funding:

- Year 1: project development, feasibilities and permissions, land acquisition
- Year 2: access infrastructure, habitat creation
- Year 3: project completion

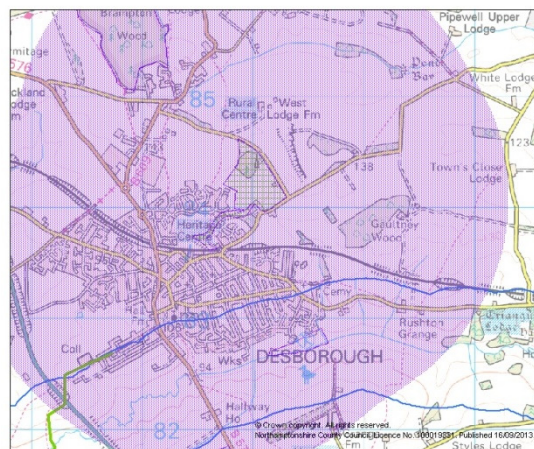
Desborough Greenspace

Contact: Kettering Borough Council

www.kettering.gov.uk



Without project



With project

Project Vision

Desborough Greenspace will provide recreational and leisure opportunities for bringing people closer and to access the countryside, whilst also encouraging nature conservation by protecting and improving existing habitats and habitat connectivity.

Project Drivers

- **Lack of accessible greenspace**, in particular on the northern edge of the town
- **Increasing population** with over 700 new homes to be built
- **Immediate opportunity**: site released through development for community use

Project Description

Desborough Greenspace will establish a 22ha high quality civic amenity open space and enhance local habitats. The project will improve site access and the overall visitor experience. Biodiversity improvements include native meadow grassland creation, habitat links to other greenspaces, and woodland restoration and extension.

Project Aims

- Provide enhanced recreational and leisure opportunities for the local community
- Increase the opportunity for access to the countryside
- Encourage conservation through enhancing and creating wildlife habitats

Delivery Partners

Kettering Borough Council

Wildlife Trust BCN

Rockingham Forest Trust

Project Costings and Funding

• Initial elements	£450,000
• Funding secured (WREN, Kettering BC)	(£103,000)
Total	£347,000

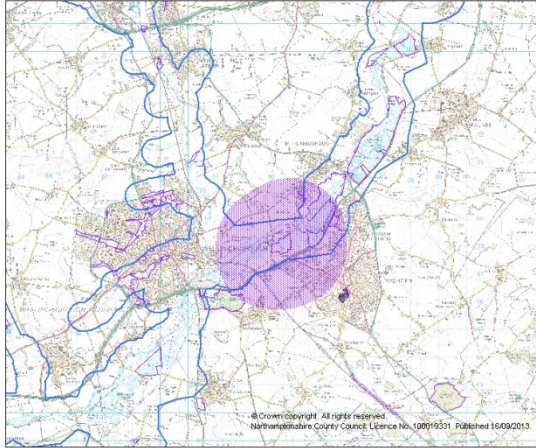
Project Status

Underway: four project phases are being delivered over a 10 year period. Phase 1 began in 2011.

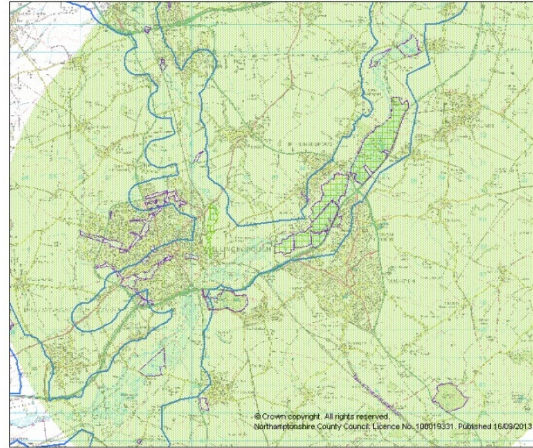
Ditchford Lakes and Meadows

Contact: *Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire*

www.wildlifebcn.org



Without project



With project

Project vision

Secured long-term protection and enhancement of 270ha of publicly accessible nature reserve in the heart of the Nene Valley. The anti-social uses of the area are reduced, the biodiversity increased, and the accessibility to neighbouring sites and communities improved. Ditchford Lakes and Meadows is one of a collection of individual projects focused on the Nene Valley Living Landscape.

Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** the Wellingborough East (WEAST) development is near this site. Combined with growth in Rushden and Irthlingborough the site is likely to experience increased visitor pressure.

Project description

The project will ensure the impacts to Ditchford Lakes and Meadows from surrounding development are managed appropriately. This will include upgrading key assets such as interpretation and access structures along with impact reduction measures. This may include additional fencing to restrict access or creation of zones of use. Entrance points and the car park will be upgraded to connect more effectively with access corridors being developed from WEAST and Rushden. Community engagement will address visitor behaviour issues to better conserve the site's biodiversity value.

Project aims

- Upgrade access infrastructure to link to surrounding development
- Reduce anti-social uses of the site
- Protect sensitive habitats on site from visitor pressure

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved habitat management of 32ha of the SPA	Potential increased disturbance due to higher visitor numbers	Appropriate path routing Signage improvements Interpretation improvements
Increased community engagement		Screening of sensitive lake edges Zoning/access restrictions

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust
East Northamptonshire Council
Natural England

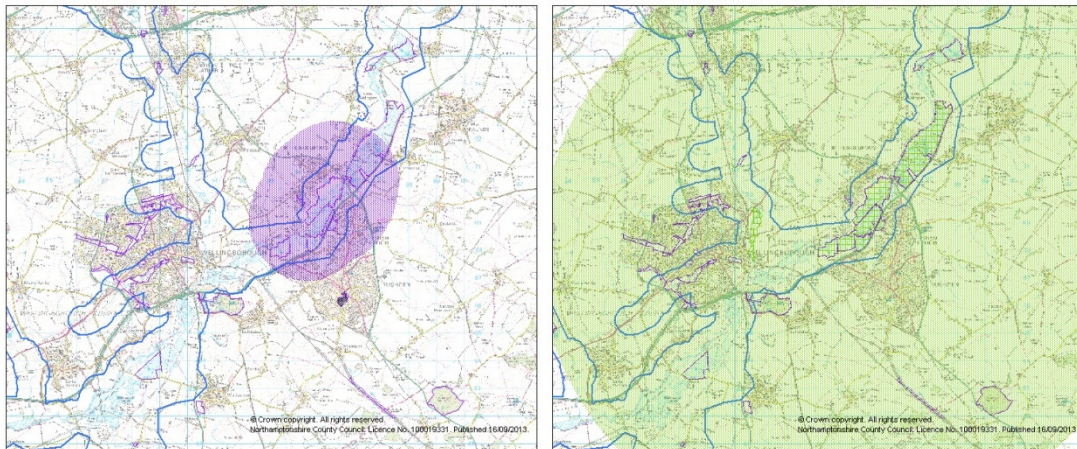
Project costs and funding

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Access upgrades (short-medium term) | £200,000 |
| Total | £200,000 |

Project status

Not started

Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows



Without project

With project

Project vision

Secured long-term protection and enhancement of 270ha of publicly accessible nature reserve in the heart of the Nene Valley. The anti-social uses of the area are reduced, the biodiversity increased, and the accessibility to neighbouring sites and communities improved. Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows is one of a collection of individual projects focused on the Nene Valley Living Landscape.

Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** in particular Irthlingborough, Higham Ferrers and to a lesser extent Rushden
- **Increasing population:** providing easily accessible greenspace well connected to other sites will make the area more attractive and reduce visitor pressure on nearby sites
- **Lack of management:** the site's habitat and access infrastructure are deteriorating and need urgent management intervention to retain the biodiversity interest
- **Potential risk to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** increased visitor pressure could cause unacceptable impacts to this part of the SPA.
- **Climate change:** increasing habitat connectivity will help species populations move in response to the impacts of climate change.

Project description

This next stage of works includes further phases of scrub management to provide the open habitats required for the interest features of the SPA while maintaining the breeding bird interest of the SSSI. It also includes day to day site management (staff presence, litter collection, structure and path maintenance), which is essential in such a heavily used part of the valley. Should additional funding become available the project could be expanded to include creating more scrapes and islands, installing a cycleway to link the west of Irthlingborough with the existing East Northamptonshire Greenway, and running activities and training for local residents.

Project aims

- Restore approximately 50ha of wet grassland habitat through a combination of scrub clearance and livestock grazing
- Improve bird habitat and biodiversity on the steep sided gravel pits
- Increase shallow water and mud habitats for birds by creating islands and scrapes and contouring the lake margins.
- Improve access to high quality green space and learning and engagement activities
- Increase volunteer participation and learning opportunities in the Nene Valley.

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved habitat management over 50ha of the SPA	Potential increased disturbance due to higher visitor numbers	Appropriate path routing Interpretation improvements
Increased bird habitat		

Delivery partners

- Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- East Northamptonshire Council
- LXB

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates :

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Path upgrades, bridge repairs etc to 2021 | £1,655,740 |
| • Funding secured to 2015 (HLF, HLS, SITA etc) | (£1,270,740) |
| • Funding secured 2015-2021 (agri-environment) | (£88,000) |
| Total | £297,000 |

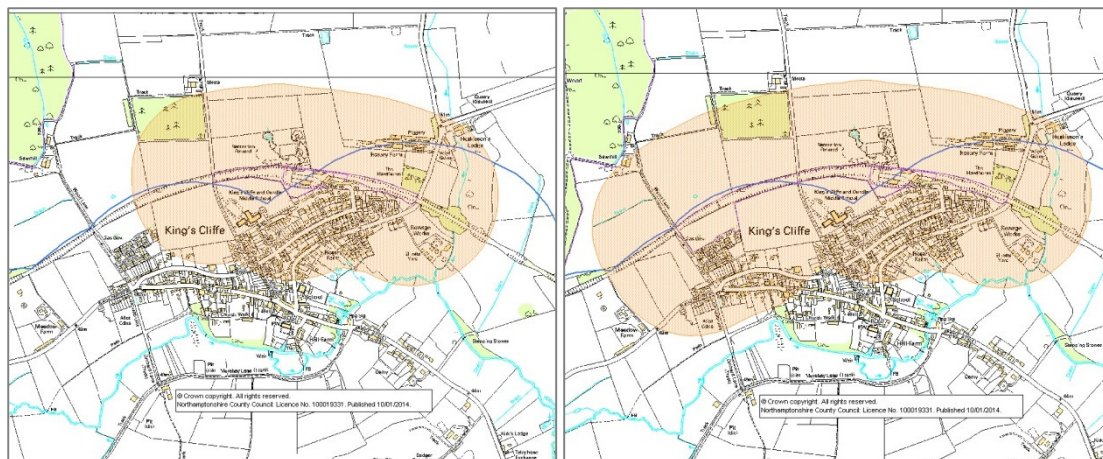
Project status

Related project underway. This is an addition which could be delivered virtually any time when funding becomes available.

King's Cliffe LNR expansion

Contact: Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

www.wildlifebcn.org



Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** this site will only get busier with increased housing, leading to further disturbance and habitat degradation

Project description

King's Cliffe LNR is a species rich meadow which requires management to protect the habitats from recreational impacts. Fencing, access and interpretation will be improved; access improvements will be undertaken sensitively to create a functioning green corridor, linking the LNR to the pocket park. Coppicing and clearance along the disused railway line will be undertaken to help restore the grassland.

Project aims

- Create a green infrastructure corridor to a nearby pocket park
- Restore meadow habitat

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust BCN

King's Cliffe Parish Council

East Northamptonshire Council

Pocket Parks

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Set up costs | £156,000 |
| • Funding secured (SITA, HLF) | (£6,000) |
| Total | £150,000 |

Project status

Not started

King's Wood Corby

Contact: *Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire*

www.wildlifebcn.org

Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** this site is experiencing increasing visitor pressure as Corby continues to grow.

Project description

This project will improve access infrastructure in this major urban nature reserve. Works to the path network will help it cope with wet conditions and the high numbers of site visitors. Improved signage will make visitors aware of the reserve's value and where they can walk. Habitat improvement works will ensure the site remains an important bluebell woodland resilient to its urban setting.

Project aims

- Improve path network to manage wet conditions and visitor pressure
- Maintain condition of bluebell woodland
- Upgrade site interpretation

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust BCN

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| • Access infrastructure | £25,000 |
| Total | £25,000 |

Project status

Not started

Left Over Spaces: Greener Places

Contact: Groundwork Northamptonshire

<http://www.eastmidlands.groundwork.org.uk/northamptonshire.aspx>

Project vision

Communities adopt and utilise leftover spaces – of any size – within urban environments, creating locally defined green places that reflect the needs, ambition and imagination of communities, support the growth of surprising and enchanting spaces, provide growing spaces to feed, educate and delight.

Project drivers

- **Underused or under appreciated spaces:** some urban spaces have no commercial value and cannot or do not justify statutory agency investment, maintenance and development
- **Urban greening:** the urban heat island effect is now well known and accepted, and among acknowledged causes are a lack of vegetation
- **The Big (green) Society:** an opportunity for communities to direct the development of their immediate environment and green asset base
- **Health and wellbeing:** opportunities to engage in physical activity, and potentially providing local food to encourage healthy eating
- **Economic challenge:** reducing public sector costs by ensuring greater community responsibility and lead in site management and upkeep

Project description

Over three years the project will support and develop two community-led greenspaces in each of North Northamptonshire's key urban areas:

- Kettering
- Corby
- Wellingborough
- Rushden & Higham Ferrers.

Additional support will be provided for project activity in:

Thrapston	Finedon
Oundle	Irchester
Rothwell	Irthlingborough
Desborough	Earls Barton
Burton Latimer	Barton Seagrave
Kings Cliffe	

The project team will work with local authorities, housing associations, developers and landowners to identify potential areas of land that are considered to be 'left over'. It will grow an informal urban green infrastructure, creating locally owned accessible greenspaces.

Working with experts, the project will develop guidance to ensure that sites comply with access, distraction, line of sight and maintenance standards and that planting will not damage other parts of the public realm. It will also develop a toolkit that includes planning

considerations, highway/landowner permissions, partnership and community development and other topics.

Project aims

- Increase awareness and appreciation of informal urban green space
- Increase levels of community stewardship of open spaces
- Bring leftover spaces into locally defined usefulness
- Promote health eating and environmental awareness
- Support urban cooling
- Increase understanding of and participation in the Big Green Society

Delivery partners

Groundwork Northamptonshire
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
Northamptonshire County Council
Housing Associations

Project costs and funding

• Pilot project	£15,000
• Partnership development and consultation	£ 5,000
• Guidance/framework development	£10,000
• Volunteer support	£10,000
• Community involvement and development: 'Big Offer'	£16,000
• Growing projects	£160,000
Total: years 1-3	£216,000
• Year 4	£36,000
• Year 5	£18,000
• Year 6	£9,000
Total: years 4-6	£63,000

Funding to maintain beyond year 3 to be identified and secured by communities with potential for sliding scale of support.

Project status

Timetable yet to be determined and depends on full award of funding. Higham Ferrers has been identified as a pilot site.

North Northamptonshire Greenway

Contact: *Customer and Community Services, East Northamptonshire Council and Borough Council of Wellingborough*

www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk www.wellingborough.gov.uk

Project vision

A network of safe, non-motorised green corridor routes between Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Irchester and Wellingborough, suitable for use by cyclists, walkers and wheelchair users.

Project drivers

- **Local access and transport policy**, including the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Local Transport Plan 3
- **Need for car-free access to greenspace**, particularly in light of the already oversubscribed parking facilities at Stanwick Lakes
- **Tourism and recreational potential** as illustrated by the runaway success of Stanwick Lakes
- **Improvements to local green infrastructure**

Project description

The project will create an off-road cycleway between Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Irchester and Wellingborough. This will link through existing connections to Stanwick Lakes, the broader Nene Valley and onwards to Raunds and Thrapston. It will also extend cul-de-sac paths and create new links from Summer Leys through to Wellingborough and Irchester Country Park. The overall ambition is to provide a link to Wellingborough Rail Station, with interconnecting routes to and from key locations including the potential development at Rushden.

The Greenway will provide the physical infrastructure necessary for visitors to access the various attractions on offer, from nature reserves to historic sites and market town shopping. It will also provide a mostly off-road running and cycling route for sporting activities. It is envisaged that the Greenway will take on an identity of its own, more than just as a route, but as an attraction in its own right, bringing the area together as a cohesive, promotable tourism destination.

Project aims

- Provide new walking and cycling routes/rights of way and improve continuity of routes
- Create a safer, well connected right of way network
- Improve the tourism offer of this part of the Nene Valley, with a 'package' of connected market towns, nature reserves and historic sites
- Provide an alternative sustainable transport option for those residents of the district's most deprived areas who do not own a car and are reliant on public transport

- Improve the vitality of the district’s towns, aiding local businesses by improving access for commuters and shoppers
- Reduce the car borne impact of the growth trajectories and tourism travel
- Encourage safer routes to schools

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved safety on rights of way	Potential increased disturbance due to higher visitor numbers	Appropriate path routing Screening of sensitive bird areas

Delivery partners

East Northamptonshire Council
 Borough Council of Wellingborough
 Northamptonshire County Council
 Natural England
 Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited
 Wildlife Trust BCN
 Environment Agency
 River Nene Regional Park
 Rockingham Forest Trust
 Sustrans

Project costs and funding

Funding is currently being sought to deliver phases 4, 5 and 6. This is expected to come from a combination of CIL, s106 and grants.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Phase 4: Islip to Woodford Grange | £297,816 |
| • Phase 5: Irthlingborough linear route | £585,000 |
| • Phase 6: Irthlingborough linear route to Ebbw Vale Way Irthlingborough | £167,700 |
| Total | £1,050,516 |

Project status

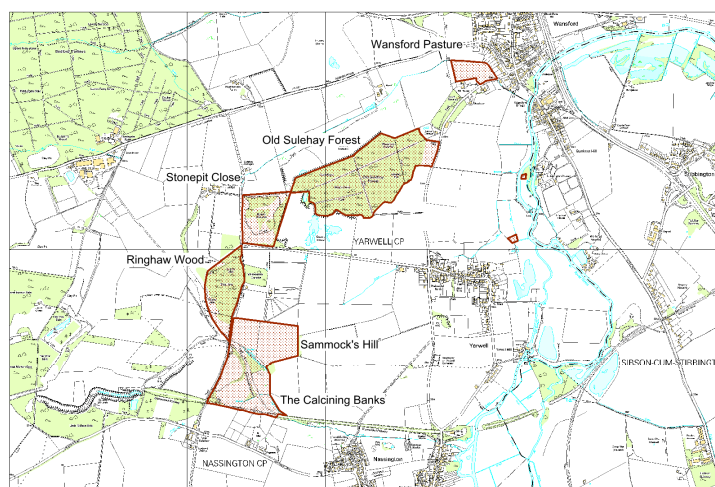
Underway: the Greenway is being constructed in manageable phases as funding becomes available.

Phases 1-3 linking Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough have been completed.

Ringhaw

Contact: *Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire*

www.wildlifebcn.org



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Old Sulehay complex

Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** the sites are located in a very rural area and would be significantly affected by any nearby development.

Project description

'Ringhaw' comprises a collection of nature reserves around Yarwell and Wansford. The main access track requires upgrading to facilitate better use of the field station for training courses. If more site visitors are anticipated the path networks and signage will need to be upgraded to prevent damage to the nature reserves and ensure paths are usable in wet weather. Dog bin installations will also be necessary, as will community engagement if site usage is to be increased.

Project aims

- Increase visitor carrying capacity of the Ringhaw group of nature reserves
- Allow better use of field station for educational purposes

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust BCN

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| • Access infrastructure | £100,000* |
| Total | £100,000 |

* a cost breakdown can be provided on request

Project status

Not started. Upgrading the access track and one or more footpaths is needed at present and could be delivered at any time. The rest of the project will be required if development is to occur nearby.

River Nene backchannels

Project drivers

- **Increasing urban growth:** water quality is likely to be impacted by increased sewage effluent and runoff with increased development
- **Water Framework Directive:** new developments need to demonstrate that they will not cause a decline in waterbody condition
- **Recreational use:** restored river channels elsewhere in the catchment are popular for fishing and recreation

Project description

Approximately 75 ha of River Nene backchannels will be enhanced to improve habitat quality for plants, invertebrates and fish and to provide amenity and recreational value. The River Nene has been degraded over many years by over-straightening and over-deepening to facilitate boat traffic and faster flow away from settlements. This has left the river in poor ecological condition, with invertebrate and fish populations particularly suffering. Restoration projects are currently being planned and some have already been implemented with great success.

Project aims

- Increase the River Nene's resilience to cope with flooding and challenges to water quality
- Improve habitat, recreational and amenity value of the river

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved aquatic habitat		Works scheduled to avoid sensitive periods

Delivery partners

Environment Agency
Wildlife Trust
River Nene Regional Park
River Restoration Centre

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Physical improvements to backchannels | £300,000 - £1,000,000 |
| Total | £300,000 - £1,000,000 |

Project status

Detailed projects are being developed on a reach by reach basis. By April 2014 there will be projects available for the entire River Nene. The Environment Agency is contributing to specific projects and is likely to match fund others.

Rockingham Forest for Life

Contact: River Nene Regional Park CiC

www.riverneneregionalpark.org

Project vision

A nationally recognized exemplar climate change initiative for the regeneration of Rockingham Forest which will enhance the natural and cultural environment, reinforce ancient woodlands, capture carbon, link fragmented sites and create wildlife corridors to provide a sustainable landscape for all to enjoy.

Project drivers

- **International obligations** to reduce carbon emissions by sequestering carbon
- **National policy:** UK Low Carbon Transition Plan, Natural Environment White Paper
- **Restoration of the historic Rockingham Forest:** alongside linking habitats
- **Climate change implications:** woodland is key for carbon sequestration. The project offers a key way to offset some of the carbon footprint associated with development in North Northamptonshire.

Project description

The project will create a significant area of new woodland to act as a local Carbon Sink Forest and support the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan. This will provide carbon capture and an essential cooling effect along with a range of environmental, leisure and recreational benefits associated with strategic landscape scale green infrastructure.

The woodland creation target is 40ha per annum, or 600ha planted over a period of 15 years. This increase in woodland will bring the total woodland cover of North Northamptonshire to approximately 8400ha, an increase from 7.9% to 8.5% (compared to the average of 9.9% for England).

Project aims

- Deliver significant areas of new woodland within the Rockingham Forest area as a local response to climate change
- Increase the amount of woodland, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat
- Contribute to the aspirations of the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan leading to measurable carbon abatement over a 15 year period
- Break with traditional public funding methods and pioneer a part- or wholly-privately funded establishment model on a not for profit basis

Delivery partners

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
Forestry Commission
Natural England
Environment Agency
Northamptonshire County Council
River Nene Regional Park

Groundwork Northamptonshire
Rockingham Forest Trust
Wildlife Trust BCN
Woodland Trust
ACRE
National Farmers Union

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- Infrastructure costs* £6,999,300
- Funding secured: East Northamptonshire s.106 (£250,000)
- Total £6,749,300****

* Kettering: £2,185,400; Corby: £968,800; East Northamptonshire £3,371,200; Other: £473,900

** to be resourced through:	CIL	Other
Kettering	£1,904,420	£280,980
Corby	£844,240	£124,560
East Northamptonshire	£3,371,200	£433,440
Other	£412,970	£60,930

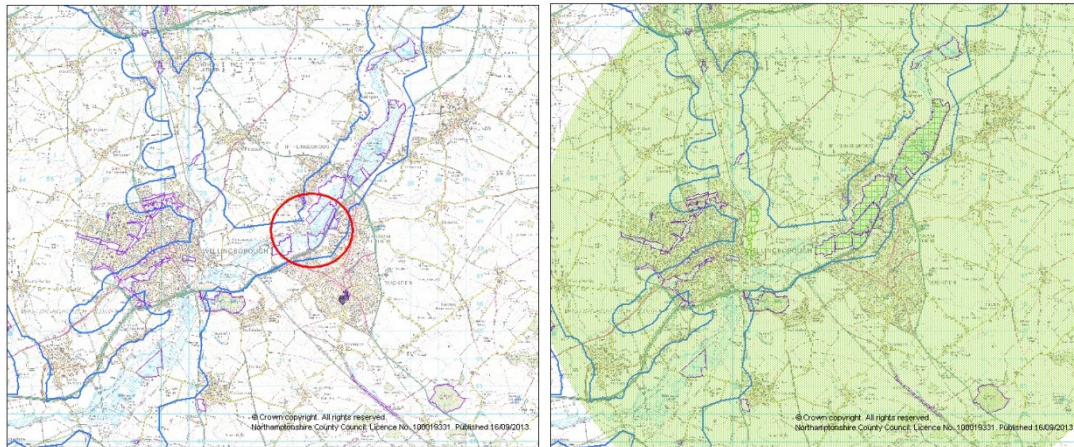
These figures do not include project hosting or maintenance costs (e.g. removing fly-tipped litter, addressing vandalism) which vary enormously based on site conditions.

Project status

Underway and in early stages following the completion of a pilot project.

This project will be delivered on suitable sites as they come available and as funding is secured.

Rushden Nene



Without project

With project

Project vision

Secured long-term protection and enhancement of 270ha of publicly accessible nature reserve in the heart of the Nene Valley. The anti-social uses of the area are reduced, the biodiversity increased, and the accessibility to neighbouring sites and communities improved. Rushden Nene is one of a collection of individual projects focused on the Nene Valley Living Landscape.

Project drivers

- **Immediate opportunity:** the Skew Bridge site is proposed for development. The area of land owned by the developer is much larger than the developable area, and much of it is in the Upper Nene Valley SPA/Ramsar site.
- **Health and safety:** illegal uses of the site (*e.g.* motorbikes) are currently posing a safety issue
- **Potential risk to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** the site is heavily used illegally by motorbikes and off-road vehicles, causing disturbance to wildlife
- **Increasing population:** providing accessible greenspace well connected to other sites will make the area more attractive and reduce visitor pressure on nearby sites
- **Climate change:** increasing habitat connectivity will help species populations move in response to the impacts of climate change.

Project description

The Wildlife Trust proposes that the 90 hectares of lakes and land around the development site are managed for wildlife and public access.

Management of the sites will include footpath improvements around the site and between sites. Two bridges over the Nene need to be repaired and upgraded to provide connectivity between sites. Management on the lake margins will include willow clearance and pollarding to promote the wildlife interest and to open up views across the lakes. Some grass-cutting and scrub clearance will be needed in open areas to retain and promote wildflowers and insects.

Interpretation materials will be produced for the site, and may include interpretation panels, leaflets, web pages, audio guides, etc.

The site will be owned by the development company but managed by another organisation, possibly the Wildlife Trust. There is also potential to deliver a visitor centre.

Project aims

- Reduce the anti-social uses of the site (motorcycle, off-road vehicle use, fly-tipping, disturbance to wildlife)
- Open a network of public/permissive footpaths around the lakes
- Provide links between sites by repairing the bridges across the Nene
- Ensure that this part of the SPA/SSSI is in positive management and enhanced for wildlife, particularly wildfowl and water birds.
- Increase use of the site, and to raise the awareness of its wildlife importance.
- Divert pressure away from more sensitive parts of the SPA

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved habitat management over 90ha of the SPA	Potential increased disturbance due to higher visitor numbers	Interpretation improvements Appropriate path routing Screening of sensitive areas
Reduced anti-social site use		
Visitor pressure diverted from more sensitive areas of the SPA		

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust
Natural England
East Northamptonshire Council

Project costs and funding

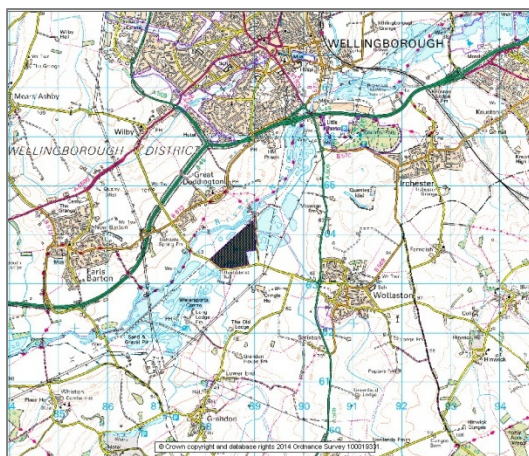
The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • immediate access infrastructure and habitat management works | £1,000,000 |
| Total initial cost | £1,000,000 |
| • annual management and maintenance | £100,000 |
| Total annual cost | £100,000 |

Project Status

The project is currently relying on the development scheme receiving planning permission, the retail scheme is due to be determined by the Secretary of State in 2014. If permission is refused this scheme will need to be reappraised and delivered through other means.

Summer Leys and Mary's Lake SPA Enhancement



Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** Summer Leys is a heavily visited site. Increasing development pressure in the surrounding area is likely to increase the number of visitors. Improvements to access infrastructure are required to increase visitor capacity. Mary's Lake is adjacent to Summer Leys and not formally managed for visitor access, though it is well-used. This project is most closely linked to the expansion of Wellingborough and Earls Barton, but also to Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough.
- **Potential risk to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** increased visitor pressure at Summer Leys and Mary's Lake could cause unacceptable impacts to this part of the SPA; the access works will help better accommodate existing and future visitor numbers.

Project description

This project will cater for increased visitor numbers while safeguarding the internationally important wildlife found in these sites.

Minor access and habitat works are required at Summer Leys to improve the resilience of the site to increasing public use.

Mary's Lake is currently privately owned by a gravel extraction company and managed as a fishing lake. The owners may consider selling the site in future. At this point, access infrastructure (paths, gates, bird hides etc) will be installed at Mary's Lake to provide a good visitor experience while managing the impact they can have on the site. Major restoration work will be carried out on and around Mary's Lake to improve conditions for wildlife and increase resilience to higher visitor numbers. Interpretation materials will also be produced.

Project aims

- Increase visitor carrying capacity of Summer Leys LNR and Mary's Lake
- Improve the visitor experience of the nature reserve
- Mitigate the effects on the reserve of increasing visitor numbers and pressure from new development

Benefits, impacts and mitigation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Benefits	Impacts	Mitigation
Improved habitat management over 100ha of the SPA	Potential increased disturbance due to higher visitor numbers	Visitor infrastructure Signage improvements Interpretation improvements

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust
Natural England
Borough Council of Wellingborough

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

• Improvements at Summer Leys	£50,000
• Initial land purchase (Mary’s Lake) and set up	£500,000
• Site maintenance 2016-2021	£500,000
• Site maintenance 2021-2031	£500,000
Total	£1,550,000

Project status

Some further assessment is still needed for this project to proceed. The works at Summer Leys are not so constrained, and could be delivered with less lead-in time. The works at Mary’s Lake are a priority, but are dependent on purchase of the land by an appropriate nature conservation organisation. This is a priority project for the Wildlife Trust in the medium term. While works at Summer Leys are an ongoing priority, works at Mary’s Lake will not be a priority until around 2018-2020.

Sywell Country Park

Contact: *Countryside Services, Northamptonshire County Council*

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

Project vision

To realise the potential of Sywell Country Park as an exciting and accessible public facility, visitor destination and wildlife habitat.

Project drivers

- **Impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** A 2014 study of visitor impacts on the SPA recommends enhancing Sywell Country Park, to draw recreational pressure away from the sensitive SPA.
- Improved economic sustainability of Sywell Country Park
- A cleaner, greener and more prosperous county
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved biodiversity
- Maximising value of park for outdoor environmental education

Project description

Sywell Country Park is an important greenspace near the outskirts of both Northampton and Wellingborough. Developed from an Edwardian water reservoir, the park currently receives approximately 200,000 visits a year.

The project aims to maximise the public benefit of the park by providing an accessible trail around the reservoir. At present there is only 1.85km of surfaced stone path around the reservoir: the remaining 2.3km is grass. A fully surfaced path will create an accessible 4.15km circular trail around the reservoir, opening up the park to a wider range of users including the less mobile, parents with prams and joggers (a circuit of this length provides an ideal training distance).

The project will improve biodiversity along the route through the creation of a series of shallow pools/scrapes along a feeder stream and expansion of the existing reedbed. An additional pond with viewing platform will be created beside the visitor centre.

There is currently no indoor space available at the park for educational and community activities. To avoid the cost of a new build the project will convert the existing park garage and workshop into a single community room. The disused filter house will then be refitted to house the park ranger's garage and workshop.

The project will provide indoor and outdoor interpretation about the site's waterworks and wildlife heritage.

Project aims

- Increase visitor numbers to the park
- Encourage increased participation in healthy outdoor activities
- Encourage local recreation and tourism
- Increase the number of schools and groups using the park for environmental activities
- Provide an alternative site to attract visitors away from sensitive sites within the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Delivery partners

Northamptonshire County Council
Borough Council of Wellingborough
Environment Agency
Wildlife Trust BCN
River Nene Regional Park
Natural England
Friends of Sywell Country Park and other volunteers

Project costs and funding

The project costs are initial estimates. They include professional fees @ 10% and are based on some initial research, professional experience and one feasibility study for the education room development conducted in 2010.

• Path and access works	£150,000
• Education facility	£60,000
• Habitat creation works	£45,000
• Interpretation	£10,000
• Contingency @ 10%	£2,650
Total	£267,650

No other sources of funding have yet been identified.

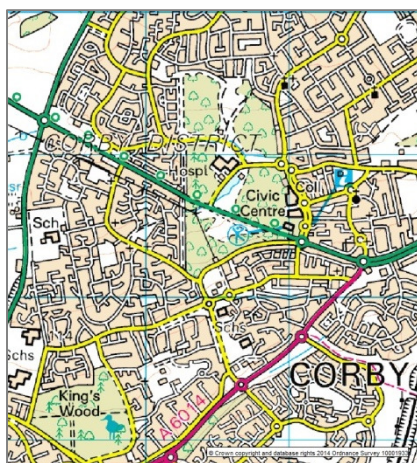
Project status

Currently at concept stage. Indicative timetable below following award of full funding:

- Year 1: project development feasibilities and permissions
- Year 2: access infrastructure, habitat creation
- Year 3: project completion

Upgrade Ancient Woodlands Corby

Contact: Culture and Leisure, Corby Borough Council www.corby.gov.uk



Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** as Corby continues to grow its ancient woodland sites are experiencing increasing visitor pressure.
- **Improve visitor experience:** including both the safety and enjoyment of the public

Project description

Ongoing maintenance and improvements to Kings Wood and Thoroughsale Wood ancient woodlands. To improve the safety and enjoyment of the public while also improving the sustainability. There is a management plan to follow to look after the woods including coppicing and thinning but also managing the trees safely.

Project aims

- Creating an interface on the entrance to the woods from the pool
- Installing lighting bollards alongside the path between the Boating lake and the pool
- Installing a Education/training unit near the Boating Lake car park
- Carry out a feasibility for a replacement to the Boating Lake café into a visitor centre/restaurant

Delivery partners

Corby Borough Council

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Costs: | £2,305,000 |
| • Funding secured: HCA, Forestry Commission | (£1,470,000) |
| Total | £835,000 |

Project status

Some parts of this project are underway. Others will follow in the short term.

Upper Nene Valley Access Improvements

Contact: Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

www.wildlifebcn.org

Project drivers

- **Potential risks to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA:** the majority of the SPA was judged to be in favourable condition when designated. However only 40% is currently in favourable condition, and Natural England have declared the whole site to be 'at risk' from increasing levels of recreation disturbance.
- **Impacts of surrounding development:** growth at Wellingborough, Earls Barton and East Northamptonshire will increase the visitor pressure which is already causing the SPA to deteriorate.

Project description

This project will help reduce visitor impacts across the SPA. This will likely be achieved through a combination of: reducing visitor numbers at certain locations or key times, greater visitor dispersal around the SPA and other sites, zoning (e.g. 'on-lead' dog areas), visitor education and site enhancements to increase resilience. Specific improvements will be informed by a 2014 Footprint Ecology visitor access study undertaken through the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Project.

Project aims

- Mitigate habitat degradation from increased visitor pressure
- Provide high quality greenspace in less sensitive parts of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust

Natural England

RSPB

River Nene Regional Park

Local authorities

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Infrastructure and management | £2,000,000 |
| Total | £2,000,000 |

Project status

This project is being developed in more detail during 2014-15. Site-specific improvements can be identified on an *ad hoc* basis, but a larger masterplan is expected in the short term.

Wicksteed Park Nature Reserve – connection to Southfield Farm Marsh

Contact: Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

www.wildlifebcn.org



Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** development has already been permitted adjacent to the project area, and will be contributing towards natural greenspace delivery in the river valley. However further expansion of Kettering will result in increased visitor pressure on the existing sites.
- **Inherent habitat sensitivity:** their wet soil renders these nature reserves very sensitive to footfall
- **Water quality challenges:** as development continues there will be increasing pressure on the River Ise to deal with urban runoff

Project description

This project will connect the Water Meadow and Castle Field on the Wicksteed Park estate to Southfield Farm Marsh along the River Ise. Some work is already happening due to development abutting this area to the east, and through work of the Wildlife Trust, River Nene Regional Park and Wicksteed Park Trust. More substantial work is required to create a continuous and coherent area of wildlife-rich greenspace along the river corridor, to connect two particularly valuable nature reserves.

Project aims

- Increase water filtration and pollution attenuation capacity along the River Ise in Kettering
- Provide high quality greenspace while alleviating the impacts of increased visitor pressure
- Address local greenspace deficits

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust
Wicksteed Park Trust

River Nene Regional Park
Natural England
Kettering Borough Council
Environment Agency

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

• Set up	£500,000
• Long term management	£500,000
Total	£1,000,000

Project status

Some parts of this project are currently being developed and taken forward. Others will follow in the medium term.

Wilby Way Orchard, Stream and Meadow

Contact: Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

www.wildlifebcn.org

Project vision

Create a valuable wildlife and recreational site and provide additional green infrastructure in the heart of Wellingborough.

Project drivers

- **Impacts of surrounding development:** this site will get busier with increased housing, leading to further disturbance and habitat degradation. As Wellingborough grows more high quality greenspace will be needed within the town.

Project description

Improve and manage three neglected Local Wildlife Sites in central Wellingborough, creating a valuable wildlife and recreational site. The project will include water course improvements and restoration of water vole habitat. Orchard restoration will create new wildlife habitat and a community resource.

Project aims

- Improve habitat condition
- Increase wildlife site resilience to visitor pressure
- Provide quality public greenspace

Delivery partners

Wildlife Trust

Borough Council of Wellingborough

Project costs and funding

The following are initial estimates:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| • Set up | £100,000 |
| • Long term management | £50,000 |
| Total | £150,000 |

Project status

Not started