nenevalley
Destination Management Plan
2019-2025
welcome

This document has been produced by the Destination Nene Valley Partnership which is championed by East Northamptonshire Council through the Enterprising East Northants Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism Strategy priority work stream.

The document outlines the priority strands of work being undertaken with tourism partners and sets out the case for establishing a Destination Management Organisation through the development of sponsorship for joint funding.

A two year transition plan has also been produced alongside the Destination Management Plan, to help shape the re-organisation of East Northamptonshire Council into the new unitary authority in 2020.
I am a passionate advocate of our great county and one of its most outstanding natural assets, the Nene Valley.

Commanding some of Britain’s most spectacular views and stunning landscapes, the impressive Nene Valley is an oasis of tranquillity with exciting opportunities for new outdoor experiences. The river valley has hidden gems, ancient mill sites, wintering bird habitats, naturally important Roman archaeology and buzzing wildflower meadows, to name but a few. We want to help people enjoy the Nene Valley whilst at the same time preserving the natural landscape.

Our vision will be delivered within four cross-cutting priorities which will include the following:

• Creating an enterprising approach to the rural economy
• Improve access to the Nene Valley
• Attracting visitor and spend
• Encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles

We look forward to working with our partners, to enhance the Nene Valley for future generations to enjoy.

Andrew Langley | Chairman of Destination Nene Valley
This is a Destination Management Plan for the Nene Valley that sets out key objectives for tourism development and marketing and makes a case for establishing a Destination Management Organisation (DMO).

The Nene Valley has a diverse and attractive visitor product with notable strengths in the River Nene, an under-utilised asset with diversity of habitats and the peaceful countryside that has a quintessentially English character which embraces exquisite country houses, wonderful gardens and countless historic curiosities - all in close proximity to large numbers of consumers in and around the East Midlands, and being only an hour’s drive from London.

Throughout history, the area has been of vital importance to the country’s economy, including agriculture, gravel extraction and as a centre for the leather and shoe industry. Today the economy of the area is characterised by small and medium sized (SME) businesses covering a wide range of sectors including a growing food and drink industry base. The Nene Valley plays a key part in the attraction of 20m visitors to Northamptonshire each year. Tourism contributes over £965m to the Northamptonshire economy.

Here as elsewhere, the visitor economy is very fragmented, made up of many small and medium sized businesses, local authorities, cultural organisations and transport providers. There is a need for these interests to work together to plan, promote and represent the whole destination. Most areas in England have a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) to bring the industry together to establish priorities, to share resources and skills, and deliver effective management and marketing of the destination.

Destination Nene Valley (DNV) began as a path finding partnership project initiated in 2012 and aims to build on existing frameworks to promote the Nene Valley and develop supporting businesses. The Nene Valley Partnership was founded because local partners, stakeholders and businesses in the tourism sector had strong opinions about what was needed to protect and further the interests of the industry in the Nene Valley.

The objectives of the DNV project are to:
• Guide strategic development to support green infrastructure.
• Develop a brand that communicates the Nene Valley’s location and unique identity to visitors.
• Work with partners to strengthen the valley’s tourism assets and increase people’s enjoyment of them.
• 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.

Our challenge is to sustain growth in visitor economy ensuring that the infrastructure around the visitor experience is developed in keeping with consumer expectations and demands. We also need to protect the core appeal of the area – its landscape and historic environment – and factor in the needs of residents.
facts and figures

- **2.4m**: visits to the Nene Valley (Nature Improvement Area Booklet 2016)
- **50k**: visitors to the Nene Valley Festival (2014-17)
- **250**: number of businesses supported by Destination Nene Valley marketing
- **150k**: number of web visits (2012-17)
- **235**: number of businesses supported through training opportunities to date
strategic context

VisitEngland encourages and supports the development of Destination Management Plans through England as an essential tool in the delivery of a successful visitor economy.

A Destination Management Plan is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionement of resources.

In these definitions, ‘manage’ and ‘management’ are taken in their widest sense. Crucially, destination management includes the planning, development and marketing of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, financially, operationally and in other ways.

Broadly, a Destination Management Plan is equivalent to a Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in a destination.

(Context quoted from VisitEngland’s Principles for developing Destination Management Plans)
vision and outcomes

All of the above provides an opportunity for Destination Nene Valley to drive the work of local stakeholders to capture the strengths of this destination. The vision of Destination Nene Valley as pursued in this document is as follows:

Destination Nene Valley is championed by East Northamptonshire Council. The council’s Economic Development Regeneration and Tourism Strategy (Enterprising East Northants) was approved in 2017 and provides the policy response to the economic challenges and opportunities faced by the district. It provides a local platform for delivering the vision and priorities of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and the emerging importance of the Oxford and Cambridge economic geography and significant opportunities associated with sectors including the visitor economy.

overarching Enterprising East Northants vision is:

To secure sustainable job growth that will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for residents whilst enhancing the quality of place and securing prosperity in the local economy. The vision will be driven by 4 priority work areas which include increased tourism spending and job creation with a focus along the Nene Valley.

our vision

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, a blue corridor for boating and water sports and a flourishing visitor economy that creates opportunities for visitors and residents to enjoy outdoor recreational activities whilst protecting the environment and wildlife.

outcomes

To articulate and realise the vision, goals and objectives for the Nene Valley’s visitor economy in partnership with stakeholders in the private and public sectors. To increase the economic impact of tourism in the Nene Valley by 10% over the next 5 years. To increase the duration of stay for visitors through meaningful product development.

To continue to develop and enhance the visitor experience. To implement the Greenway project to develop a green corridor for walking and cycling from Northampton to Peterborough. To continue to build on our existing partnerships with the private and public sector in order to maintain dynamism within the Destination Management Partnership.
**Nenescape Landscape Partnership Scheme**

This Heritage Lottery funded collaborative project will bring together partners from along the River Nene between Northampton and Peterborough to celebrate, protect and conserve the natural and built heritage of the landscape. The River Nene Regional Park is leading the project in partnership with a wide range of organisations.

The river valley has hidden gems – ancient mill sites, wintering bird habitats, nationally important Roman archaeology and buzzing wildflower meadows to name a few – but this special and underappreciated collection is under threat from fast population growth.

Passionate organisations and individuals in the area are working to look after the landscape and Nenescape will support their projects by increasing access into the landscape, sharing skills and knowledge across partners and ensuring that the river is resilient to increasing visitor numbers.

www.nenescape.org
key priorities

The Destination Management Plan brings together the aspirations of a range of organisations, groups and businesses across the Nene Valley including East Northamptonshire Council, Wellingborough Council, Northampton Borough Council, Peterborough City Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Nenescape Landscape Partnership Scheme, River Nene Regional Park, the Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Rockingham Forest Trust, Natural England, Town and Parish Councils and Peterborough Tourism Forum etc.

The vision will be delivered by DNV activities within four cross-cutting priorities:

- **CCP1**: Creating an enterprising approach to the rural economy
- **CCP2**: Improve access to the Nene Valley by identifying and developing solutions to existing barriers
- **CCP3**: Attracting visitors and spend from local, national and international markets
- **CCP4**: Encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles and promote green transport

Each priority has its own objectives as outlined over the next few pages.
creating an enterprising approach to the rural economy

Destination Nene Valley will:

• Support new business and growth.
• Develop greener and cleaner technology opportunities.
• Create a new approach to the development in the rural economy, including employment at Tresham Garden Village and developing clusters of artisan producers.
• Encourage inward investment in the business economy along with associated infrastructure, including marina and riverside development.
• Offer an informed opinion on tourism related planning applications.
• Support the provision of good quality accommodation in the valley.
• Consistently record evidence and intelligence (where we are and where we would like to be).
• Consult with and influence key visitor stakeholders in the public and private sectors to commit to a shared vision and implement an agreed action plan for tourism that delivers significant positive impacts locally.
• Attract more private sector partners to the growing Destination Management Partnership.
• Promote tourism development opportunities.
• Showcase local and support businesses who make efforts to source local ingredients for their menus.
• Maintain a strategic focus for the development of the visitor economy.
• Providing sustainable routes which link key business developments.
• Recruit and train Nene Valley ‘Welcome Hosts’.
• Run an annual competition to find a Nene Valley Superstar!
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 (East Northamptonshire Greenway).
- Support Nenescape, the Northamptonshire Nature and Nene Catchment Partnerships, to enhance awareness of, and access to, the Nene valley for its growing local communities in a sustainable and sympathetic way.
- Enhance and promote the River Nene corridor.
- Lobby for improvements to key visitor gateways and connectivity for visitors travelling to and from the Nene Valley.
- Encourage partners and members to commit to making the destination accessible for all.
- Produce a wayfinding and signage strategy to ensure a co-ordinated approach to wayfaring and branding of the Nene Valley.
- Support the proposal for a Bedord and Milton Keynes Waterway Park, which will link the River Great Ouse at Bedford to the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes.
- Create roundabout artwork along the A45 corridor from Rushden to Oundle.
attracting visitors and spend from local, national and international markets

Destination Nene Valley will:

• Continue to build on the Nene Valley brand with its strong outdoor and recreational offer.
• Develop and implement thematic marketing and PR campaigns with a focus on wildlife, culture and heritage.
• Improve the range and quality of the product offer and visitor services.
• Work with tourism businesses to develop packages, enhancing the visitor experience.
• Maintain a consultative, adaptable approach to quality and accreditation schemes and continually review systems – balancing industry and visitor needs.
• 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 from a 2013 baseline (Nene Valley NIA Visitor Survey).
• Work more closely with VisitEngland, VisitBritain, SEMLEP and other tourism partnerships, to attract new visitors from new market sectors.
• Evaluate visitor experience.
• Work with gateways into the Nene Valley, such as Rushden Lakes, to maximise on opportunities to attract visitors.
• Further develop the Nene Valley Festival.
• To further develop the nenevalley.net website.
• Support key projects that increase visitor numbers in the Nene Valley, such as Lyveden Reconnect.
encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles and promote green transport

Destination Nene Valley will:

- Develop and promote outdoor recreational events with partners.
- Produce promotional material to encourage walking, cycling, boating, 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.
- Deliver key projects within the Nenescape Landscape Partnership Scheme to include the Nene Valley Festival.
- Serve and engage local communities, including them in tourism related events and consultations.
## Creating an enterprising approach to the rural economy

### PRIORITY PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>How evaluated</th>
<th>Lead responsibility</th>
<th>Review Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>To capitalise on funding opportunities and sponsorship to drive Destination Nene Valley work, including the Nene Valley Festival</td>
<td>To deliver key projects such as the Nene Valley festival and website development through external funding, sponsorship and partnership contributions</td>
<td>Amount of funding achieved</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business support</td>
<td>To create a new Enterprise Centre in East Northamptonshire</td>
<td>Nurture tourism business creation and support in the Nene Valley, specifically as a source of information, advice and training and as a base for networking for businesses across the Nene Valley, as well as DNV supporting the Centre’s aim to provide work spaces suitable for tourism businesses such as food and drink and craft businesses, in which the area is strong. To produce a programme of business support events and workshops throughout the year</td>
<td>Number of tourism businesses supported Number of spaces taken Number of participants and feedback through evaluation questionnaire</td>
<td>ENC</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen partnerships</td>
<td>To ensure representation by all sectors at strategic and tourism operational levels</td>
<td>To maintain a strong strategic and operational tourism board To deliver an annual tourism event for the sector</td>
<td>Number of partners / businesses represented at strategic and tourism promotional board level Numbers of partners attending and evaluation questionnaire</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and the visitor economy</td>
<td>Recruit and train Nene Valley Welcome Hosts</td>
<td>To establish a working group to lead on this project</td>
<td>Key performance indicator – 50 recruited by 2021</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Large scale developments</td>
<td>To increase overnight visits to the Nene Valley</td>
<td>Support any relevant activities to build good quality accommodation in the Nene Valley</td>
<td>To undertake an audit of accommodation stock in the Nene Valley on an annual basis and identify gaps</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public art</td>
<td>To enhance and promote gateways and towns</td>
<td>To deliver public art on roundabouts along the A45</td>
<td>Number of public art installations</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>To make Destination Nene Valley and key attractions accessible to all</td>
<td>Undertake an audit of current accessibility statements from businesses and stakeholders</td>
<td>Delivery of the statement through all channels</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Superstar</td>
<td>To build and strengthen existing relationships with the industry</td>
<td>To introduce an annual awards scheme</td>
<td>Number of participants in awards</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Improve access to the Nene Valley by identifying and developing solutions to existing barriers

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<tr>
<td><strong>Greenways</strong></td>
<td>To deliver the Greenway project to deliver walking and cycling routes along the Nene Valley from Northampton to Peterborough</td>
<td>To deliver phases of the Greenway as and when external funding is secured</td>
<td>Number of phases delivered</td>
<td>ENC</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling Access from Waterway to Land</strong></td>
<td>To enhance and promote the River Nene corridor</td>
<td>To deliver the key findings for the Waterway Study produced which prioritises access improvements to and from the River Nene</td>
<td>As per study</td>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wayfinding</strong></td>
<td>To improve wayfinding and signage along the River Nene / Nene Valley corridor</td>
<td>To produce a wayfinding and signage strategy for implementation by Nene Valley partners To identify sites for sculptures on public roundabouts</td>
<td>Number of signs installed by DNV and partners</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
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### Attracting visitor and spend from local, national and international markets

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shouting outward</td>
<td>Strengthen national and international positioning of the Nene Valley</td>
<td>Promote the Nene Valley as a destination for visitors</td>
<td>Number of national stories</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake Spring and Autumn familiarisation visits with the press to encourage positive</td>
<td>Engage with national bodies through the work of DNV</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>publicity and promotion</td>
<td>members</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>To further develop and promote the Nene Valley Festival</td>
<td>To increase the number of visitors to the festival every year</td>
<td>Numbers of visitors</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To work in partnership with Wellingborough Council to further develop the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of sponsorship secured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waendel walk to include the Nene Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>To improve Nene Valley digital channels</td>
<td>To develop a new website dedicated to the Nene Valley</td>
<td>Number of visits to website and social media channels</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Research</td>
<td>To increase day / overnight visits to the Nene Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To commission market research to understand our current and potential audiences/visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To undertake regular STEAM economic impact assessment data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Story</td>
<td>To create a Nene Valley shared story to be used by the industry</td>
<td>To develop a shared story toolkit and image library</td>
<td>Number of times toolkit and image library used</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Produce thematic marketing material and campaign packages</td>
<td>To work with partners to produce trails, local walks and cycling leaflets etc. Work with partners to offer days out / overnight packages</td>
<td>Number of leaflets produced Take up of offers</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre</td>
<td>Nene Valley presence at the Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre at Rushden Lakes</td>
<td>To promote the Nene Valley to all residents and visitors to Rushden Lakes</td>
<td>Number of visits to the visitor centre per year</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
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### Encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles and promote green infrastructure

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<tr>
<td>Talking inward</td>
<td>Educate and inform Nene Valley residents</td>
<td>Talk to members of the public and local groups to develop awareness and encourage participation in local events, attractions and activities. Attend local events to promote Nene Valley attractions.</td>
<td>Report of number of information events delivered</td>
<td>DNV</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Histories of Rushden</td>
<td>Delivering new technologies to engage with new audiences with heritage and the environment</td>
<td>Development of a new free artcodes app which allows images to be scanned with a smartphone or tablet and linked to online content.</td>
<td>Number of participants engaged along the Greenway in Rushden</td>
<td>Nenescape</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out to Water Into History</td>
<td>To offer safe and attractive green routes enabling access to and from Rushden to the River Nene and the newly-built Rushden Lakes complex.</td>
<td>Signposting, interpretation boards, a mural and a locally derived “welcome” installation will be features included in the project. A “Friends of Greenway” group will be created to ensure this asset is maintained.</td>
<td>Number of signs installed. Delivery of mural. Number of participants in ‘Friends Group’.</td>
<td>ENC / Nenescape</td>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
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Encourage local communities to lead healthier outdoor lifestyles and promote green infrastructure

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| Walking in Time     | To restore the area to its former glory                                   | To deliver two apprenticeships through Peterborough Regional College  
To create a heritage trail using a geophysical survey (produced by Durham University) of the park and estate;  
Delivery of art installations to connect the City of Peterborough to the park  
Re-install a section of the boardwalk in Bluebell Woods | Apprenticeships delivered  
Heritage trail produced  
Installation delivered  
Section delivered                              | Nene Park Trust / Nenescape                                             | Autumn 2019                        |
| 900 Voices of the Nene | To capture the voices of people along the River Nene from Northampton to Peterborough. | To create an online archive that gathers information and resources about the River. This archive will also form the basis for a digital art installation to be launched in December 2018 | Visits to website                          | Nenescape / One to One Development Trust | Autumn 2019                        |
| Settlers of the Nene Valley | To explore and celebrate 4,000+ years of settlement in the central Nene Valley. | To deliver Roman cookery demonstrations, building a multi-era barn and learning timeless skills such as blacksmithing | Number of participants                            | Stanwick Lakes / Nenescape                   | Autumn 2019                        |
conclusion and next steps

This plan has been produced by Destination Nene Valley following a stakeholder workshop and consultation process, to identify the core needs of the Nene Valley visitor economy. Reviews will be undertaken on a regular basis.

This plan belongs to the Nene Valley and should be considered a working and living document. Any comments or input on the plan should be directed to Destination Nene Valley.

Karen Williams | Tourism Officer
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