Local Nature Recovery Strategy

APSE Parks Seminar

March 2025

LNRS

- A new approach to setting priorities for nature at a local level. A statutory requirement in the Environment Act.

- The main purpose is to identify priorities and locations to create or improve the habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.

- It won't force landowners and land managers to make any changes, but will help identify areas and opportunities for a wider natural network.

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LNRS what it isn't and what it is

- It wont require landowners to make specific proposed land use changes – this will remain their choice
- It wont place restrictions on development land – but the LNRS can help inform the local plan
- It doesn't provide protection or designation

It is guidance

- For funding, criteria to influence funding, private investment
- It will help guide and influence to support nature recovery as part of an England wide network
- Is a material consideration for planning applications

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The North Northamptonshire story

- Governance structure agreed

- Oversight group – meets monthly

- Key partners to support the LNRS development

- Delivery Advisory Group

- Significant stakeholder engagement over the spring and summer –site tour, workshops

- Background information and data

- Focus groups and resource on drafting and mapping

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The requirements

- Consists of
    - The Strategy
    - Mapping

- Background information
    - Statement of Biodiversity
    - Species Methodology
    - Mapping Methodology
    - Stakeholder Engagement report

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The Strategy

- The strategy includes
  - The vision
  - Links to wider environmental benefits
  - North Northamptonshire wide priorities
  - Character area based priorities split into habitat type
  - Practical actions to support delivery of the priorities
  - Where these relate to important species
  - Where the actions have been mapped

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Mapping

- The mapping portal includes
  - All the <u>existing</u> areas of biodiversity importance
  - The areas that action <u>could make</u> a positive difference for nature
  - All the areas that <u>could become</u> of importance for biodiversity
  - This is known as the **Local Habitat Map**

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Simplified Timetable

Key Stages	Timings	
Focussed engagement	March – August '24	✓
Finalisation of the consultation draft	September '24	✓
Consultation with Natural England (28 days)	19th September – 18th October '24	✓
Public consultation (6 weeks)	25th October – 9th December '24	✓
Review responses received and make changes	December '24	✓
Consultation with Natural England (28 days)	January '25	✓
LNRS finalised for Scrutiny Committee	25th February '25	✓
Adopt and publish final LNRS	5th March '25	✓
Delivery	Ongoing and onwards	←

Early Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder analysis to review and to secure spokesperson for larger groups
- Three specific workshop events with invited stakeholders
- Consensus building and discussion process
- Everyone had the same weight of input and reviewed throughout
- An inclusive methodology within a framework steered by a delivery group
- Provided lots of detail and outputs to inform the vision, priorities and measures

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Consultation material

- Alongside usual online publicity

- Specific evening and online sessions for landowners and farmers

- The LNRS and Local Plan consultation database

- Training presentation to all Cllrs and sent to Town and Parish Councils

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Consultation responses summary – key stats

- 179 questionnaire responses, 28 direct emails, 32 mapping portal comments.
- 92% strongly agreed/agreed that the right character area and habitats were identified
- 93% strongly agreed/agreed that the 19 priorities were the right ones to support nature recovery
- Around 80 changes made to the main document and 18 to the mapping, mainly minor contextual changes

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Document example 1

1. Top tabs to move through the document

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PRIORITY

Increase environmental resilience of nature across North Northamptonshire

2. The area of focus

3. The priority

Practical Actions:

009A. Increase area of land managed for priority birds, including Lapwing and Golden Plover across suitable habitat within 10km of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits

009B. Within those already identified and mapped areas of suitable habitat for Lapwing and Golden Plover, the land will be principally managed to support these qualifying species for the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits*** △

010. Increase management of all woodlands to diversify the structure and increase species to support ecological and future climate resilience

011. Create and restore wetland mosaics to increase climate resilience

012. Increase the land area of regenerative agriculture practices and management that maintains or improves soil health, biodiversity, water quality and reduces flood risk

013. Restore natural process and minimise water pollution through enhanced flood plain function, improved sewerage control and re-naturalisation of watercourses

014. Increase the tree canopy to 17%* by both planting and encouraging natural regeneration. Add new trees to urban settings of streets, parks and public spaces; extend and connect existing woodlands and plant along watercourses to provide habitat, reduce urban heat islands, improve air and water quality and draw down carbon contributing towards climate change mitigation**

015. Enhance the network of habitats through corridor and stepping stone improvements

◇ = Species practical actions   △ = Mapped practical actions
** To avoid impacts on archaeology, robust baseline survey work must be undertaken to guide scheme delivery and ensure impacts to archeology are avoided.
*** Identified and mapped areas based on evidence of bird record locations and habitat types, this does not preclude others areas that may need to be surveyed further.

4. The range of practical actions to support delivery of the priority

5. The wider natural capital benefits that could be achieved

Invasive Species Control   Clean Water Source   Carbon Sequestration   Soil Fertility   Air Quality   Raw Materials

Flood Regulation   Climate Stability   Nutrient Cycling   Public Health and Cultural Services   Food Provision   Erosion Prevention

6. Building environmental resilience is vital in tackling climate change and other environmental challenges. In North Northamptonshire, this involves developing ecosystems that can cope with changing conditions, like extreme weather (floods and droughts) and shifts in species locations. Feedback from stakeholders highlighted the need for long-term planning and flexible management. Experts in ecology and climate offered guidance on improving habitat quality and supporting species at risk from climate impacts, helping to ensure the region's natural environments can endure and bounce back from future challenges.

6. The rational for the priority

*Please see the North Northamptonshire Council Tree Strategy for further information about our trees and how to help increase canopy cover.
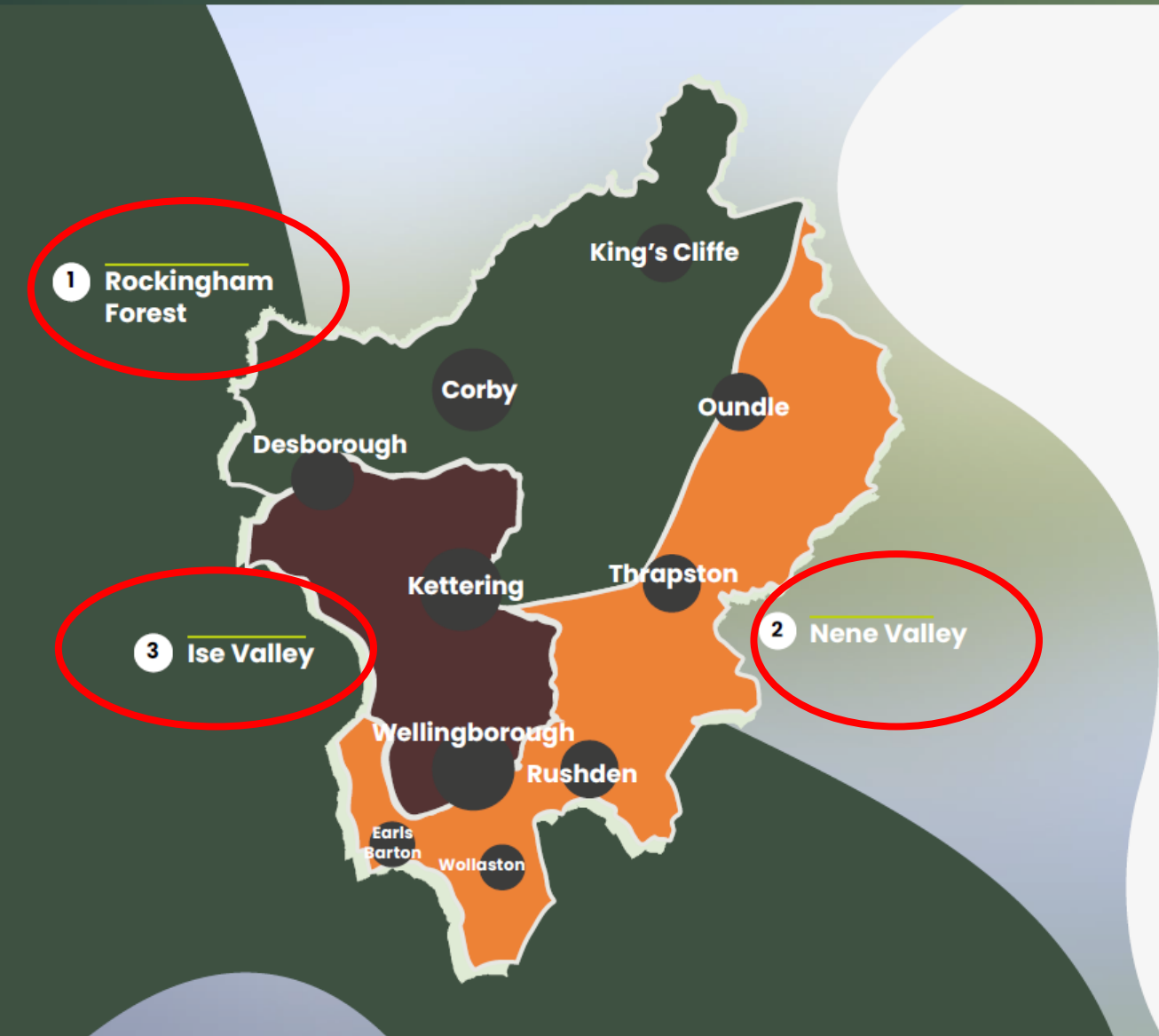
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7. Click to go to the mapping portal

Explore the map

1

1. Top tabs to move through the document

2. The character areas

Character Areas

North Northants is divided into three landscape areas, these are loosely based on the Natural England's defined 'National Character Areas' but have then been informed by local understanding and geography.

1. **Rockingham Forest**
    A historic area of ancient woodland, rolling farmland, and villages. Once a royal hunting ground, it's rich in wildlife and biodiversity.

2. **Nene Valley:**
    Following the River Nene, this area has wide floodplains, wetlands, and historic towns. It's known for its scenic views and diverse birdlife.

3. **Ise Valley:**
    A rural valley shaped by the River Ise, with gently hills, farmland and a network of villages. It's a key wildlife corridor with scenic walking routes.

King's Cliffe

1 Rockingham Forest

Corby

Oundle

Desborough

Kettering

Thrapston

2 Nene Valley

3 Ise Valley

Wellingborough

Rushden

Earls Barton

Wollaston

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Explore the map

3

Urban   **Woodland**   **Grassland**

Farmland   **Water**

2

KEY HABITATS
Rockingham Forest

1. Top tabs to move through the document

2. The character area

3. The key habitats

Explore the map

Document example 2

1

NENE VALLEY PRIORITY

2

Farmland

Maintain, restore and create priority habitats through effective engagement with farmers and landowners

3

4

Practical Actions:

074. Enhance farmed landscapes through creating semi-natural habitats like grassland, scrub, field margins and hedgerows. This would support species such as the Harvest Mouse ◊

089. Identify, protect and manage land used by qualifying species of the Special Protection Area, namely priority species Golden Plover and Lapwing

090. Promote and support the delivery of stewardship options such as improved riparian habitat management along watercourses and the integration of fallow in crop rotation

091. Promote and support the delivery of soil conservation practices that enhance fertility, reduce soil erosion, and increase carbon sequestration

092. Encourage best farming practices such as introducing winter cereal crops into planned rotation to improve soil structure and provide opportunities for Golden Plover to forage (within a 10km buffer of the Special Protection Area) ◊

◊ = Species practical actions   Δ = Mapped practical actions

5

Invasive Species Control	Clean Water Source	Carbon Sequestration	Soil Fertility	Air Quality	Raw Materials
Flood Regulation	Climate Stability	Nutrient Cycling	Public Health and Wellbeing	Food Provision	Erosion Prevention

6

Engaging with farmers and landowners is crucial for the success of habitat restoration and creation efforts in the Nene Valley. This priority focuses on building strong partnerships to implement conservation practices that benefit both biodiversity and agricultural productivity. Stakeholder engagement highlighted the importance of collaborative approaches, and technical specialists provided guidance on specific habitat management techniques. These efforts aim to align biodiversity goals with the needs and interests of land managers, ensuring long-term sustainability.

"I remember flocks of Sparrows in hedges"
Sheila Aged 85

7

Explore the map

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1. Top tabs to move through the document

2. The area of focus

3. The priority ⭐

4. The range of practical actions to support delivery of the priority

5. The wider natural capital benefits that could be achieved

6. The rational for the priority

7. Click to go to the mapping portal

Map example 1

Map example 2

Map example 3

Delivery Options document

- Not a requirement but seen as important to support delivery

- Support for
  - Planners, developers, farmers, land managers, foresters, communities and individuals, and environment and other organisations

- Will be a live document to allow changes and updates as necessary

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Delivery

- Many different ways to engage with and deliver
- A wide variety of partners
  - Local Nature Partnership – key organisation
  - Funding streams a wide variety to meet the different natural capital benefits
    - Public health to support healthy spaces
    - Heritage Lottery Funding to support culture and environment
- Various teams within the local authority can deliver on priorities and measures

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Other tools

- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – 10% now mandatory – if a site is mapped in the LNRS this increases to 15%

- The LNRS can support
  - Onsite design of landscaping and natural areas to ensure linkages with the wider environmental network
  - Support multifunctional use of land alongside biodiversity
  - The location of Habitat Banks for offsite delivery

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Next Steps

- We were able to publish our LNRS at the beginning of March
- Now with partners move towards delivery which will include
  - Funding
  - Direct delivery through council land management
  - Influence with other plans and strategies eg the Local Plan
  - Publicise and work with partners to deliver across the wide variety of priorities
  - Monitor progress

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"Nature will love you back if you look after it"
Stuart Aged 85

"Its fun and sometimes a bit messy but that's what makes it so amazing, if we didn't have nature the world would just be boring."
Isla Aged 10

North Northamptonshire
Together with Nature

Lennox age 7

Any Questions?

Contact me at:

    naturerecovery@northnorthants.gov.uk

https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/conservation-and-protection/local-nature-recovery-strategy

Thank you

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