

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL  
AFFAIRS: COUNCILLOR REBECCA BREESE**

<b>Report Title</b>	Ise Valley Strategic Plan
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## List of Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Ise Valley Strategic Plan study area

#### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 To inform members about the River Ise Partnership, the content of the Ise Valley Strategic Plan and to seek agreement to West Northamptonshire Council being a named “partner”.

#### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report summarises the background and content of the Ise Valley Strategic Plan, which has been prepared by the River Ise Partnership. It sets out the benefits of West Northamptonshire Council being a partner.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that Planning Policy Committee:
- a) Notes and endorses the contents of the Ise Valley Strategic Plan.
  - b) Agrees that West Northamptonshire Council will be a partner of the River Ise Partnership.

### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 Endorsement of the Ise Valley Strategic Plan and agreement for West Northamptonshire Council to join the Partnership will enable the council to use the evidence to support habitat enhancement projects and emerging strategic policy.

### **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The River Ise is the largest tributary of the River Nene. The River Ise Partnership (RIP) was formed in 2019 through a collective interest in the River Ise catchment and is now a working group of the Nene Valley Catchment Partnership. The RIP comprises representation from the Nene Rivers Trust CIO (NRT, formerly River Nene Regional Park CIC), Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Anglian Water, North Northamptonshire Council and the Wicksteed Charitable Trust. West Northamptonshire Council is currently a friend of the partnership, officer representation at partnership meetings was invited in March 2021. The aim of the partnership is to work together to enhance the quality of the Ise Valley's natural environment, mitigate against climate change, seek opportunities for sustainable tourism and improve access to nature for people. The terms of reference are set out in an appendix to the Ise Valley Strategic Plan (IVSP).
- 5.2 The IVSP has been prepared by the NRT on behalf of the Partnership and was launched in October 2022.
- 5.3 The IVSP study area comprises the catchment of the River Ise and is shown in appendix 1. It is predominantly located in North Northamptonshire, extending from Geddington in the north, through Kettering to Wellingborough. Central to the valley are the towns of Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby, the planned growth of which will create a requirement for high quality accessible green space for recreational and ecosystem services, as well as enhancing existing green spaces for local communities. The source of the Ise is in West Northamptonshire close to Naseby, from where it flows eastwards past Clipston and Arthingworth to Geddington.

### **6. Issues and Choices**

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#### Ise Valley Strategic Plan

- 6.1 Despite its title, the IVSP is not a statutory planning document in the same sense as a local plan or neighbourhood plan and does not therefore form part of the West Northamptonshire

development plan for decision making. In this case, “strategic” refers to the landscape scale of the study area. The study area is divided into three zones, north, central and south. Only a relatively small area of West Northamptonshire is within the study area (part of the north zone).

- 6.2 The IVSP was publicly launched in October. The first section sets out the mission and seven aims which align with the mission. The IVSP mission can be summarised as follows: creating a connected landscape, with an emphasis on restoring and developing resilient, better managed habitats; caring for the Ise so that its water quality is high and flooding reduced; creating an environment for people and wildlife that will benefit tourism; and enhancing and protecting ecosystem services (these include food, climate regulation, recreation and habitat provision). It goes on to describe the study area, the policy context, relevant documents and existing evidence.
- 6.3 The second section describes the need for a strategic approach to the Ise catchment. Profiles of each of the three zones describe the existing situation and opportunities with regards to biodiversity; connectivity and access; community health and wellbeing; landscape; heritage; flooding and water management; and ecosystem services. The north zone is relevant to West Northamptonshire.
- 6.4 This section goes on to describe the issues for the Ise Valley:
  - A. Population growth leading to increased pressure on the natural environment.
  - B. Necessity to enhance existing and create new open spaces and/or destinations to accommodate population growth.
  - C. Balancing of needs between people and wildlife in open spaces.
  - D. Limited access to the river for recreation.
  - E. Physical modifications to the watercourse.
  - F. Resilience to climate change and contribution to mitigation.
  - G. Pollution.
  - H. Flood risk.
  - I. Threat of non-native species to native flora and fauna.
  - J. Management and maintenance of designated habitats to ensure restoration, conservation and enhancements.
- 6.5 The third section sets out proposals to implement the strategy based on three strands which are to develop working practices; general project principles; and delivering specific projects to realise the partnership mission and aims. These are set out in tables with activities, descriptions, leading partners and potential sources of funding for the projects. The list of projects include ones that could take place in multiple locations such as undertaking surveys and creating a cycling and pedestrian route at various locations along the river. It also includes place specific proposals, none of which are in West Northamptonshire.
- 6.6 The ISVP will be reviewed annually to measure progress and keep it up to date. It will undergo a comprehensive review every four years.

#### Benefits of West Northamptonshire being a partner

- 6.7 Despite only a small part of West Northamptonshire being in the study area there would be benefits to the council being a partner. The IVSP reinforces the understanding that the Ise is a connected network of blue and green infrastructure and it will be a useful resource to ensure

that proposals and works along the stretch of the river in West Northamptonshire take account of and align with the mission and aims. It would also facilitate identifying and implementing projects that cross local authority boundaries, including sources of funding.

- 6.8 The evidence for the plan includes habitat opportunity mapping which dovetails with natural capital and green infrastructure evidence produced to support the emerging West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. This will inform policies and proposals including natural capital, green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, climate change mitigation and place shaping. Where planning proposals arise in the north zone it can be used to support decision making and secure developer contributions where appropriate.
- 6.9 Lastly, it would be beneficial to be part of a network of partner agencies with specialist knowledge of ecology and water habitats.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 Any funding required for projects etc. would be the subject of a separate report.

### **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the endorsement of the IVSP. The partnership was created prior to the formation of WNC. If WNC becomes a partner it will be bound by the terms of reference.

### **7.3 Risk**

- 7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **7.4 Consultation**

- 7.4.1 The IVSP does not form part of the West Northamptonshire development plan, there is therefore no requirement for statutory consultation. During its preparation it has been subject to internal consultation within the partnership.

### **7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

- 7.5.1 Not applicable.

### **7.6 Climate Impact**

- 7.6.1 The IVSP mission and aims promote an enhanced and restored natural environment. One of the issues is to build resilience to climate change and contribute to mitigation.

### **7.7 Community Impact**

- 7.7.1 The ISVP aims to create a connected and more accessible network of spaces for people and wildlife. It seeks to increase the level and diversity of partner and community participation in

the planning and delivery of projects and use of the valley. People will benefit in terms of health, fitness and wellbeing.

## **8. Background Papers**

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### 8.1 Ise Valley Strategic Plan (including terms of reference)

# Appendix 1: Ise Valley Strategic Plan study area

## Legend

### Study Area

- Ise Valley Central
- Ise Valley North
- Ise Valley South

### Unitary authority boundary

- Unitary authority boundary

### Ise Waterbodies

- Ise Waterbodies
- Tributaries not show on Catchment Data Explorer

