



15 THE RIVER NENE

Objectives

- To improve the quality of riverside development, particularly within the urban areas.
- To attract new investment, facilities and employment opportunities.
- To conserve important environmental assets and natural resources.

15.1 The River Nene rises in Northamptonshire and flows into the sea at The Wash. The river and its tributaries drain about three-quarters of the County. It flows through the major urban areas of Northampton and Wellingborough and either through, or close to, the smaller urban areas of Higham Ferrers, Oundle, Rushden and Thrapston along with a number of villages.

15.2 The River Nene and its valley is an important resource in terms of biodiversity, sand and gravel supply, economic and social activity and recreation and tourism. In the Valley, there are many sites and features of biodiversity or historical value. As a result of its geology, the Valley is also the main area for the supply of sand and gravel in the County. Indeed, extraction has taken place along much of its length from just west of Northampton to north of Thrapston. The river, its valley and the lakes created by sand and gravel extraction, provide an important opportunity for developing further water-based recreation and tourism.

15.3 The management of the River Nene and its valley in Northamptonshire, being at the upper end of the catchment, is also crucial in terms of its impact downstream in respect of water supply, water quality and flood control.

15.4 Having regard to these competing needs a delicate balance must be found between development and conservation taking account of economic, social and environmental considerations.



River Nene Regional Park Policy Area

Policy RN1

Provision will be made for a River Nene Regional Park Policy Area. This will reflect the following priorities:

- **Improving the quality of riverside development;**
- **Conserving, and where possible enhancing, important environmental assets and natural resources;**
- **Improving public access;**
- **Attracting new investment, facilities and employment opportunities, particularly in relation to recreation; and**
- **Seeking to prevent, and where possible reduce, the risk from flooding through a strategic approach to floodplain management.**

The general extent of the Regional Park is identified on the Key Diagram.

Detailed proposals will be identified in local plans.

- 15.5** To help balance the demands of development and conservation, it is proposed to establish a Regional Park for the River Nene.
- 15.6** The Regional Park concept provides the opportunity for local authorities, business, agricultural and other groups to work in partnership to promote sustainable development and management of the catchment as a whole. This does not imply a uniform approach throughout the Policy Area as different areas offer different opportunities.
- 15.7** The Regional Park offers particular opportunities for recreation and sustainable tourism development as it is well related to the County's urban spine, the primary road network and the rail network. Conservation will also be a key part of its role. Opportunities will be identified for improving floodplain management and conserving and enhancing important environmental assets and natural resources. The Park will play a specific role in managing the legacy of mineral extraction in the Valley.
- 15.8** Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Regional Park will be prepared in conjunction with other partners and, along with local plans, will need to apply the criteria in Policy RN1 and identify detailed proposals taking account of local considerations. It will consider the precise boundaries of the Regional Park.

Riverside Development

Policy RN2

Riverside development will be expected to be of a particularly high standard in terms of its design and materials. Special account will be taken of the scale, height, density, mass, landscaping and overall appearance of the proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings and the riverside environment in general.

- 15.9** Although much of the River Nene flows through open countryside, a number of urban areas border the River and have stretches of riverside frontage. On the whole these are poorly utilised and unattractive, yet have potential for enhancement.
- 15.10** Local planning authorities will identify measures and opportunities for improving the quality of the urban riverside environment, particularly through redevelopment and enhancement, and ensuring that development is of a particularly high standard and in keeping with a riverside location.