

The Colne Valley Park and HS2

The Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company (CIC) is publicly and determinedly opposed to the HS2 project, which will have a direct negative impact on a precious and already vulnerable landscape.



We lobbied against HS2 and were deeply dismayed when it was granted permission by the government.

Its impact on the countryside will be felt from London to Birmingham, hitting the Colne Valley from Ickenham to Chalfont particularly hard – the project includes two tunnel portals, a huge viaduct and many construction sites. We would have preferred a tunnel to take the line beneath the Colne Valley, but unfortunately the government has rejected that call.

It would be all too easy to throw in the towel when major infrastructure projects, especially those as controversial and colossal as HS2, are given the go-ahead. But, in our view, it is vitally important to continue to press for mitigating measures that will lessen its impact wherever possible, holding those responsible to their obligations, professional, political and moral.

The Colne Valley Park CIC is not a statutory consultee, and has had no authority to approve or reject HS2's planning applications. Nevertheless, despite our fundamental objections, we are taking a pragmatic approach, and engaging with the project team, using our local expertise to campaign for the very best outcome as it proceeds.

Our work so far

The Colne Valley Park CIC formally petitioned against HS2 together with local authorities and others. Commitments secured by this partnership include:

- Abandonment of provision for the Heathrow Spur
- Better diversion routes for some Public Rights of Way
- Creation of the [Colne Valley Regional Park Panel](#), an independent body made up of local authorities, environmental charities and government agencies that allows views to be directly and clearly heard.
- Production of an [Additional Mitigation Plan](#) for the Colne Valley Regional Park in line with the six objectives of the Park.
- A £3m budget to support the delivery of the Additional Mitigation Plan – £500,000 worth of funding has already been committed to path improvements and helping bats and water voles. The £3 million is independent of, and in addition to, HS2's own mitigation measures

HS2's viaduct plan

A great deal of attention has been focused on plans for a viaduct in the Colne Valley Park. During the Spring, its designers staged a number of public exhibitions, and we expect to receive a summary report from the contractors shortly.

The main works contractor published a specimen design earlier this year, but we have stressed this should be treated merely as a minimum standard: we expect and demand that this structure is built to the highest possible standard, and takes full account of its considerable impact on the area.