Heathrow Expansion – Colne Valley Regional Park's position

The Colne Valley Regional Park is publicly and determinedly opposed to Heathrow's expansion proposals, which will fundamentally change the southern third of the Colne Valley Regional Park. This gigantic project will have a significant and far reaching impact on the Park and its wildlife, and will affect the way people use and enjoy it.

It is important that we draw Heathrow's attention to the potentially devastating impacts on the Park; three of the key effects are outlined in this document and will form the basis of the Park's engagement with Heathrow.



A. PERMANENT LOSS OF PARTS OF THE COLNE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

Unfortunately, a huge area of the southern third of the Park will be lost. In addition to the new runway itself, there will be associated taxiways, hotels, car parks, warehousing, and offices. Large operations, like Lakeside Energy from Waste and the British Airways headquarters are to be relocated.

- SUGGESTED SOLUTION
  Heathrow reduces permanent land-take and replaces land lost with new areas – an expansion of the boundaries of the Park elsewhere in the Colne Catchment that will mitigate for losses in the south (e.g. Colne upstream of Rickmansworth, River Ash corridor, etc).

B. LOSS OF THE PARK'S FUNCTIONALITY

Heathrow's expansion proposals will severely hamper the Park's ability to function in this area, and prevent it from achieving its objectives.

- The Park's landscape will be changed forever: large areas of agricultural land and waterscapes will be lost.
- Recreation and countryside enjoyment will be severely affected; there will be a loss of angling sites, severed Public Rights of Way and loss of proposed route improvements (e.g. Colne Valley Trail). Significant parts of Harmondsworth Moor Country Park and other precious green spaces will also vanish.

- There will be far-ranging and significant impacts on biodiversity; loss of habitat, species and habitat connectivity.
- The expansion will bring light pollution and the real risk of large scale urbanisation in this vulnerable area, putting even further pressure on the Park.

➢ SUGGESTED SOLUTION

A Landscape Masterplan devised specifically to ensure the objectives of the Colne Valley Regional Park are met. A landscape-scale vision and multi-functional approach to mitigation and long-term management for the affected areas providing sustainable use of the land when the project is complete. An integrated Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy that will seek the best possible quality designs to address the direct and significant impacts on the Park.

Particular and careful consideration of the wider landscape and precisely how it is being used by people and wildlife; compensation for agricultural tenants and farm businesses remaining in and around the Park; multi-functional use of flood mitigation and flood storage areas.

C. IMPACT ON RIVERS AND LOSS OF CONNECTIVITY FROM THE THAMES TO THE CHILTERNS

Rivers, riparian habitat and their continued viability will be threatened – e.g. by use of covered corridors and netting of watercourses. Heathrow proposes to carry at least four rivers under the runway (River Colne, Wraysbury River, Longford and Duke of Northumberland), this could also include a fifth, the Colne Brook. If the Colne Brook is put under the runway, this would mean a complete loss of any open river habitat connections between the Colne Catchment and the River Thames. Runoff from the airport could change flow levels in our rivers and potentially affect water quality.

➢ SUGGESTED SOLUTION

It will be crucial to ensure that mitigation is implemented on a catchment scale and that habitat connectivity can be maintained between the upper Colne Catchment and the River Thames. As an absolute minimum, the Colne Brook must remain as an open river channel.

Explore realistic opportunities for further open channels to the west or north of the airport, giving consideration to any implications on river water levels elsewhere in the catchment. For any covered river corridors, the best possible design needs to be developed (natural light, naturalised river beds and riparian habitat, air circulation, headroom for maintenance etc).

Water drainage and treatment facilities must be designed to the highest possible standard to prevent water quality issues.