

President: Rt.Hon. the Lord Randall of Uxbridge Kt.PC.

Planning Service
Buckinghamshire Council
King George V House
King George V Road
Amersham
HP6 5AW



August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

PL/22/1775/FA and PL/22/1710/FA

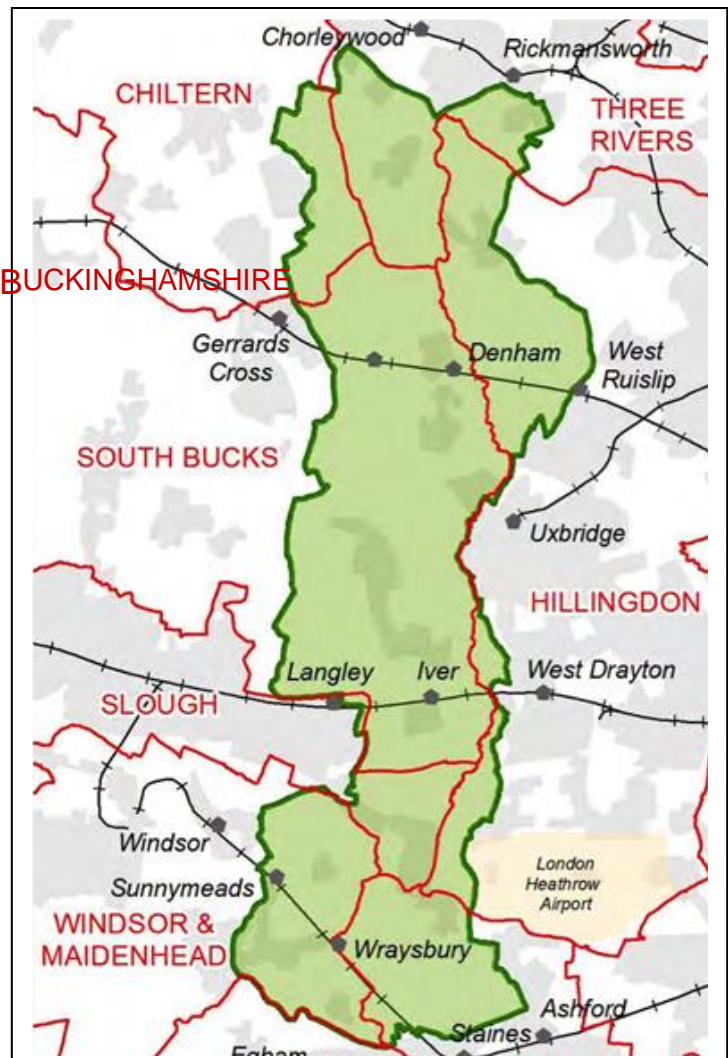
Response to proposed data centre at Thorney Business Park, Iver

These comments also apply to the proposed access road as the two applications are complementary.

**This response is from and behalf of
The Colne Valley Regional Park**

The Colne Valley Regional Park was founded in 1965 when local authorities – including Bucks County Council – showed great foresight in agreeing to work together to preserve and enhance this precious area for recreation and nature conservation.

It is supported by more than 80 member organisations including local authorities, businesses, residents' associations, environmental charities and user groups. Groundwork South acts as the Park's managing agent.



Colne Valley Park Trust

Charity Registration Number: 1181303

Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England. Company No. 08131867

Registered Office: c/o Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham,
Buckinghamshire, UB9 5PG
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

The Colne Valley Regional Park has six objectives:

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/whats-special/>

Landscape

The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) covers seven local planning authorities. As a result, the valley is rarely, if ever, considered at a landscape scale.

The creation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy-downloads/> for the Colne Valley Regional Park aims to bring the green and blue on the map to the forefront of planning policy and decisions, and feature the landscape of the Valley as a whole, rather than from the perspective of its various council boundaries.

These boundaries are an administrative convenience – they don't exist as real barriers to people and wildlife. The Crane Valley has been added to this strategy to provide a truly landscape-scale picture of the area.

This cross-border approach is entirely consistent with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of response

The whole site is within the Colne Valley Regional Park and is surrounded by the Green Belt. The new access road is in the Green Belt.

The development plan encourages the redevelopment of this brownfield site, but Core Policy 9 states that sites within the CVRP urban/rural fringe should support and implement CVRP initiatives. This development does not do that – in fact no mention is made in the supporting documents that the site is within the Park, or that there is a policy initiative to mitigate and compensate in CP9.

The CVRP therefore **objects to this application** as inadequate compensation and mitigation has been provided.

Concerns regarding rights of way are as follows:

- Iver FP13 and FP14 (not 3 and 4). A distant view from higher ground in Iver Village to the north east.
- Iver FP15 (north of canal). A closer view from the north and north east. The data centre is significantly higher than the existing buildings.

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- Iver FP15A. This dead-end path runs along the western edge of the development site. The path would be seriously affected. A thick vegetation belt between the path and the development should be required. It would be good if there is a way to negotiate a new bridge south from FP15A over the railway towards FP15 (south) and North Park.
- Iver FP17 (canal towpath). This path runs along the northern edge of the development site and would be affected to a greater or lesser extent depending on how the height of the buildings is graded north to south.
- The development would also be visible from North Park to the south.

We also have concerns regarding the height of the buildings. At between 20 and 25 meters high, they are considerably taller than the existing and nearby buildings and will be visible from all points in the surrounding Green Belt area. Surely this height imbalance could be mitigated by sinking the buildings – this would have the bonus of providing natural insulation from the ground.

It also appears that this and other data centres proposed in the Iver area will necessitate a substantial increase (more than doubling the land area) in the National Grid site on Slough Road, further damaging the CVRP. Although not directly related to this application, it is a real and significant consequence.

We welcome the proposed footpath and cycle route alongside the access road, particularly from the west, although we are confused about the status of this road. The data centre application mentions that the access road from Hollow Hill Lane will be grasscrete and for emergency use only. Presumably with no cycle access. The second application for the access road states it will have both footways and cycle path, thus providing full connectivity between Langley and Iver. It does not mention whether it is public or private.

In terms of biodiversity net gain (BNG), the applicant proposes improving the boundaries of the site by planting trees, wildflowers and hedgerows. It also states that the building will have green roofs and one green wall. However, the site will require 3m high security fencing which is incompatible with wildlife connectivity. This aspect is not addressed. Piecemeal measures like this achieve nothing and are contrary to the principles of BNG. However, the improvements suggested to the nearby BNS in the access road application could go some way towards ameliorating this situation. The addition of public access to this land would be welcomed.

We would like reassurance that the development, including green roof and green wall, will be water efficient. The Colne catchment is a water stressed area with high demand for water, we would not want to see this development make that worse.

In terms of biodiversity, impact on the landscape, and impact on the quiet enjoyment on recreational routes, the applications conflict with our objectives and are entirely

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inconsistent with the aims of the Regional Park, not least because they would create actual harm.

Buckinghamshire Council should therefore support the CVRP in delivering its six objectives which are consistent with this paragraph, and not allow this development as it stands.

The applicant should be advised by the Colne and Crane Green Infrastructure Strategy when looking at additional mitigation.

Jane Griffin

Director

Colne Valley Regional Park

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