

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



October 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

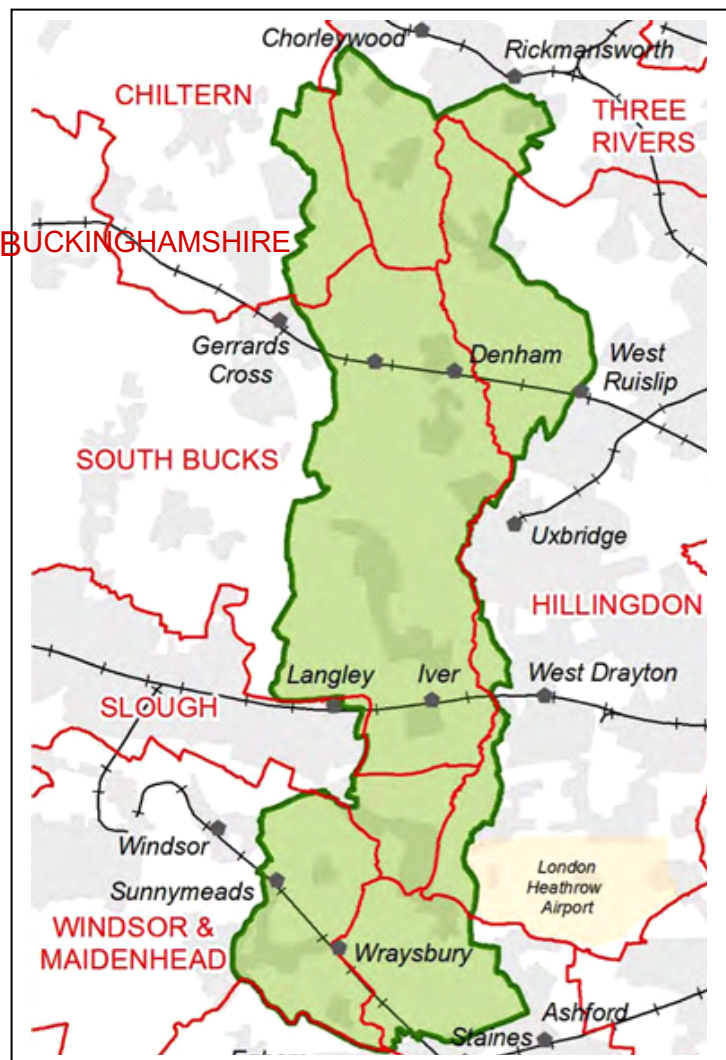
PL/22/2898/OA

Response to proposed 975 houses etc at Chalfont Common

**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

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The Colne Valley Regional Park has six objectives:

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

Landscape

The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) covers six 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

A speculative application, outside of the local plan process, for this high number of houses on a Green Belt site is virtually unheard of.

The majority of this 78 Hectares site is within the Colne Valley Regional Park and is designated Green Belt. **No mention or assessment of the harm to the Colne Valley Regional Park is made by this application or mitigation suggested** (including off site mitigation in the surrounding parts of the Regional Park). In our opinion substantial harm is caused to the Park by the loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, the urbanising of Public Rights of Way, and as admitted, major adverse impact on the local landscape character and visual impact.

The application will also develop 78 hectares of Green Belt Land. The Green Belt Assessment concluded that the wider parcel of land that includes this site, played an important role in preventing coalescence of the settlements of Chalfont St Peter and Chalfont St Giles. The development is therefore inappropriate Green Belt development.

The now withdrawn Local Plan proposed 360 homes within the major developed site. This number was promoted by the Epilepsy Centre using the same arguments that now require 975 homes. This is based on viability information that has been redacted in the submitted documents. This information should be available on an open book basis to enable scrutiny.

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It is recognised that the Chiltern area of Buckinghamshire does not have a 5 year housing supply, but NPPF para 11 (d) states that when a site is in the Green Belt it changes the way the tilted balance applies. A speculative development of this size should be promoted and delivered through a Local Plan process in order for the infrastructure requirements, together with all necessary mitigation and compensation, to be delivered in accordance with the NPPF and after a comprehensive Green Belt Assessment to ensure that alternative less compliant areas of the Green Belt are assessed which may deliver a better outcome than this site.

The site is not well served by the local road network , in particular access to Junction 17 of the M25 via Rickmansworth Lane. Existing bus services are only hourly and this is unlikely to change. Thus increased vehicular traffic will use the country lanes which have no street lighting or pedestrian footways.

The application as it stands conflicts with our objectives, is inconsistent with the aims of the Regional Park, and causes substantial harm to the Green Belt and, in turn, to the Regional Park.

Buckinghamshire Council should therefore support the CVRP in delivering its six objectives by refusing this application or by promoting substantial mitigation and compensation in line with the Colne and Crane Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Jane Griffin
Director
Colne Valley Regional Park

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