

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

Councillor Martin Tett
Leader
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway Offices
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF



December 2022

Dear Cllrs Tett, Williams & Strachan

Thank you for sparing your time earlier this month to discuss the critical state our Green Belt is in and ways for Buckinghamshire Council and the Colne Valley Regional Park to work together to urgently address this.

The Green Belt is facing huge pressure nationally. However, that part in the Colne Valley Regional Park is, we believe, possibly the most threatened in the entire country. If this area is to achieve its potential for people and wildlife then these threats require an immediate, co-ordinated and robust response.

We understand that there will sometimes be 'very special circumstances' to justify development, but in our view any such approval must guarantee substantial improvement to how the countryside functions.

We identified three opportunities to work together but unfortunately there was insufficient time to discuss the third, so for clarity I thought it would be helpful if I outline these below:

Green Belt: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 145ⁱ calls on Council's to improve the Green Belt. Green Belt is more than a negative policy against development – it has a positive angle, too, which is critical for its future functioning. Buckinghamshire decisions need to be exemplars. We would welcome further conversation about precisely how we can work together to encourage national government to better help local authorities achieve this.

Green Infrastructure. As a matter of urgency, and in advance of the forthcoming local plan, we ask the Council to embrace the 2019 Colne & Crane Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy. <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/green-infrastructure-strategy-colne-and-crane-valleys/> This document can inform individual development proposals so that GI is central to site design (rather than being squeezed around development) and so that mitigation achieves strategic benefit for the landscape around the site in line with NPPF para 145.(see appendix). It is not an 'either/or' situation: once opportunities are missed, they are lost forever.

Bucks Landholding. Bucks is a major landholder in the CVRP, much of it purchased in the 1920s-1960s specifically for its countryside value and public benefit. In many cases land was purchased by others e.g. the Greater London Council or public subscription. There is nowhere else in the county where the Council has a strategic opportunity on this scale, see the map in the appendix. We ask Bucks to think on a landscape scale rather than merely on a site-by-site basis, to manage land to achieve what NPPF para 145 calls for and to fulfil the original intentions of the land purchase.

Thank you for the offer of a further meeting in early January with Cllr Strachan and relevant officers to 'get under the skin' of these issues. We will liaise with Steve Bambrick to arrange this and look forward to working with Buckinghamshire Council so that the authority can be an integral part of the solution for the benefit of local communities and our environment.

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

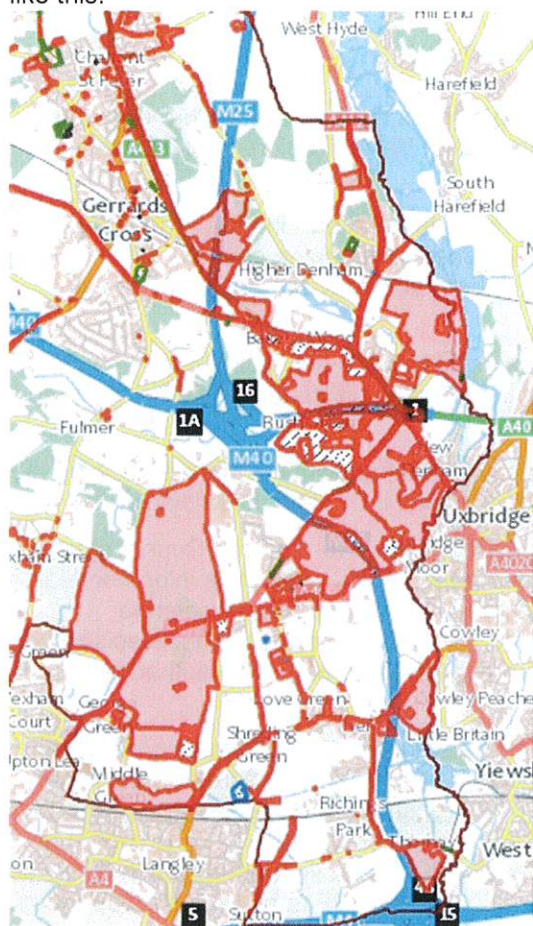
President: Rt.Hon. the Lord Randall of Uxbridge Kt.PC.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Pomeroy
Colne Valley Managing Agent

APPENDIX Council -owned land in the CVRP. Nowhere else in the county has an opportunity like this.



i NPPF Para 145. Our highlighting.

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should **plan positively** to **enhance** their **beneficial use**, such as looking for opportunities to provide **access**; to provide opportunities for **outdoor sport** and **recreation**; to retain and enhance **landscapes, visual amenity** and **biodiversity**; or to **improve damaged and derelict land**.”

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