

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



1st December 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

PL/22/3628/HS2

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 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

The Colne Valley Regional Park's comments on the above application are as follows.

- We note that the construction works to date have had an impact on the amount of breeding bird habitat and led to disturbance leading to an overall decline in numbers, primarily due to the loss of woodland and wetland loss.
- The HS2 scheme has committed to a no net loss in biodiversity and habitat. Consequently, new habitats and replacement planting is proposed which will lead to a 'significant local improvement in biodiversity and habitats.'
- The metric used to determine this has been agreed with NE and EA but regular monitoring for the foreseeable future will remain key to the success of this scheme.
- In terms of recreational provision, a new permissive route is proposed to connect with the planned Bucks Cycle Way. Do we know why this route is only permissive? If it is to be closed on a regular basis there should be signage provided to inform users.
- It is not clear that the permissive path continues to the west of the A412, this should be confirmed as it provides a good opportunity to link to the diverted path DEN 3 and towards DEN 38. The permissive path is labelled 'walking/cycling', yet the reference to a 'pedestrian bridge' (to come in a future application) does not imply access for cyclists, this should be amended so cyclist access on the bridge can be facilitated. The Council should withhold granting of permission until these two points are confirmed.
- The CVRP has no comments about the type of agricultural fencing to delineate ownership or the reprofiling of the land to mainly restore that which previously existed.

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Buckinghamshire Council should therefore support the CVRP in delivering its six objectives by amending this application to reflect the above comments.

Jane Griffin
Director
Colne Valley Regional Park

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