

The **'top tips/ top ideas'** for making effective comments that came out of the workshops were:

1. Start early and be on time.
2. Collaborate with others to have one voice – local people, organisations and residents (the 'Heathrow Villages Hillingdon' example was cited).
3. Gather support, in writing if possible.
4. Identify the planning reasons but use simple language and be constructive.
5. Research and highlight the local conditions/ environment as well as addressing policy issues.
6. Reference the 2019 Colne & Crane GI strategy wherever relevant.
7. Evidence comments with facts and figures.
8. Avoid emotion.
9. Try and respond to all applications for major developments.
10. Seek to influence the councillors/ politicians – lobby and use them to talk to planners.
11. Publicise and use social media.

**Other constructive suggestions** made about how the planning system works regarding major development in the Colne Valley Regional Park's (CVRP) Green Belt:

1. Better communication of the plan-making process and better engagement with local communities at the plan making stage.
2. Councils to foster a better understanding of planning process.
3. Join-up with others e.g. parishes to share professional resources as well as opinions etc.
4. Use of Planning Performance Agreements to foster better engagement.
5. Better use of Development Briefs.
6. Make the CVRP a statutory body.
7. CVRP to consider a section on plans and policies on its website.

There was quite a lot of **disillusionment** with how the planning system seems to be working and that it doesn't feel like communities and organisations are operating in a Green Belt area. Points made in that regard included:

- Non-environmental (economic) considerations seem often to prevail.
- The Green Belt protection does not feel as special as it used to.
- Don't feel listened to
- Neighbourhood Plans can be ignored and hard to get developers and planners to care about them.
- The 'technical' reasoning used in planning reports can be obscure.
- Lack of technical expertise available to communities – an unbalanced situation.
- The cumulative erosion of the Green Belt in the CVRP seems overlooked.
- It can feel like trying to make the best of a lost situation.