

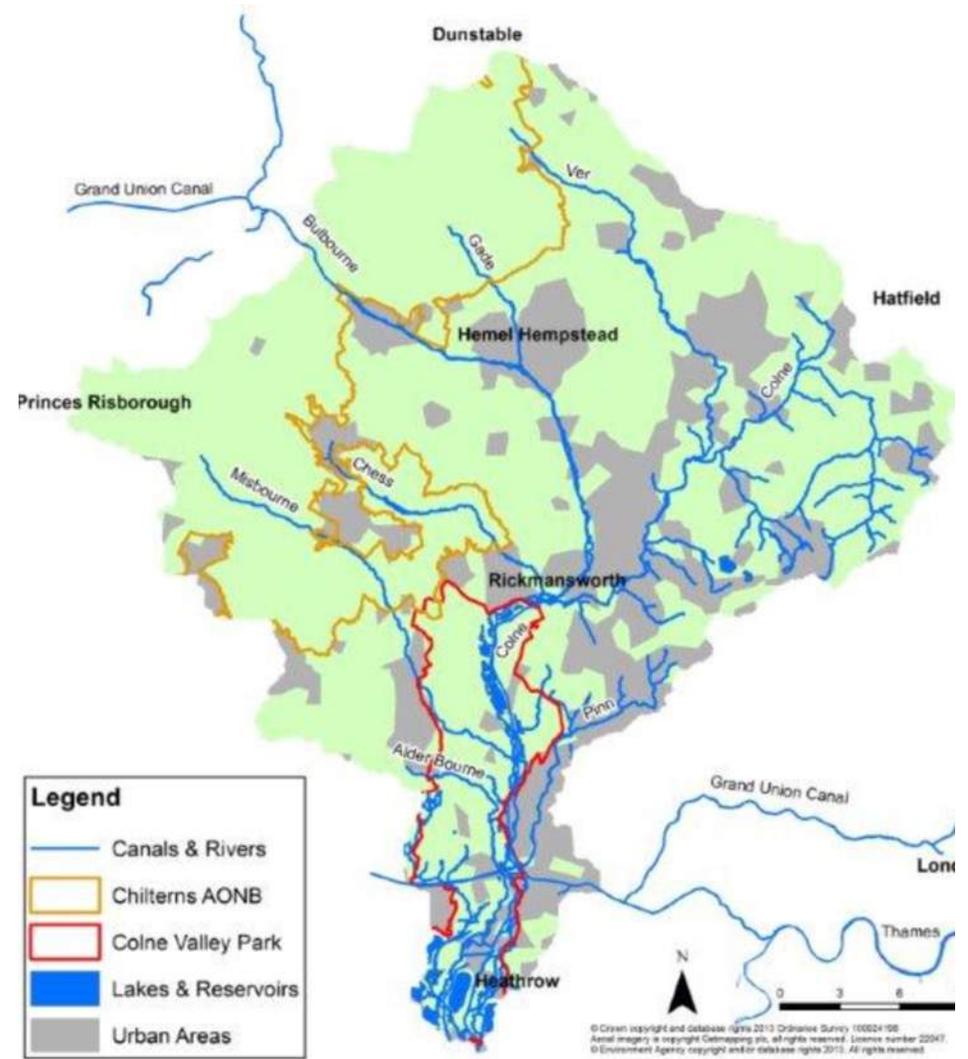


Planning challenges facing the CVRP & policy responses needed for the urban-fringe Green Belt

Jerry Unsworth, Independent Planning Consultant



18th April 2023
Brunel University



Explore Your Colne Valley Regional Park

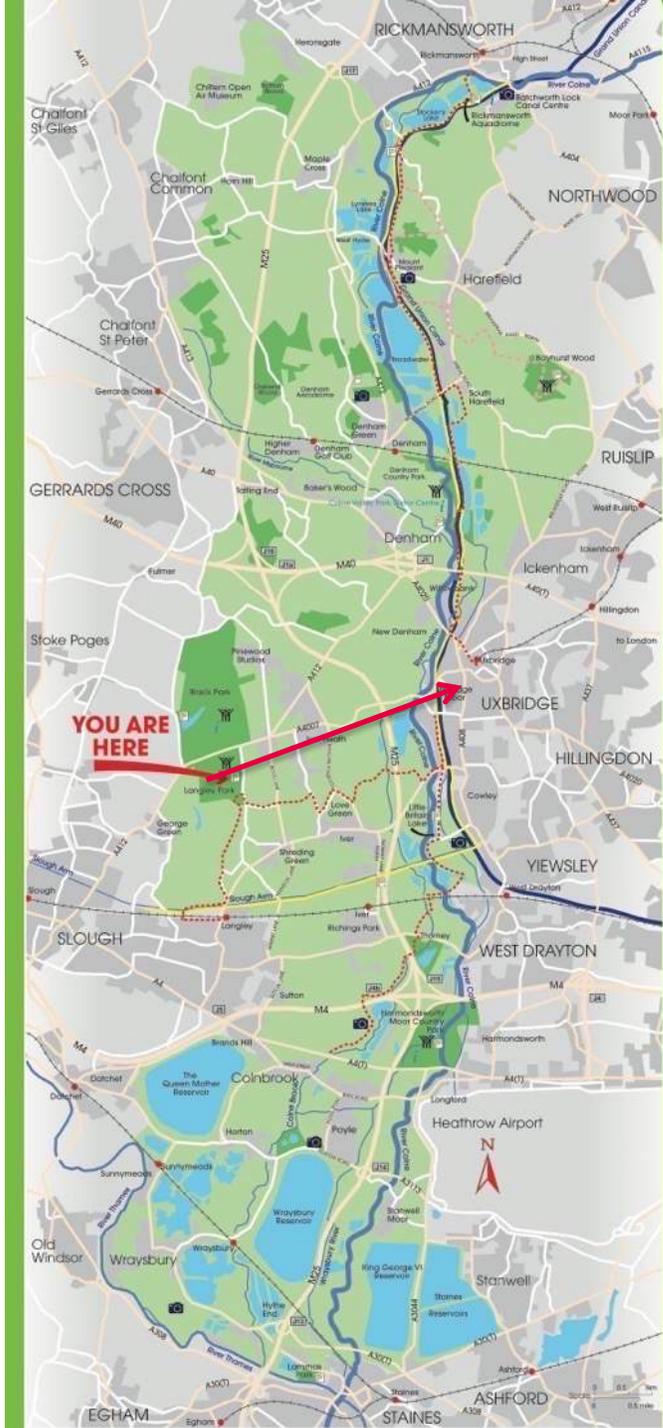


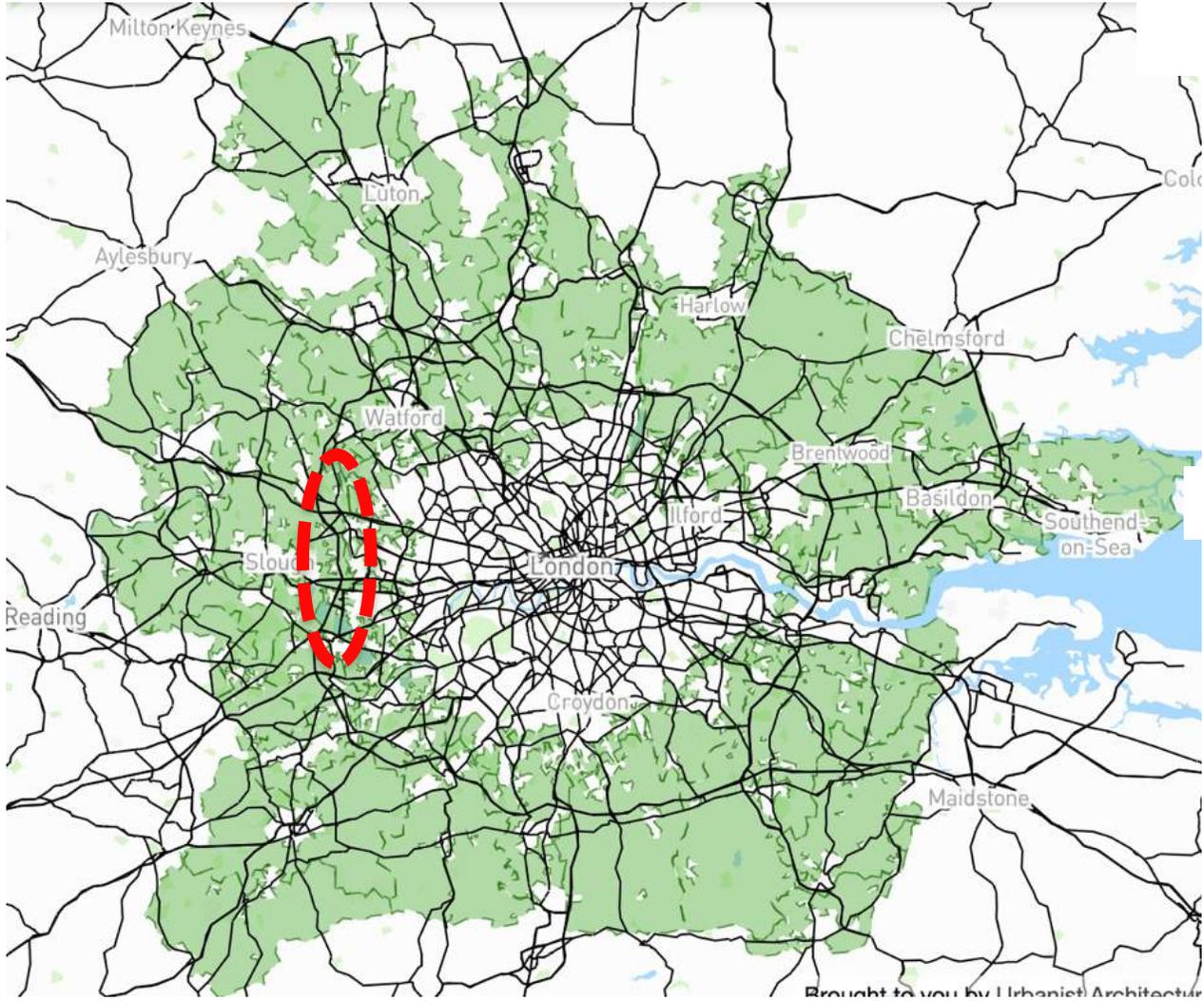
100's of green spaces, 5
country parks, 20 Nature
Reserves, 13 SSSI's

Key to physical and mental
health, biodiversity & farming

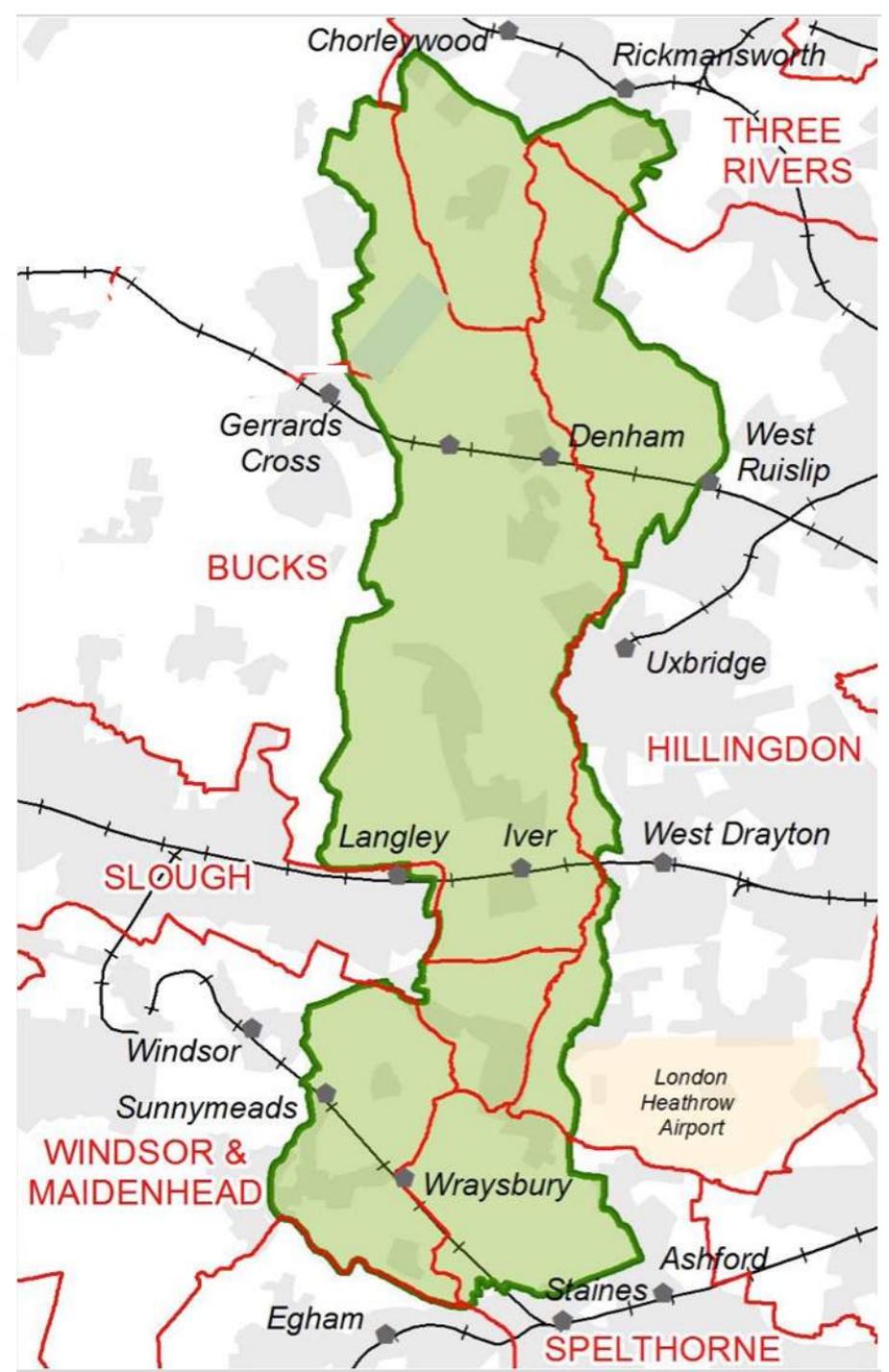
Strategic resource to access
the natural environment

>3M people within 10 miles





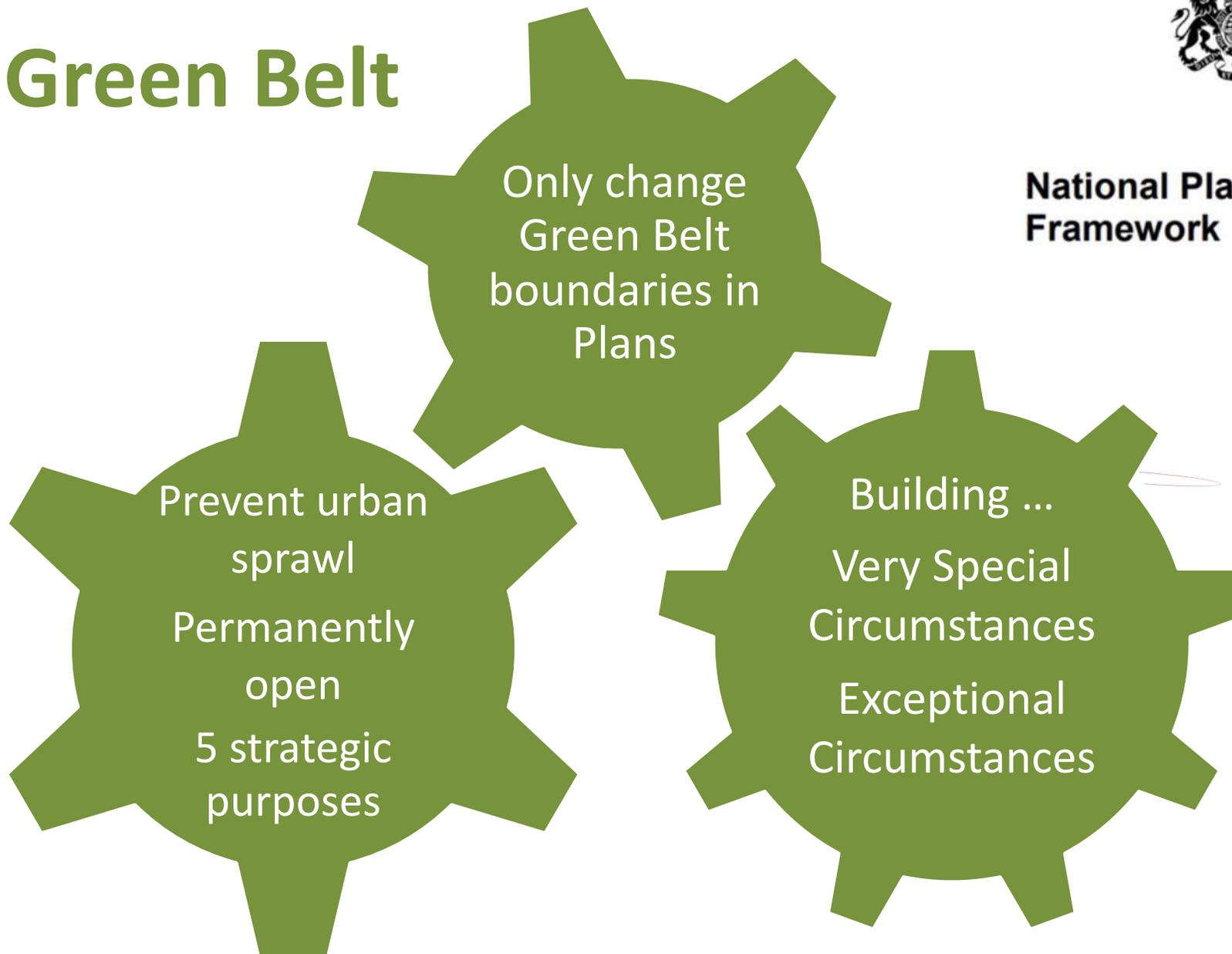
A key part of London's Green Belt





Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework



Often overlooked in the NPPF

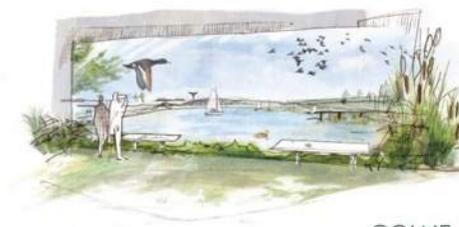
142. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land they should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through **compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.**



145. 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.

Also often overlooked

Para 145 – why the CVRP was established



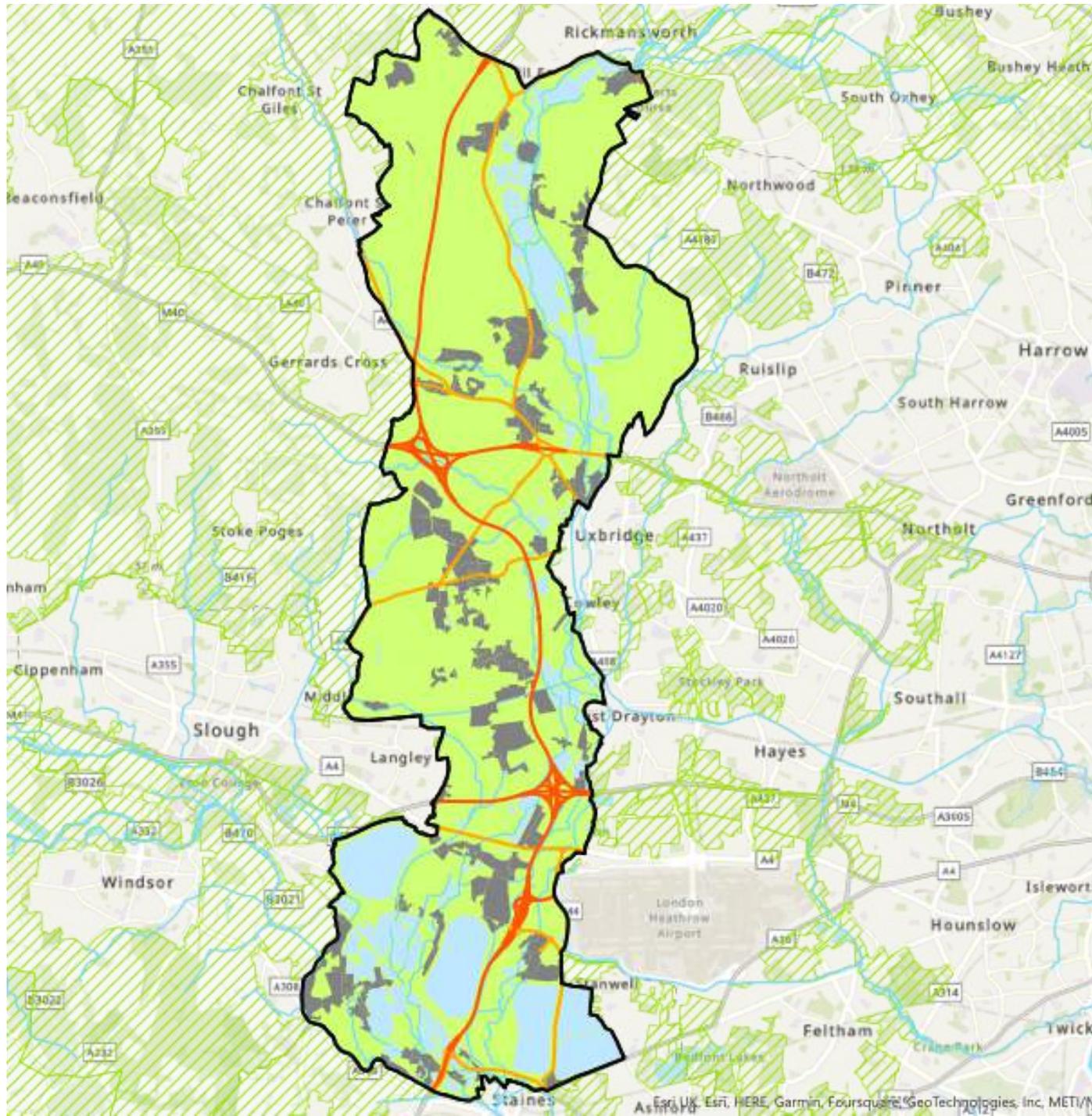
COLNE & CRANE VALLEYS
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY
SEPTEMBER 2019
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ARUP

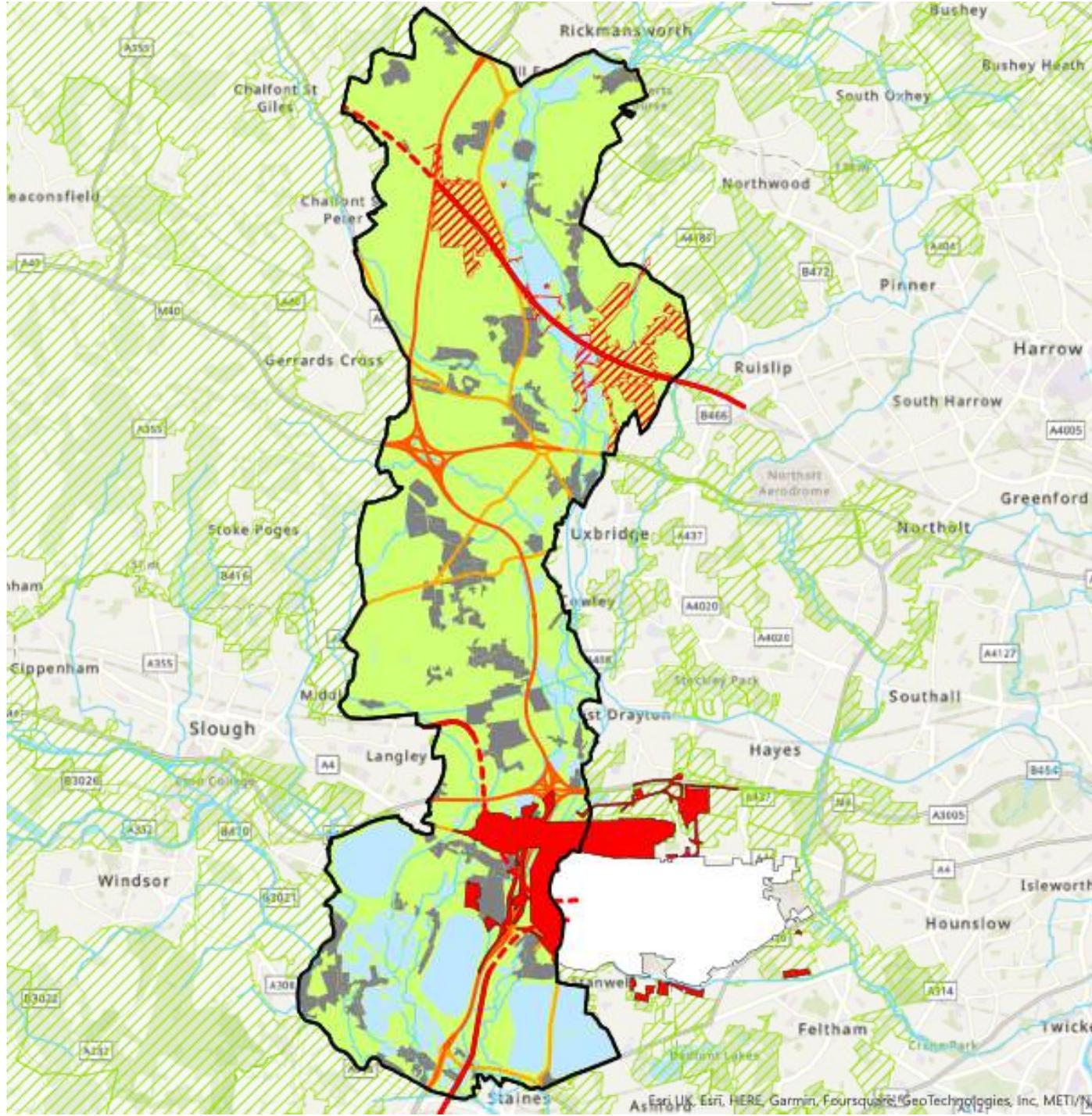
And why the 2019 Strategy was prepared

Case Study 1 –
Development Proposals



Colne Valley Regional Park

A 2018
baseline



Colne Valley Regional Park (The Future?)

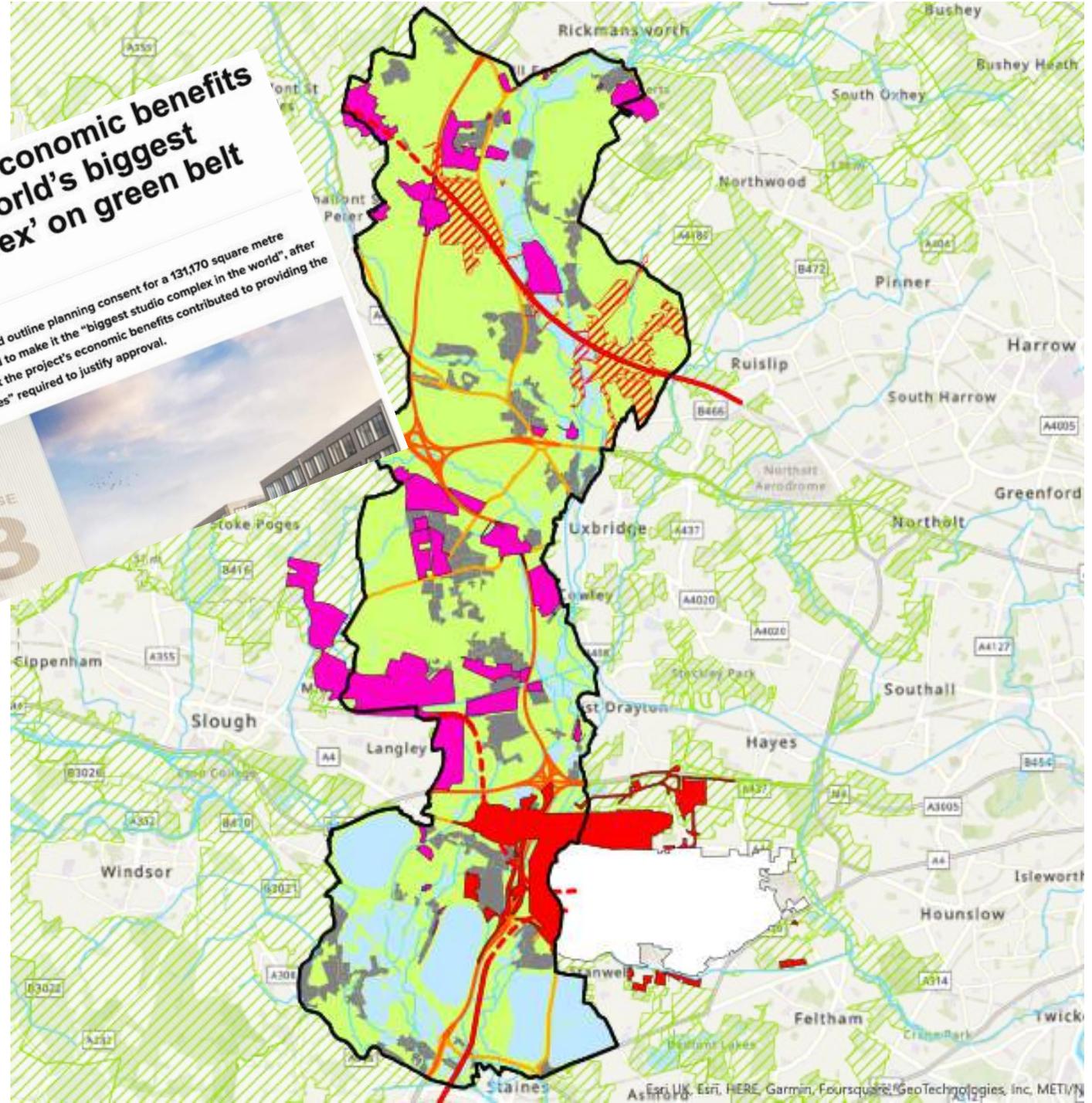
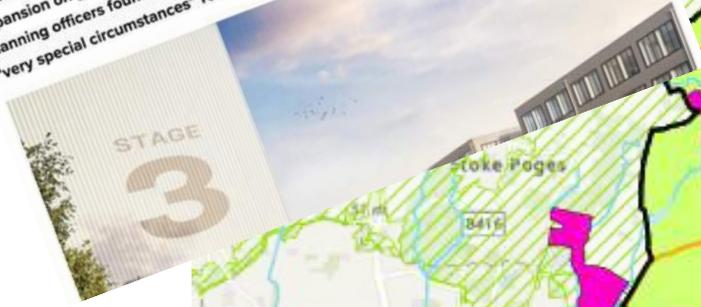
Showing infrastructure proposals

- HS2 under construction
- &
- Heathrow 3rd runway and related schemes

Council cites economic benefits in allowing 'world's biggest studio complex' on green belt land

22 February 2023 by Toby Porter

A film studio has been granted outline planning consent for a 131,170 square metre expansion on green belt land to make it the "biggest studio complex in the world", after planning officers found that the project's economic benefits contributed to providing the "very special circumstances" required to justify approval.



Colne Valley Regional Park (The Future?)

Showing all infrastructure schemes

and

Approved development e.g. Pinewood

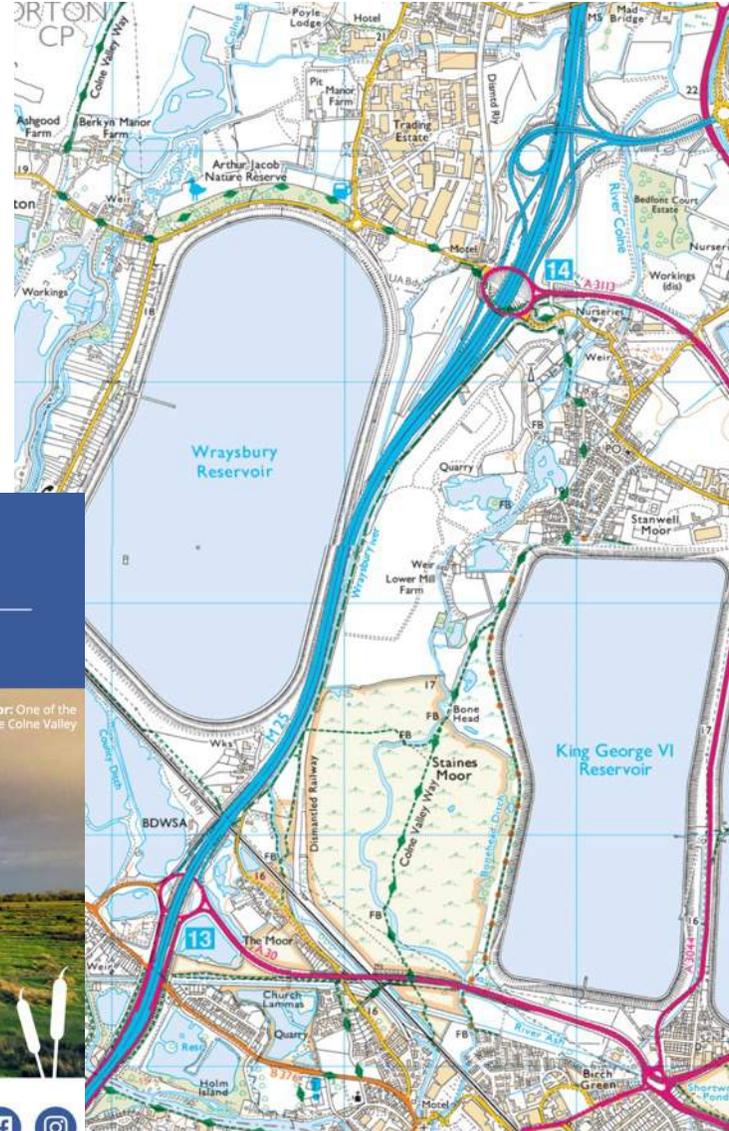
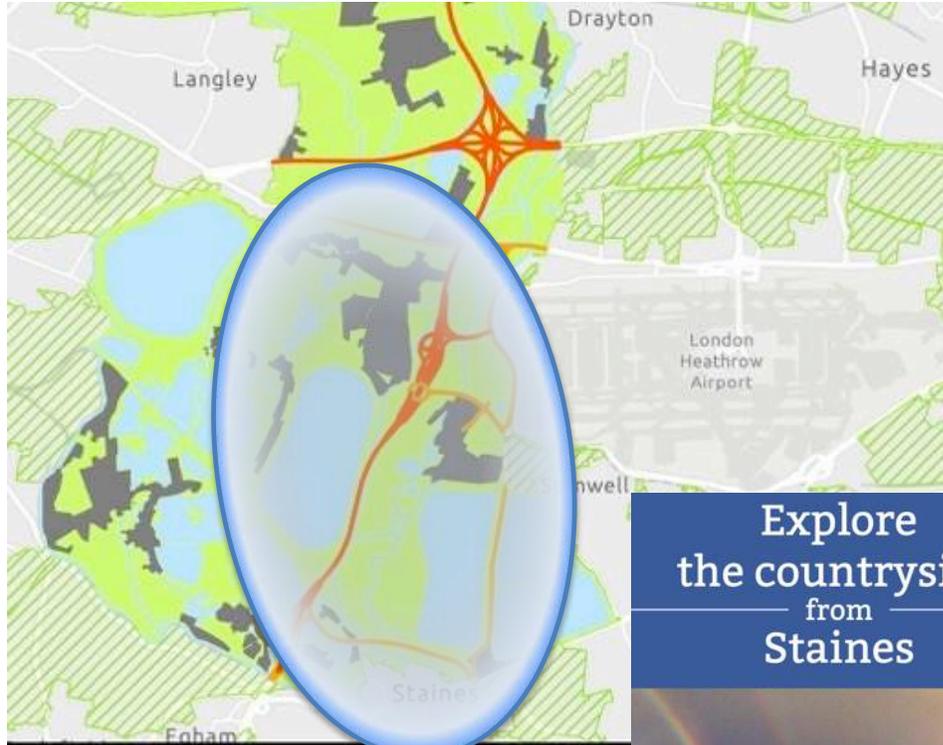
and

If planned proposals (from LAs and others) are followed through

Case Study 1 – reflections

- Something has changed
- Green Belt is a regional, a strategic policy
- Demise of strategic, cross-border planning
- Big thinking needed

Case Study 2 – Contrasts & Challenges



Explore
the countryside
from
Staines

Staines Moor: One of the gems of the Colne Valley

HERITAGE FUND
SEEKING
COLNE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

Staines Moor





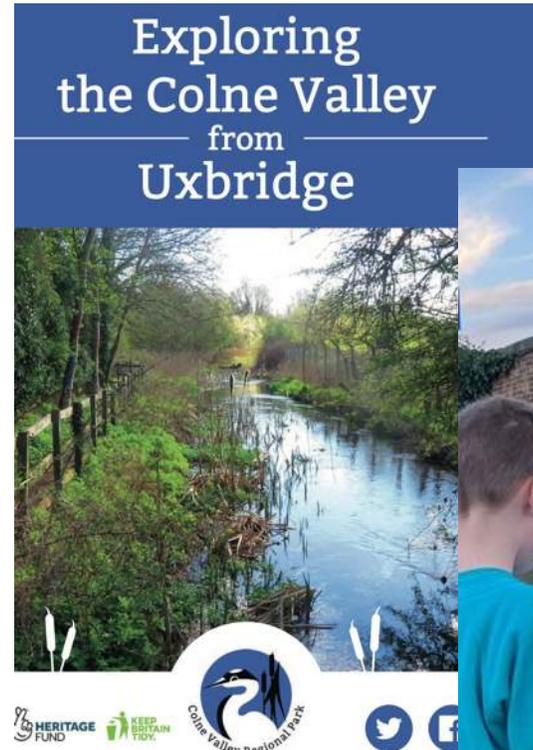
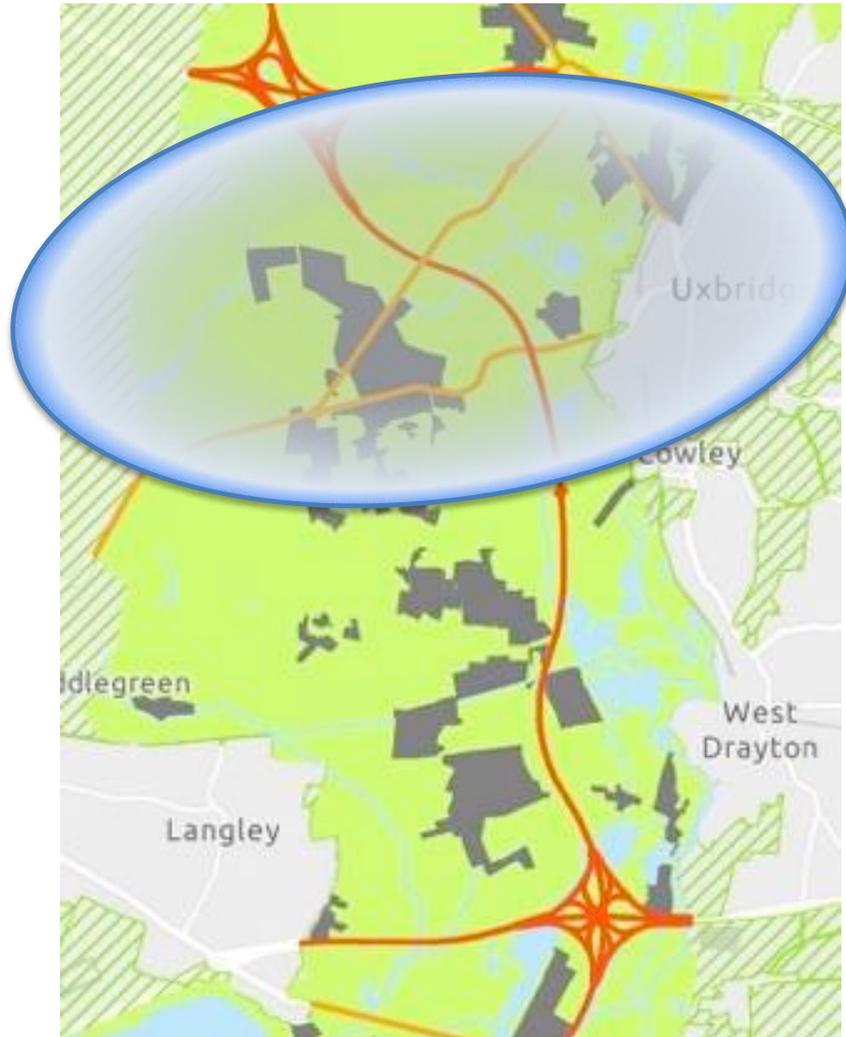


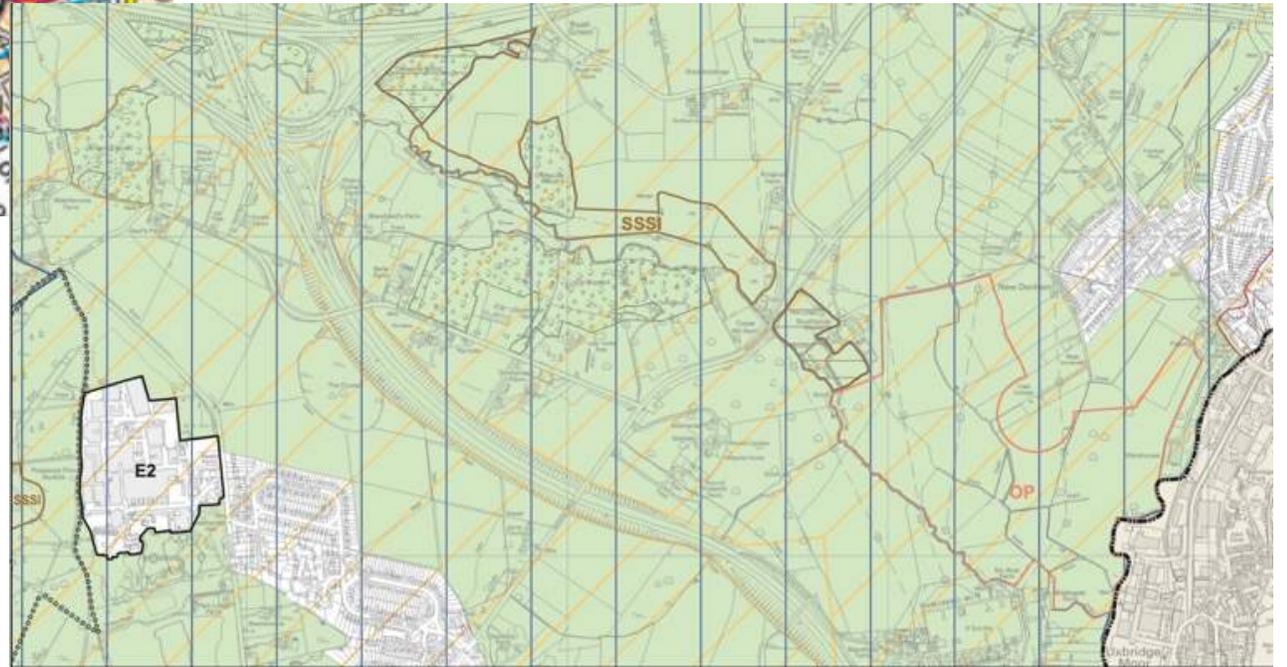
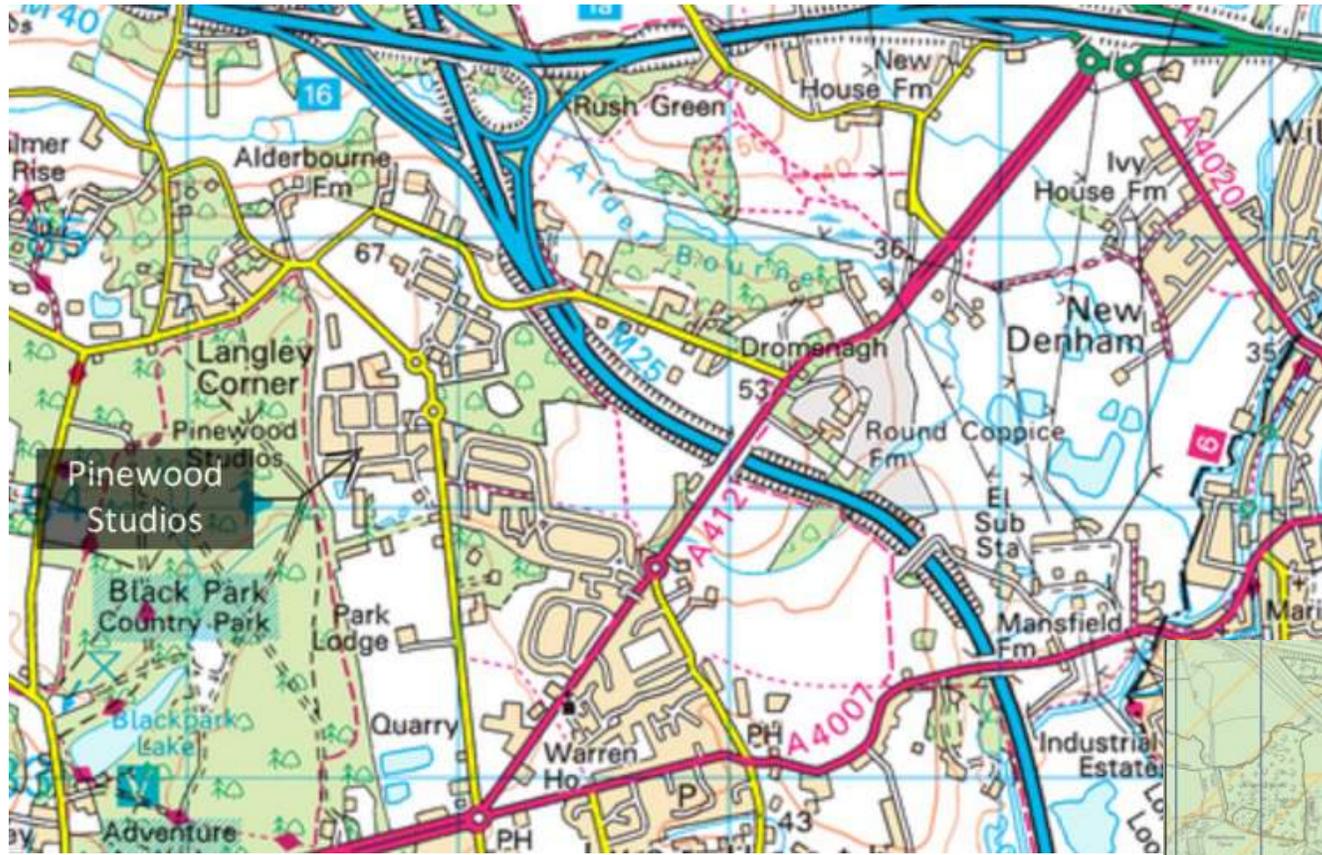
Case Study 2 – the positive stuff

- Some real gems and some great ‘hidden rivers’ to open up
- Some really large restoration schemes (minerals extraction)
- Just need joining up with the landscape and accessibility around them
- Cross (LA) border opportunities for connecting up the landscape
- RBWM Plan hook to CVRP/ 2019 GI Strategy led to package of mitigation
- Spelthorne Local Plan at examination next month with a CVRP policy - and a GI Strategy and Supplementary Document in hand

Case Study 3

Connectivity – a strategic opportunity





lmer



Langley Corner

Black Park

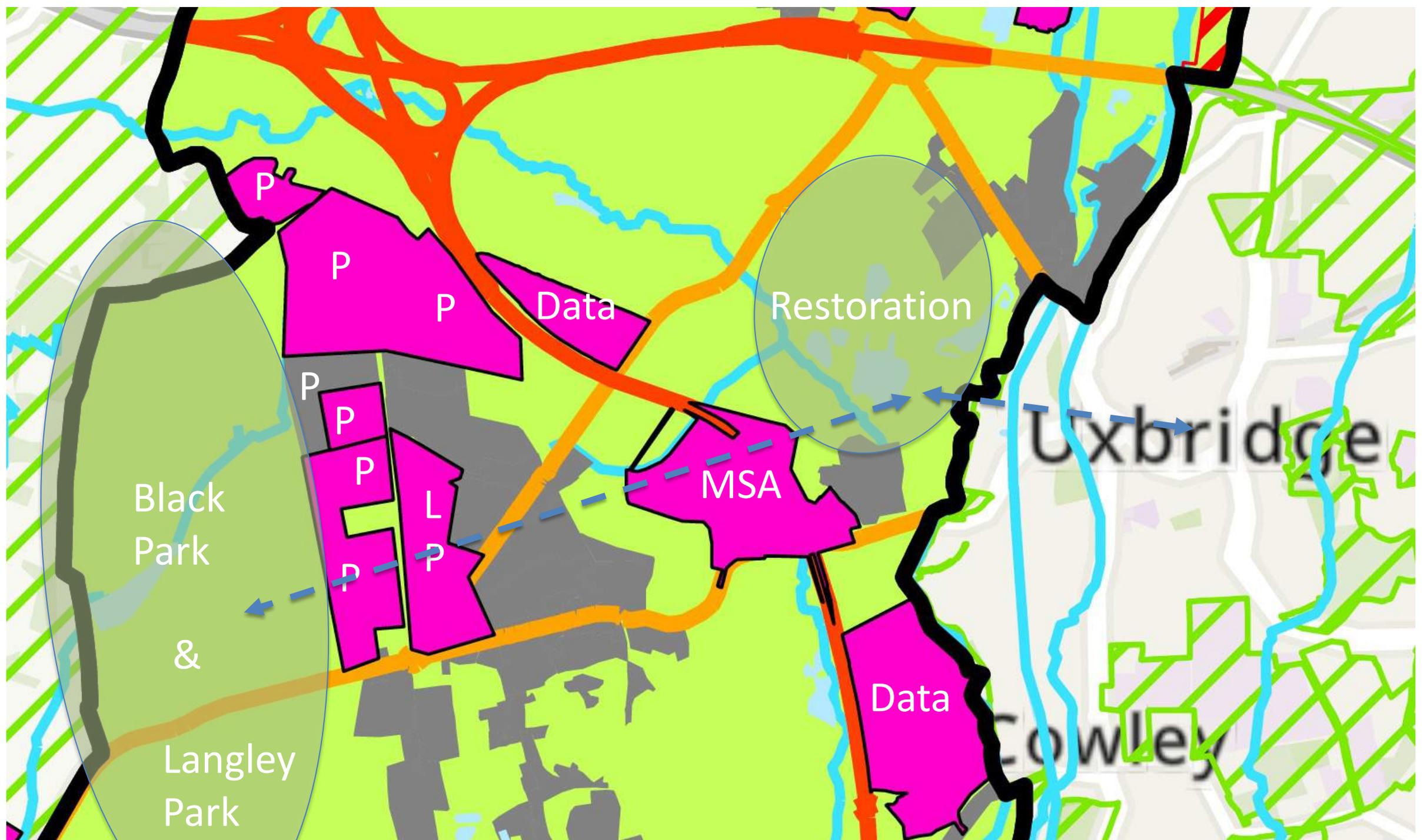
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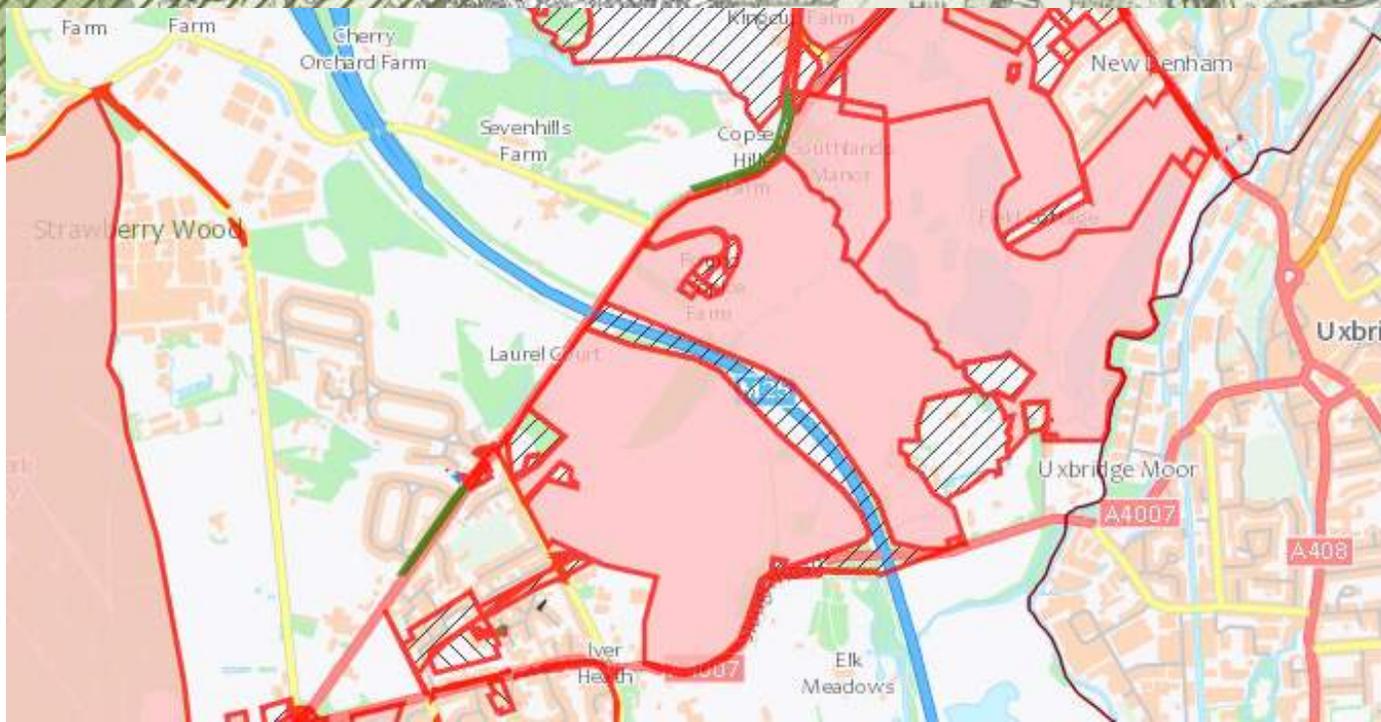
Go Ape Black Park

Langley Park

Restoration







Case Study 3 – the positive opportunities

- Major restoration scheme to implement
- Cross LA border opportunities to connect the landscape/ gems
- Council land ownership
- ‘Hidden’ streams and river corridors to open up
- It’s not too late!
- In fact, it’s never too late - this is the Colne Valley Regional Park and Green Belt



Where next?

1. **Major developments** - think strategic landscape
2. CVRP LAs **embody the 2019 Strategy**
3. **NPPF** adjustments (Govt)
4. **New form of landscape designation** – with need a bigger factor than natural beauty
5. **CVRP Status** and as a Case Study



COLNE & CRANE VALLEYS
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY
SEPTEMBER 2019
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRINCIPLES WHEEL

The 15 Principles are based on:

- The 5 Benefits of GI or 'Why' Principles
- The 5 Descriptive or 'What' Principles
- The 5 Process or 'How' Principles



6 (NPPF) policy changes for the urban-fringe Green Belt

1) A 6th Green Belt purpose – functional accessible countryside

2) Guidance to combat incremental ‘urban sprawl’ through ad hoc applications

3) Stronger guidance regarding Councils’ discharge of the positive (Para 145) role for GB (& to apply to major applications outside of Local Plans)

4) Tightening up ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ to promote functionality of the GB

5) ‘Compensatory Improvements’ to apply equally to all proposed major developments – whether in plan review or in ‘ad hoc’ applications.

6) A workable strategic planning mechanism replacing the Duty to Cooperate

Green Belt and “Very Special Circumstances”

How GB ‘harm’ is assessed

Substantial weight to harm -
proportionate to scale

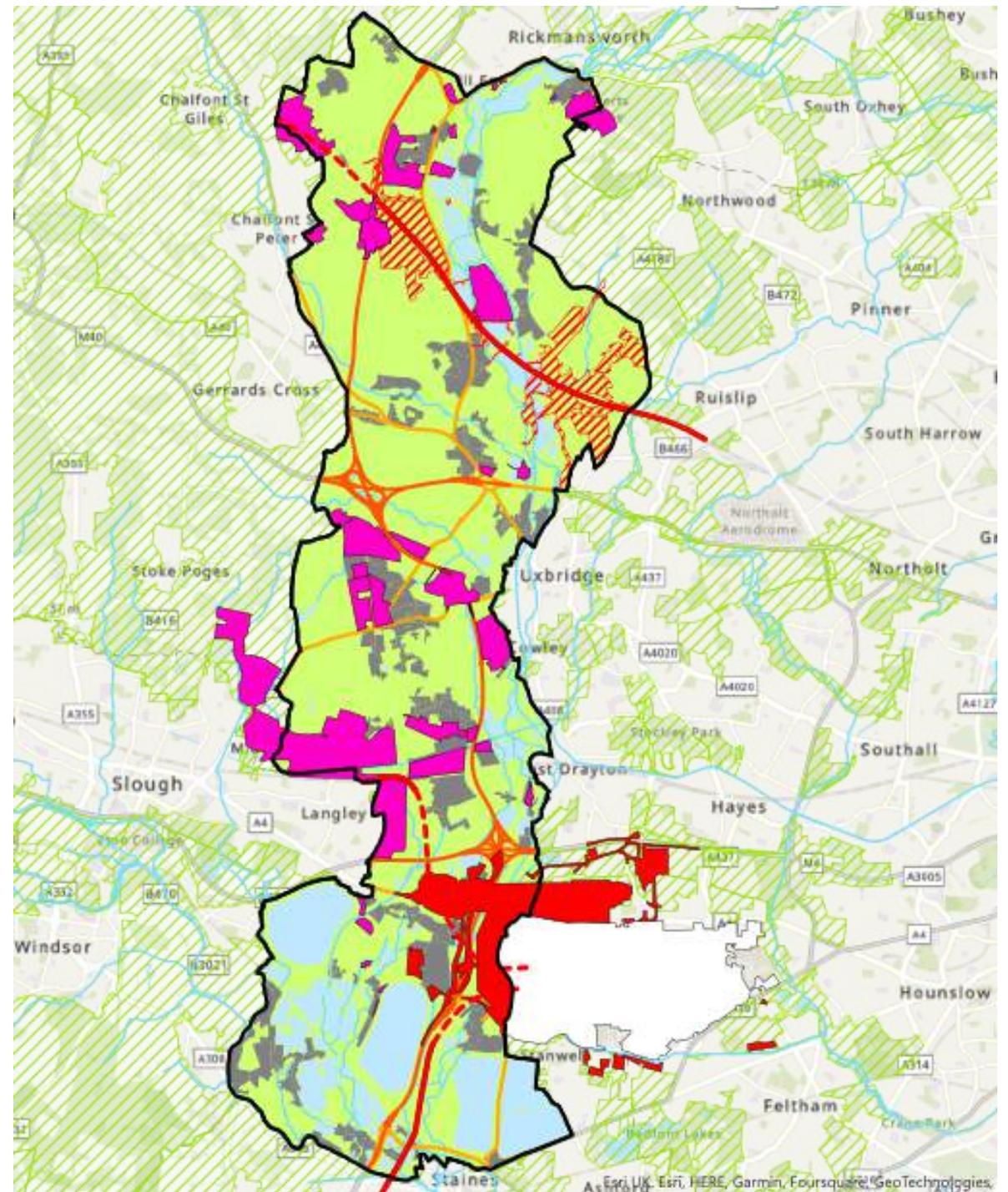
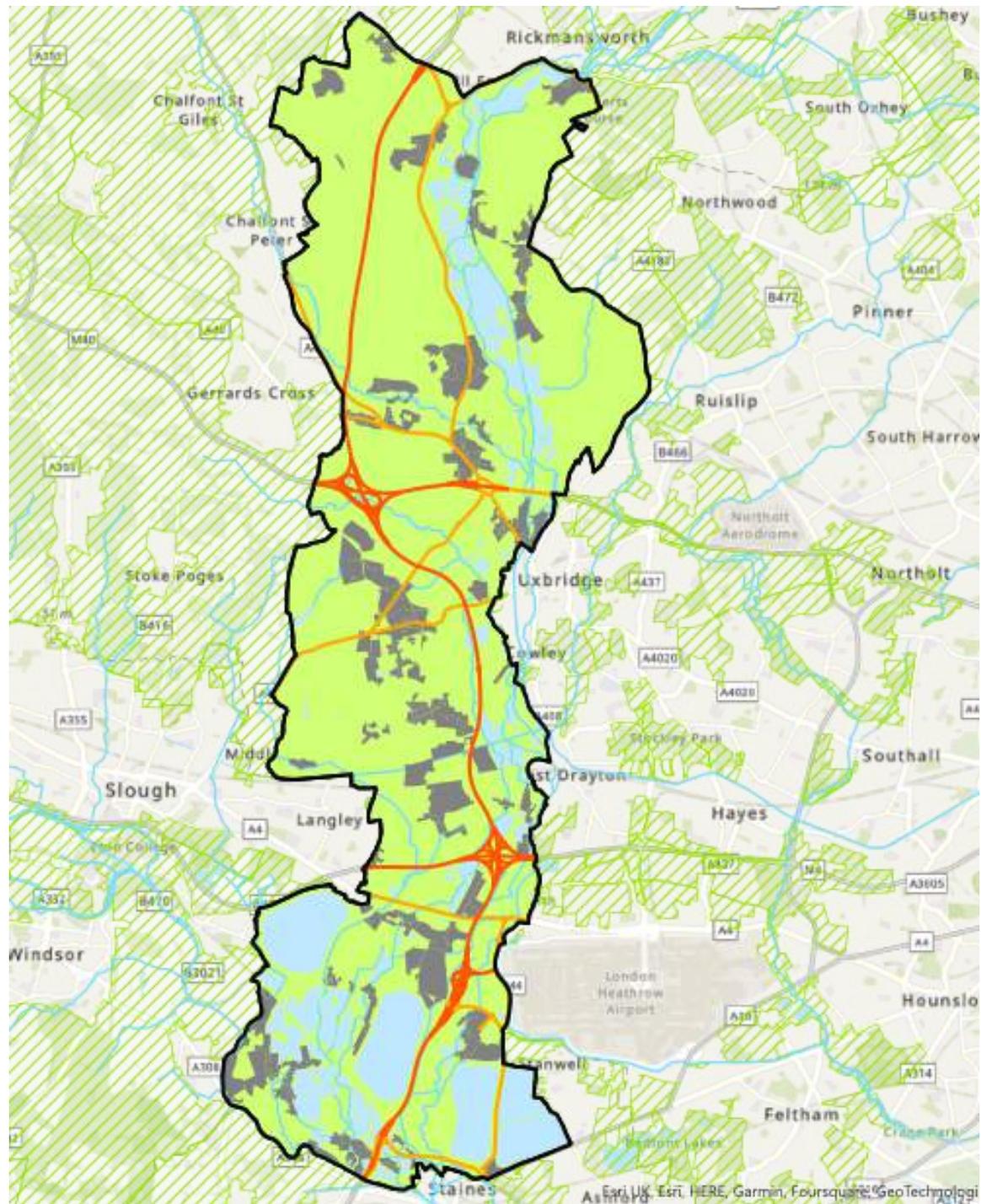
Think strategically – the win-win

NPPF Para 145 – the planning
positively role – is very relevant

Once potential overlooked
opportunities are lost forever

Zen & The Art Of Very Special Circumstances







Thank You



for biodiversity
for quality countryside
for local food production
for climate change mitigation
with better access for our communities

the inner Green Belt on the west side of London

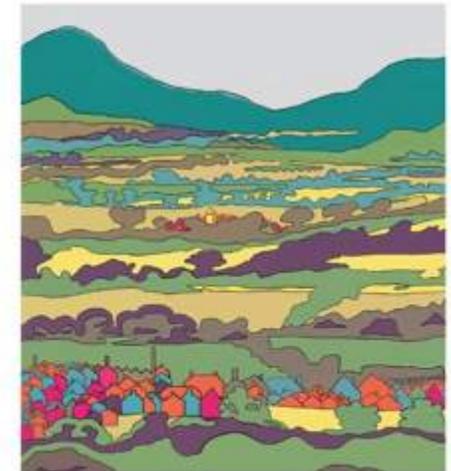


“If we are unwilling to embrace these challenges and fundamentally change our approach, then perhaps we should leave the Green Belt intact for future and hopefully more responsible generations.”



THE GREEN BELT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

*Peter Bishop, Alona Martinez Perez,
Rob Roggema and Lesley Williams*



UCLPRESS