

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

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



17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Martin,

The board of the Colne Valley Regional Park has been taken aback by the council's decision to dispose of Green Belt land that had been held in its care.

Such was its concern that it called a special single issue meeting to review the situation, assess its direct consequences for the Park and consider its next steps with regard to the future of the Green Belt in this uniquely pressured area on the edge of London.

We have published our views here: <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/iver-motorway-service-area-decision/> )

- **With regard to planning:** The officers took a worryingly narrow view of Green Belt policy. The Strategic Sites Committee seemed to be labouring under the misapprehension that it had to choose one MSA or the other. It didn't. The committee simply had to make a judgement call on two competing policies: National Planning Policy Framework (with clear and repeated reference to Green Belt) and a DfT Strategic Road Network Policy paper from 2013, updated 2022. Even if Bucks, or the Government following an inquiry, concluded an MSA at Iver is strategically warranted, that is certainly no justification for completely ignoring the long-term connectivity of the countryside in the planning analysis.
- **With regard to property:** Your disposal of this land sets a dangerous precedent for Buckinghamshire, the Colne Valley Regional Park and for all areas of Green Belt nationally.

All of our trustees have expressed their incredulity at what the council has done, which is unique in my experience. They are bewildered as to how a piece of countryside at one of the narrowest points of the Green Belt and specifically designated for protection, could be thrown away by those who are supposed to safeguard it for the benefit of future generations.

From my delivery officer point of view, I enjoy a great working relationship with large numbers of council officers and local councillors. This results in our achieving a lot for the benefit of local communities and the local environment (<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/whatwedo/>).

However, I am sorry to say that I now share the view of many of our Trustees that, at cabinet level, Buckinghamshire Council appears no longer supportive of the six objectives of the Colne Valley Regional Park that your predecessors helped formulate.

You have tweeted recently about the MSA decision. These posts are either misleading or give only a selective part of the picture. In one, you ask whether environmental groups that *'...have been so loud against the Conservatives [will] be equally vocal when environmentally sensitive sites are under threat by Labour?'*

**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](http://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk)

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As one such environmental group, we make no apology for being loud and vocal when Conservatives are doing the wrong thing for the environment. And we will be just as loud and vocal should Labour, or indeed any other party or coalition, do the same.

We continue to lobby all of the main political parties, principally to get them to understand the enormous potential the Colne Valley Regional Park can offer for the benefit of millions of people and the unique challenges we face. The two MPs whose constituencies cover the Bucks/Colne Valley geographical crossover have been very helpful to us with this.

I would like to be in a position where we are able to work closely with you, as leader of the local authority with the largest geographical coverage within the Regional Park. Your active support of our objectives can help us bring significant benefits for people and wildlife.

I wrote to you on 21/07/23 to express concern about the direction of travel of the Council and offered to work with the council to help it meet its obligations under National Planning Policy Framework to 'plan positively' for the Green Belt. I was surprised and disappointed not to receive so much as an acknowledgement.

I want you to know that there is now profound concern among the trustees and officers of the Colne Valley Regional Park and in its many partner organisations, about the way in which Buckinghamshire Council has approached recent planning and property matters.

I sincerely hope we can find a way through these difficulties and at the very least open a dialogue in the best interests of local people and the environment.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Pomeroy  
Colne Valley Managing Agent  
For, and on behalf of, the Colne Valley Regional Park

Cc Cllr. Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration  
Cllr. Angela Macpherson, Deputy Leader  
Cllr. Gareth Williams, Deputy Leader  
Joy Morrissey MP  
Sarah Green MP

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