

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

Ms Maria Bowen
Planning Casework Unit
Dept. for levelling Up, Housing and Communities
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH



15th March 2024

Dear Ms Bowen,

Re: Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938. Application by Buckinghamshire Council for a proposed long lease disposal of Mansfield Farm and Round Coppice Estate, Iver Heath for construction of a motorway service area.

I write in response to Buckinghamshire Council's letter of 27/02/24 and with reference to our letter to the Secretary of state of 24/10/23 (attached).

Disposal of land and use of proceeds.

Buckinghamshire Council's answer to objections to the sale of this land, and how the proceeds from the sale are to be used, are both unsatisfactory and unacceptable. Local people expect green belt land held on their behalf to be safeguarded and, if sold, capital receipts to be used locally, yet the council's only answer is to state that it has applied to the Secretary of State to sell the land and to apply capital receipts to its general fund. This merely repeats facts that are already known and that have been fiercely objected to by the Colne Valley Regional Park, Iver Parish Council, a range of other organisations, local MPs and many hundreds of individuals living in the area.

We firmly believe Bucks should be managing this land to deliver the intentions of the 1938 Green Belt act, the intentions behind the council's predecessors' acquisition of the land in 1950, and the wishes of the former landowner (I refer you to my letter of 24/10/23 for further information). Our view is that the council is the responsible body holding this land in trust on behalf of local people and city and regional visitors and it should be managing it in accordance with para 150 of NPPF and in line with the six objectives of the Colne Valley Regional Park.

I refer you to the reasons given for objection in our letter to the Secretary of State dated 24/10/23. In addition, I make the point that a key reason given for Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Sites Committee approving the planning application was that it felt that the national benefit of an MSA outweighed the local and regional benefit of Green Belt. If the council is sacrificing local land for national benefit, then the local loss must be mitigated by allocation of all proceeds of the sale and spent in the area immediately adjacent to the MSA.

Colne Valley Park Trust
Charity Registration Number: 1181303

Registered Office: c/o Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham,
Buckinghamshire, UB9 5PG
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

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Call for an inquiry.

The council dismisses calls for a public inquiry by stating the planning matters were “carefully considered” at the Strategic Sites Committee in September and there is therefore no need for an inquiry into disposal of the Green Belt land. Having been present at the meeting, I saw little evidence of careful consideration and I will be happy to give examples of this upon request. In any case, the council’s letter of 27/02/24 gives no specific justification for why there should not be an inquiry.

The Colne Valley Regional Park urges an inquiry to review:

- the case for development and disposal of this land against the case for retention in line with the 1938 Green Belt Act; the intentions behind land acquisition in 1950; the intentions of the former landowner and the potential for this land to deliver public benefit in perpetuity.
- the case for retention of funds centrally against the case for funds to be allocated to local environmental benefit (in the event that the inquiry finds that short term financial gain overrides long term environmental benefit)

The 1938 Act was passed for the purpose of “*preservation from industrial or building development of land*” which would be beneficial to the amenities of London and the localities in which the Green Belt land was situated and the health of the inhabitants of London and those localities. Given the limited case law relating to this act and the contentious nature of the council’s proposals, it is considered that matters need to go back to first principles – therefore, it is entirely reasonable for this matter to be considered within the context of a public inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



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

Cc Jenny Caprio, Head of Legal Services, Buckinghamshire Council
Joy Morrissey MP
Steve Tuckwell MP

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