

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

Rt Hon. Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Housing, Communities, Local Government
House Of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



16th July 2024

Dear Mr Pennycook

The Colne Valley Regional Park is a great example of the positive role that Green Belt immediately next to major cities can deliver for people including access to the natural environment, with all the health and wellbeing benefits that this brings.

For many years, we have been pressing for properly joined-up thinking with regard to planning at the urban fringe. Our motivation is the rapidly increasing number of uncoordinated development proposals which not only miss huge opportunities to deliver positive benefits for millions of people living in and around the 'inner' Green Belt, but that also have a detrimental effect on the Colne Valley Regional Park .

There is no question that planning reform is long overdue. We welcome the new government's pledge to act on this, but would like to draw your attention to the real risk of the unintended consequences of 'planning by dereliction' from any 'Grey Belt' initiatives. In our experience there are very few Green Belt areas locally that have been previously developed (eg car parks). Most of the poor-quality land in the Green Belt exists because of mis-management, bad planning or illegal activity and lack of enforcement. This situation has noticeably worsened in the last ten years.


We hope the new government's planning regime can successfully balance competing development needs with social and well-being benefits of access to green space to create a win-win. We hope that any future development is to be plan-led, rather than the chaotic and highly damaging ad-hoc approach of the last few years.

The Colne Valley Regional Park has 60 years' practical experience in the management of the countryside on the urban fringe immediately to the west of London: we believe we are uniquely well-placed to act as a case study that could help inform the formulation of policy to improve the inner Green Belt across the nation for public benefit) and would like to offer you our help in doing so.

We will be only too pleased to discuss this with a member of your team to expand on how we can be of practical use in helping you establish a planning system that is genuinely fit for purpose.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Pomeroy, Colne Valley 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

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