

Uxbridge Town Centre Vision – Response from the Colne Valley Regional Park – 1st March 2025

Note: The references e.g. p.1 indicate page numbers in the main Town Centre Vision document.



Our Headline Comments

1. We commend the preparation of this town centre vision as it can help shape future change and improvement of the Uxbridge town centre and its environs.
2. One of the clear assets of the town centre is its proximity to the Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) which lies to the west of the centre and the Grand Union Canal. It is therefore very disappointing that the vision document does not draw out the CVRP's existence, its assets (though some are mentioned) and the opportunities for improved connectivity to those assets by sustainable modes of transport (active travel). The CVRP encompasses a significant part of the designated Green Belt in and adjoining the borough. Paragraph 151 of the NPPF calls on local planning authorities to “.. plan positively to enhance their (*Green Belts*) beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access ..”
3. It is well researched and evidenced that access to the natural environment can improve physical and mental health and quality of life generally. The creation and improvement of natural corridors, linking urban areas to the countryside beyond, is also essential for wildlife and biodiversity. The fact that parts of the CVRP lie outside of the Council boundary is no reason to overlook it as people and wildlife do not recognise administrative boundaries when moving about and seeking out places to go.
4. The LB Hillingdon Council is a supporter of the CVRP, and discussions have been held with your planning policy officers who had indicated that emerging planning policy documents would refer the CVRP and seek to protect and enhance its qualities and realise its potential for people's enjoyment and for the natural environment to thrive.
5. We believe it is a great asset to LBH that the CVRP organisation exists and works to improve the countryside assets in its area. The CVRP is managed by 'Groundwork', itself a charity and it draws in a significant amount of volunteer help and acts as a financial 'multiplier', generating about £10 for investment in its environment from each £1 raised. This is through obtaining grants e.g. heritage lottery and fundraising. Some more information about the CVRP is contained in our annex.
6. We ask that the vision document be revised to fully take account of what the CVRP's proximity offers to those working, living in or visiting Uxbridge Town Centre. This point permeates the whole vision document. Making appropriate references to the CVRP and giving strategy direction does not imply reducing any of the good aspects of the vision already drafted, it is about enhancing it and adding a missing dimension.
7. We commend the 2019 Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy¹ (prepared by Arup) as a general reference document. We recognise that it covers a very wide area but it does demonstrate a way of thinking and valuing a natural environment so close to urban areas. The CVRP Trust, a charitable environmental organisation, will be happy to help you, as much as is possible. Please contact SPomeroy@groundwork.org.uk or jerryunsworthplanning@gmail.com in the first instance.

¹ <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/green-infrastructure-strategy-colne-and-crane-valleys/>

A few detailed points are listed below. These are examples and, as we say in para 6 above, fundamental reference to the CVRP should be made throughout the document.

P 5: We note it is stated that “This document follows a baseline analysis stage which provided a detailed assessment of Uxbridge Town Centre and the immediate hinterland areas.” A detailed assessment should have picked up the CVRP.

p. 8 “Better links”: Reference should be made to connections from the town centre to the countryside/ natural environment beyond as well as the improvement of connections with surrounding areas within the borough.

p.58 (and later references) - the Town Centre pedestrian and cyclist links map fails to note the CVRP or routes (and opportunities for better routes) towards Denham along the Fray and towards the Ivers and nearby countryside locations e.g. Black Park and Langley Park which are within potential walking and cycling distance of the town centre. This is a missed opportunity.

p.10. “.. the baseline analysis has also looked at the immediate areas around this boundary, as well as the wider catchment for the town centre.” Again, the CVRP and areas within it should be referenced.

p.20. “...The countryside is right on its doorstep ...” We welcome reference to the rivers, the Grand Union Canal, London Loop route etc., but can this be put into the context of the CVRP?

p.58. “Uxbridge is a historic market town with a fantastic setting at the edge of London and the Colne Valley.” Again, reference to the wider CVRP would be appropriate here.

p.72 Strategic green routes and green corridors – this mapping could be much enhanced which we are happy to collaborate with you on.

p.77 Connecting Uxbridge to the Grand Union Canal and Greenspace and Leisure – again this can be enhanced by reference to the CVRP and its assets.

Basic information about the Colne Valley Regional Park

About the Colne Valley Regional Park

The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) is the first substantial taste of countryside to the west of London. The Park, founded in 1965, stretches from Rickmansworth in the north to Staines and the Thames in the south, and from Uxbridge and Heathrow in the east, to Slough and Chalfont St Peter in the west.

The CVRP occupies a strategically important part of London's Green Belt.



As the first Green Belt area west of London the CVRP offers those living in urban areas access to the natural environment, with all its attendant benefits for health and well-being. Its multi-functional roles support:

- green and blue corridors rich in biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- opportunities for nature recovery and re-wilding
- local food production
- combatting climate change
- active lifestyles, physical and mental well-being
- recreational pursuits
- flood management

We believe the CVRP is unique in having an organisation established specifically to protect and improve this area of 'inner' Green Belt on the edge of the capital, working in collaboration with local authorities and other partners. Funding is, however, minimal.

The Colne Valley Park Trust oversees the park and is a registered charity. Day-to-day operations are managed and implemented through a contract with Groundwork South, a not-for-profit company operating in the environmental sector.

Everything we do in the park is guided by its six objectives. These are consistent with national planning policy for the Green Belt:

1. **Landscape:** To maintain and enhance the landscape, historic environment and waterscape of the park in terms of their scenic and conservation value, and their overall amenity.
2. **Countryside:** To safeguard the countryside of the Park from inappropriate development. Where development is permissible it will encourage the highest possible standards of design.
3. **Biodiversity:** To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Park through the protection and management of its species, habitats and geological features. We are the home of many areas of nature importance.
4. **Recreation:** To provide opportunities for countryside recreation and ensure that facilities are accessible to all.
5. **Rural Economy:** To achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural economy, including farming and forestry, underpinning the value of the countryside.
6. **Community Participation:** To encourage community participation including volunteering and environmental education. To promote the health and social well-being benefits that access to high quality green space brings.