



Statement for Slough Borough Council from CVRP in connection with May 2025 ‘Call for Sites’ exercise to inform Local Plan preparation.

Commentary

The new Slough Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation and will be very important to guide future development and the management of undeveloped land around Slough

Whilst the ‘call for sites’ normally focusses on options for where built development could happen, considering how the countryside around Slough can best be protected and enhanced will be critical if other objectives for the emerging Plan are to be also achieved. Slough’s adjoining countryside should be planned in an integrated way with the urban area to realise its multi-functional potential – with benefits for physical and mental health of Slough residents, addressing the biodiversity crisis, combatting climate change, obesity, for local food production and so on.

Looking for opportunities to enhance what the local countryside can offer

Opportunities to connect the urban areas and to its (enhanced) nearby countryside will be key to offering a high quality of life for future residents and workers, not merely planning for the protection of identified parks, nature reserves and the like. That said there are already some special places within the CVRP in or close to the Slough BC area such as:

- Pippins Park, Crown Meadow and Albany Park
- Colne Valley Trail
- Riverside paths heading north from Colnbrook Village and opportunity to create a circular walk by looping back by irreplaceable ancient woodland at Old Wood
- Arthur Jacobs Nature Reserve & Poyle Poplars Community Woodland
- Harmondsworth Moor

The emerging Local Plan should plan for connectivity opportunities, with green corridors for people and wildlife planned for at the outset and strong policies to protect and enhance its Green Belt, ensuring that any future development contributes to the enhancement of its countryside.

We contribute at this early stage of the Plan to highlight the value of planning for that protection and enhancement of the countryside around Slough and in particular the Colne Valley Regional Park that adjoins the urban area to the east, separating Slough from the metropolis. This is an area of Green Belt that has a strategic and long-term role to contribute to a high quality of life for residents and green corridors for wildlife and active travel.

With population and density growing rapidly in Slough, London and other centres, realising the CVRP’s intrinsic value and potential will be more important than ever.

The CVRP is a key part of that countryside that has existed since 1965. It is run by a registered charity with a mission to safeguard the area for future generations, enabling it to realise its full potential. The December 2024 NPPF states:

“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.” (in Para 151)

The Green Belt around Slough has been in existence for decades and the Local Plan provides the platform to strategically plan for the future of the area.



Statement from Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) – May 2025

Working in partnership with the CVRP

The CVRP has a vision and 6 [objectives](#) (repeated below). Everything we do in the Park is guided by its six objectives. These are consistent with national planning policy for the Green Belt and relate to:

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.

The CVRP runs on a small core budget but levers in major funding for countryside improvements. We offer to work collaboratively with Slough Borough Council in a cross Local Authority manner - people and wildlife do not recognise LA boundaries when they move about.

We look to the Council to include a CVRP enhancement policy in the Plan and point to the most advanced Local Plan for a LA in the southern part of the CVRP, Spelthorne. We have supported the policy wording in the annex that has gone through examination and, earlier this month, consultation on Major Modifications.

We also commend reference to the [2019 Colne and Crane Valleys GI Strategy](#) as a starting point for evidence to underpin the emerging Plan and also to the 2020 'Joint Connectivity Statement' (separately attached) which takes a cross LA approach to improving active travel routes in the eastern part of the Borough.

The CVRP Trust, a charitable environmental organisation, looks forward to **working with you** on the development of the Local Plan. Please contact SPomeroy@groundwork.org.uk or jerryunsworthplanning@gmail.com in the first instance.

The extent of the Colne Valley Regional Park



Spelthorne BC Local Plan – CVRP policy with agreed changes

SP5: Colne Valley Regional Park

- 1) The extent of the Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) within the Borough is defined on the Policies Map. As a member of the CVRP, the Council will seek to maintain the character and landscape of the Park and promote its benefits and enhancement.
- 2) The Council will expect proposals for development within the Colne Valley Park to make a positive and sustainable contribution towards implementing the objectives of the Park. The Council will support, in principle, development within the Park where it can be demonstrated that it will:
 - (a) maintain and enhance the landscape and historic environment of the Park and its overall amenity value;
 - (b) contribute to the objectives of the Park;
 - (c) conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Park through the protection and management of its species, habitats and geological features;
 - (d) provide opportunities for countryside recreation and ensure that facilities are accessible to all;
 - (e) contribute to a vibrant and sustainable rural economy within the Park;
 - (f) encourage community participation, including volunteering and environmental education, and promote the health and social well-being through high quality green space and its contribution to the wider green infrastructure network and;
 - (g) carry out appropriate surveys, should development within the Park amount to changes to biodiversity areas or designations and recreational facilities.

Reasoned Justification

- 5.22 The Colne Valley Regional Park covers over 10,000 hectares to the west of London. It forms a narrow corridor of countryside, much of it within the Green Belt, stretching from Rickmansworth in the north to Staines and Wraysbury in the South where the River Colne joins the Thames. It is some 14 miles long and 3 miles wide at its widest point. It straddles a number of local authority boundaries. The area within Spelthorne covers some 1,000 hectares and comprises three major reservoirs, the areas of Staines Moor, Hithermoor and the settlement of Stanwell Moor. In addition, the River Colne SNCI and King George VI SSSI are key features and located within the Park.
- 5.23 The Colne Valley Regional Park was conceived in the 1960's with the broad aims of providing for informal recreation in a countryside setting. The original objectives remain just as valid today, although they have been updated, modified and extended over the last 50 years:
 1. 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.



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2. To resist urbanisation of the Colne Valley Park and to safeguard existing areas of countryside from inappropriate development.
 3. To conserve the biodiversity resources of the Park through the protection and management of its diverse plant and animal species, habitats and geological features.
 4. To provide opportunities for countryside recreation including appropriate accessible facilities.
 5. To achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural economy, including farming and forestry, underpinning the value of the countryside.
 6. To encourage community participation including volunteering and environmental education and promote the benefits of health and social well-being afforded by access to high quality green space.
- 5.24 The Council supports the objectives of the Park and will seek to ensure that land within it is kept open and available for informal recreation where possible and that any proposals for development make a positive contribution to the setting of the Park, its landscape and recreational potential.
- 5.25 The CVRP produced the Colne and Crane Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2019 which highlighted numerous challenges facing the Park. These challenges include significant development pressure and the need to enhance green infrastructure assets. Improving the network of green infrastructure could benefit Spelthorne by enhancing linkages to the CVRP and wider areas within the Borough. By supporting the approach by CVRP, this presents the Council with the opportunity to enhance beneficial use of the Green Belt linked with the Park, where appropriate.