

Colne Valley Regional Park

Criteria and Process for any potential extension of the Park boundary

1.0 Current boundary

1.1 The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) was established in the mid 1960s, when nine local authorities agreed to work together to recognise and protect this precious landscape. The boundaries were drawn to include all the open land visible from the valley floor between Rickmansworth and Denham, with small adjustments to fit in with recognisable landscape features. The boundaries were defined by the urban fringe of London to the east, and the River Thames to the south. The western edge was defined by development at Langley and Datchet, and then ran roughly parallel to the River Colne, taking in Langley Park and Black Park.

1.2 Additions made in the 1980s and '90s have included the Misbourne Valley below Chalfont St Peter, land around the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal near Langley, and green space near Staines town centre. The park now covers an area of 110 sq km.

2.0 Criteria to consider for potential new area

2.1 The Colne Valley Regional Park is not a statutory designation so the process for changes to its boundary is simpler than that required for statutory landscape areas such as National Parks and National Landscapes.

2.2 Having taken account of how other organisations have approached boundary variations, the CVRP Trust has identified the following tests to be applied when considering proposed new areas:

A. Connectivity: Any new areas added to the Regional Park should demonstrate good connectivity with the current Regional Park. The following points would have to be considered:

- The land must be part of the Colne Catchment
- Landscape type in the proposed new area must be similar to that in the rest of the Park as described in the CVRP Landscape Character Assessment
- The new area must be adjacent areas to the current boundary
- The new area should complement the original reasons for establishment of the CVRP boundaries and subsequent alterations

B. Evidence Of Existing Value or Potential value: Is there convincing evidence that the proposed area will contribute, or has potential to contribute, towards implementation of the six Colne Valley Park Objectives? This might include:

- Existing or possible public access connections
- An important existing or potential wildlife corridor
- An existing or potential quality landscape
- Opportunity for active farming, forestry or other rural businesses
- Countryside or urban fringe with potential for restoration
- Opportunities for discrete projects that further the CVRP's objectives

C. Support and sustainability: Is there tangible and long-term support from the local planning authority for the proposed extension? Is there a means of resourcing the work of the CVRP in the additional area?

Are there Plan and Policy commitments (even if only ‘in principle’) from local authorities for next draft Local Plan or neighbourhood plan to include reference to CVRP and a CVRP policy (informed by the model policy in Appendix 2 of the Colne Green Infrastructure Strategy)?

Up-front requirement from those that are proposing the boundary extension to cover the costs required to do so. (see section 4.2)

3.0 Process. The process is as follows:

1. A formal written request from the Parish Council, local planning authority or residents’ association for the CVRP Trust to extend the CVRP boundary. Where there is more than one tier of council, all tiers should be informed of the request
2. CVRP Trust will assess the request and produce a report based on the criteria (section 2.0 above) and undertake a cost/benefit analysis including analysis of opportunities to deliver the six objectives of the CVRP for local benefit.
3. CVRP to seek formal approval of Parish Council or Local Planning Authority. Note: in two-tier areas approval is only needed from one tier, but there must be clear communication to both and no objection from the other tier.
4. Approval by CVRP Trust Board to implement the boundary change

4.0 Cost/benefit analysis

4.1 Trustees should consider:

- Project and funding opportunities
- Any LPA/Parish Council offers of funding support (this should be viewed as ‘catalyst funding’ as outlined in section 4.2 below)
- Current and future opportunities for new corporate supporters.
- Costs of updating maps, websites, webpages etc;

4.2 ‘Catalyst funding’ must be at a level sufficient to enable the CVRP Trust to build the partnerships, projects and other funding from external sources to implement the six objectives of the Park. ‘Catalyst’ funding must be in the region of £5,000-£15,000+ per area, per year at a level proportionate to the size of the area, population and contributions from long-standing supporters (including Denham and Iver) at circa 2025 prices and contributions. This catalyst funding should run over a period of at least 3-5 years. During that time, the CVRP Trust will demonstrate value for money, build partnerships and develop other sources of funding.