

COLNE VALLEY PARK - Community Interest Company



Position Statement on Heathrow Rail Access Schemes September 2018

Context

The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) is the first large taste of countryside to the west of London; an area for people, wildlife and many uses, including farming and angling. The Park, (founded in 1965) stretches from Rickmansworth in the north to Staines and the Thames in the south, Uxbridge and Heathrow in the east, and to Slough and Chalfont in the west.

It is championed by the Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company (CVPCIC) which has agreed this position statement in view of proposed rail access schemes to Heathrow that potentially have a direct, significant and adverse impact on the Park.

The CIC's locus is to protect and enhance the Regional Park through six objectives (see page 2 of this note). The CVPCIC notes:

- a) That strategic rail access improvements are likely to be part of the future management of the significant transportation demands to/ from Heathrow – demands that are likely to grow with the government decision in principle to proceed with the third runway.
- b) That without improved rail access, there is a threat that environmental conditions around Heathrow and in the Park could worsen, with pressure increasing for yet further car parks and added road space in the proximity of Heathrow, including in the CVRP.
- c) That with improved rail access there will be negative environmental impacts including impacts on rivers.

Position Statement

In light of the above, the CIC's stance on rail access schemes in the foreseeable future will be one of:

- a. A starting point of opposition in principle in any circumstances where a proposed scheme is in direct opposition to the six objectives of the Colne Valley Regional Park.
- b. A fundamental concern about the impact of railway projects on the openness and environmental quality of the Colne Valley Regional Park (and associated Green Belt/similarly protected areas) and concern about the cumulative impact with other schemes.
- c. The CIC will, however, be prepared to challenge, inform and negotiate with promoters, and will seek to influence local authorities and other bodies. The level of the CIC's input will be relative to the level of support/ formal approval to the principle of the scheme at a government/ strategic policy level and resource availability. The CIC's input will be geared to ensure:
 - There is comprehensive mitigation, including in relation to any loss of green space, public rights of way, ecology, flooding and cumulative impact;
 - Design/appearance of surface/visible features and landscaping is of the highest quality to enhance the locality;
 - Any new railway infrastructure is part of an overall transportation plan to mitigate the overall impact of airport-related activity;
 - Surface connectivity works for leisure trips and access to the CVRP as well as for business/ freight/ air passenger trips;
 - The CIC will look to promoters to resolve identified issues/ clarify appropriate mitigation prior to submission of applications for formal approval (DCO or otherwise).

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ANNEX

The six objectives of the Colne Valley Regional Park are:

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.
2. To safeguard the countryside of the Park from inappropriate development. Where development is permissible it will encourage the highest possible standards of design.
3. To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Park through the protection and management of its species, habitats and geological features
4. To provide opportunities for countryside recreation and ensure that facilities are accessible to all
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. To promote the health and social well-being benefits that access to high quality green space brings.