



A river runs through us: **our Catchment Plan 2025-2030**

‘An urban river corridor teeming with life and unconstrained by pollution, serving as a community resource where people can connect with nature and improve their well-being.’

Crane Valley Partnership's overarching vision



Our purpose

This document sets out the approach of the Crane Valley Partnership (CVP) to enhancing the community and environmental value of the River Crane catchment in West London. The purpose is to provide a framework for stakeholder activity planning over the next five years to 2030 alongside an overall vision that will support the activities of the Partnership to 2035. For background information on CVP please see: <https://www.cranevalley.org.uk/cvp-structure>

Existing Plans

Our intention is not to reinvent the wheel but instead to build on the firm foundations provided by the following existing documents:

- All London Green Grid River Colne and Crane Area Framework 10 2012
- The Crane Valley A Water Framework Directive Catchment Plan 2013
- Crane Valley Partnership Strategy for the Crane Catchment 2018 to 2028
- Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy 2019
- River Crane Smarter Water Catchment Plans – 2021 onwards
- State of the Crane Environment Reports 2022 and 2025
- Crane Valley Business Plan – to be updated as part of this process
- Public Engagement Strategy and EDI Plan
- Lower Crane Re-naturalisation and Enhancement Plan 2023
- Yeading Brook Unbound: Draft Project Vision 2024
- Crane Valley Story Guide 2025

Any public-facing documents listed above can be found in the CVP Library <https://www.cranevalley.org.uk/project-archive-library/>

Our principles

These guiding principles underpin the Partnership's operations:

- We always consider both the blue and green spaces of the Crane Valley. As an urban catchment many of the green open spaces are along the river corridors
- The catchment based approach underpins everything we do – as the river catchment is the natural landscape based unit for effective management. All the catchment's rivers are considered to be equally important
- Partnership working is essential to delivering sustainable improvements in complex urban open space and river environments with many (often competing) interests
- Community involvement is integral to our effectiveness and in particular involving audiences who would not normally engage, including those who face barriers to engaging
- Community AND environmental protections and improvements are the objective of each proposal by the Partnership
- Maintaining the status quo for our rivers and open spaces is already a major challenge for existing organisations and networks. Major and sustainable improvements, as proposed in this document, require incremental and systemic change to the way these networks function – so as to create a rich “connective tissue” of inter-linked organisations fully integrated into all our local communities
- We will pursue a small number of strategic objectives that collectively have the potential to embrace all the outcomes we seek in the Crane Valley
- Our strategic objectives will always provide a wide range of social, health, economic and environmental benefits and will be delivered through a broad network of funding from key beneficiaries

Catchment overview



Catchment area: 125 km²

Total length of watercourses: c.65 km

Larger watercourses: Yeading Brook (western branch, eastern branch and combined section), River Crane, Upper and Lower Duke of Northumberland's River, Longford River

Smaller watercourses: Smarts Brook, Ickenham Stream, Frogs Ditch, Hounslow Drain, Whitton Stream

London Boroughs: Harrow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Hounslow, Richmond upon Thames

Population: > 650,000

Major population centres: North Harrow, Rayners Lane, Ruislip, Ickenham, Yeading, Hayes, Cranford, North Feltham, Whitton, Hanworth, Twickenham, Isleworth

Major transport infrastructure: Heathrow Airport, RAF Northolt, M40, M4, M3, A30, Great Western Railway, Chiltern Railway, HS2, London Underground

Catchment Partnership: Crane Valley Partnership

Adopted catchment: Portlane Brook (includes Felthamhill Brook and Lower Feltham Brook). [**Councils:** London Borough of Spelthorne and Surrey County Council]

Crane Valley gallery



Yeadon Brook West at Headstone Manor Park



Yeadon Brook East at Newton Park West



Yeadon Brook at Yeadon Brook Meadows



UDNR near Heathrow Airport



River Crane in the Hayes area



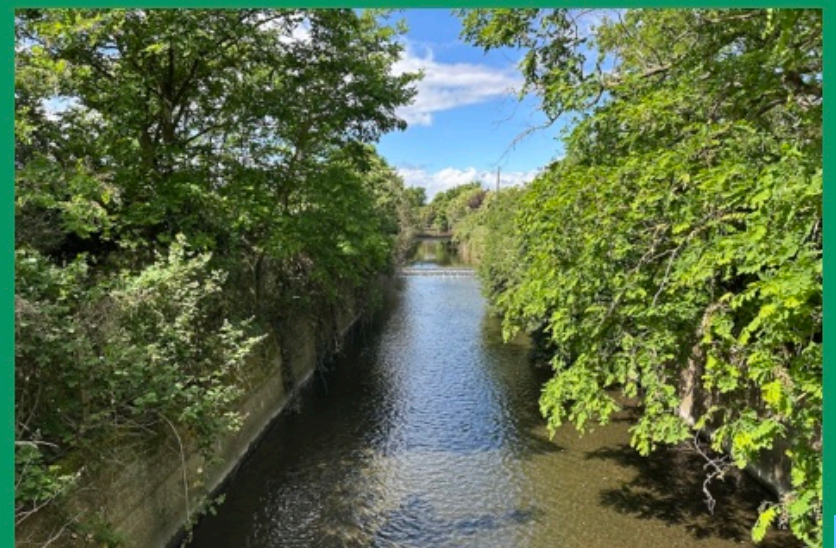
River Crane at Brazil Mill Wood



Longford River, Hanworth area



LDNR in Twickenham



Lower Crane in Twickenham

Our six strategic objectives



Achieve Good Ecological Status

(or Good Ecological Potential if appropriate) - as defined and assessed by the Environment Agency.



Deliver the Crane Valley Trail: *a continuous walking and cycling route from near the river's source in Harrow to the Thames at Isleworth.*



‘Slow the Flow’ - *direct rainwater and urban run-off to the river via wetlands and SuDS, and reconnect the river with its floodplain to reduce flood risk.*



A Home for Water Voles - *create and maintain high quality habitat that can support water voles (and therefore also many other species).*



'A River Runs Through Us' - *increase public awareness and appreciation of the Crane Valley's rivers and associated open spaces and encourage active engagement.*



No Orphan Stretches - *no gaps in community stewardship along the river corridor*

Note: Objectives 1-6 are not presented in order of priority

Assessing our progress

We will use the following **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to assess our progress towards our goals over the next five years:

Achieve Good Ecological status	Environment Agency data for Ammonia and Dissolved Oxygen RMI/EA invertebrate data (species richness expressed as number of taxa)
Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Percentage of the defined trail marked and accessible for walkers defined trail Percentage of the defined trail accessible for cyclists, wheelchair and buggy users
‘Slow the Flow’	Increased flood storage in river corridors calculated by volume attenuated Increased flood storage in SuDS and wetland systems calculated by volume attenuated
A Home for Water Voles	Extent of river vegetation and physical habitat in good condition as assessed by Modular River Physical (MoRPh) survey and the River Condition Assessment (RCA) Length of river corridor inhabited by water voles
A River Runs Through Us	Number of community stewardship groups in the Crane Valley Number of organisations that offer regular (more than 6/year) volunteering opportunities
No Orphan Stretches	Percentage of river corridor with community stewardship groups

N.B. Other metrics can also be used for assessment and reporting purposes. If they are judged to provide a better overall assessment of our progress we will revise the listing above accordingly.

Linking SoCER 2025 actions to our strategic objectives

The State of the Crane Environment Report 2025 (SoCER25) identified 35 targets for the time period up to 2035 across the five SWC themes. These are set out in the tables below – which also indicate their relationship to the six Strategic Objectives.

Public awareness, access and participation

	Achieve Good Ecological Status	Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Slow the flow	A home for water voles	The River Runs Through Us	No orphan stretches
	<i>Achieve Good Ecological Status (or Good Ecological Potential if appropriate) - as defined and assessed by the Environment Agency</i>	<i>Establish a continuous walking and cycling route from near the source in Harrow to the Thames at Isleworth</i>	<i>Direct rainwater and urban run-off to the river via wetlands and SuDS, and reconnect the river with its floodplain to reduce flood risk</i>	<i>Create and maintain high quality habitat that can support water voles (and therefore also many other species)</i>	<i>Increase public awareness and appreciation of the Crane Valley's rivers and associated open spaces and encourage active engagement</i>	<i>No gaps in community stewardship along the river corridor</i>
Doubled stewardship and built capacity through volunteering and citizen science					✓	✓
Established funding streams for community groups to access.						✓
Encouraged new audiences to take an active role in the promotion, management and enhancement of the river corridor through volunteering and citizen science.	✓			✓	✓	✓
Built on engagements in the areas of limited community involvement to place every stretch of the river corridor under community stewardship.					✓	✓
Strengthened forums and widened participation in them to enable best practice to be shared and bring together interested stakeholders.		✓			✓	

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Encouraged diverse community participation in environmental stewardship through the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan.	✓			✓	✓	✓
Encourage broad community and political support for the Crane SWC.		✓			✓	
Developed a joined-up high quality network of public spaces through the Crane Valley Trail project.		✓			✓	
Worked with landowners to ensure that the Crane Valley Trail is accessible to all.		✓			✓	
Developed a distinctive and cohesive identity for the catchment.		✓			✓	
Encouraged the development of nodal points of community facilities to support public engagement.		✓			✓	✓
Developed green travel targets for the Crane Valley Trail and linked trails with public transport, councils and businesses' Green Travel Plans.		✓			✓	
Developed a variety of communication channels including maps and information leaflets.		✓			✓	

Enhance flood resilience

	Achieve Good Ecological Status	Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Slow the flow	A home for water voles	The River Runs Through Us	No orphan stretches
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Surface and sewer flood risk: we would like to see an increase in local SuDS schemes developed from the surface water flood studies being undertaken within the national flood risk programme, with at least ten SuDS schemes built in the catchment.	✓		✓			
Public engagement: we need to keep working with people living in the catchment, encouraging them to contribute directly to reducing flood risk in their communities – for instance by de-paving front gardens and/or installing water butts.			✓		✓	
River flood risk: there are opportunities to make more use of the green spaces within the river corridor to store flood water. This could reduce the risk of flooding to property and infrastructure or offset the effect of climate change. In particular there are four green spaces in the catchment where restoration of river habitat could be coupled with reconnecting parts of the floodplain to create additional natural storage for flood water. We would like to work with partners to develop schemes at these and other sites.	✓		✓	✓		

Improve water quality

	Achieve Good Ecological Status	Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Slow the flow	A home for water voles	The River Runs Through Us	No orphan stretches
	Achieve Good Ecological Status (or Good Ecological Potential if appropriate) - as defined and assessed by the Environment Agency	Establish a continuous walking and cycling route from near the source in Harrow to the Thames at Isleworth	Direct rainwater and urban run-off to the river via wetlands and SuDS, and reconnect the river with its floodplain to reduce flood risk	Create and maintain high quality habitat that can support water voles (and therefore also many other species)	Increase public awareness and appreciation of the Crane Valley's rivers and associated open spaces and encourage active engagement	No gaps in community stewardship along the river corridor
Achieve Good Ecological Status for natural water bodies or Good Ecological Potential for heavily modified water bodies throughout the catchment.	✓			✓		
Track the impacts that restoration/ improvement initiatives have had on biodiversity e.g. the enhancement project at Spider Park and improvements soon to place as a result of the Yeading Brook Unbound Project.	✓			✓		
Track the history of, and compare, Thames Water's outfalls using the new referencing system.	✓			✓		
Resolve chronic pollution issues identified on the Yeading Brook East.	✓			✓		
Continue river restoration work across the catchment to improve water quality.	✓			✓		
Recruit more volunteers to ensure Citizen Crane project continuity beyond 2030.	✓				✓	✓

Geomorphology

	Achieve Good Ecological Status	Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Slow the flow	A home for water voles	The River Runs Through Us	No orphan stretches
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Detailed identification of restoration opportunities and the delivery of proposals for restoration projects throughout the catchment. We now understand where investment in restoration will deliver the greatest benefits for people and nature and have identified broad restoration opportunities for all parts of the river network.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
The identified opportunities will be progressively translated into pre-project surveys and proposals for specific locations that will be ready for implementation as funding becomes available.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Volunteers who would like to join us in this work and monitoring its outcomes will be welcomed and integrated into any aspects in which they express an interest.					✓	
We will use post project and post recovery surveys to understand how effective schemes have been at improving the river environment and use this information to inform design of future schemes.	✓		✓	✓		
We will use post project and post recovery surveys to understand how effective schemes have been at improving the river environment and use this information to inform design of future schemes.	✓		✓	✓		

Enhance biodiversity and environmental connectivity

	Good Ecological Status	Deliver the Crane Valley Trail	Slow the flow	A home for water voles	The River Runs Through Us	No orphan stretches
	<i>Achieve Good Ecological Status (or Good Ecological Potential if appropriate) - as defined and assessed by the Environment Agency</i>	<i>Establish a continuous walking and cycling route from near the source in Harrow to the Thames at Isleworth</i>	<i>Direct rainwater and urban run-off to the river via wetlands and SuDS, and reconnect the river with its floodplain to reduce flood risk.</i>	<i>Create and maintain high quality habitat that can support water voles (and therefore also many other species)</i>	<i>Increase public awareness and appreciation of the Crane Valley's rivers and associated open spaces and encourage active engagement</i>	<i>No gaps in community stewardship along the river corridor</i>
Achieve 'Good Ecological Status' or 'Good Ecological Potential' (as appropriate) throughout the Crane catchment.	✓			✓		
Track the impacts that restoration/ improvement initiatives have had on biodiversity e.g. the enhancement project at Spider Park and improvements soon to take place as a result of the Yeading Brook Unbound Project.	✓			✓		
Water voles re-establish across catchment/ habitat expanded across the catchment.				✓		
Improve fish passage between the Thames and Crane.	✓					
INNS management at a catchment-wide level for mink and floating pennywort.	✓			✓		
Develop management plans for each local borough.	✓			✓	✓	✓
Improve ecological connectivity between habitat patches.	✓					
Obtain more information about the ecology of the Longford River.				✓		
Work with Cartographer to gather and explore natural riparian zone data across the catchment to better understand the impacts of recent and potential future river restoration activities and subsequent links to biodiversity improvements.	✓			✓		



Delivering the vision

We want to involve as many organisations and local community groups as possible in the effort to achieve the ambition set out in this catchment plan.

Over the next five years we will be encouraging our SWC Theme Leads and stakeholders in CVP's wider partner network to apply for grants from relevant funding sources (including the Crane Valley Grant Programme) to support their efforts to deliver the strategic objectives.

CVP as the formally recognised catchment partnership will continue to provide the forum for discussion, exchange of ideas and collective decision-making, helping to ensure that everyone's efforts to protect and enhance the Crane river system and associated open spaces occur in a coordinated fashion - delivering economies of scale and tangible benefits for the catchment as whole. CVP will actively promote the work and celebrate the successes of partner organisations and local community groups through its website, social media channels, newsletter and events.

By working together in partnership we can and will build on the considerable success to date and continue to transform the Crane Valley for the benefit of people and nature.

The capacity and sustainability of CVP is central to delivering our bold vision for the catchment. The Crane Valley Community Interest Company (CVCIC) took on the CVP hosting role in 2021 and is currently mandated to deliver the service until March 2031. This provides continuity and stability throughout the period of this catchment plan, subject to securing adequate core funding to support the hosting operation.

Eight CVP partners (five boroughs, the EA, Thames Water and Heathrow Airport Limited) provide core operational funding for CVP on an annual basis. Smarter Water Catchments (SWC) funding from Thames Water started in 2021 and has greatly boosted the Partnership's capacity for project delivery. SWC funding is scheduled to continue until at least 2030 (though as of June 2025 this was not guaranteed).

A robust catchment partnership, adequately funded and energetically supported by stakeholders, is vital for the successful delivery of this ambitious catchment plan. The Partnership is seeking to diversify the funding streams for core operations and project delivery, building on the

last five years, and developing new sources of financial and in-kind support from all interested parties. The approach is set out in the CVP Business Plan, an updated version of which is scheduled for 2025.



To discuss any aspect of this first edition (August 2025) of the Catchment Plan 2025-2030, please contact:
cvp@cvcic.org.uk

