

A NIP in the Autumn Statement Ignores Rural England

George Osborne didn't mention the word "rural" even once in his speech. It's not there in the printed Autumn Statement either. This is a statement that's centred on cities and ignores the needs of rural people. There is some more money for affordable housing but this is less than a third of the £15.1 billion budget allocated for roads.

This would not be such a big problem if Eric Pickles hadn't last week removed the requirement of housing schemes of ten or less houses to provide a contribution towards affordable housing. Declaring long-standing S106 practices promoted by successive governments and councils of all political persuasions are a "stealth tax", he said the move would help small and self-builders. Most housing schemes in rural areas are very small. We are heading towards a situation where building of affordable houses in some parts of the country will grind to a halt.

The Autumn Statement and accompanying National Infrastructure Plan weren't the least bit green either. George Osborne did not mention the environment at all. Instead, he continues to promote fracking and cutting taxes on fossil fuels, as well as promoting the biggest road building programme since the 1970s. This is an Autumn Statement delivered during the winter. We are heading towards 2014 being one of the warmest years on record, but the political agenda is looking the other way.

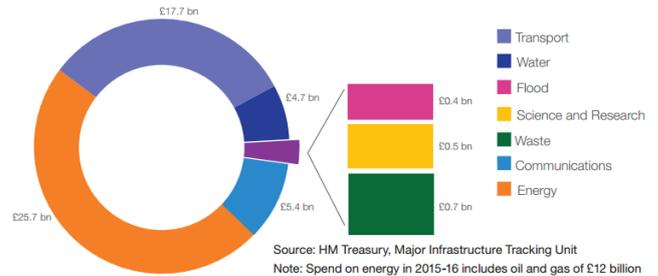
Andy Boddington

Three Statements

Affordable housing. A week last Friday, Eric Pickles issued new planning guidance that pulled the rug from under most affordable rural housing. Small developments will no longer have to make a S106 contribution to affordable housing stripping the countryside of houses so desperately needed for people who were born and work in the area, let alone the carers needed for growing elderly rural population 🏰.

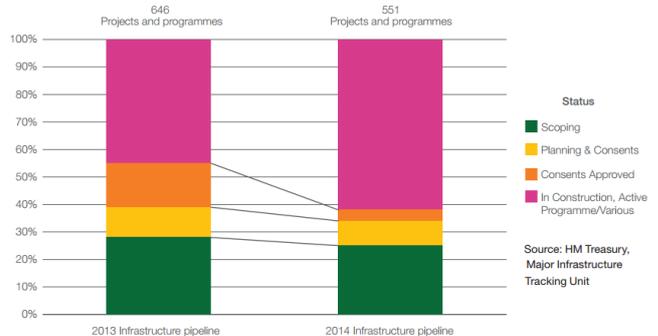
National Infrastructure Plan (NIP). On Tuesday, Treasury Secretary Alexander published the revised *National Infrastructure Plan*. He said it would deliver: "A radical new approach to housing, £2.3 billion of investment in flood defences and £15 billion of road improvements." Press release 🏰. NIP 🏰🏰🏰🏰. The DfT also published the *Road Investment Strategy Overview* 🏰 (RIS). The RIS is equivalent to the arrangements the government has with Network Rail. It will be adopted when the *Infrastructure Bill* completes its passage through parliament.

Chart ES.1: 2014 infrastructure pipeline, by sector, spend in 2015-16



Source: HM Treasury, Major Infrastructure Tracking Unit
Note: Spend on energy in 2015-16 includes oil and gas of £12 billion

Chart ES.2: Projects and programmes in infrastructure pipeline, by status



Autumn Statement (AS). On Wednesday, George Osborne delivered the *Autumn Statement*. "The statement sets out a comprehensive package to boost productivity through investment in infrastructure, including roads, rail, flood defences and science... The government is also taking further action to rebalance the economy by building a northern powerhouse, improving the connectivity of the south-west of England, devolving unprecedented powers to local areas through city deals and local growth deals, and supporting the North Sea oil and gas industry." 🏰. In this eBulletin, (AS1.111) refers to paragraph 1.111 in the [full statement](#). The House of Commons Library has published a summary of the AS, which concentrates on aspects the statement not reported below 🏰. The Library has produced a more technical paper on the latest economic indicators, including the north-south divide 🏰.

Planning

Minor changes. There were no major planning changes announced in the suite of statements. The AS and NIP forewarn of a number of relatively minor changes to the planning regime but are short on the detail.

Need. Developers will only be required to establish the need for their development once (AS1.141). I take this as encouraging repeat applications for commercial and housing developments that do not get approved the first time, but we will need to see the detail.

S106. The government will consult on speeding up S106 negotiations on matters like affordable housing (AS1.141). This extends the government's controversial proposals in the Infrastructure Bill to cut delays after planning permission is awarded through "deemed discharge" 🏰🏰.

Special measures. Local councils will have to decide 50% of major planning applications within 13 weeks or an agreed extended timetable to avoid facing special measures which allow developers apply directly to the planning inspectorate (AS1.141). The current target is 40%. *Planning* magazine lists 24 authorities below the 50% threshold, including Eastbourne (44%), Lewes (42%) and Christchurch (34%) 🏰.

Minor applications (1). “Publishing new data on local authorities’ performance in meeting their statutory duty to process smaller planning applications within 8 weeks” (AS1.141). This may refer to nothing more than the recent clarification on data in performance [Table P131](#). Communities department statisticians tell me that planning authorities are using many more planning performance agreements for minor applications. These agree a longer than eight week timescale – thus disguising an apparent slow-down of planning performance.

Minor applications (2). The government pledges to work with industry and local authorities to see if more can be done to support the approval of small sites (AS1.141). In the second quarter of 2014, 85% of minor applications were granted, around the same as major applications. The wide range of approval rates from 52% in Maldon, Essex to 100% in several authorities ([Table P131](#)).

Brownfield. The AS commits the government to streamlining the Compulsory Purchase Regime to bring forward more brownfield land for development. Proposals for a consultation will be announced in the 2015 Budget Statement, so there are unlikely to be any changes until well after the general election (AS1.119). The government’s consultation on S106 contributions last summer found that councils supported a stronger line on brownfield first but builders were against it. In its response to the consultation published last week, the communities department did not comment brownfield policy [🏠](#).

Town centres. The business rates discount for shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants with a rateable value of up to £50,000 will be increased to £1,500 in 2015-16. The government is to carry out a review of the future structure of business rates to report by Budget 2016 (AS1.160/161). This is expected to examine whether business rates can be lowered for high street stores to allow them to compete with online sellers, though the review will be “fiscally neutral” limiting room for manoeuvre [📊](#).

Growth and Devolution

Local growth. The £12 billion Local Growth Fund will be topped up by £1 billion. LEPs will be able to bid to “support for local projects as part of their ambitious plans for growth” (AS1.182).

Northern Powerhouse. The AS gives a commitment to the Northern Powerhouse announced in June, but gives few firm commitments for action, including on the devolution of spending powers [📊](#) [📰](#) [FT](#). KPMG said: “City leaders across the country will be drowning their sorrows tonight after the Chancellor offered warm words but nothing of substance on devolution” [📰](#). An interim report on a transport strategy will be available by March 2015, including plans for a HS3 cross-Pennine link. A commitment to “look at” accelerating construction of the northern section of HS2 is reiterated. There is a package of transport, science projects and other measures, not all of which are new announcements, totalling £7 billion (AS1.185-194). Writing in the Manchester Evening news, George Osborne said: “There is a real sense of buzz around the north at the moment, and I want to show it off to the world with a Great Exhibition in the North – to show off the best art, design and culture from the north” [📰](#). The government will provide £1 million towards the Great Exhibition (AS2.249).

Affordable Housing ‘Stealth Tax’

Affordable housing cut. Under the slogan “cutting stealth taxes and boosting small builders”, Eric Pickles removed the requirement for housing developments of ten homes or less to provide a contribution towards affordable housing [🏠](#) [🏠](#) [🏠](#). The new rules do not apply to rural exception sites. Planning guidance has been updated to reflect the new rules which apply immediately [🏠](#). Mr Pickles said:

This will also be a massive boost to the self-build and custom-build sector. Overnight in many parts of England, it will be cheaper to build an extension, a family annex or just build your own home. Our long-term economic plan is helping hard-working people. Section 106 agreements can run to more than the cost of building a home in the first place. They then render the company’s development plans unviable.

In its summary of responses to its consultation on the move, the government says that local authorities generally opposed the move while builders supported it, but no numbers are given [🏠](#).

Reaction. The move was welcomed by the Home Builders Federation and the Mayor of London. However, housing associations and most councils are aghast. Developers think the move will lead to higher community infrastructure levy payments [📰](#). Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) called for villages with a population of less than 3,000 to be exempt and said [BBC](#):

This change would have a catastrophic effect on the numbers of affordable houses coming forward for local communities. It also flies in the face of allowing local communities to take responsibility for the numbers and types of houses that they want.

National parks. At the beginning of November, the heads of England’s ten national parks sent an open letter to Eric Pickles [📰](#) [YP](#). They said:

Any threshold risks seriously threatening our ability to facilitate affordable housing in National Parks for local needs, particularly in our smallest and most remote local communities... We are clear that only an exemption for National Parks from this particular proposal will avoid the serious unintended consequences for affordable housing. The need for new affordable housing is just too great, that any change that makes it harder rather than easier to deliver new affordable housing in National Parks will be felt acutely by our rural communities.

Lower rural thresholds. The new planning guidance allows for local councils to impose a lower contribution threshold of five units in ‘designated rural parishes’, which include national parks and AONBs. For developments of six to ten units, a financial contribution can be sought but a council cannot insist on affordable housing being built on the site [🏠](#) [📰](#). This lower threshold can be introduced in designated rural areas as described in section 157(1)(c) of the [Housing Act 1985](#). The designated parishes are set out in the Schedules of [this later instrument](#). Rural Housing Solutions says this lower threshold will only apply to 34 rural authorities leaving 69 with “few if any” opportunities to provide affordable homes. Jo Lavis from RHS said: “The rural exemptions being offered in the announcement are paltry and will do nothing to compensate for the loss of rural affordable homes that this will cause” [🏠](#).

Housing

Affordable housing numbers. Eric Pickles announced a target of 275,000 new affordable homes between 2015 and 2020, with an average of 55,000 new residences a year between 2018 and 2020. If achieved, this would be the fastest rate of affordable house building for 20 years [\[1\]](#). The AS said: “Measures which will take forward existing commitments for up to 42,000 homes, release [public] land with capacity for up to 150,000 homes and commit to new measures to support up to 133,000 homes” (AS1.130).

Affordable housing funding. The level of funding for affordable housing remains static at £955 million a year, though the funding is extended by two years to 2019/20. Unlike roads, there is no funding announced for 2021/22 (AS1.138). However, the two year extension will allow larger affordable housing schemes more time to complete. Douglas Alexander said the extension will help build 275,000 new affordable homes over the life of the next parliament [\[2\]](#). The houses will be for the more expensive ‘affordable rent’, not ‘social rent’ (the difference is [explained here](#)). See also Red Brick’s political comment on the housing aspects of the AS [\[3\]](#). The AS announces minor improvements aimed at extending shared ownership of social housing (AS1.139).

 National Housing Fed retweeted

 David Orr @natfedDavid · Dec 2

#AutumnStatement still not a plan to end the housing crisis. Some useful but small steps. Where's the urgency. #HomesForBritain

David Orr of the National Housing Federation reacts

Government to build housing. After years of market failure, when housebuilders have used the recession as an excuse to land bank rather than build, the government is to intervene directly in the housing market. The AS announces that the Homes and Communities Agency will take the lead in speeding up the development of Northstowe new town in Cambridgeshire, aiming to deliver 10,000 new homes “up to twice as fast as conventional development routes.” Further details will be announced in the Budget (AS1.136) [\[4\]](#). Earlier, treasury secretary Danny Alexander had made it clear that the Treasury will step in, using the HCA and housing associations, to get housing built where the market was not working. He said: “The message to the housebuilding sector would be simple: if you don’t build them, we will” [\[5\]](#). One housing director described the move as a “seismic change”. *Inside Housing* quotes the Treasury as saying: “The role affordable housing would play in the plan has not yet been decided” [\[6\]](#).

 Northstowe Town @NorthstoweTown · Dec 2

Great to see #Northstowe as a priority site for Government [flickr.com/photos/hmtreas...](https://www.flickr.com/photos/hmtreas...) #BuildingBritain @HCA_UK

 HCA @HCA_UK · Dec 2

.@NorthstoweTown is priority for us & the Councils, lead developer role will maximise our commercial & strategic expertise #buildingbritain

Housing: South East

Ebbsfleet garden city is reannounced along with the previous commitment to help clean up the brownfield site (AS1.132/2.33). The AS also promised: “The government will undertake a review of transport provision for the Ebbsfleet area, including Crossrail, High Speed 1, Southern and Southeastern rail services” (AS2.198).

Bicester garden city. The AS announces: “The government will support Bicester to provide up to 13,000 new homes subject to value for money.” No details are given but this is assumed to be the former MoD land south-east of the town (AS1.135) [\[7\]](#). Nick Clegg said:

I am delighted that Bicester is confirmed as a pioneer in what I hope will be another wave of garden cities in this country. Bicester will get help from the government with both significant capital investment and in helping developers build the amenities that are required to be a true garden town. I hope many other towns will follow Bicester’s lead and we will see more garden cities spring up that have the affordable, well-designed homes with proper transport links; services and amenities, which our young families want and need [\[8\]](#) [\[9\]](#).

Banbury MP Tony Baldry said: “We will have the eco town project going ahead, we are redesigning the town centre... and we have a huge amount of brownfield land. We will have very strong rail links, east-west and north-south” [\[10\]](#). Helen Marshall of CPRE Oxfordshire said: “You have to feel a bit sorry for people who may have moved there 10 years ago thinking that it was a small market town” [\[11\]](#). The Independent got reaction from people on the streets of Bicester [\[12\]](#). The Guardian said local people feared the strain on services [\[13\]](#).

Flooding

National. The government has pledged £2.3 billion to flood and coastal defences, with spending brought forward for priority schemes [\[14\]](#). The fund will finance 1,400 flood defence schemes over the next six years, to “ensure that at least 300,000 homes are better protected by 2021.” The government is also looking for private sector investment in flood schemes, which will be tax deductible. There is a general consensus that this funding is welcome but insufficient to cope with flooding brought about by lax building polices, changes to farming practices and climate change. Friends of the Earth said the plans are “wholly inadequate to keep pace with rising flood risk” [\[15\]](#). Full list of schemes [\[16\]](#).

South East. Approximately £686 million will support at least 312 projects over six years. This includes the **Oxford Western conveyance**, a major project which will allow water to pass through and around Oxford more effectively. There will be an additional £60m funding for the Lower Thames Scheme from 2021 given its exceptional scale and history of flooding, but it will be “subject to business case and local partnership contributions” (AS2.216). Other schemes include Middle Medway Strategy, Broomhill Sands Tidal Defence, Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls and Portsea Island [\[17\]](#).

Environment and Communities

Reaction. Edie summed up the environment aspects of the AS: “This Autumn Statement contained very little that green businesses did not already know and will undoubtedly be seen by many as another missed opportunity” [E]. That is a polite way of saying the environment barely featured at all in the AS.

Flights. Children flying economy class will be exempt from Air Passenger Duty: under-12s from 1 May 2015, and under-16s from 1 March 2016 (AS1.223).

Community farms. There are plans to increase social investment tax relief for investors in social enterprises and extend the relief to small-scale community farms and horticultural activities (AS2.55). Big Society Capital welcomed the move []. Community renewable energy schemes will be eligible for the increased tax relief but will lose access to other venture funds [FT] [] (AS2.15).

Heritage. £15 million will be available to repair the roofs of listed churches (AS2.252).

Broadband. The AS gives a not quite firm promise to allocate more radio spectrum for mobile networks for 4G and 5G services (AS1.117). There will be an extra £40 million voucher-based subsidies for small and medium business in cities to install superfast broadband, but still no money for market towns or rural locations (AS1.118).

Community projects. The Landfill Communities Fund is a levy on landfill which is used for community funds, but the current rules and restrictions mean the funds are often underspent. The government will now consult: “On options for reform to get funding to community projects more efficiently” [R] (AS2.119).

Energy

Fracking. The AS announced a £5 million fund: “To provide independent evidence directly to the public about the robustness of the existing regulatory regime. This will also ensure the public is better engaged in the regulatory process” (AS1.121). If that sounds like £5 million for a propaganda exercise, the government will at least invest £31 million in research test centres to boost sub-surface scientific knowledge to support fracking and carbon capture and storage (AS1.122).

Fracking funds. The government intends to set up a long-term investment funds from tax revenues from shale for the North and other areas hosting shale gas developments, to capture the economic benefits of shale gas for future generations (AS1.123/1.195). George Osborne said: “I’m creating a new sovereign wealth fund for the north of England – so that revenues from the shale gas resources of the north are used to invest in the future of the north” [L]. However, proposals for these funds will not be brought forward until sometime in the next parliament (AS2.210).

Oil and gas. There is extra tax relief and other support for offshore oil and gas exploration from 1 January 2015 but the AS is vague on how much extra oil and gas these measures will produce (AS1.125/8).

Nuclear. The government is close to agreeing a financial guarantee for the **Moorside plant** north of Sellafield in Cumbria (NIP Box8.A).

Renewables. There is not much new in the AS and NIP. There is a cautious promise to start closer discussions with the promoters of tidal lagoon project in Swansea Bay to assess whether it is: “Affordable and value for money for consumers... It could become the first tidal lagoon project in the world” (AS1.129).

Fuel duty. George Osborne said: “Despite falling fuel prices let me make this clear: we’ve cut fuel duty and we will keep it frozen” (see AS1.127).

Fuel poverty. The government is allocating £25 million of funding in 2015-16 for first-time heating systems in off-gas-grid homes in England (AS1.125). This category of homes typically pays more into the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which funds suppliers to install energy efficiency measures in fuel-poor homes [C]. Most off-grid homes are rural.

Transport: National

Back to the future. The new announcements are mostly about roads. The AS boasts £15 billion between 2015-16 and 2020-21 to continue the transformation of the Strategic Road Network (AS2.189) []:

The largest programme of road improvements since the 1970s. This investment will include around £6 billion to resurface 80% of the national network, and over £9 billion to add 1,300 extra lane miles and over 60 junction improvements to the national road network. The government has also committed to invest almost £6 billion to improve the condition of local roads (AS1.115).

The roads money is not new. It’s the funding for the Highways Agency, which is to be spun off into a government owned company, which was announced in the 2013 Comprehensive Spending Review. Two-thirds of the projects cited in the NIP are already underway.

Headlines. Over 1,300 new lane miles will be added over the next parliament on motorways and trunk roads tackling congestion and fixing some of the most notorious and longstanding problem areas on the network including the A303, A1, A47 and A27. Projects include a road tunnel for the A303 at Stonehenge, dualling of the A27 on the south coast, and extending the dual carriageway section of the A1 north to Ellingham in Northumberland. Junction 6 of the A42 will be rebuilt to improve access to Birmingham Airport and the planned HS2 Birmingham Interchange station [L].

A303 Expressway. Proposals to build a tunnel up to 1.8 miles long at Stonehenge have received support and opposition in equal measure from the heritage community [] [G] [] (RIS page 40). The Stonehenge Alliance has launched a petition calling on transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin to invest in deep bored tunnel at least 4.5km long. It says: “Anything shorter would cause irreparable damage to this landscape, in breach of the World Heritage Convention” [38] [f]. Further west, the road is planned to be upgraded to expressway standard via the A358 and Taunton, thereby avoiding damage to the Blackdown Hills AONB. The DfT said: “The Blackdown Hills just do not feel in environmental and engineering terms like a sensible and strategic connection onwards. Never say never but it’s not going to happen in these plans for the foreseeable future” [L].

A417 Loop. Another sensitive road scheme is the proposed A417 loop on the Cotswolds escarpment in Gloucestershire. The DfT said: “We are committed to working with all interested parties to find and deliver a solution that can meet economic and social needs, while being sensitive to the special environment of the Cotswolds [AONB]. Indeed, recent schemes, such as the Hindhead tunnel, show that ‘win-win’ solutions are possible” [L](#) (RIS page 41).

Bath City Centre Congestion Relief. The government will “consider a business case” for park and ride and a park and rail service to the East of Bath to increase capacity and ease city centre congestion [L](#) (NIP Box 5.A).

National Networks NPS. The government plans to introduce the [National Networks National Policy Statement](#) for roads and rail into parliament this month for consideration and a formal vote (AS2.50).

Emissions. The AS promises £85 million to support ultra-low emission taxis, buses and cities (AS2.190-192).

Airports. The announcements are unsurprisingly largely silent on new schemes for airports ahead of the announcement on whether Gatwick or Heathrow, or both, will get the thumbs up from the Airports Commission after the general election. Work on the [Western Rail Access to Heathrow](#), providing a direct service from Reading will start in 2017, “subject to feasibility”. Network Rail is also producing a feasibility study into options on [Southern Rail Access to Heathrow](#) reporting in 2015 (NIP6.12).

Rail. The NIP reannounces a £38 billion Network Rail delivery programme, including electrification of key lines, as well as commitments to transformational projects such as Crossrail and HS2. Although the government has given a clear commitment to the Oxford Cambridge Expressway under the roads programme (below), it is more cautious on [East West Rail](#), saying: “The government will consider the outputs of the Network Rail study into the East West Rail central section (Bedford to Cambridge) as part of the planning for... 2019-2024.” There is also support for Crossrail 2 (Epsom in Surrey to Cheshunt in Hertfordshire [RE](#)); the Norwich in Ninety minutes project [C](#); the resilience of rail line at Dawlish and connectivity to and within the South West peninsula [BBC](#); [disability access to stations](#); and rebuilding of Chesterton rail station in Cambridge [L](#) (NIP Table 4.A).

CPRE reaction. Ralph Smyth of CPRE said: “National Parks from the New Forest to Northumberland are threatened by the Government’s attempt to turn back the clock and restart a massive roads programme. Road-building didn’t help the economy in the 1970s and it will have even fewer benefits now as travel patterns change and traffic levels flatline... It is not just the swathes that could be cut through our most cherished landscapes. Rural England faces even more cuts after 2016 to buses, cycling and even road maintenance to pay for this huge roads programme. It would become harder to get around without a car, not to mention bumpier to drive one” [CPRE](#).

CPRE action. CPRE is encouraging campaigners to write to MPs to ask them to lobby the Transport Minister. It is seeking amendments to the [Infrastructure Bill](#) to guarantee long-term ambition and funding for cycling and walking, including local road maintenance; changes to national planning policy to introduce a ‘sustainable travel first’ principle, making major road-building the option of last resort; action to tackle congestion by increasing transport efficiency, including introducing high occupancy lanes to increase coach travel and lift sharing [RE](#).

Campaign for Better Transport reaction. Writing in the *New Civil Engineer*, CBT’s Andrew Allen said [NCE](#):

Badly flawed feasibility studies have been used to justify damaging road building schemes right across the country... Worse, the Government has given notice that its fixation with new tarmac will continue indefinitely. This is all happening while better, more sustainable, transport options like cycling and walking are not getting the investment they need, and buses are even seeing their funding being cut.

Sian Berry of CBT said [CBT](#):

There is no evidence that building new roads creates jobs or benefits the economy and plenty of evidence that it creates new traffic that just fills up the roads again. What we really need is investment in public transport, walking and cycling for daily journeys to reduce congestion for other trips that have to be made on the roads. Instead, by laying tonnes of tarmac in areas supposedly protected for their beauty and history the government will end up making people more reliant than ever on cars.

Campaign for National Parks. The CNP gives a full list of proposals that affect national parks. Ruth Bradshaw said that while some funding – £300m – had been earmarked to deliver environmental improvements to the existing network – it was far less than the £3bn demanded by campaigners over the next five years. She said: “The identification of specific funding to maintain and enhance landscape and work to halt the loss of biodiversity is welcome. But there is nothing to ensure that National Parks will be prioritised for the funding for noise reduction, despite the huge benefits this could bring” [NCP](#).

Roads: South East

The South East. The NIP promises 18 new schemes worth around £1.4 billion and an estimated 900 construction jobs. Counting schemes underway, 29 major schemes costing £2.2 billion are promised for 2015-21 (RIS page 38ff). George Osborne said [C](#):

Our plans will transform some of the country’s most important strategic routes, such as our ambitious projects to improve the M25 and A27, and spending on important local infrastructure will boost productivity and help the local economy of the South East. For years our roads have been neglected. Now... we can afford to invest properly in our roads.

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway to cut up Bucks. The government is proposing the dualling of the A428 to create a continuous 'expressway' from Cambridge to Oxford via Bedford and Milton Keynes. The route would make use of existing dual carriageway on the A421 and A428, and soon to begin work to complete the dualling of the Cambridge to Milton Keynes leg. The Milton Keynes to Oxford section will require greenfield construction of a 40km long section of new road through Buckinghamshire. Graded junctions are likely along the entire route [MKW](#) [NCE](#).

Cycle City Ambition scheme. Before the NIP, Nick Clegg announced that Oxford could benefit from the announcement from part of the £114 million allocated between 2015-16 and 2017-18 to continue the [Cycle City Ambition scheme](#) in eight cities. The city has previously only gained 1% of the total funding available for this scheme and is using it to [redesign the Plain roundabout](#). Oxford must bid for the new funding. City council cabinet member for transport David Nimmo Smith said: "We continue to be highly ambitious about how we improve the transport network for cyclists in the city." One cycle shop owner said: "Changing infrastructure isn't going to change the way people use the roads. Oxford is very behind in its cycling training in schools" [OM](#).

A27 and M27

Upgrade. The NIP announced a £350m scheme for improvements along the A27, including a bypass for Arundel [WST](#) (NIP Box3A):

The A27 feasibility study has recommended a new dual carriageway bypass of Arundel and extra improvements in Worthing and Lancing, which will fix one of the most notorious 'missing links' in the region, while junction improvements in Chichester will ease journeys on the western part of the route. Smaller bottlenecks will also be targeted, for example with a short widening of the A31 at Ringwood to remove the conflict between local and long-distance traffic, and through improvements to the A27 through Worthing and Lancing (RIS page 39).

An upgrade to Junction 10 of the M27 at Fareham in Hampshire is designed to give access to housing land for the Welbourne urban extension, which has [just been examined in public](#) (RIS page 39).

SCATE reaction. Commenting for campaign group South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment, Sue White said: "This would be a gross waste of money. We want smart, 21st century thinking for transport, not lumbering, outdated roads that we know will simply generate more traffic, increase local congestion and destroy town centres and small businesses, just as similar roads have done elsewhere" [C](#).

Political reaction. Nick Herbert MP said: "This is fantastic news for West Sussex. Congestion at Arundel has caused delays, forcing traffic up through this historic town and the South Downs, and damaging investment in our coastal communities" [L](#). Caroline Ansell, Conservative candidate for Eastbourne said: "It is down to us locally to determine. We have got time and we have got money. We have got hopes for more investment" [L](#).

National park reaction. The South Downs National Park Authority issued a statement saying it would be looking hard at alternatives to the government's proposals [SNP](#) [SNP](#). The authority will be asking the Highways Agency examine the scheme against the framework of the seven [Special Qualities of the National Park](#):

The potential impacts upon the special qualities of the South Downs National Park are a crucial issue and are our primary concern. The SDNPA will therefore be looking for evidence... that there are no other more sustainable transport measures which would have a lesser negative impact; robust data on the nature and scale of the impacts on the National Park that would arise; and detail on how they would be mitigated or compensated for, bearing in mind that this is a nationally designated landscape.

A balance needs to be struck – nationally – between the need for accessibility and mobility and the need to safeguard the National Park landscapes and communities. This balance must be struck by government based on robust evidence on both.

Road Schemes: South East

Under construction. M3 Junctions 2-4A.

Committed and previously announced. M4 Junctions 3-12; M25 Junction 30; M20 Junctions 3-5; M23 Junctions 8-10; A21 Tonbridge to Pembury; M3 Junctions 9-14; M27 Junctions 4-11.

Committed – new. A34 Oxford Junctions; A34 Technology enhancements; M25 Junction 25 improvement; M25 Junction 28 improvement; Heathrow slip road; M2 Junction 5 improvements; M25 Junctions 10-16; M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley interchange; M3 Junction 9 improvement; M3 Junction 10-11 improved slip roads; M3 Junctions 12-14 improved slip roads; M27 Southampton Junctions; M271/A35 Redbridge roundabout upgrade; A27 Arundel Bypass; A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements; A31 Ringwood.

Committed – subject to other contributions. A2 Bean & Ebbsfleet junctions; M20 Junction 10a; A27 Chichester Improvement.

Funded from other sources. A20 Access to Dover; M27 Junction 10.

Developed for next Road Period. Lower Thames Crossing; A3 Guildford.

Strategic studies. Oxford to Cambridge Expressway; M25 South-West Quadrant.

The CPRE eBulletins

CPRE South East eBulletin is independently written and edited by Andy Boddington: cprenews@andyboddington.co.uk. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE.

[Subscribe](#) to regular copies of this eBulletin [CPRE](#).

[CPRE London](#) eBulletin [CPRE](#). [Sign up](#).

[CPRE Buckinghamshire](#) eBulletin [CPRE](#).

All eBulletins are free of charge.