



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
South East

South East eBulletin

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www.cprese.org.uk



The Future of Planning is the 39 LEPs

The last vestiges of the structures of regional government are being swept away as the government finally scraps regional plans. Few outside the specialist world of planning will mourn their passing.

Planners are however raising concerns (page 2). They recognise that the incentives for councils to collaborate with neighbours under the Localism Act are limited. Although councils have a duty to cooperate with adjacent councils, it is unclear how effective this will be in practice. It is no surprise that Lord Taylor has identified this duty as an early priority for new planning guidance (page 3). This only resolves local cooperation. There are almost no incentives for councils to work together at a regional scale – except of course in opposition to major infrastructure projects such as High Speed 2 (page 4). This is set to change.

As George Osborne's Autumn Statement made clear, the thirty nine local enterprise partnerships are set to grow into the role formerly occupied by the regional assemblies and development agencies (page 4). The LEPs will be funded to draw up strategic growth plans for their areas, just as the regions did, but there will be five times as many plans.

The government will devolve significant growth-related spending on infrastructure, transport, training and housing on the basis of these plans. LEPs will only get the money if their bid chimes with national growth priorities. There will be an inevitable tussle between local priorities that might be achievable and priorities dreamed up in Whitehall. Again it is pretty much as it was with the regions, but five times over.

Many LEPs seem to be unprepared for this task. Several got off to a slow start and others have struggled for resources. The government belatedly recognised this in September when it gave them £250,000 each for core activities. Despite this most will need rapidly to raise their game if they are to meet the new challenges head on.

Councils will also find working with the LEPs challenging. Many barely take account of them at present. More than one in ten councils happen to be members of more two LEPs. These may wish to drop out of one or the other rather than engage with two growth plans.

LEPs are be given money to hire private sector planners to draw up growth plans. But the hard challenges will be not in dreaming up new sub-regional visions. They must work out how to integrate their growth strategies with the existing local plans on their patch. They may even need to persuade councils to take higher growth targets. But the biggest challenge they face will be engaging with communities. Regional government was lousy at this. If anything is to survive of the age of localism, the LEPs must make community engagement an early priority.

Andy Boddington

Bexhill Hastings Link Road

Protest grows. They are calling it the second Battle of Hastings. Contractors moved in before Christmas to begin felling trees and destroy badger sets along the route. They were met by protestors, many camped in trees, and some dug into tunnels. At least two protestors have been arrested [g](#) [itv](#) [f](#) [YT](#) [O](#) [O](#) [L](#). Combe Haven Defenders are claiming that East Sussex council has secretly earmarked a further £6 million for the road [L](#). As we go to press, protestors are peacefully confronting contractors. They even have a model code of conduct [O](#). Up-to-date news at [f](#) [W](#)



Protestors in action (above) and the road plan (below)



People

People. Tony Kemmer, national CPRE trustee and former chair of CPRE East Midlands died suddenly on Christmas Eve while preparing to play golf [RE](#).

The eBulletins

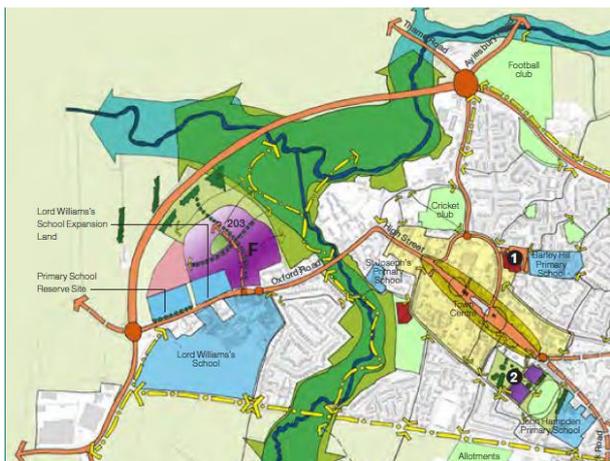
CPRE South East eBulletin is written and edited by Andy Boddington. To receive a regular copy or to alert me to news, please email cprenews@andyboddington.co.uk. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE. **CPRE London** now publishes a bi-monthly eBulletin from the same stable as the South East eBulletin [CPRE](#).

Planning & Housing in the South East

Local plans. East Hampshire District Council may suspend its local plan examination after an inspector raised concerns over its housing target, even though it is the target set in the South East Plan. He complained the council has failed to produce an up to date strategic housing market assessment **PP P L**. The adopted Wealden core strategy has been labelled disastrous for Uckfield and Crowborough because it bans development within 7km of Ashdown Forest **L**. The Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan has been found sound **L LG**. Basildon Borough Council approved a much scaled down masterplan for its town centre **P**.

Surrey. A barrister retained by the developers of Cherkley Court said that a CPRE Surrey legal challenge to the development by is 'hopeless' **L**. Residents in Esher are campaigning against relocation of a primary school into the green belt **L**. Chelsea Football Club has drawn up proposals to build an indoor football pitch on green belt land at Stoke D'Abernon **L**. Plans to turn the "last bit of green belt" in Laleham, Spelthorne into a flooded gravel lake are being strongly opposed by residents **L**. Giant CCTV masts originally installed for the duration of the Olympics will remain in place on a one-year trial basis. The decision has been hailed as a "qualified success" by the CPRE Runnymede which has strongly opposed the masts **L**.

Oxfordshire. Ed Turner, deputy leader of Oxford City Council attacked Andrew Motion and backed Nick Boles over housing on green fields **g**. The Oxford Times asked: Should thousands of homes be built in the green belt south of Grenoble Road? **L PE**. Officers are recommending approval for 108 houses in rural Kingston Bagpuize in the Vale of White Horse, despite the local plan suggesting just 15 units. They say the NPPF and a shortfall in housing delivery means the scheme must be approved **L**. A plan for 80 houses outside the village limits at Hook Norton was examined at appeal **L**. Two schemes totalling 160 houses at Bloxham were rejected by Cherwell council **L**. Thame has submitted its neighbourhood plan (detail below) to South Oxfordshire district council for examination **P O**.



Buckinghamshire. Aylesbury MP David Lidington has asked Eric Pickles to block an appeal on the basis of non-determination by developers proposing 3,000 houses on the edge of town **L**.

Hampshire. The Homes and Communities Agency has acquired the airfield at Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus, and hopes to attract aerospace and aviation companies **O**.

Kent. Pro-expansion campaigners are calling for a decision on additional capacity at Lydd airport, fifteen months after the public inquiry closed **BBC**.

Planning

Regional strategies. The Regional Strategy for the East of England has been revoked **PE**. The TCPA says that the strategic environmental assessment for the South East Plan places too much reliance on local authorities cooperating on planning and takes insufficient account of the inter-relationship between policies. It says that key environmental policies should be saved, including regional renewable energy and biodiversity targets **tepa**. The strategic environmental assessment for revocation of the North West regional strategy has been published for consultation **PE**.

Garden cities. Nick Boles will no doubt be an enthusiast of Lanzhou in China, which is planning to level 700 mountains to build a new city **g**.

Countryside. CPRE President Andrew Motion warned that if planning reforms go ahead: "By a thousand cuts, we will be left with a countryside so fragmented that it will be impossible to find a view unimpeded by pylons or warehouses" **TC**. Prince Charles told the Oxford Framing conference that the countryside is "as precious as an ancient cathedral" and must be protected **TC**. Nick Boles appeared to backtrack on his call to build over 3% of the countryside when he faced a heating grilling from MPs **S**.

Neighbourhood plans. The Upper Eden Neighbourhood Plan (covering 17 parishes in East Cumbria) is the first in the country to be successfully examined under the Localism Act and will now go to referendum **LG L PP**. The government announced that from this January local planning authorities will be able to claim grants of up to £50,000 to help up to 10 communities get going with their neighbourhood plans. From April, £100,000 will be available to kick start up to 20 plans in the area. Authorities will then receive a further £25,000 for every neighbourhood plan that gets through a successful examination **PE PP**.

Local plans. Nick Boles said that the number of authorities with adopted local plans had increased by 59% from 96 to 153 between April 2011 and December 2012. He pledged extra help for those struggling to get plans in place **P**. Nearly half of councils say they need to revise their local plans to bring them in line with the NPPF. Two in five do not expect to be able to do so before NPPF comes into full force at the end of March. One in seven think that they may not be able to prevent house building on unallocated land as a result **P**.

Planning permission. A survey of housebuilders found that half think achieving planning permission has become more difficult in the last two years **O**.

Environmental Impact Assessments. In his Autumn Statement, George Osborne said that in future fewer planning applications could need screening to see if EIAs are required **P**. As the EU published amendments to EIA regulations, Eric Pickles accused it of "regulatory creep... imposing additional and expensive requirements on the planning system" and condemned it for delaying abolition of regional strategies **PP**.

Flooding. As 2012 was confirmed as the wettest year on record in England, Met Office statistics show that heavy rainfall has become more common since 1960, threatening more flooding **BBC BBC FWI**. Engineers called for a new national Water Security Task Force to tackle flood risk **BG O**. The Environment Agency is consulting on a flood risk management strategy for the lower tidal River Arun in Sussex. Protection will be withdrawn from some upstream areas and strengthened downstream. Closes 15 March **PE**.

Housing

Eco towns. Plans to build a 5,000 home eco-town on former china clay workings near St Austell in Cornwall have been put on hold due to the economic climate . Work on Whitehill Bordon eco town in Hampshire looks set to get underway in 2014  . North West Bicester has been awarded £1.3 million to improve the construction and efficiency of its eco houses .

Housing targets. A Policy Exchange report, *Planning for Less* shows that councils are planning to build 272,720 (7%) fewer new homes after the abolition of regional targets. The largest reductions are in the South East (-57,049 homes) and South West (-108,380) areas with the greatest housing shortage. The report claims that: “the widespread fear that the Coalition is set to concrete over the countryside with new housing is not borne out. Relying on councils to expand housing targets was a mistake”  .

Permissions up. The Home Builders Federation said that approvals for 33,881 homes across England were granted in the third quarter of this year, an increase of 36% on the previous quarter, and 17% on the same period last year .

New Homes Bonus. England’s 353 councils will share £661 million, after delivering 142,000 new homes, including 58,000 affordable properties last year  . Eric Pickles has approved a plan to build 269 homes on a greenfield site at Sandbach in Cheshire after his previous refusal was rejected in the high court .

Planning System Changes

Community Right of Appeal. Chris Skidmore MP is sponsoring a Private Members Bill giving communities the power to appeal planning developments in their area .

Planning applications. The communities department has published its response to the consultation on simplifying outline planning applications. Applicants will no longer need to specify the height or layout at outline stage, though a planning authority will be able to request this information for individual sites. Applicants will still have to provide information on site access arrangements. The department is also considering simplifying Design and Access Statement requirements   .

Permitted development rights. After criticism from the commons, Eric Pickles said that the permitted development rights for house extensions might only allow single storey extensions “considerably less” than the six or eight metres proposed  . A clause added by the government to the Growth and Infrastructure Bill will allow a council to insist that change of use, for example from commercial development to housing, cannot go ahead without its approval – in effect allowing them to block the government’s new permitted development rights .

Building regulations. Communities minister Don Foster has pledged to cut back 1,300 pages of building regulations, citing the success of cutting back planning rules to the “52-page” NPPF  .

Infrastructure. Large housing schemes should be classified as major infrastructure projects, a government backed expert advisory group said. It also called for faster disposal of public land  . The government is consulting on changes to the thresholds for nationally significant transport infrastructure projects. It plans to exclude small lengths of rail network and all local authority road schemes  . Closes 22 January .

Taylor Review of Planning Guidance

The review. A review by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor has concluded that up to 80% of the 7,000 rules governing where development can take place should go  . Consultation closes on 15 February .

Guidance. Taylor said the present guidance suite is unfit for purpose. It should be cut down to essentials and relabelled as Government Planning Practice Guidance. This should be signed off by the government’s Chief Planner and hosted on the web, kept up-to-date and be free to access.

Best practice. Taylor said that ‘best practice’ is not best managed by government but by practitioner bodies. It should be removed from guidance and professional advice signposted from the new website. The RTPI worries that such signposting risks being seen as a kind of low-level Government endorsement .

Priorities. Nine priority areas need to be addressed first:

- The Duty to Cooperate between councils on local plans.
- Viability testing of local plans and housing strategies.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).
- Climate Change and Renewable Energy.
- Flooding.
- Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Sustainability Appraisal.
- Biodiversity.
- Development Management.

Guidance abolished. Taylor lists 103 documents to be cancelled outright, including guidance on polytunnels and on the permeable surfacing of front gardens. A further 28 documents should be cancelled but relevant material incorporated into new guidance, including the PPS6 guide on planning for town centres.

Guidance temporarily reprieved. 106 documents are recommended for retention until replaced by revised guidance. They include guidance on: PPS5 historic environment; PPS22 renewable energy; PPS25 development and coastal change; PPS25 flood risk; national and regional aggregates provision; outdoor advertisements and signs; designing gypsy and traveller sites; tree preservation procedures; manual for streets; biodiversity and geological conservation; and the strategic environmental assessment directive. The schools policy statement issued by Eric Pickles and Michael Gove in 2011 is also retained for now.

New guidance. Taylor recommends eight new areas of guidance: Local Green Space designation; environmental quality; neighbourhood planning; the duty to cooperate; water supply; EU Waste Framework Directive; relationship between planning and environmental permit regimes; and viability.

Timing. The website and the most urgent updating of guidance should be completed by the first anniversary of the publication of the NPPF, 28 March 2013. The great majority of the remaining revisions should be complete by July 2013.

Reaction. MP Clive Betts warned that: “Smaller planning authorities without expertise rely on this guidance to help them.” Shaun Spiers for CPRE said: “Detail is all important in planning and we will be on high alert to ensure there are no unintended consequences for the countryside.” CPRE also complained that rural needs housing and the value of agricultural land for food security appeared not be a priority. It said much of the existing guidance verges on being policy and detailed guidance is needed as backup for the NPPF .

Landscapes, Food and Farming

Green space. The Guardian reviewed attacks on green belt policy during 2012 [g](#). The South Downs Network is warning that the Growth and Infrastructure Bill represents a real threat to the future protection of the national park [O](#).

Hedges and woods. A farmer faced down angry Shropshire villagers after he put forward an unprecedented application to remove seven miles of hedgerow clearing an entire farm [L](#) [O](#). The increasing abundance of roe deer is having an impact on woodlands [BBC](#).

Ash dieback. As the number of sites infected by Chalara fraxinea topped 300, Defra secretary Owen Paterson published a strategy to combat the deadly fungus [O](#) [g](#). The National Trust was critical: "The limited actions and weak commitments set out in the plan will not be enough to achieve the aim of controlling the spread of the disease. It's far too little, too late" [4](#). The disease has been confirmed in East Sussex [L](#). Latest map: [g](#). See also: [T](#) [BBC](#) [g](#) [T](#) [O](#)

Biodiversity. George Monbiot argued that biodiversity offsets threaten the survival and the meaning of nature [g](#).

Food. CPRE called on the supermarkets to make a New Year's resolution to support the countryside [RE](#) [FWI](#). Friends of the Earth reacted angrily to Owen Paterson's assertion that that the British public should be persuaded of the benefits of genetically modified food [O](#). Last month, the group published a briefing on GM and Food Security [O](#). Environmental journalist Mary Lynas backed GM crops [FWI](#). CAP reform will not come into effect until at least 2015 [FWI](#). The NFU estimated that the bad weather in 2012 had led to a financial cost of £1.3bn for British farms [FWI](#).

Culling. Owen Paterson spoke about his backing for fox hunting and the badger cull, and his opposition to wind farms [L](#). Lord de Mauley, resource management minister at Defra said plans for the cull would not be halted [FWI](#)

Fly-tipping continues to fall. Local authorities in England dealt with over 744,000 incidents of fly-tipping, a 9% decrease from 2010-11 [O](#).

Marine. Defra is consulting on creating 31 marine conservation zones, substantially fewer than the 127 called for by advisers. The MCZs aim to protect the ocean floor from trawling and dredging. The Wildlife Trusts and Marine Conservation Society said they were "bitterly disappointed by the lack of ambition" [g](#) [g](#) [O](#) [RSPB](#). The South Downs Network is calling on residents to back the proposed Beachy Head West MCZ – "one of the most iconic marine areas in the country" [L](#) [O](#). Consultation ends 31 March [O](#).



South East marine conservation zones [O](#).

Heritage. John Penrose, the former architecture minister, has called for Britain's best views to be listed by English Heritage in the same way as historic buildings to avoid "casual destruction" [T](#). Simon Thurley, head of English Heritage called for stiffer sentences for heritage crime [T](#).

Environmental Merger?

Review. Environment Secretary Owen Paterson announced the Triennial Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England. Closes 4 February 2013 [O](#) [O](#) [P](#) [O](#). The review document suggests the two organisations might be merged into "a single body having the role to protect natural resources and possibly also the marine environment."

Reaction. CPRE warned that if ministers make the wrong choices, the protection of England's landscapes and wildlife will be undermined. Ben Stafford said: "We do not believe that amalgamating the Environment Agency and Natural England would be the right decision" [RE](#). The RSPB said a merger would leave threatened species in the countryside without an independent statutory champion [RSPB](#).

Transport

High Speed 2. The judicial review began on 5 December. Heathrow Hub Ltd argued that the route should go to the airport and connect with west coast rail routes. HS2 Action Alliance argued that the line required a strategic environmental assessment and that the government has breached the Habitats Directive. 51M claimed that options to increase capacity on the West Coast line and environmental assessments were not properly considered. It also said that Euston station will not cope. [L](#) [O](#). The DfT has appointed a Director General to oversee delivery of the line [O](#). Buckinghamshire MP Cheryl Gillan likened the scheme to a "cancer" [T](#) [T](#).

Clutter. After years of CPRE campaigning, the DfT published advice on reducing signage clutter. It suggests that local authorities regularly audit their road signs [O](#) [O](#) [T](#) [T](#).

Speeding. An Ashdown Forest teenager used deer skulls to create speed limit sign in a campaign to reduce animal deaths on the A22 [L](#).

Autumn Statement

Statement. At the beginning of December, Chancellor George Osborne gave his annual statement on future government expenditure [P](#) [O](#) [M](#) [i](#) [P](#).

Budgets. Osborne unveiled plans to reallocate £5 billion of Whitehall funding to infrastructure projects, targeting a host of road building, health and education, and science programmes. This means that department operational budgets will be cut. Defra's budget will be down £35m over the next two years, BIS' budget will be £430m lower, DfT's will be reduced by £140m and DECC will lose £10m.

Infrastructure. Osborne confirmed that HS2 will be extended to Manchester and Leeds, and a further £350 million will be distributed through the Regional Growth Fund by the end of the current Parliament. Osborne also announced the winning cities in the second wave of the Urban Broadband Fund for superfast broadband. They include Brighton and Hove, Oxford and Portsmouth. An extra £1 billion has been found for road schemes including upgrading of the A1, linking the A5 with the M1, dualling the A30 in Cornwall and upgrading the M25 [O](#).

Local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) will be able to apply for up to £250,000 to draw up strategic growth plans for their areas. These will guide future growth-related spending, much of which will be devolved to the LEPs. A single funding pot for housing, transport schemes, work, skills and other local growth funding will be distributed to LEPs from April 2015. Further measures in response to the [Heseltine](#) report, will be set out in a spending review early next year.

Gas Strategy

The dash for gas. George Osborne also announced a national gas strategy. It sets out a central scenario for 26GW of new gas capacity by 2030 to replace older coal, gas and nuclear plants and to act as back-up to intermittent renewable energy sources. But more controversially, the strategy suggests 37GW of capacity could be delivered if Osborne persuades the government to relax the 4th Carbon Budget and remove the requirement to halve carbon emissions by the late 2020s [BG](#). Osborne also announced tax breaks for the industry and an Office for Unconventional Gas and Oil to oversee shale gas.

Planning. The government is to establish a working group to examine how flexibilities within the planning system could speed up approvals for new gas-fired power plant.

Fracking. “The Government has signalled that shale gas is potentially an exciting new prospect for diversifying our energy supplies. Any development will have to meet high standards of safety and environmental protection.”

Reaction. Responding to the Autumn Statement and gas strategy, Friends of the Earth said: “Osborne’s statement smacks of the crass short-term desperation that’s fast becoming the hallmark of this Government” [O](#). WWF-UK warned: “The UK’s overreliance on gas is, environmentally and economically, highly risky” [E](#). See also [BG](#).

Fracking



Green light. As the Committee on Climate Change warned that the dash for gas could add £600 to domestic gas bills, Ed Davey gave the green light to shale gas extraction. Davey said the government would impose strict controls to protect both communities and the environment. “Residents want to be assured that their water will not be contaminated with gas or toxic chemicals,” but Davey was vague on how this assurance would be delivered. Initially, the government will demand strong mitigation against potential seismic events. He is considering introducing benefit schemes for host communities “further down the line” [BG](#) [BG](#) [P](#) [E](#) [itv](#) [fl](#).

Reaction. David Cameron told the Commons: “It may be that this gas revolution is really quite transformative and there is going to be a lot more gas and the price won’t be as expensive” [E](#) [g](#) [BG](#). David Kennedy, Chief Executive of the Committee on Climate Change said shale gas will only provide 10% of the UK’s current gas demand [T](#). Paul Miner for CPRE said: “The government doesn’t appear to have recognised the potential for major landscape damage... If fracking is to happen, it must be with the support of local communities” [E](#) [T](#). Friends of the Earth warned: “Communities... will be disturbed by this reckless decision which threatens to contaminate our air and water and undermine national climate targets” [O](#) [BBC](#). Waterwise voiced fears that fracking could have a potentially damaging effect on groundwater supplies [E](#) [T](#).

Comment. Andrew Rawnsley: “The fracking dream which is putting Britain’s future at risk” [g](#). Daniel Boffey: “Fracking laws needed to control UK’s dash for gas” [g](#). Boris Johnson: “Ignore the doom merchants, Britain should get fracking” [T](#). Tim Yeo: “Government is seduced by shale gas” [T](#). The BBC reviewed the risks and benefits of fracking [BBC](#).

South East. Fifteen licences for exploring Sussex’s gas reserves have already been issued. Anti-fracking group Frack Off said Sussex could soon resemble a “Swiss cheese” as firms drilled up to 3,000 wells [L](#). Members of the Sussex branch of Frack Off held a demonstration against national and local plans for fracking [L](#). Residents of Balcombe in Sussex told the BBC of their fears [BBC](#) [BBC](#).

Other fracking news. US environmentalists welcomed the movie *Promised Land*, which will be released in the UK on 19 April 2013 [i](#). Radio Russia hosted a heated debate on fracking pitching Cuadrilla against UK environmentalists [O](#). See also [T](#) [g](#).

Wind Energy

South East schemes. E.ON told the Planning Inspectorate that it wishes to temporarily withdraw its application for the Rampion windfarm off the coast of Sussex. It admits it failed properly consult interested parties but says it remains committed to the project [P](#) [L](#). Navitus Bay will be scaled down and moved further out to sea to reduce the potential visual impact from coastal areas including The Needles and Bournemouth [BBC](#) [BG](#) [L](#) [L](#). Bournemouth’s tourism chief rejected the changes as inadequate and said the scheme could cost the Dorset’s economy £20 million a year [L](#). Challenge Navitus said the changes seem primarily to address shipping issues the impact on the heritage coast [O](#) [f](#) [BBC](#). A wind farm near Polegate in East Sussex has been reduced from five turbines to three after concerns about impact on the national park [L](#). Plans for a turbine at Henton in South Oxfordshire have been turned down [CPRE](#).

South East policies. Climate change minister Greg Barker hailed wind farms as “wonderful and majestic” and claimed that the turbines in his Bexhill and Battle constituency are a tourist attraction [fl](#). RWE Npower Renewables has launched a legal challenge against Milton Keynes Council’s turbine policy, which enforces separation distances between housing and turbines [L](#). Hampshire Council has implemented its controversial blanket ban on wind farms on county-owned land [L](#).

Landscape wins. A four turbine wind farm at Stinchcombe near Stroud was turned down by a planning inspector. Philip Skill, head of planning at Stroud District Council said the NPPF was “initially thought to have favoured renewable energy schemes, but this judgement appears to put the landscape issues higher up the agenda, particularly where large developments like wind farms and incinerators are concerned” [L](#) [PI](#). The inspector cited the impact the turbines would have on the settings of the Cotswolds AONB, Stinchcombe Conservation Area, the church of St Cyr’s, Berkeley Castle and the Cotswold Way National Trail. He was also concerned about the detriment to local residents:

When turbines are present in such number, size and proximity that they represent an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place in which to live. It is not in the public interest to create such living conditions where they did not exist before.

Politics. Nick Boles told energy minister John Hayes that “local people have genuine concerns” and “wind farms are not appropriate in all settings. Proposals allowed on appeal by planning inspectors can be bitterly resented. We have been very clear that the government’s policies on renewable energy are no excuse for building wind farms in the wrong places” [C](#) [C](#). In its editorial, the Observer sighed: “Another week and another war of words is being waged over our green and pleasant land... Nowhere is this battle more heated than over the subject of wind turbines” [G](#).

Roundup. Lincolnshire Council is consulting on its policy to restrict the spread of wind farms across the county. Close 21 January [LG](#). Residents in west Norfolk have launched a judicial review against Planning Inspectorate approval of two wind farms [BBC](#). A plan for a 325-turbine wind farm off the Suffolk coast has been submitted to the government. The East Anglia One wind farm would be 27 miles from shore and it would cover 115 sq miles. Four 23-mile (37km) underground cables would run from Bawdsey to the Bramford sub-station near Ipswich [BBC](#). Norfolk Energy Futures, a company set up by Norfolk County Council has installed 19 small-scale wind turbines on 11 county farm sites [L](#). A planning inspector has allowed an appeal for a 250 foot turbine in Cornwall, which was erected without planning permission [L](#). An Edinburgh University study of almost 3,000 turbines in Britain found that they wear out in 12 years, not 25 years as claimed by the industry, in part due to larger turbines [R](#) [E](#). RenewableUK condemned the report [E](#).

Energy, Waste and Water

Climate change. The tortured Doha negotiations ended unhappily with a handful of nations, including the EU agreeing emissions targets but countries responsible for over 85% of global emissions facing no legal targets [BG](#) [E](#).

Pylons. CPRE cheered Ofgem’s decision to allow up to £500 million to be spent over 2013 to 2021 on burying existing National Grid transmission lines in National Parks and AONBs [CPRE](#).

Renewables. A report from Cambridge Econometrics, prepared for WWF-UK and Greenpeace argued that large-scale investment in offshore wind would create up to 70,000 more jobs by 2030 than gas-fired power plants [O](#). Eastleigh Borough Council has given consent to a 6.3MW solar farm with nearly 26,000 photovoltaic panels at Chalcroft Farm, West End [BG](#). The government published the new support rates for solar and biomass generation [E](#).

Biodiversity. Clive Hambley from Oxford university wrote: “I’ve since seen the havoc wreaked on wildlife by wind power, hydro power, biofuels and tidal barrages. The environmentalists who support such projects do so for ideological reasons. What few of them have in their heads, though, is the consolation of science” [S](#).

Severn barrage. David Cameron said a barrage is a “long way off” from any “rational fruition” [L](#). Energy Secretary Ed Davey said later if the right proposals were submitted the government would look at them [BBC](#). Hafren Power, the company behind the plans, said construction could create 20,000 jobs. The £25 billion project would involve 238 giant caissons – large airtight chambers 75 metres wide – interlinked across the estuary with 1,026 turbines generating electricity on both incoming and outgoing tides [L](#) [FT](#) [L](#). There are concerns that the scheme would damage the fishing industry and put birdlife at risk [L](#) [O](#) [L](#). Top right – Hafren’s proposal for the barrage.



Incineration. Plans to build an incinerator in the AONB at Old Kiln Quarry in Chieveley, Berkshire have been dropped by Grundon after strong opposition, including from CPRE Berkshire [L](#) [O](#). The Stewartby incinerator in Bedfordshire has been approved by parliament overriding the objections of local councils and residents [BBC](#) [L](#). An incinerator in Wales has been shut after breaching dioxin emission levels [BBC](#) [O](#). A European Commission environment official said high waste incineration levels in Norway and Sweden should act as a warning to the UK: “There is an opportunity in the UK to... leapfrog the incineration stage” [O](#). West Norfolk Council, which opposes the King’s Lynn incinerator, is proposing to recycle 90% of waste into wood replacement products [L](#).

Incineration capacity. The UK now has seven million tonnes more consented residual waste treatment capacity than there is residual waste requiring treatment. Currently the South East has over 2.9 million tonnes (per annum) of residual waste treatment capacity operating or under construction [E](#) [O](#).

Nuclear. Despite gaining regulatory approval for the plant, EDF has postponed a decision on whether to build a new power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset after troubles with a French nuclear station [G](#) [BG](#) [E](#).

Recycling. The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) will see its budget cut by 11% next year [E](#). Mauritania has banned the use of plastic bags to protect the environment and the lives of animals and fish [BBC](#).

High Streets

Supermarkets. Independent traders in Aldeburgh in Suffolk fear for the high street after approval of a Tesco Express [BBC](#). The battle has resumed to save the high street of Newport in Telford & Wrekin. Three supermarkets have now been approved, including an out of town Sainsbury’s backed by Telford & Wrekin council, which is set to gain £21 million from the development. Eric Pickles called in this scheme, which is to be examined at a public inquiry at the end of the month [C](#).

Portas. The Association of Market Towns (AMT) and consultancy Urban Pollinators reviewed progress in the year after the publication of the Portas review [O](#). The AMT said rigorous application of town centre first policy is crucial to the future of many small towns and launched a ‘town centre first watch’ [O](#). Newhaven and Seaford in Sussex have secured £10,000 of funding each from the Mary Portas scheme to reinvigorate their struggling high streets [L](#).

Pubs. Business Secretary Vince Cable announced plans for an independent pub industry adjudicator to address unfair practices in the industry. As well as a new Adjudicator, the coalition also wants to establish a new statutory Code to look at the relationship between large pub companies and publicans [E](#).