

Windfarm Policy

Energy no longer trumps. To widespread fanfare in the anti-windfarm press, Eric Pickles announced a major change to planning policy on turbines. National targets for renewable energy will no longer override local or heritage objectives to windfarms: “Meeting our energy goals should not be used to justify the wrong development in the wrong location.” Pickles said that councils should not feel obliged to approve windfarms outside those locations they have identified as suitable in the local plan [\[C\]](#) [\[G\]](#) [\[M\]](#). After the statement was widely reported as giving a community veto over windfarm development [\[C\]](#), the government rushed housing minister Mark Prisk to the Commons to deny that was the government’s intent [\[T\]](#) [\[P\]](#). He told MPs: “This is not about vetoes; it is about making sure, in a legal system, that we have appropriate and due consideration of the material issues—topography, amenity and heritage.” Prisk summarised the forthcoming guidance:

[It] will set out, first, that the need for renewable energy does not automatically override environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities. Secondly, decisions should take into account the cumulative impact of wind turbines and properly reflect the increasing impact on the landscape and local amenity. Thirdly, local topography should be a factor in assessing whether wind turbines have a damaging impact on the landscape. Fourthly, great care should be taken to ensure that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.

The government will amend secondary legislation to make pre-application consultation with local communities compulsory for the “more significant” onshore windfarms.

Reaction. Energy Secretary Ed Davey said opposition to onshore windfarms should be taken seriously [\[C\]](#). The South Downs Network complained of “pick ‘n’ mix localism” and said “the change in approach to wind farms appears little more than a political sop” [\[SDN\]](#).

Nightingales dislodge Medway plans

Local plan rejected. Medway council’s dreams of building 5,000 houses on former Ministry of Defence land at Lodge Hill were dealt a blow in March when Natural England declared the site a site of special scientific interest to protect a watch of 70 nightingales, along with ancient and long-established semi natural woodland and unimproved grassland [\[N\]](#). Now the planning inspectorate has declared that Medway’s core strategy is unsound because of the designation. The inspector reasoned that although compensatory habitats might be created elsewhere, there were “uncertainties inherent in this approach rather than preservation in situ.” Relying on paragraph 152 of the NPPF, she concluded: “I am not persuaded that the social and economic benefits that would flow from development on this site would outweigh the harm to a site of national importance for biodiversity.” Lodge Hill was due to supply nearly one quarter of Medway’s housing over the core strategy period. The inspector had told the council earlier that it should not rely on the South East Plan to establish housing targets and must objectively assess its needs [\[LG\]](#) [\[C\]](#).

Reaction. Council leaders railed at the RSPB for waiting 17 years before opposing the scheme and fumigated that the government and “unelected quangos” had tied the scheme up in “red tape and grinding bureaucracy” [\[LG\]](#) [\[KO\]](#) [\[KN\]](#). The RSPB said: “Now is the time to draw a line under the Lodge Hill proposal” [\[RSPB\]](#). Rival developers are already lining up replacement schemes [\[KO\]](#).



CPRE: “A sea of furiously wriggling eyebrows”

‘Boring fields’. Nick Boles did not actually use the word ‘boring’, but in a letter to an MP he said that in order to meet housing needs: “This may mean building on low quality, environmentally uninteresting fields. In exceptional circumstances, it may involve a Green Belt review” [\[C\]](#) [\[M\]](#).

A few days later, **Sir Andrew Motion** told CPRE’s annual general meeting that the government’s road and housebuilding plans pose the greatest threat to the English countryside in 60 years. He called for “a return to a planning system which is truly democratic, prioritises brownfield development, and delivers genuinely affordable housing where it is needed.” Branding planning minister Nick Boles “Boles the Builder”, Motion taunted: “He leapfrogs brownfield sites and lands with a bricky crunch in the open countryside. He speaks up for green field housing estates rather than the green fields themselves” [\[C\]](#).

Nick Boles, speaking to the same AGM, told CPRE stalwarts that he loves the English countryside just as much as they do. Giving a potted history of his youthful days – his “stepmother kept bantams and Jacob sheep and Dexter cattle” – he told the audience, “We are in this curious position where the countryside we all want to protect is itself the product of human intervention.” Banging his fist, he observed: “I’m well aware that I’m probably the CPRE’s least favourite minister.” But blocking new housing developments was slowly condemning rural villages to be “museum exhibits, not so much protected as embalmed.” The audience heckled, one shouting, “It’s untrue. Untrue. It’s about time you listened to other people.” Two representatives walked out. Richard Nicholls from Dorset, told the Telegraph: “The man does not understand what planning is about. The man is a fool.” Michael Deacon wrote in the Telegraph: “If you were to draw a Venn diagram representing the respective memberships of a) the CPRE and b) the Nicholas Edward Coleridge Boles Fan Club, you probably wouldn’t see much of an overlap” [\[C\]](#). Speech [\[C\]](#).

CPRE
2:22pm via Twitter for iPhone

Minister Nick Boles says CPRE likes to trade in urban myths when talking about real problem of land banking. #majordissent

Shaun Spiers accused Boles of acting like a Russian Tsar by not getting around the country to see how the planning system works [\[C\]](#) [\[G\]](#) [\[T\]](#) [\[M\]](#). Fresh from diplomatic indulgences at the French Ambassador’s residence, Spiers gave a more sanguine view of events at the AGM than the “lurid” portrayals in the national media. He insisted that “the speech was listened to with respect” and people had only walked out of the speech to catch early trains [\[C\]](#). On the BBC’s Jeremy Vine show, he called for smaller schemes to be built instead of the large estates favoured by the half-a-dozen big companies that dominate the housing market.

Planning in the South East

Berkshire. A plan to build a £20m mansion in the green belt at Blacknest Park, Ascot was rejected by councillors. The Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor is now examining whether the developers can be prosecuted for illegal felling of trees in ancient woodland [f](#).

Buckinghamshire. Pinewood Studios has submitted its appeal to planning inspectorate after South Bucks council threw out its £200 million plan to expand into the green belt [BFP](#) [C](#). The studio claims that it will lose Hollywood blockbusters unless it expands [g](#).

Hampshire. The slowly emerging Whitehill Bordon eco town has published draft development briefs for the new town centre at Prince Philip Barracks and an Eco-business park at Louisburg Barracks . A cooperative, Hampshire Energy Group, has been launched to bring local ownership to the proposed wind farm at Bullington Cross [L](#) [L](#). CPRE Hampshire has been set up the South Downs and Central Winchester District Planning Group [THH](#). Basingstoke and Deane council agreed to adopt an annual house building target of 748 new homes, down from the target of 945 new homes in the now abolished South East Plan [L](#).

Kent. Maidstone Lib Dem councillors are asking parishes to identify green spaces that need protection as the council struggles to find a five year land supply for a provisional 14,800 homes [L](#). Plans for more than 500 houses, a hotel and conference centre in Dover have been approved to the anger of CPRE Protect Kent which complained about the impact on the AONB [BBC](#) [CPRE](#).

Wirescapes. National Grid is consulting on the Richborough to Canterbury connection, part of a scheme to link the national grid to Europe. Protect Kent said both routes would cross some "truly beautiful" open countryside. "The southern route is probably of more concern to us, but we are looking to get the line run underground whichever route is chosen." National Grid may use the new T-pylon (page 7) [CPRE](#) [BBC](#) [KO](#) [YC](#) [TKK](#) [P](#). Closes 9 August .

Chilmington Green. Controversial plans for up to 5,750 houses, schools and a new district centre at Chilmington Green look set to proceed after a planning inspector said Ashford council's area action plan would be sound with a number of straightforward modifications [KO](#) [C](#) . The developers propose a design code to create a sense of place and local distinctiveness . The Homes and Communities Agency has shortlisted the scheme for funding [IH](#).

Oxfordshire. Developers and Oxford City Council have applied for planning permission for Barton West, east of Oxford. It will supply 885 homes, 40% affordable [LG](#) [OT](#). Opponents of the scheme have been told their application for town green status has been 'duly made' and will be examined. Campaigner Sietske Boles said that, if successful, designation would block the proposed Barton Link road across the Eastern Bypass [L](#). Three housing developments near Banbury have been approved despite councillors' objections that the local plan is not in place. Lack of five year land supply was a major factor in the decision [BG](#).

Save our Port Meadow!



Port Meadow, unchanged for centuries



Port Meadow, in April 2013

Port Meadow. Oxford University's student accommodation overshadowing Port Meadow has been nominated for the Carbuncle Cup [ba](#) [OT](#). After it found that contamination of the site had been ignored by planning officers, CPRE Oxfordshire submitted a question to the leader of Oxford City council asking what plans the council had to deal with it [CPRE](#). The council is to appoint an inspector to review whether it followed correct procedures in approving the scheme [BBC](#).



Surrey local plans. Reigate and Banstead council approved amendments to its core strategy demanded by a planning inspector. The council accepted that revision of greenbelt boundaries will be only under "exceptional" circumstances. It agreed "to maintain a robust and defensible green belt, and set out more clearly how – in exceptional circumstances (including the need to identify land for urban extensions and gypsies and travellers) – limited revisions to the Green Belt boundary will be made." The council pledged to cooperate with neighbouring councils on "the maintenance of a coherent green belt" [L](#) [L](#) [LG](#). Waverley council has taken a different line and has decided to defy a planning inspector who asked that the core strategy be withdrawn. It wants the examination in public suspended while it tries to sort out problems with housing numbers [L](#).

Surrey schemes. The petition to save the green belt adjacent to Cobham Common closed on 1 July. Sir Andrew Motion said: "Chobham Common is one of our finest areas of lowland heath... If the land next to the Common is removed from the Green Belt, the risk of wrecking the nightjar's habitat becomes very real" [CPRE](#). Anger is growing over plans to build 140 houses in the green belt at Oxted, exacerbated by the developer's decision to kill trees by ring barking to prevent them becoming subject to tree preservation orders [L](#) [L](#). A high court judge reserved judgment at the end of a judicial review brought by CPRE Surrey into plans to turn Lord Beaverbrook's former Surrey home at Cherkley Court into a luxury hotel and yet another golf course [BBC](#) [TTS](#) [C](#). A judicial review against development opposite Hampton Court Palace has been rejected by the high court [P](#) [O](#).

Sussex. Eric Pickles rejected plans for 195 houses on greenfield at Hailsham saying they would result in "significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to up to date development plan policy" [TA](#) [O](#). Decision [C](#). Mid Sussex district council has published the Slaugham Parish neighbourhood plan and two Community Right to Build (CRB) Orders. The CRBs, the first in the country, will allow 76 homes, a community centre and a bowling green to be built, if they pass examination and a referendum [P](#) [O](#) [C](#). Over 450 people have objected to the link road to the Coombe Haven Link Road [CHD](#). Coombe Haven Defenders built a mock road in the grounds of George Osborne's Cheshire home [TA](#) [CHD](#).





Mayfield. A developer is bidding to build up to 10,000 new houses in the countryside between Henfield and Sayers Common in Sussex. CPRE Sussex is vigorously opposing the scheme of "up to 25,000 people dumped in the middle of our open countryside: not a market town, but a commuter town, with few on the spot jobs available" [CPRE](#) [WSG](#) [M](#). Michael Brown for CPRE said that "this dreadful, unwanted scheme would devastate Sussex's unique countryside and deprive future generations of its enjoyment and tranquillity" [C](#). Nicholas Soames and Nick Herbert, MPs for Mid Sussex and Arundel and the South Downs, said the proposal is "entirely unacceptable." They told the developer: "Your proposed new town would not be a 'market town', since there would be minimal local employment. It would, as the CPRE have observed, be a commuter town" [WSG](#).






Planning




National infrastructure regime. The communities department confirmed that the nationally significant infrastructure projects regime will be widened  . The proposed new categories are:


- ◆ manufacturing and processing: for example, car factories and food processing plants
- ◆ leisure, tourism, sports and recreation: for example, sports stadiums, theme parks and hotel complexes
- ◆ offices and research and development centres
- ◆ warehousing, storage and distribution sites
- ◆ conference and exhibition centres
- ◆ extraction of aggregates and industrial minerals.


It will publish draft regulations on the changes by October. Planning applications for new coal, onshore oil and gas schemes, including shale gas will normally remain with the local mineral planning authority.


Hazardous waste. After a long delay, the government has published the hazardous waste national policy statement. It is little changed from the consultation document, except for removal of a requirement to examine the impact on community stress and anxiety    .




Broadband. The culture department has declared that it will push ahead with relaxing planning rules for broadband cabinets and poles, despite widespread opposition. It admitted that 71% of consultation respondents disagreed with its plans and that planners and heritage groups had told it the relaxation would result in a “proliferation of new poles across the country.” Regardless, it will give broadband providers permitted development rights for five years. Neil Sinden for CPRE said cabling should be put on shared poles before new ones are erected: “We call on the industry to work closely with planners and parish councils and recognise that clutter-free landscapes are no less critical to economic prosperity than superfast broadband”   . Bad broadband connections are a major inhibitor to rural businesses . Villagers in Frilford Oxfordshire are paying for their own superfast connection .


Special measures. The communities department confirmed that local planning authorities will be placed in special measures if they determine 30% or fewer major applications on time, or if more than 20% of major decisions are overturned at appeal. It intends to make the first designations in October. In designated authorities, promoters of major planning applications will be able to submit proposals directly to the planning inspectorate. The thresholds will be kept under review, “with the intention of raising them over time to help drive improvements in performance.” The department also confirmed that planning inspectors will hold local hearings for the applications . The Local Government Association remains opposed to the plans . *Planning* magazine identified seven planning authorities that are likely to be designated: Horsham, Daventry, Halton, Hounslow, Fylde, Cherwell and Enfield .







Garden cities. Nick Boles has admitted that the government has abandoned its enthusiasm to build a new generation of garden cities .



Local plans. Friends of the Earth failed in its high court judicial review, which argued that the Forest of Dean core strategy breaches the Habitats Directive .






Neighbourhood plans. Wiltshire Council has produced guide to help groups understand environmental assessments for neighbourhood plans .

Local growth. Leaders of local enterprise partnerships, known as the ‘39 LEPs’, are agitating for a new national network that gives them more accountability and a stronger voice . The London-Stansted-Cambridge Consortium (LSCC), a public-private partnership, has been launched to promote economic development in the corridor from north London, Stansted Airport to Cambridge  .


Judicial review. From 1 July, applications for judicial review must be lodged within six weeks of a decision .

Politics. Labour’s planning spokeswoman Roberta Blackman-Woods told *Planning* magazine that the party is considering replacing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and planning gain agreements, including section 106 agreements with a “community investment fund” . Hilary Benn, the shadow communities and local government secretary, pledged to give communities a greater say over where housing would go  . The Telegraph reported that Labour would scrap the NPPF , but this suggestion was scotched by Blackman-Woods on Twitter: “To be clear @hilarybennmp didn’t say that Lab would scrap #nppf” . CPRE said it was happy to work with all parties to further reform the planning system .

Nimbys. Geoffrey Wheatcroft: “The truth is that when it comes to “the environment” we are all obliged to be nimby’s, or hypocrites and humbugs” . Ben Scotchbrook: “Stop knocking our gin-soaked HS2 Nimby’s” .

Design. The culture department has asked Sir Terry Farrell to review the government’s role in promoting design quality in architecture and the built environment   . Landscape Institute president Sue Illman criticised the terms of reference: the review “should be debating not only the role of well-designed and managed public space, but changes in land use, water sensitive urban design, the impact of major infrastructure and sustaining biodiversity” . Scotland launched its design policy, which has “a stronger emphasis on ‘place’ than ever before” .

Town Centres and Retail

Margate. Mary Portas is among those raging against a decision by Eric Pickles to approve a 7,500 square metre, 24-hour Tesco store on the seafront at Margate  . Despite the site being out of centre, Pickles said that “that the proposed development could prove to be a positive benefit to the High Street”   . Decision . A judicial review against the decision has been launched by a local retailer backed by FOAM ([Friends of Arlington Margate](#))   .



Mary Portas @maryportas

14 Jun

A sad, sad day for #Margate. Eric Pickles has signed off 80,000 sq ft edge-of-town Tesco. Government is "Town Centre first" is it?



DCLG @CommunitiesUK

14 Jun

.@maryportas Inspectors report cites job creation, positive benefit to #margate high st and more footfall on seafront bit.ly/11B90sK

Town centre first. The high court has weakened the sequential test at the heart of the town centre first policy. It dismissed a judicial review by Telford & Wrekin council against an inspector’s approval of an out-of-town superstore in Newport. The judge ruled that inspectors are not obliged to interpret the sequential test in a “rigid, mechanistic fashion. They are guidelines not tramlines.” The judge’s ruling throws light on how the sequential test and linked trips should be interpreted in future planning decisions . Ruling . The Estates Gazette said developers applied for twice as much out of town retail space as town centre space last year .

Five year land supply

Clarity. There has been some clarity in how housing land supply affects planning decisions. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that councils identify a five year land supply plus 5% or 20% (NPPF47). Woe betide a council that fails to do so, as the presumption in favour of sustainable development under NPPF49 comes into play, giving the nod to unplanned developments. Some nervous councils have been including only sites with planning permission in their calculations of this supply. We now learn that sites without planning permission can definitely be included in the required supply of specific deliverable sites and that failure to identify a five year land supply does not override green belt protection. An inspector's decision in Devon suggests that other policies, such as affordable housing and damage to landscape, can override land supply concerns, but this decision looks idiosyncratic when viewed against other inspectorate decisions.

Cases. In rejecting housing development at Hailsham, Sussex, Eric Pickles said that there "is nothing in the wording [of the NPPF] that says that sites without planning permission should be excluded as a matter of principle" from the calculation of five year land supply. Decision [\[P\]](#). Overturning an inspector's decision to approve housing in the green belt at Glebelands, Castle Point in Essex, Pickles gave no weight to the council's lack of five year land supply. The council has less than one year's deliverable sites and a "grossly inadequate" delivery of housing over a decade. The scheme would have provided 165 homes, 35% affordable, but Pickles ruled that green belt policies outweighed all other matters. He emphasised that "national policy is very clear that green belt reviews should be undertaken as part of the Local Plan process [and] a decision to allow this appeal for housing in the green belt risks setting an undesirable precedent for similar developments which would seriously undermine national green belt policy" [\[P\]](#). Decision [\[P\]](#). In North Devon, a planning inspector agreed in principle that housing should be built beyond the settlement boundaries of Barnstable due to the lack of five year land supply, but rejected an appeal because the developer only offered 20% affordable housing against the local plan minimum of 33%, as well as "an adverse environmental impact on the countryside" [\[L\]](#). Decision [\[P\]](#).

Determining supply. After a planning inspector ruled that South Gloucestershire lacked a five year supply, the council commissioned a report that demonstrated that a sufficient supply is in place [\[P\]](#) [\[LG\]](#) [\[LG\]](#) [\[L\]](#). *Planning* magazine looked at the four key tests for five year land supply: land must be available; suitable; achievable and viable [\[P\]](#).

Gypsies and travellers. Only four local authorities in the south and south east have identified a five year land supply for gypsy and traveller pitches, which they were required to do by March. Lord Ahmad for the government said lack of supply should be a "significant consideration in any planning application for temporary permission" for pitches [\[P\]](#). But this consideration will not apply within the green belt. Eric Pickles is to tighten restrictions on gypsies and travellers settling in the green belt and over the next six months he will call in more appeals to determine himself. Local government minister Brandon Lewis said that "the single issue of unmet demand, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely to outweigh harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the 'very special circumstances' justifying inappropriate development in the green belt." The government has also cancelled *Diversity and Equality in Planning*, a Prescott era document [\[P\]](#) [\[L\]](#).

Housing

Rural housing. The National Housing Federation said that people in their thirties are been driven out of the countryside by housing costs. The number of people aged 30-44 dropped nearly 9% in rural areas over the last decade, while it rose in urban areas. The NHF asked: "What will happen to the local shops and pubs, the village school, the small businesses that maintain rural economies, if there's no-one left to keep them open? If we don't start building more homes that ordinary families can afford, our treasured rural England will become the preserve of the old and wealthy" [\[NHF\]](#) [\[IH\]](#). The Observer debated affordability in the South East: "It's absurd for young people to own housing in Uckfield, Sussex" [\[G\]](#) [\[G\]](#).

Housing supply. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors published its Housing Commission report, which claimed that the last five decades have been blighted by almost zero consistency in housing policy [\[RICS\]](#). The annual Housing the Nation report by BNP Paribas said that local authorities in England have reduced housing targets by 7% against former regional strategies. Targets are down 14% in the South East. It estimates that there will be a shortfall of at least 51,000 homes against the new targets this year and called for a relaxation of greenfield planning rules [\[P\]](#).

Region	RSS housing figure pa	LAs yet to set target	Est. total housing loss	% change from RSS
Midlands	38,494	7%	-5,293	-13.7%
North East	31,660	7%	2,773	8.8%
North West	33,122	0%	801	2.4%
South East	51,403	9%	-7,004	-13.6%
South West	30,653	0%	-3,419	-11.2%
England total	185,332	5%	-12,142	-6.6%

Housing targets post RSS (BNP Paribas)

Green Space and Landscapes

Town greens. The appeal court ruled that town green laws are compatible with human rights legislation. The case concerned an application to register land at West Beach in Newhaven as a town green [\[P\]](#). The Open Spaces Society has published an updated guide to registering town greens taking account of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill [\[OSS\]](#). The communities department is consulting on clarifying rules that prevent communities applying to register a town green. Applications are already blocked when a local or neighbourhood plan is published for consultation. The government is suggesting that the prohibition will automatically expire after two years. Protection from town green status will also apply when a Transport and Works Act Order application is made (where the Secretary of State gives planning permission) or a Local Development Order is being considered. Closes 19 August [\[P\]](#).

Parks and meadows. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund are ploughing £23m into eleven park restorations, including [Westgate Gardens and Landscape](#), Canterbury [\[MLP\]](#). Campaigners are raising a petition against the sale of the Control Tower at Greenham Common. They want it to become a Visitor Centre that will reflect the military and social history of the site, and the natural environment of the common [\[C\]](#) [\[T\]](#) [\[L\]](#). Prince Charles has called for the creation of new wild flower meadows, at least one in every county, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Coronation. The Coronation Meadows project is led by Plantlife and in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust [\[P\]](#) [\[T\]](#) [\[MLP\]](#).

National Parks. East Devon CPRE is among those urging caution over lobbying to create a new national park in Dorset and East Devon [L](#) [BBC](#).

Rivers. Defra launched a new partnership scheme, called the Catchment Based Approach, to encourage communities and environmental groups to take on more responsibility for improving the health of their local rivers, as well as the surrounding natural environment and wildlife [C](#).

Biodiversity. Defra has published a new map of Local Nature Partnerships [C](#). Owen Paterson gave the go ahead to a cull of gulls on the Ribble Estuary to protect aircraft [G](#). Native juniper bushes, and the editor's tippie of gin, are threatened by the spread of the phytophthora austrocedrae fungus [C](#). New statistics show that 10% of England is woodland, 26% of which is conifers. In 2012-13, 2,600 hectares of new woodland was planted, all broadleaf [C](#).

Pollinators. Environment minister, Lord De Mauley, announced an urgent review of policy to protect Britain's pollinators including bees, butterflies and flies. The National Pollinator Strategy, due in November, may advise councils not to cut verges during flowering and to use nectar rich plants in municipal beds. The government might prevent buildings being demolished from April to June to protect solitary bees, and the NPPF might be changed to incorporate 'bee friendly development' [C](#) [C](#) [C](#). Beekeepers said a third of UK bee colonies were lost over the winter [C](#). The University of Sussex is urging gardeners to record bees and other pollinators using a smartphone application [G](#). The RSPB is encouraging householders to leave part of their gardens untidy [C](#) [RSPB](#).

Rights of Way. The Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society (OSS) are concerned that the England Coastal Path might be scrapped after environment minister Richard Benyon described it as a "sledgehammer to miss a nut" [OSS](#) [Y](#). The OSS is alarmed that the [Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill](#) could make trespass a criminal offence in public places in England. It argues this "could unfairly restrict the public's rights to enjoy paths and open spaces" [OSS](#). [And potentially restrict the right to protest, Ed.]

Farming, Food and Retail

Farming. Owen Paterson reached provisional agreement with other EU ministers but clashed with the NFU over reform to the Common Agricultural Policy. He intends to transfer 15% of funds from direct payments for the area farmed (Pillar 1) to rural development and environment (Pillar 2) [FG](#) [FgTK](#) [FWI](#) [C](#). Farmers' incomes have plunged [C](#). Peasant farmers are on the rise in the UK [G](#).

Supermarkets and food. After an email campaign by supporters, CPRE said supermarkets are still failing to give adequate support to English farmers and the rural economy. It wants supermarkets to adopt a target of at least 10% of food sold to come from within a 30 mile area [FWI](#) [YP](#) [C](#). Retailers retorted that demand has to be consumer led [YP](#). The government is reviewing the integrity and assurance of food supply networks. It is calling for evidence on issues that affect consumer confidence by 7 August [C](#).

GM crops. Defra Secretary Owen Paterson declared that GM technology is good for Britain, the developing world – and his children [M](#) [C](#) [i](#) [C](#) [G](#). The Soil Association retorted: "GM is the cuckoo in the nest. It drives out and destroys the systems that international scientists agree we need to feed the world" [BBC](#). Nick Clegg and David Cameron were more cautious than Paterson [C](#) [C](#) [G](#). The managing director of Waitrose condemned GM as a technology "struggling for a problem to solve" [C](#).

High Speed 2

Evidence and comment. The Commons public bill committee is calling for views and evidence on the line. Closes 19 July [C](#). The consultation on the draft Environmental Statement closes on 11 July [H2](#). CPRE Oxfordshire is asking respondents to the consultation to consider the impacts on light pollution and rural noise [RE](#). Campaigners and councils have launched an appeal against the high court's rejection of their case that the government was required to conduct a strategic environmental assessment of the line [L24](#).

The cost. The New Economics Foundation said that the £33 billion planned for HS2 could be more effectively spent on improving rail services and broadband infrastructure. "As custodian of our public funds the government must step back from unsubstantiated rhetoric on HS2 in order to explore and assess these opportunities properly" [C](#) [net](#). Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin told a Commons debate on the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Bill that the line is projected to cost £42.6bn, up from £33bn, inclusive of a large contingency fund [BBC](#) [C](#). Thirty-seven MPs voted for a motion urging the bill to be rejected until budgets and the route are determined [C](#) [R2B](#). The Financial Times reports that the economic benefits of the line will be revised downwards by around £21 billion in the autumn when the DfT will drop its 'decade old' assumption that business people are unable to work on trains [FT](#).

Aviation

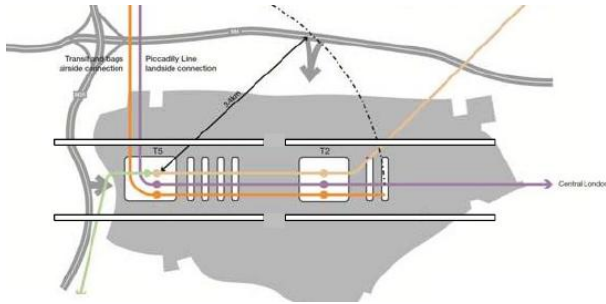
Tranquillity. The government is consulting on the guidance on environmental objectives issued to the Civil Aviation Authority, including noise and over-flight of national parks and AONBs. The guidance urges the CAA to "take into account the concept of tranquillity when making decisions regarding airspace below 7,000 feet" but this is secondary to reducing over-flying of densely populated areas. Closes 17 September [C](#).

Davies. The Airports Commission visited Kent and Richmond to hear the views of RSPB, local politicians and residents opposed to airport expansion [KO](#) [TIL](#) [C](#). Richmond Heathrow Campaign has told the commission that better use of daytime runway slots and plane capacity, along with reversing the growth in international transfer passengers would obviate the need for an extra runway [Vlg](#) [C](#). The Independent Transport Commission think tank is recommending a single hub airport for the UK [C](#).

Birmingham airport told the Airports Commission that it should reject plans for a new runway at Heathrow and instead support a network of long-haul centres. The airport wants to expand to handle 70 million passengers [i](#) [FT](#) [BBC](#) [X](#) [X](#).

Gatwick airport called on the commission to support its plans for a second runway, arguing that, with a second runway at Stansted, this would break the "Heathrow monopoly" [ES](#). Brendon Sewill, chair of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC), said it was "impertinent" of the airport to suggest that opposition had died away [G](#). GACC has told the Airports Commission that there is no need for new runways and warned of widespread blight from the proposals [C](#) [C](#). The airport has appointed Sir Terry Farrell to offer specialist advice to support its proposal for additional runway capacity and its vision for a constellation of three London Airports with two runways each – Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. Farrell said: "The concept of building a single mega-hub airport is at significant odds with what London needs" [X](#) [BBC](#) [TA](#).

Heathrow runways. The national media reported that Heathrow favours a third runway 10km south west of the airport towards Stanwell Moor village in Surrey. The runway, dubbed R3S, is said to be its preferred option in its forthcoming submission to the Airports Commission [ES](#) [i](#) [i](#) [C](#) [BBC](#). Residents and environmentalists say the Stanwell Moor proposal would devastate wildlife [T](#). Comment: “Come friendly A380s and tear through Stanwell Moor, home of a peculiar new phenomenon: ‘Stimbyism’ – Stick-it-in-my-backyardism” [i](#). The Centre for Policy Studies has proposed extending the existing runways to form two runways each (below) [□](#) [□](#).



Heathrow claimed that an estuary hub airport, Boris Island, could lead to the loss of 63,000 jobs near Heathrow. A Stansted or Estuary hub would mean an additional 30 minute average journey time to the airport, which, it claimed, could cost the UK economy £26 billion. Heathrow’s management refused to rule out seeking public funds to aid its expansion [ES](#) [FT](#) [g](#) [VLG](#) [A](#).

Opinion. A Populus survey said that 46% of people favoured expansion of Heathrow; 43% were against [UC](#). Heathrow says it will fund a lobby group “to provide a voice for the thousands of local people” who are pro-expansion [GS](#).

Wind

Environment. A high court judge dismissed a judicial review against a Purbeck windfarm ruling the inspector did not err in the manner he dealt with the harm to the AONB [P](#). Ruling [B](#). Scottish Natural Heritage has been looking at decommissioning turbines. One conclusion is that leaving concrete bases in place may be less environmentally damaging than removing them [C](#) [BBC](#). To the anger of the Renewable Energy Foundation, the government has endorsed the noise measurement methodology proposed by the Institute of Acoustics [□](#) [REF](#).

Proposals. An application for the 240-turbine offshore Atlantic Array windfarm in the Bristol Channel has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate RWE Npower Renewables [L](#) [C](#) [C](#). Opposition to the array remains strong [□](#) [□](#). Residents of Honeywell, North Devon have rejected a payment of nearly £6,000 for accepting a turbine [L](#). Navitus offshore windfarm has recruited Barnacle Billy to win over children to the scheme [L](#).



Barnacle Billy

Fracking

Planning. The government confirmed that decisions on planning permission on fracking will remain at local level and not be subject to the national infrastructure regime [UW](#) [C](#). The Commons Library published a briefing on fracking [B](#).

Supply. The US Energy Information Administration said Britain has “technically recoverable shale resources” of 26 trillion cubic feet, around ten years supply. It also estimates that some 700m barrels could be extracted [C](#). The British Geological Survey agreed that shale gas reserves are greater than thought but it is not clear how much can be extracted. The BBC suggested that communities will receive 1% of the income of any well [BBC](#). Friends of the Earth said the north of England should not be turned into a new ‘Gaslands’ [C](#). Centrica has joined the fracking rush in the north west, promising lower energy bills [g](#) [C](#). The Sunday Mail did a hatchet job on FoE’s anti-fracking campaign [B](#).

South East. Cuadrilla wants to flare methane from its rig at Balcombe in Sussex [T](#). After action by Friends of the Earth, the Environment Agency belatedly said the company must apply for mining waste permit and a radioactive substances permit before it can carry out test drilling. Consultation on the permits closes 16 July [C](#) [C](#) [C](#). Speaking to residents in Sussex, a Cuadrilla representative admitted that fracking will not significantly lower the price of gas [i](#). Campaigners are planning peaceful protests once work begins [f](#). Green Euro MP Keith Taylor has joined the battle to keep fracking out of Hampshire [L](#). Damian Carrington: “You should be in no doubt that the roaring protests against fracking will make the opposition to wind farms look like a gentle breeze” [g](#).

Community payments. The UK Onshore Operators Group (UKOOG), the representative body for UK onshore oil and gas companies, has published a binding industry charter for its members. It says that the environment must be protected and sets out the minimum standards of engagement required with local communities alongside a community benefits scheme. Communities will be given £100,000 at the exploration and appraisal stage of fracking, rising at production stage to 1% of revenues, allocated approximately two-thirds to the local community and one third at the ‘county level’ [□](#). UKOOG suggests that community benefits could be worth in excess of £1.1 billion across the UK over a 25 year production timescale [□](#).

Energy and Recycling

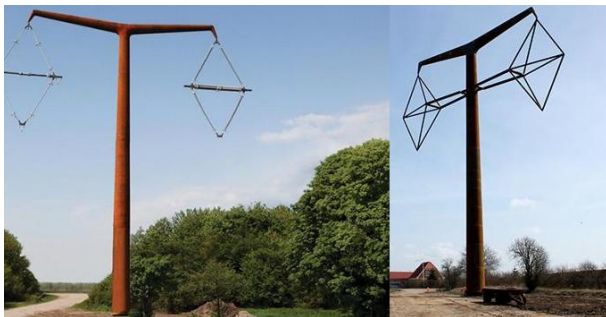
Recycling. The Local Government Association said that improving the market, financing and taxation for recycled materials could earn local authorities £1 billion by 2020 [LGA](#).

Communities. The government has issued a call for evidence for its Community Energy Strategy, which aims to put communities at the heart of managing and generating their own electricity. Closes 1 August [C](#); Ed Davey [g](#). DECC has also announced a £15 million fund to carry out feasibility studies into renewable energy projects for rural communities [B](#).

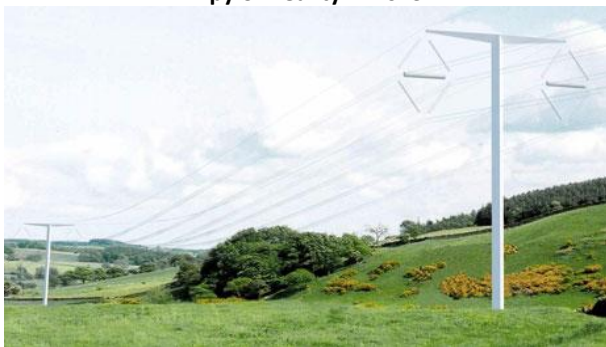
Energy supplies. Ofgem said spare electricity capacity could fall to between 2 and 5% by 2015, increasing the risk of blackouts. Britain has not built enough replacement capacity for retiring coal fired plants and consumers are not reducing demand by as much as expected. National Grid suggested that large industries could be paid to lower their usage on weekday evenings to keep domestic lights on [BBC](#) [C](#) [□](#) [□](#). Just four households have signed up to the government’s flagship Green Deal energy efficiency programme [C](#) [C](#).

Renewables. Wave power will need a strike price six times that of coal to be successful [\[1\]](#). MPs on the Commons energy and climate change committee condemned the business and environmental case for the Severn barrage, leading to widespread comment that the scheme will not now proceed [\[BBC\]](#) [\[BBC\]](#) [\[BBC\]](#) [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#). In 2012 renewable energy accounted for 4.1% of energy consumption [\[1\]](#). The Committee on Climate Change said that Britain was likely to meet its 2017 emissions targets, but warned the government against reducing green initiatives [\[1\]](#). The Commons Library published a briefing on smart metering [\[1\]](#).

Wirescapes. The National Grid has built its first prototypes of its “really elegant” T-pylons. These ugly brutes have been built using low maintenance uncoated steel, unlike the white coated shown to the public when the T- pylon was first announced. The Grid is apparently considering a range of coating options [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#).



T- pylon reality in 2013



T- pylon as featured in 2011

Campaigning

National ‘Roads to Nowhere’ Rally. CPRE Sussex is among the supporters of a rally organised by the Roads to Nowhere campaign, the Hastings Alliance and the Combe Haven Defenders [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#).



People. CPRE is seeking a Head of Government and Rural Affairs [\[1\]](#). Matthew Plummer is walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela to raise money for CPRE and Mobility, and writing an amusing blog to boot [\[1\]](#). Steve Graham has departed as Director of Civic Voice, as the organisation struggles for funds [\[1\]](#).

Pubs. Green King is rebranding many of its pubs and scrapping the traditional pub sign [\[1\]](#). CPRE’s CEO Shaun Spiers said: “Greene King may want to run anywhere pubs in anywhere places, but I doubt their new signs will feature in any future survey of the country’s icons” [\[1\]](#).

Government: Budgets and Infrastructure

Spending and infrastructure. The Chancellor announced the outcome of his spending review for 2015/16 and beyond Speech [\[1\]](#). Report [\[1\]](#). Details [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#). Treasury Secretary Danny Alexander, published a white paper *Investing in Britain’s future*, setting out the government’s infrastructure plans [\[1\]](#). The paper details infrastructure spending worth over £100 billion over the next parliament, of which £70 billion will be spent on transport. However, total investment will fall by 1.7% in 2015 once inflation is taken into account.

Table 1.A: Government long-term spending plans

£m	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Transport							
High Speed 2 ¹	832	1,729	1,693	3,300	4,000	4,498	16,052
Highways Agency	1,497	1,907	2,316	2,614	3,047	3,764	15,145
Network Rail ²	3,548	3,681	3,770	3,789	3,824	3,859	22,471
London Transport Investment	925	941	957	973	990	1,007	5,793
Local Authority Major Projects ³	819	819	819	819	819	819	4,914
Local Authority maintenance	976	976	976	976	976	976	5,856
Integrated Transport Block ⁴	458	458	458	458	458	458	2,748

Infrastructure spending plans

Government: Communities and Environment

Department of Communities and Local Government: 10% budget cut. The government announced £3 billion capital spending to build 165,000 affordable homes [\[1\]](#). In the Guardian, Peter Hetherington argued the “side-lined” communities department should now be abolished [\[1\]](#).

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: 10% cut. Funding for flood defences will rise to £370 million by 2015-16 and then be protected in real terms until 2020. Defra is expected to save £54 million in 2015/16 through its **Strategic Alignment programme**, which aims for its network to of agencies operate as ‘one business’ and to achieve 30% cost savings. The Green Alliance said that Defra’s “ability to steward the natural resources base of our economy reduces as each year goes by, and it may be time to consider how to create a new and more powerful department for natural resources” [\[1\]](#). Damian Carrington said Owen Paterson is lucky to have a department at all after the cuts [\[1\]](#).

Natural England and the **Environment Agency** will remain separate agencies, Owen Paterson announced [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#). The decision has been widely welcomed by green and industry groups. Paterson said the bodies must make “transformational changes” in the way they work, including consolidation of land management and planning functions. They must provide a seamless planning advice service to developers on environmental issues and: “develop a more pragmatic approach to how they engage with customers, whilst still delivering the necessary environmental outcomes.” CPRE said the government deserves credit for the decision but called for a longer than three year period between reviews [\[1\]](#). The Ramblers, RSPB and industry groups also welcomed the decision, though the Ramblers worried that budget cuts would affect creation of the England Coastal Path [\[1\]](#) [\[1\]](#). The review heralds a future new management for the **National Nature Reserves**. A sell off is ruled out, but they might be managed by NGOs and financed by “innovative funding streams.”

JNCC. Paterson also announced that the **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** will continue [\[1\]](#).

WRAP. The Waste & Resources Action Programme will have its funding from Defra cut by 40% in 2015/16, taking its government funding down to £15.5 million [\[1\]](#).

Government: Heritage

English Heritage is to have its budget cut by a “very disappointing” 10% and will be split in two [A]. The management of its 420 National Heritage Monuments will be transferred to a new ‘self-financing’ charity, with a one off sum of £80 million to get it going. It will retain the brand English Heritage and “in due course, will be completely self-financing and no longer need tax-payer support.” The monuments will remain in public ownership. English Heritage’s planning and heritage protection remit will remain with the culture department within a new National Heritage Protection Service, though it is expected to seek a friendlier name [BBC]. English Heritage’s chief executive Simon Thurley predicted that within 10 years the new charity will be self-sufficient. He said English Heritage already generates around £54 million of its £175 million budget. The National Heritage Protection Service will need around £75-£80 million a year from the government [C].

Government: Transport

Department for Transport: 9% cut. George Osborne unveiled what he described as “the largest programme of investment in roads in half a century” and the “largest investment in our railways since the Victorian age.” He boosted the transport department’s capital budget to £9.5bn in 2015/16.

Roads. Treasury Secretary Danny Alexander announced £28bn for road improvements, including £10bn for essential maintenance. The Highways Agency will be transformed into a public owned corporation, its budget growing 250% by 2020. It will resurface 21,000 miles of roads and add new lanes to the busiest stretches of motorways. The national non-motorway network will be improved, with a “large proportion” upgraded to dual carriageways and grade-separated junctions. “Improvements in materials and [mitigation] mean that there is no longer a choice between a well-functioning road network and a well-protected environment.” Many projects ‘announced’ are subject to feasibility studies, including upgrading of the A303 through the Blackdown Hills AONB – a scheme that has been opposed by environmental groups for more than 20 years (1993: [i]). CPRE said that many of the road schemes announced are along corridors where improvements to the rail network are urgently needed and these should be prioritised first. It said older roads should be brought up to modern environmental standards [RE].

Roads in the South East. Several projects in the South East are listed. Managed motorway schemes: M4 J3-12 London to Reading; M23 J8-10 near Gatwick; M20 J3-5 Maidstone; M27 J4-11; and M3 J9-14 near Southampton. Other schemes: A21 upgrade Tonbridge to Pembury; A27 Chichester Bypass improvements; M20 J10a; A2 Ebbsfleet Junction; A2 Bean; and the Lower Thames Crossing. The Woodland Trust condemned plans to dual the A21 near Tunbridge Wells, which will destroy nine hectares of ancient woodland [KN].

High Speed 2. George Osborne reiterated that the government will give the “green light” to HS2. The government is budgeting £42.6 billion for construction costs and £7.5 billion for rolling stock (in 2011 prices). The government will also establish a HS2 growth taskforce chaired by Lord Deighton to capitalise on the growth opportunities across the country resulting from the line.

Other rail. More than £16 billion will be spent on maintaining and extending Britain’s railway network from 2014 to 2019. 850 miles of railway to be electrified.

Government: Business

Department for Business: 6 % cut in expenditure, in exchange for a 9% boost in capital spending.

Broadband. The government is now committed to 95% of UK premises having access to superfast broadband by 2017, the previous target had been 90% by 2015. For the final 5%, the government will “work closely with industry to ensure that at least 99% have access to superfast broadband” by 2018 [G]. The National Audit Office condemned the roll out of rural broadband saying: “The rural broadband project is moving forward late and without the benefit of strong competition to protect public value” [C].

Local enterprise partnerships. Lord Heseltine’s proposal for a ‘single pot’ growth fund (SLGF) for LEPs will come to fruition, with a £2bn a year. Heseltine welcomed the move, discretely omitting to mention that he called for a £12bn annual pot. This is not new money: £819 million will come from local authority transport funding, £100 million from local sustainable transport funds, £300 million from further education and £400 million from the New Homes Bonus. The single pot will be allocated competitively on the basis of the strategic plans drawn up by the LEPs. “The LEPs with the strongest strategic plans that demonstrate their ability to deliver growth will gain the greatest share of the SLGF.” The LEPs will also receive £5.3 billion of EU Structural and Investment Funds for 2014-20. Nick Clegg will chair a new Local Growth Committee, which will control the SLGF money [FT].

Government: Energy

Department Energy & Climate Change: 8% cut. Osborne offered guarantees for new nuclear plants and tax incentives for shale gas drilling. £430 million will be provided to subsidise green heat pumps. Consumers will fund £5.3 billion through energy bills to enable investment in renewable energy and to address fuel poverty.

Energy market. The government will introduce a *capacity market* which will pay a predictable revenue stream for providing reliable capacity. The market aims in particular to encourage growth in gas power stations [C]. The government published draft strike prices for renewable energy, with wave and tidal power getting the largest cross subsidy [C]. These ‘contracts for difference’ offer a higher subsidy for renewables than at present. RenewableUK said the strike price for wind power was “challenging” [G]. The government will provide guarantees to help the building of new nuclear plants, including Hinkley Point [G].

Fracking. Danny Alexander said shale gas was “environmentally safe” and could provide “cheap energy” for many years to come. He said the government will publish by 18 July a package of measures designed to kick start the shale gas industry in the UK. The package will include:

- ◆ new guidelines on the planning and permitting regime
- ◆ a consultation on tax incentives for exploration
- ◆ an industry-led scheme of community benefits.

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 [RE] (it’s free).

CPRE London eBulletin [RE]. **Subscribe.**

CPRE Buckinghamshire eBulletin [RE].