



Happy Birthday to the Green Belt

After sixty years, our green belts are still intact, though somewhat nibbled away at. But they are under more pressure than ever.

Oxford city council has long wanted to sprawl southwards. The council's plans for a 'Northern Gateway' in the green belt have been found sound by a planning inspector. Oxfordshire council is to press ahead with an outer ring of park and ride sites in the green belt.

I've lost count of how many times so-called think tanks have proposed building in the metropolitan green belt. The latest trend is to propose high density building around railway stations, though the Town and Country Planning Association says this will simply increase car commuting.

But for all this, the green belt remains one of our most successful, if most misunderstood, landscape policies. May it long remain so.

CPRE London has published a special eBulletin on the metropolitan green belt, with a superb cartoon by OLD CPRE. More news on the green belt 60th at CPRE Oxfordshire CPRE and on the national website CPRE.



CPRE has launching a new national campaign, *Our Green Belt*, which calls on the government to:

- ◆ be more specific on the limited circumstances in which green belt boundaries can be changed through local plans;
- ◆ call in or direct local authorities to refuse damaging developments in the green belt that are not identified in existing local or neighbourhood plans; and
- ◆ target public funding, through organisations such as Natural England and Local Enterprise Partnerships, to increase the quality of and access to green belt.

The campaign is being promoted through a new website, ourgreenbelt.cpre.org.uk and on social media with the hashtag #ourgreenbelt. CPRE is encouraging people to share memories and photos, and post stories on why the green belt is important to them.

Affordable Housing Victory

Court victory. After a high court judicial review brought by West Berkshire and Reading councils, Mr Justice Holgate ruled that a coalition government policy to exempt many housing developments of ten or fewer homes from paying towards affordable housing is incompatible with planning law. That law says the local development plan should guide development but ministers had ignored that. Justice Holgate's judgement reveals that ministers drove the changes in policy through in defiance of advice and in ignorance of the consequences. Ministers disregarded advice from their civil servants on how exemptions for S106 contributions towards affordable housing should be implemented. They seem to have misunderstood or misinterpreted survey evidence about the impact of affordable housing levies on small builders. They also ignored advice about the consequences exempting conversions of empty offices from affordable housing contributions under the vacant building credit. The government has said it will appeal

Reaction. As a result of the ruling, the government has announced that it will delete the nine paragraphs of national planning guidance that direct councils not to seek affordable housing contributions from small developments or from developments that bring empty buildings, such as offices, back into use . Daventry council in Northamptonshire is taking legal action over appeals allowed by the planning inspectorate without a contribution to affordable housing .

Berkshire

River victory. CPRE Berkshire lodged a formal objection to plans to allow a new housing development to discharge treated sewage into the river. It said: "[We are] very concerned about the likely pollution of the upper reaches of the River Lambourn from this proposed development and cannot understand the Environment Agency granting permission for effluent runoff." After villagers threatened a judicial review and West Berkshire council insisted on an environmental impact assessment, the developer successfully applied to connect the ten-home development to the main sewage system

Housing. West Berkshire's planning committee approved a replacement house in the AONB at Inkpen against an officers' recommendation for refusal and local opposition. CPRE Berkshire said: "What is the point of planning policy when WBC simply choose to ignore it and what is the point of localism when the voice of the many is overruled by the WBC planning committee" . Plans to build more than 700 homes at Newbury Racecourse have been approved, despite objections from residents . The high court has backed a planning inspector who said a mobile home park of 22 caravans at Finchampstead near Wokingham was built without planning permission must be cleared . Plans have been submitted for 265 homes in Henwick Park on the edge of Thatcham .

Housing appeals. West Berkshire council has launched a claim in the high court aiming to overturn a planning inspectorate decision to build up to 90 houses at Firlands Farm, Burghfield Common   . The inspector had concluded that the council lacked a five-year land supply  .

Heritage. Plans to convert the Greenham Common Control Tower into a café have been put on hold after an objection from BBOWT wildlife trust .

Local plans. The South West Action Group has defended its work in challenging housing west and south west of Basingstoke. It says it stands for “fairness” .

Renewables. Villagers are objecting to plans for an 11-hectare solar farm Sulhamstead Abbots  . Lightsource Renewable Energy has asked Basingstoke and Deane council whether an environmental impact assessment is required for its planned 5MW solar farm at Old Basing  .

Transport. Plans for a public consultation on the £250 million Windsor Link Railway have been delayed . The Royal Borough’s consultation on the local plan is however live and that covers the railway link as well local green spaces . Slough council is opposing plans to build a depot for Heathrow Express trains in Langley as a consequence of redevelopment of Old Oak Common for HS2. It has petitioned the House of Commons committee reviewing the HS2 bill citing concerns over air quality, loss of land for housing and road access  .

Buckinghamshire

Housing. Wycombe council’s planning committee unanimously agreed that an application by Gladman Developments for 192 homes in the green belt at Mill Lane, Monks Risborough was unacceptable . The committee members described the application as “opportunistic and aggressive”, saying it would have a serious impact on flooding and a detrimental impact on views from the Chilterns AONB overlooking the town. Cllr David Johncock said:

This is a speculative approach from an aggressive national developer and our response is robust. The message is very simple here. We are the people who will shape the future of this district. We are in charge of what happens in our local area, not the developers.

Gladman has lodged an appeal on the basis on non-determination  . Gladman is also to appeal after its plans for 160 houses at Longwick were unanimously turned down by Wycombe council’s planning committee . Communities secretary Greg Clark is considering whether to call in an application for 130 homes on the edge of Buckingham .

Renewables. Energy company Anesco is planning a solar farm in the green belt at Little Marlow. A local resident objecting to the scheme said: “Marlow is beautiful, and popular because of that. The beauty is slowly getting nibbled away and huge amounts of steel work won’t help”  .

Transport. The tri-council strategic alliance of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire is proposing a Transport Infrastructure Forum to guide spending of £2.8 billion in road and rail links  . The government has accept a recommendation by the Commons HS2 committee to extend the Chilterns tunnel by 2.6km northwards beyond South Heath, replacing a proposed cutting and green tunnel. The move will reduce the impact of the scheme on the village and save 12 hectares of woodland, some ancient, in Mantle’s Wood, Sibley’s Coppice and Farthings Wood. The government and the HS2 committee remain opposed to a long tunnel through the Chilterns proposed by Chiltern council and others   . (For the long tunnel proposal, see the CPRE Bucks eBulletin for May .)

More Buckinghamshire news, including the HS2 inquiry, in the CPRE Bucks eBulletin .

Hampshire

Economy. Councils across Hampshire and Isle of Wight have submitted devolution plans to create a “southern powerhouse”. The plan aims to create more than 80,000 homes by 2025 across brownfield sites and in rural areas, and improve transport   .

Housing. Eastleigh council has backed an outline application for 1,100 homes on an 84-hectare site despite officers saying the scheme would “represent a departure” from the area’s existing development plan “in that the site is outside of the settlement boundary and within Strategic Gap and on land identified as an historic parkland” . Residents in Petersfield are to campaign against the neighbourhood plan in an attempt to stop up to 200 new homes being built at Causeway Farm .

Housing appeals. Gurnard parish council is appealing to the secretary of state, Greg Clark, to quash a planning inspector’s decision to build 86 homes on the green gap between the village and Cowes. The inspector said the proposal would not significantly detract from the green gap and would not lead to the inappropriate coalescence of settlements  . A planning inspector has rejected plans for 17 houses on the edge of Rowledge, agreeing with East Hampshire council that the development would cause significant harm to the character of the area   . A housing scheme in a green gap has been rejected by a planning inspector. The inspector concluded: “The proposal would cause harm to the Local Gap between Hook and Newnham; would have an adverse impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents; and may have an adverse impact upon a protected species such that a precautionary approach is appropriate”  . Plans for nearly 320 homes at Church Crookham, rejected by Hart council last year, have been approved by a planning inspector. The 34-hectare site includes a 16-hectare Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). The inspector said the SANG and a circular walk were sufficient to mitigate impact on the nearby Thames Basin Heaths special protection area .

Renewables. EDF Energy Renewables has decided not to proceed with an appeal against the planning refusal for the Bullington Cross Wind Farm 🌞. Chairman of Keep Hampshire Green, Douglas Paterson, said: “We are absolutely delighted. After three years of worry it is hard to describe how happy and relieved we are that this ordeal is finally over... To scar this beautiful stretch of unspoilt countryside for such poor return would have been scandalous” ^{HAMP} ^{CHRO.} The planning inspectorate has sent its recommendations on the Navitus wind farm to the Secretary of State, who will announce a decision by 11 September. 🌿 🔄. The Daily Telegraph reports the government is set to reject the wind farm 🇬🇧. Test Valley councillors granted permission for a 5MW solar farm at Warren Farm in North Baddesley ^{South} ^{West}. Winchester council has approved a 26-hectare solar farm at Bishop’s Waltham ^{Da.}

Roundup. Work to reinstate a road destroyed in storm on the Isle of Wight has been halted after Natural England objected to the damage to a SSSI ^{South} ^{West}. Test Valley officers are recommending councillors approve polytunnels on 17.5 hectares of land next to Grade II-listed Kings Farm at West Wellow, even though the council’s conservation team has objected ^{Da.}

Kent

Housing. CPRE Kent is objecting to 100-bed hotel and over 300 homes on Grade 1 agricultural land outside Faversham. Brian Lloyd said: “We fail to see how a site, significantly detached from the existing town, would contribute to the current compact nature of Faversham. It is an illogical and arbitrary incursion of the town into the open countryside” ^{KM3} ^{PERRY} ^{COURT} ^{FARM}. Plans for 400 homes adjacent to Dunstan Down, Whitstable come with 20 hectares of green infrastructure and 52 allotments. Local residents have fought a long campaign against the proposals ^{CANT} ^{TIMES}. Faced with a hostile public gallery of more than 300 people, Faversham town council reversed its previous decision to support plans for more than 300 greenfield homes at Perry Court Farm ^{KM3} ^{KM3} [□].



Plans for Perry Court Farm, Faversham

Housing appeals. Gladman Developments has appealed plans to build 580 greenfield houses in Sittingbourne on grounds of non-determination ^{KM3}.

Planning. CPRE Kent is objecting to Canterbury council’s proposal to raise the level of housing in its local plan from 10,200 new homes by 2026 to 15,600 by 2031. Brian Lloyd said: “The council has seemingly, from the outset, cast in stone the sites it wants to see developed, and despite high levels of public opposition it has not been prepared to consider alternatives. We will be participating fully at the examination to put our case that the plan is unsound” ^{KM3}. The increase in housing had been recommended by a planning inspector who paused the examination of the local plan while the housing numbers are addressed ^{ins} ^{Da.} ^{P.}

Junction 8 row. Maidstone council has adopted an Economic Development Strategy that calls for expanded employment land off Junction 8 of the M20 ^{KM3}. This decision comes just weeks after CPRE joined other groups and the council itself in opposing a huge employment development off Junction 8 at Waterside Park. Before the appeal decision, Richard Knox-Johnston of CPRE Kent, said: “Councillors are now being asked to ignore all the borough’s own arguments against development, as well as everyone else’s concerns, and promote development there. It is baffling!” ^{KM3}. The appeal for the Waterside Park development was dismissed just days later. The planning inspector said: “Considerable environmental harm would result from the loss of this area of countryside to development through the combined impact on the landscape setting of the AONBs and the heritage assets” ^{KM3} ^{CP} ^{Appeal} ^{Casey} ^{Power.}

Roads. Manston Airport is to be used to accommodate overflow from Operation Stack ^{Da.}

Renewables. Farm Renewables is to submit an application for a 10-hectare solar farm at Abbeyfields near Faversham ^{KM3}.

Oxfordshire

Housing. An application to build 51 homes on fields in Chesterton has been rejected because it would result in a “disproportionate concentration” of new housing in the village ^{Ch} ^{ins}. Proposals to build 170 homes on seven hectares in the green gap between Didcot and East Hagbourne are being opposed by both communities ^{Oxf} ^{Tim}. The FT’s Kate Allen compared the housing policies of Oxford and Cambridge. The latter embarked on a programme of new settlements in its surrounding countryside. Oxford, she says, has been stuck in a debate over whether to build on the green belt and housebuilding has failed to keep up with population growth ^{FT}. Bicester residents are concerned at the loss of green spaces, including Gavray Drive, as the town expands ^{Oxf} ^{Oxf} ^{Tim} ^{Tim}.

Self-build freedom. Cherwell council has announced proposals for the UK’s first large-scale Local Development Order for self-build housing development on the former MOD site at Graven Hill, Bicester. The order would remove the need for self-builders to submit individual planning applications for each plot, proving the house conformed with rules laid out in the LDO ^{Da.}



Housing appeals. A landowner won an appeal to build 107 houses and 52 retirement flats and bungalows at Benson. The Bensington Society said: “Our main concern is that it’s only using part of a very large field and that in the future we may find new planning applications to develop more of the field” ^{Henl Henl Apper} _{Stat Stat Stat}. Plans to build ten homes on a field on the outskirts of Woodcote have been thrown out on appeal. The inspector said the development conflicted with the Woodcote neighbourhood plan. Although the Chilterns Conservation Board had declined to comment on the application, the inspector concluded that the development would be harmful to the AONB ^{Henl Henl Apper} _{Stat Stat Stat}.

Cherwell’s local plan, which plans 22,840 homes and 200 hectares of employment land by 2031, has been adopted ^{Ch} ₂₄. It allows for more than 6,000 extra homes than in the draft plan after a planning inspector said the council was not providing for enough housing ^P. The council said it is seeking legal advice on whether the high court judgement on affordable housing (page 1) will mean the plan should be amended ^P. The chairman of Bodicote parish council has said the village could lose its identity under the plan ^{Gu}.

Local plans. The Chipping Norton neighbourhood plan has been approved in a referendum with 95% in favour on a 35% turnout. In an all too familiar action, Gladman Developments had objected to the plan’s housing policy ^P. The Vale of White Horse council said Oxford city council needed to review its local plan and “try harder to meet its own needs” before asking other parts of Oxfordshire to build more homes ^{Oxf} _{Tim}. The examination into the West Oxfordshire local plan will begin in October. The inspector has already raised significant questions on whether there is adequate provision for housing against county-wide projections and the council’s disagreements with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan ^{Co} ₂₀₂₁. CPRE Oxfordshire has welcomed West Oxfordshire’s questioning of county housing figures ^{RE}. A planning inspector has declared Oxford city council’s area action plan for the Northern Gateway to be sound ^{RE}. Campaigners are raising funds for a legal opinion on whether the decision can be challenged in the high court ^{RE}.



Northern Gateway Area Action Plan area

Transport. Oxfordshire council is set to approve its **Local Transport Plan** on 8 September, after it was approved by cabinet in July ^{RE}. The plan envisages replacing the park and ride sites on the edge of the city with sites in the green belt. Campaigners are fighting plans for a truck area and park and ride outside Abingdon ^{OxM}. Oxford Civic Society is backing the proposals for new outer park and ride sites but Helen Marshall of CPRE Oxfordshire said they could damage the green belt ^{OxM}.

Green belt. The Oxfordshire Growth Board has commissioned a study of the Oxford green belt to identify areas suitable for housing. Helen Marshall accused the Board of secrecy and said ^{OxM} ^{OxM}:

The Oxfordshire Growth Board plans to change rural Oxfordshire into a growth area, bringing in tens of thousands of new people and constructing the equivalent of a new Oxford every 10 years. These plans have been progressed behind closed doors for the past two years, without any public consultation and almost to the point of no return.

Residents said the Vale council was protecting Oxford’s green spaces at the expense of the green belt ^{OxM}.

Retail. Rival groups are arguing for and against a Tesco on the outskirts of Thame. An e-petition from **Thame Needs Tesco** in favour of the scheme has gained 159 votes ^{So}. The opposing e-petition calling for the scheme to be rejected and the Thame neighbourhood plan upheld has 567 votes online, and many more on paper ^{So} ^{Bicst} ^{Spencer}. Bicester retailers say plans for an out of centre Marks and Spencer will damage trade in the town centre ^{THE} _{ALB}.

Renewables. CPRE Oxfordshire is objecting to an 11-hectare solar farm between the villages of Beckley and Elsfield north of Oxford. CPRE’s Mike Tyce said: “The protection of the countryside just isn’t something to compromise. There is just no balance between the loss of agricultural land for at least 35 years – particular with our food production and self-sufficiency struggling – and the generation of electricity for a few months a year” ^{OxM} ^{OxM}.

Roundup. Oxfordshire council has opened a £1.3 million plant to recycle up to 25,000 tonnes of road sweepings a year . Henley council is consulting on improving the town's parks and green spaces .

Surrey

Housing. An appeal to build 27 executive homes in Ewhurst has been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate . Nearby residents have criticised plan to build 1,800 homes along with a primary school, health centre, church, market square, leisure and community centre, shops and restaurants, a large country park and 30,000 square metres of employment space at Dunsfold Park . Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge councils approved a 102-home green belt housing scheme. It includes 25 new homes for blind or partially sighted people, and 77 for market sale. The communities secretary will make the final decision . Residents' groups fear that the green belt in Tandridge is at serious risk after a consultation they branded as a "farce" . A decision on building a new town on Wisley Airfield has been delayed by five months .

Housing appeals. The appeal court granted permission for Smech Properties to challenge a high court decision to refuse its application for a judicial review. The company is challenging Runnymede council's decision to permit developers to build 200 houses on former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency land in the green belt near Chertsey .

Costly countryside. The Open Spaces Society has condemned proposals by Surrey County Council to reduce its share of the funding for countryside sites year on year, eventually reducing it to zero by 2021 . After learning that Surrey Wildlife Trust, which already manages the county's sites, will become solely responsible for generating income to maintain the land. Kate Ashbrook, the society's general secretary said:

The idea that we must make money out of countryside is abhorrent. The risk is that we shall destroy the unique beauty and tranquillity that it offers. We congratulate Surrey CPRE on its crusade to save our countryside from developers and destroyers, and we stand alongside ready to protect our rights to enjoy Surrey's beautiful land.

Green belt. Mole Valley council has approve 135 applications to build on green-belt land in the past five years. Andy Smith director of CPRE Surrey warned that once countryside was developed it was lost forever .

Renewables. Navistas Projects has submitted an application to build a 10,000 panel solar farm on 1.6 hectares of the green belt in Hookwood, near Horley. Council officers have recommended refusal of the scheme, to which CPRE Surrey has objected   . Solar Power South has submitted a revised application to Guildford council for up to 30,000 solar panels on Eashing Farm. A previous application was rejected by the council and planning inspectorate. Nearby Waverley council is backing the application .

Fracking. Europa Oil & Gas has won its appeal to test drill at Holmwood in the green belt and the Surrey Hills AONB. The application had originally been turned down by Surrey council, a decision confirmed on appeal. The inspector's decision was quashed in the high court and a challenge to that decision in the appeal court by Leith Hill Action Group failed. The case was returned to the planning inspectorate. The inspector hearing this second appeal concluded: "The benefits clearly and convincingly outweigh the very short term harm to the green belt, the AONB and other interests." He said the site did not constitute major development, which is restricted in the AONB under NPPF116, but even if it had done so, the proposal would meet the "exceptional circumstances" test required for major development in AONBs   .

Heritage. A second legal challenge has been launched to Waverley Borough Council's decision to approve plans to turn Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's former home 'Undershaw' into a special school. The initial challenge was not allowed to proceed by the high court .

Roundup. Communities secretary Greg Clark has said he will not call in plans for development of a research facility on the former BOC site in the green belt at Chobham. The application was approved by Surrey Heath council earlier this year . Reigate and Banstead council is to take further action against the man who built a 'mock castle' in the green belt behind straw bales after he failed to demolish it   .

Ashdown Forest SPA

The judgement. The appeal court ruled that the 7km zone around Ashdown Forest imposed by Wealden council to limit development neat to the special protection area is unlawful. Within the zone, no additional housing was allowed within 400 metres of the forest. Housing in the remainder of the zone could not be built without suitable alternative natural greenspaces (SANGS) to alleviate recreational pressure on the Ashdown Forest special protection area (SPA). The court said it concluded "with a degree of reluctance" that the council had not complied with EU rules on strategic environmental assessments. The judges also cast doubt on the SANGS policy, pointing to a statement from Natural England that suggested that a broader programme of measures including an increase in the level of monitoring and wardening on the forest could suffice    .

Reaction. Wealden council said the court judgement did not mean it is "open season for unsustainable speculative development in Ashdown Forest and surrounding areas." It has extended the area in which it assesses requirements for SANGS and SAMMS (strategic assessment monitoring and management schemes) to 15km . Natural England wrote to Mid Sussex and other councils to support the way they are using SANGS and visitor management within the 7km zone around the forest .

Crowborough. A planning inspector has overruled Wealden council's decision to refuse planning consent for 103 new homes on greenfield in the AONB at Crowborough. The inspector found that damage to the landscape would be limited and mitigated by the proposed SANG. She said the NPPF gave greater weight to increasing housing supply than recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the development would have only a neutral effect on the AONB [EX](#) [Appeal Cases Portal](#) [P](#) [Co](#) [Co](#). Reacting to the decision, Wealden council said [Co](#).

Many people have been justifiably disappointed with the outcome of the Steel Cross housing site appeal in Crowborough. The Planning Inspector's decision grants planning permission in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the house numbers exceed any development targets set out in our adopted and sound Core Strategy Local Plan. The Council will be robustly challenging the Planning Inspector's decision, and taking it to the High Court if necessary.

Sussex

Housing. An appeal to build 97 homes in the green gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks, close to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate due to fears over increased traffic pollution. Mid Sussex council will not contest the appeal, a decision Michael Brown of CPRE Sussex decried as "lily-livered" [airq news](#) [Co](#) [RE](#). The South Downs National Park authority has approved 79 houses on a former quarry site in Lewes [EX](#). In a letter to the West Sussex County Times, CPRE Sussex's Roger Smith condemned developers for offering as little as 6% affordable housing with their schemes [Co](#) [RE](#). Mid Sussex council approved greenfield 36 homes in Ardingly [Mid Sussex](#) [Mid Sussex](#). Horsham council has dismissed plans from by Gladman Developments to build 78 new homes in Ifield [Co](#). Wealden council has approved 1,000 homes on the edge of Uckfield. Stephen Hardy of CPRE Sussex said: "The starting pistol has fired. We are seeing developers lining up. It is too late for Uckfield now." The development will include 29 hectares of SANGS [Co](#) [P](#). The high court has rejected a challenge to Rother council's grant of planning permission to develop a bowls club site for 39 sheltered apartments and replacement bowls club facilities [LGL](#). The leader of Lewes council has written to residents defending the councils' plans to build 415 affordable homes, including on part of a park [EX](#). Developer Gladman has lodged a proposal with Wealden council to build 100 homes on a greenfield site at Ridgewood, Uckfield – within the new 15km Ashdown Forest screening area [EX](#). Rother council approved 66 homes outside the development boundary of Northiam [Co](#). Ringmer parish council is opposing plans by Gleasons to build 110 greenfield homes in conflict with the emerging neighbourhood plan [EX](#).

Local plans. A planning inspector has recommended that the examination of the Arun local plan is suspended by 18 months while housing supply issues are resolved [Co](#) [Co](#).

Mayfield Market Towns has written to Mid Sussex and Horsham councils pledging not to pre-empt the outcome of the current development of their local plans with a premature application or appeal. Campaign group LAMBS described the pledge as "laughable" [Co](#) [Co](#). In a remarkable show of bias, Mayfield has launched an interactive map of appeals in the area which have been allowed or in progress, but omits to map those that have been refused [Co](#).

Renewables. REPOWERBalcombe has submitted a planning application for a 5MW solar farm at Chiddinglye [Co](#). A planning inspector has allowed an appeal against Wealden council's refusal of a 25-hectare, 8.21MW solar farm near Uckfield. He concluded: "Some harm to the appearance of the countryside is an almost inevitable consequence of national and local policies that are generally supportive of renewable energy developments if the impact is (or can be made) acceptable, as is the case here" [P](#) [P](#) [Appeal Cases Portal](#). Plans for a solar farm at Chailey were rejected by Lewes council's planning committee against officers' advice. CPRE Sussex had objected to the impact on the landscape and nearby footpaths. Hadstone Energy is to appeal [Co](#) [Mid Sussex](#) [Mid Sussex](#) [Mid Sussex](#) [Ar](#) [P](#). A tiny solar farm in the AONB at Udimore is meeting local opposition [Co](#). Plans have been submitted for a community owned solar farm near Berwick rail station. The income will be used to insulate homes [Co](#). Mid Sussex council's planning committee approved two solar farms, one on a 17-hectare site in Twineham and another north of Goddards Green [Mid Sussex](#). Horsham council is set to approve a second solar farm at Five Oaks, Billingshurst [Co](#).

Fracking. Campaigners, including CPRE Sussex, have warned that the South Downs National Park could be surrounded by fracking rigs if the government lets energy companies drill beneath it [Ar](#). The Oil and Gas Authority announced 132 new areas across the country for exploration, including two areas between Midhurst and Chichester [EX](#). Warnings have been issued over an anonymous leaflet on fracking [EX](#).

Campus expansion. A £500million masterplan to extend the University of Sussex's Basil Spence-designed campus has been approved on appeal after Brighton council withdrew from the public inquiry. The inspector said the few slight disbenefits of the proposed masterplan would be far outweighed by the benefits it would generate [Appeal Cases Portal](#) [Co](#). Residents groups are threatening judicial review of the decision [Ar](#).



Plans for Sussex University

Heritage. The Grade II* Arts Centre at Sussex University is to be revamped [AJ](#). A high court judge ruled that the failure of Rother council to consult English Heritage on replacing a listed housing terrace with sheltered housing was not illegal [P](#) [P](#) [P](#).

Transport. East Sussex council said the case to bring high speed rail to Hastings is ‘securely made’ [OB](#). Hastings council cancelled the planning permission for the Queensway Gateway road it granted in February after a legal challenge was brought by local resident. The scheme will now be reconsidered by the council’s planning committee [P](#) [OB](#) [COM](#) [DEFI](#) [COM](#) [DEFI](#) [OB](#).

Newhaven. Plans have been approved for the expansion of Newhaven Port after councillors said the negative impacts of the scheme, including the loss of a sandy beach, were outweighed by economic and regeneration benefits. Sussex Wildlife Trust had raised “significant concerns over the severity of the likely adverse ecological impact of the development” [P](#) [EX](#) [EX](#).

Roundup. Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert said large-scale development in the South Downs National Park could transform it into a ‘suburban-style theme park’ [Co](#). Despite adopting the persona of a hedge during a planning meeting, the mayor of Chichester failed to save a hedge from being uprooted for a café extension [X](#).

Gatwick

Rebuttal. Gatwick Airport has published a 50-page report that says that the Davies Commission used a “flawed approach” that produced “erroneous conclusions”. Gatwick CEO Stewart Wingate said:

We expected a well-considered examination of all options, but instead the final report contains so many omissions and basic errors that its reliability as the basis of aviation policy must be called into question. The findings of this report simply do not add up.

The report criticises the reports forecasts of air traffic, air quality, noise levels, financial investment and deliverability. The Airports Commission responded that its report is fit for purpose [P](#) [THE](#) [TRANS](#). Sir Howard Davies reacted angrily to the comments [A.M.](#) [T](#):

This dossier appears to repeat many points which Gatwick made to the Commission in the course of its work and which, unsurprisingly, were carefully considered. They did not alter the Commission’s view that Heathrow was the best option. Using colourful language, as Mr Wingate has done, does not turn weak points into strong ones, and does him and his company no credit.

Advert banned. The Advertising Standards Authority has ordered Gatwick to stop using two of its ‘Gatwick Obviously’ campaign adverts which claim more people will be affected by noise from a new runway at Heathrow compared to Gatwick. It said the figure used an unjustified comparison. CAGNE said: “Gatwick’s expansion propaganda ignored the impact a second runway would have on the residents and areas of Sussex, Kent and Surrey and simply tried to discredit the Heathrow options” [Surre](#) [MTR](#) [USE](#) [SUSSEX](#) [COUNCIL](#).

Gatwick roundup. Following campaigns by rural residents about noise, Gatwick has announced an independent review of westerly arrivals. It will report towards the end of the year. A report on easterly arrivals will follow [P](#). British Airways has pledged to modify their older Airbus A320 planes which produce a high-pitched whining noise [K](#) [K.M.](#). Twenty-six Sussex business leaders have written to David Cameron supporting a second runway at Gatwick [P](#). The chairman of CPRE Sussex urged the government to reject all the Airport Commission’s recommendations for aviation expansion in the south [RE](#).

South Downs Local Plan

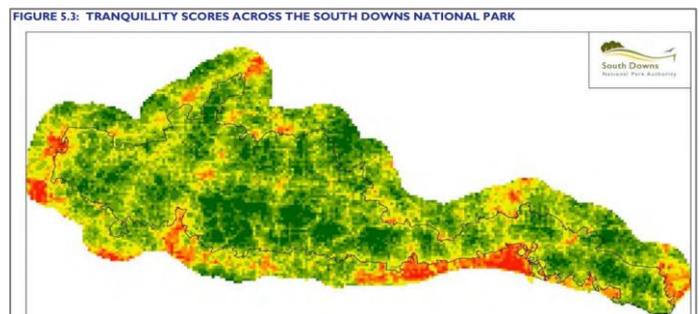
Consultation. The South Downs National Park authority is consulting on the issues and options for its local plan. Closes 28 October [P](#). The consultation covers a wide range of issues including:

- ◆ the strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA)
- ◆ Local Green Spaces
- ◆ the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites assessment.

The 466-page draft plan is cautious about allowing major development and any development that conflicts with the national park’s statutory purposes. It says:

When considering development proposals the authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development provided that they are consistent with the national park purposes [and] conserve and enhance the special qualities of the national park. Major development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

The plan also contains policies to safeguard views, and to conserve and enhance tranquility and dark skies.



The CPRE eBulletins

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