



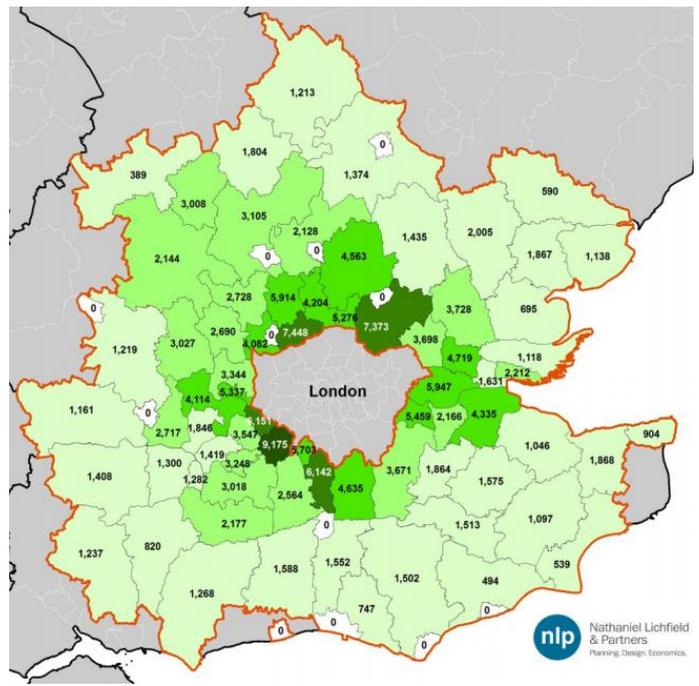
London's Overspill

South East councils object. The Greater London Authority is contacting authorities outside the capital to “strongly advise” them to take account in their local plans of the predicted gap between London’s housing supply and growing demand [P]. But umbrella group South East England Councils (SEEC) said it would “not be viable or sustainable” to assume that London’s unmet housing needs could be met, either in part or in full, within the South East. In its response to the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP), SEEC warns potential overspill from the city could put strains on local services. It called on the GLA to “do more to meet its own housing need”, including reviewing the capital’s green belt. SEEC points out that the London plan’s target of building 42,000 homes a year falls well short of the assessed annual housing need of between 49,000 and 62,000 homes.

London response. Edward Lister, the deputy mayor for planning, said the Boris Johnson was “simply recommending common sense, co-ordinated regional planning to ensure London and the South East’s housing needs are met over the coming years.” Ruling out a green belt review, he said the mayor was “already engaging with authorities in the wider South East” on the implications of the Further Alterations to the London Plan.

London’s unmet needs. A report by consultants Nathaniel Lichfield Partners is being used by developers to justify overspill development from London [GLA]. *London’s Unmet Housing Needs: Meeting London’s overspill across the wider South East* defines London’s housing market area as stretching from Huntingdonshire in the north to Eastbourne in the south, and from West Berkshire to Thanet in the east. The report calculates the “base share” that each local housing market area would need to take to accommodate London’s unmet needs. It then adjusts the base share for quality of transport links; for “fundamental constraints” such as national parks and AONBs; “policy constraints” such as the green belt; and the distribution of unmet need across London. It removes some areas from its models because they have no capacity for growth. These include Oxford, Crawley, and Brighton.

Implications. On this model, the greatest challenges would be to Elmbridge, facing up to 9,175 extra homes over ten years. Aylesbury Vale, *already struggling* to plan for sufficient housing and facing pressures from Milton Keynes and Luton to accommodate their unmet housing needs, could see a requirement for an extra 2,144 homes by 2026 from London’s overspill.

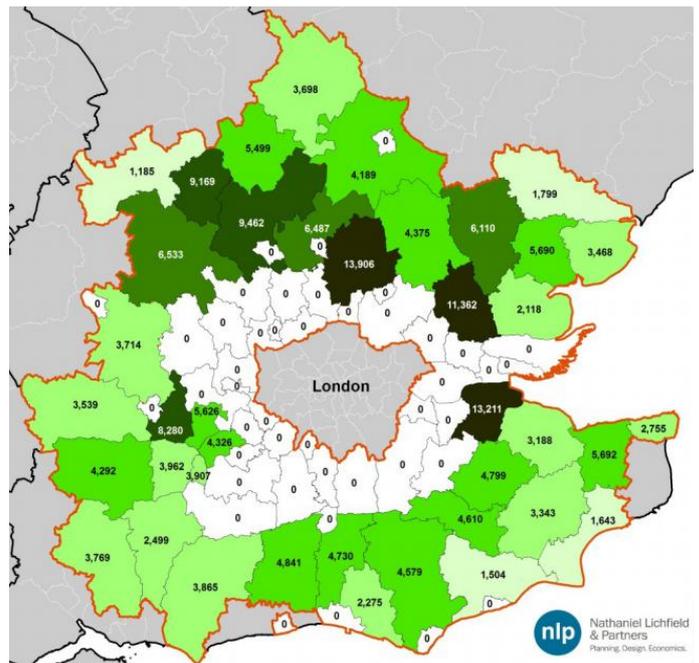


Unmet needs distributed without green belt constraint

It “becomes stark” with the green belt. The “base share” model (map above) assumes that overspill housing will be accommodated in the green belt. NLP says:

If green belt is applied as a fundamental constraint, the implications for those areas beyond the green belt becomes stark.

Under this scenario, locations such as East Hertfordshire, Medway and Chelmsford could be expected to accommodate more than 1,100 additional dwellings a year over and above their own needs (map below). Aylesbury Vale would need to find space for an additional 6,533 homes. South Oxfordshire is facing 3,714 extra homes, on top of the 11,487 planned from 2006 to 2027. Wokingham will need to find space for 8,280 homes, on top of the 13,230 for the plan period from 2006 to 2026.



Unmet needs distributed with green belt constraint

Planning: South East

Henfield homes approved on appeal. A planning inspector approved 160 homes on a greenfield site at West End Lane, Henfield, Sussex. The inspector said Horsham lacks a site allocations plan. A supplementary planning document allows for developments of up to 150 homes outside defined built-up areas of Category 1 settlements, including Henfield. But the inspector said the 150 limit was not valid given the council's lack of five year land supply. The inspector made much of the landscape being classified as of 'high' landscape character sensitivity in a 2013 study, whereas in 2003 it was considered to be of 'low/moderate' sensitivity. The developer's appraisal concurred with the 2003 assessment, and the inspector seems to have done the same. He said the early provision of new homes where there is a local housing supply shortfall overrides concerns over heritage and landscape impacts [WST](#) [WST](#) [GMB](#).

Sussex open letter. In a letter to Horsham MP Francis Maude published in the County Times, Roger Smith of CPRE Sussex said a decision by Horsham district council to approve 50 homes in Billingshurst was a landmark event for planning [WST](#). The development was approved because officers argued they would lose at appeal due to a lack of five year land supply. Smith said:

The huge target of 13,000 houses set for the District by the revoked South East Plan, which continues to be enforced by the Planning Inspectorate, is excessive and the required build rate of 650 houses per year has proved unachievable... By imposing a target that is impossible to attain the Planning Inspectorate has enabled developers to impose development and in so doing has excluded communities and their elected representatives from effective decision making. This is inequitable and unjust.

Smith called on Frances Maude to meet with Nick Boles "with a view to finding solutions including the restoration of an equitable planning process."

Oxfordshire open letter. CPRE Oxfordshire has written an open letter to deputy prime minister Nick Clegg calling for a public inquiry into the draft Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan. It said the draft SEP is based on an economic forecast and a housing target forecast that has not been rigorously or publicly scrutinised [RE](#).

Cherwell local plan suspended. A planning inspector has halted the inquiry into the local plan, saying that housing numbers should be raised to be in line with the recent strategic housing market assessment (SHMA). The controversial SHMA recommends that 100,000 new homes are built across Oxfordshire by 2031 (see the last eBulletin [RE](#)). The inspector is also suggesting that the green belt is reviewed, a position backed by Oxford council leader Bob Price. John Broad of Bicester CPRE disagreed: "Oxford has done a spoiling operation on the local plan. The city should be supporting Cherwell rather than throwing spanners." Tony Baldry, MP for Banbury said: "I don't see what possible benefit there is for anyone in the inquiry bringing the examination in public of the local plan to a halt" [OM](#) [LG](#). CPRE Oxfordshire said it was disappointed with the suspension of the hearing. It said that the inspector had not given a direction that a green belt review should take place and it believed a review is unnecessary [RE](#).

Planning: South East Roundup

Hampshire. Planning officers have recommended rejection of a windfarm at Bullingdon Cross. The Hampshire Renewable Energy Co-operative, which will have a 10% share in the project, says the fight for the windfarm is not over [C](#) [C](#).

Kent. CPRE Protect Kent has criticised a list of potential development locations in Gravesham, saying 32 sites are in the green belt. It said: "This shows greedy developers are after cheap sites rather than tackling eyes sores like the old Lord Street car park site" [TTL](#) [KN](#). Part of the historic Blue Boys Café in Tunbridge Wells, which dates to 1584, was demolished to make way for a McDonalds, two days before it was due to be listed by English Heritage [L](#). Tonbridge residents vowed to fight plans for a special needs school in the green belt [L](#). CPRE Protect Kent said that plans for a line of pylons between Richborough and Canterbury will spoil the view of Canterbury and the surrounding countryside. Hilary Newport said: "It will be very visible from the AONB and definitely have a significant impact on areas around" [BBC](#) [YC](#).

Oxfordshire. Green Energy UK Direct said it is not planning any more solar farms in Oxfordshire because the national electricity grid cannot cope. CPRE's Michael Tyce welcomed the news and said: "In our view it is the worst possible use of agricultural land" [OM](#). CPRE Henley and Mapledurham is objecting to a floodlighting for a sports pitch in Woodcote. Chairwoman Judith Crockett said: "The light pollution... will intrude into the dark skies of the AONB, which we should be doing everything to protect" [L](#). Oxfordshire MPs have joined protests against the recent strategic market housing assessment which projects the county needs 100,000 new homes by 2031 [OT](#).

Surrey. The leader of Guildford council told green belt campaigners that the planning inspectorate could impose up to 20,000 homes on the borough if the local plan did not proceed [GS](#). Tim Harrold, chairman of CPRE Guildford said:

The council message is still get the plan accepted as soon as possible, even if this will undermine the permanence of the green belt by an unacceptable redefinition of what 'exceptional circumstances' mean and how green belt boundaries can be adjusted.

Wisley Action Group said that air pollution could reach dangerous levels if 2,250 new homes are built on the Surrey airfield. The campaigners said the proposal fails to address problems relating to road infrastructure, transport links, air quality, the green belt status of the land and the fact that the land is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and adjacent to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area [GS](#).

Sussex. A decision on whether to build an incinerator at Ford has been delayed to allow officers to address issues of access, noise and loss of amenity [L](#). Residents under the banner of [Future Horsham](#), made a submission to the Commons inquiry on the NPPF [WST](#). Offices recently vacated by South Downs National Park Authority look set to become affordable housing [MAPS](#). Mayfield new town would damage wildlife and the UK Barn Owl recovery programme [AV](#). The Environment Agency has approved the Lower Tidal River Arun flood risk strategy, but funding has yet to be found [□](#).

Neighbourhood Plan Roundup

Berkshire. An internal split led to the collapse of the forum set up to prepare the **Central Windsor** neighbourhood plan. A second meeting is to be held to resolve issues [L](#) [L](#) [L](#). Residents are calling for people to get involved in the **Binfield and Bracknell** neighbourhood plans [L](#) [GS](#). **Eton and Eton Wick** are to produce their own Neighbourhood Plan [L](#).

Buckinghamshire. The **Woburn Sands** neighbourhood plan has been approved by an examiner and gained 89% of the vote of a 49% turnout in a referendum on 22 May. The plan aims to protect green open spaces, countryside and conservation areas [LG](#) [LG](#) [MKW](#) [MKW](#).

Sussex. Amid the controversy over planning in Horsham (page 2), council leader Ray Dawe said 15 neighbourhood plans are underway [WST](#). A referendum approved the **Arundel** neighbourhood plan. The plan aims for at least 80% of units in the town centre to trade as shops. At present it stands at 60% of units, the rest includes cafés, restaurants, estate agents, banks and offices. Three Local Green Spaces are designated, along with 60 homes on four brownfield sites [SP](#) [L](#) [P](#). Residents of **Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common** are concerned that three appeals for 300 houses and a care home might predetermine their neighbourhood plan [MST](#). **Herstmonceux** neighbourhood plan is set to be revised to take account of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment [SE](#). The **Barnham and Eastergate**, and the **Felpham** neighbourhood plans have been successfully examined [LG](#). The South Downs National Park Authority is consulting on the final version of the **Fernhurst** neighbourhood plan. It states: "Fernhurst will retain its role as a rural parish in a tranquil and wooded location within a National Park. Development shall preserve and enhance the quality of the environment for residents and visitors alike and ensure that unacceptable strain is not placed on the physical and social infrastructure of the parish." Closes 13 June [SP](#).

Rogate and Rake are the latest Sussex villagers to embark on a neighbourhood plan [MAPD](#).

Oxfordshire. **Grove** parish council is asking residents to become involved in a neighbourhood plan, saying the village, on one scenario, might grow to 30,000 people by 2040 [DM](#). Residents of **Woodcote** have approved their neighbourhood plan: 91% voted in favour on a 59% turnout [L](#). The joint **Henley and Harpsden** neighbourhood plan is currently subject to consultation [C](#).

National. Eric Pickles overruled a planning inspector to block a 111-home development in Leicestershire because it conflicts with the adopted **Broughton Astley** neighbourhood plan. The inspector had approved the scheme on the basis of lack of five year land supply. The neighbourhood plan was adopted only after the inquiry ended but Eric Pickles said he gave "very substantial" weight to the neighbourhood plan, even though it is out of date in terms of housing land supply [IH](#) [P](#) [C](#) [C](#). Housebuilders have failed in their legal challenge to the **Tattenhall** neighbourhood plan. They wanted the judge to strike out a rule that prevents developments of more than 30 homes. Cheshire West Council leader Mike Jones said: "This decision will be greeted with delight in Tattenhall by a community which worked so hard and showed such unbelievable commitment in creating the plan." The plan has now been made (adopted) [P](#) [L](#) [L](#) [C](#).

Commons NPPF Inquiry

The inquiry was launched after research by Cambridge University identified problems with the planning system [L](#). Oral evidence sessions begin on 9 June [L](#).

CPRE said the NPPF has had far reaching effects which have been detrimental to localism, countryside protection and town centre regeneration [RE](#). It said there is no evidence to suggest that the NPPF has encouraged a strategic approach to developing energy infrastructure, or directed infrastructure towards locations of least environmental impact. The submission stresses the threat to the green belt, where 190,000 homes are planned:

It is notable that the overall level of proposed development in the Green Belt now exceeds that proposed in the former regional plans.

Five year land supply is a significant problem:

Recent legal decisions... have highlighted that the five year supply policies in the NPPF can be used to trump wider policies on spatial strategy, where these seek to maintain existing rural settlement boundaries or concentrate housing in particular locations, such as large urban areas.

CPRE condemns the government's approach as:

A simplistic approach to planning for new housing, which has focused on a national desire to get housebuilders building. Development is being directed to profitable locations for large housebuilders regardless of the environmental consequences.

CPRE wants the government to:

- ◆ Amend the NPPF to prioritise brownfield and town centre land before greenfield, and allow councils to control which sites are available for development first.
- ◆ Introduce effective strategic planning at the city-region or sub-regional level.
- ◆ Strengthen guidance stating that development in and around villages should be planned through the local or neighbourhood plan process, and that building outside settlement boundaries should be exceptional.
- ◆ Ensure planning authorities seek to protect landscape character in their local plans and in planning decisions.
- ◆ Instruct the planning inspectorate to give significant weight to local plans that have identified areas where energy infrastructure is appropriate or inappropriate.

Local councils responding said:

One of the key matters for us is the failure of the NPPF to give any significant weight to the plan at the submission stage. The balance has swung against local communities who may have to accept development where the emerging plan does not propose it."

Brighton and Hove council said that the requirements of the NPPF and tests of soundness are very challenging, leading to significant delays in adopting an up-to-date development plan. The Vale of White Horse council said that since the NPPF came into effect: "At least 33 planning applications, totalling in excess of 2,000 housing units" have been granted in the district because of a lack of a five-year housing land supply [P](#).

Threat to sustainability. In its evidence, the Royal Town Planning Institute criticised the emphasis on the five-year land supply. It said the weight given to the land supply issue was a threat to sustainable development [L](#).

Planning by surrender. The Town and Country Planning Association told the select committee :

The impact of appeals on some local authorities has led to the growth of ‘planning by surrender’ whereby once plans are found out of date, local authorities approve applications they may otherwise have refused because of the likelihood that any appeals will be upheld... The application of the presumption in favour in the absence of a five year land supply is plainly a punitive system... There remains an important unanswered question about whether it delivers good planning.

The TCPA expressed concern that of 173 appeals of developments of more than 100 homes, 110 have been allowed – a success rate of 63%. The TCPA says this is undermining the plan-led system. It also suggests that many local plans may not be up-to-date as they rely on pre-NPPF housing figures.

Appeal Undermines Presumption

Sustainability has just been taken out of the presumption in favour of sustainable development by a planning inspector, who dismissed the interpretation of the NPPF made by a high court judge last year   . Tewkesbury council cannot demonstrate a five year land supply. Ruling on an appeal for 47 homes at Alderton, the inspector dismissed the council’s argument that paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires a preliminary assessment as to whether a development is sustainable – and only if it is sustainable will the presumption in favour of sustainable development apply. The inspector disagreed and said the NPPF is clear that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. She said that the NPPF did not specify that a separate decision should be made as to sustainability. In doing so, she rejected a ruling by Justice Lang last year that “paragraph 14 NPPF only applies to a scheme which has been found to be sustainable development.” Lang had said: “It would be contrary to the fundamental principles of the NPPF if the presumption in favour of development in paragraph 14 applied equally to sustainable and non-sustainable development”  .

Planning: National

The European Commission has told the government to build more homes and make the planning system for major infrastructure projects more predictable to help boost growth. The Commission also called for reform of the government’s Help to Buy scheme and for higher council tax on more expensive properties   .

Five year land supply. Research by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) found that only 54% of 289 authorities surveyed said they had a five-year housing land supply. Alice Lester for PAS said that the five-year supply requirement pre-dates the NPPF – it was a PPS5 requirement – but the framework, with its presumption penalty, “raised the stakes regarding its importance.” She said a “large minority” of councils do not fully understand the NPPF’s housing land supply requirements and there is confusion over how to calculate their supply as well as working out which sites to identify  . Cheshire East Council is to launch a judicial review after a planning inspector approved 96 homes at Elworth Hall Farm, Sandbach saying the planning authority could not prove it had a five-year land .

Garden cities. At least 60% of new homes in garden cities should be affordable, the TCPA said as it launched a new report on garden cities. It said that garden cities should yield a net gain in local biodiversity and must aim to be water-neutral in areas of serious water stress . Nick Boles said garden cities will not have affordable housing quotas   . Manston Airport in Kent, which closed earlier this month, could become a garden city   .

Travellers. Eric Pickles is to face a judicial review over his repeated refusal of permission for gypsy and traveller sites. Lawyers will argue that the Pickle’s decision to impose a blanket call-in for all gypsy and traveller appeals over planning permission in the green belt breaches human rights and equality laws .

Permitted development rights. Richmondshire and North Yorkshire councils are challenging an Article 4 order made by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The order removes permitted development rights allowing the conversion of barns and other agricultural buildings to commercial uses  .

Town centres. The Future High Streets Forum published a report that identifies local leadership as the ‘recipe for success’ on the high street . In its submission to the Commons NPPF inquiry, CPRE said that town centre first policies are not working because local plans were out-of-date or inadequate, and local authorities are: “over-reliant on evidence submitted by developers which, when independently reviewed, was found to be biased in favour of the development. In particular, retail impact assessments submitted with planning applications underestimated the actual impact” .

Planning guidance. A briefing by consultants NLP advises developers they can benefit from “the slimmed down guidance’s omissions and its far less detailed content”. It says: “well-established planning terms such as sites being ‘suitable, available and viable’ under the sequential test and ‘criteria for acceptable development in the setting of heritage assets’ are no longer explained in the same amount of detail” .

Population growth revised down and up. The latest population figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) project that England will grow by 7% by mid-2022. In 2012, ONS had predicted the population of England would grow by 8.6% to mid-2021. The capital is now projected to grow by 13%, the East by 9% and the South East by 8%. The population projections published in 2012 predicted Oxford’s population would shrink by 800 between 2011 and 2021. ONS now predicts the city’s population will grow by 8,400 by 2022  .

Empty homes. The ONS said there were 1.1 million household spaces unoccupied by usual residents in 2011, up from 0.9 million in 2001 (21%)   . Most are holiday homes in coastal areas: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Norfolk, Scarborough Somerset and South Lakeland.

Affordable housing. Affordable housing from S106 agreements fell by nearly a third during 2011/12, to 32,000 units compared to 48,000 in 2007-8, according to research for the communities department. London accounted for more than half of units compared to 30% in 2007-8. The report said the reduction in affordable housing was linked to the fall in construction activity since 2007-8  .

Landscape and Biodiversity

Split opinion. Reports from a meeting at London Zoo suggest conservationists are split over whether to back biodiversity offsetting. Peter Unwin, director general of the policy delivery group at Defra commented: “I don’t think I have ever seen so much suspicion on either side of a debate. Clearly we cannot trade some aspects of biodiversity for others but business is getting engaged” [g](#). Before the conference, forest group FERN and Friends of the Earth published a set of case studies, including of HS2 and Lodge Hill, Maidstone. The campaign groups said biodiversity offsetting could allow developers to push through projects that would have “devastating impacts on irreplaceable habitats and our wildlife” [g](#) [o](#) [p](#).

Offset site offset. In 2012, a developer gained permission for housing at Thaxted, Essex on condition that slow worms were moved to a wildlife rich meadow nearby, with a condition that this site was preserved until 2017. Now a planning inspector has allowed on appeal a 47-home development on the meadow, after a developer offered a 25-year biodiversity offsetting deal involving replacement grassland and Common Lizard habitat. The inspector said that Uttlesford council cannot demonstrate a five year land supply [g](#) [c](#) [p](#) [o](#) [c](#).

Forests. The Woodland Trust said it is “hugely disappointed” that the government did not include a Forestry Bill in the Queen’s Speech to secure the future of the public forest estate [g](#) [t](#).

Birds and bees. Natural England is proposing to allow “taking, damaging and destroying of nests and eggs” of robins, pied wagtails and starlings where they pose a health and safety threat. It is proposing similar action against greylag geese and mallards [g](#) [t](#) [B&G](#). University of Sussex researchers said foraging preferences of honey bees can provide valuable information for governments about how to better manage rural landscapes [u](#).

Friends of Blencathra in Cumbria have applied to Eden District Council to register the mountain as an asset of community value (ACV) [c](#).

Town green bids fail. The supreme court has rejected a plea to register a playing field in Whitby as a town green, saying that residents had statutory right to use the land for recreational purposes, and therefore use the land “by right” rather than “as of right”. The ruling will make it harder to register public sports and play areas threatened with development as village greens. The field will now be developed for 105 affordable homes [LGI](#) [OSS](#) [i](#) [p](#) [c](#). The high court threw out a campaigner’s attempt to get Bushfield Camp in Hampshire registered as a town green. The court said she had taken too long to correct details of her application [LGI](#) [P](#).

Greenhouses. Planning permission has been given for two giant greenhouses covering nearly 50 acres (20 hectares) of land between Great Blakenham and Bramford in Suffolk. They will grow 10% of the UK’s consumption of tomatoes and will be heated by a nearby incinerator [BBC](#).

CAP. University researchers writing in Science, say that the new rules for the common agricultural policy could be bad for the environment. Ineffectual rules mean could farmers could get paid for replacing species-rich wildflower meadows with mono-crop grass for cattle [BBC](#).

Shale Gas and Oil

Wealden oil but not much gas. A report published by the British Geological Survey said there could be between 2.2 billion and 8.6 billion barrels of oil in five shale formations within the Weald Basin [c](#) [p](#) [t](#).

This study has identified the potential for a significant volume of oil-mature shale to be present at several horizons in the Jurassic in the centre of the basin, but shales further west and on the northern and southern flanks are not considered mature for oil generation.

Not all of the oil is extractable. Much depends of the quantities of shale oil – oil produced from a shale reservoir – versus oil shale – sedimentary rock from which crude may be produced by heating (see [c](#)).



Potential shale oil deposits in the Weald

The BGS study concluded that “significant volumes of shale gas are unlikely to occur in the Jurassic of the Weald area, due to insufficient depth of burial and hence maturity”. The study did not assess the hydrocarbon potential of **tight oil formations**, which could be extracted by fracking [c](#). Georgia Wrighton, director of CPRE Sussex said CPRE opposes extraction of gas and oil in the South Downs National Park: “There is no need to extract gas or oil from shale within our most exceptional landscapes” [wst](#).

Consultation. The government is consulting on allowing energy companies to drill under private land without the permission of landowners. DECC is proposing to grant underground access rights to companies extracting petroleum or geothermal energy from land which is at least 300 metres below the surface. Landowners would receive a payment in return, perhaps £20,000 for any well that extends by more than 200 metres laterally. It will be a voluntary whether companies notify communities of areas affected by underground drilling and of any payments which might be made in return for such access. Closes 15 August [c](#). The CLA said landowners must be protected from any liability if fracking causes any negative long-term effects on their land [FG](#) [c](#).

CPRE called for the government to ditch proposals that would exclude small scale fracking from environmental regulation. Nick Clack said: “Environmental hazards exist from even small scale activities – the escape of 200 tonnes of oil at a sensitive site, such as an AONB or close to a water course or major aquifer, could be disastrous” [KN](#). In its evidence to the Commons inquiry on the NPPF, CPRE said: “We are concerned that the section on cumulative effects has been removed from the Planning Practice Guidance on **Planning for Hydrocarbon Extraction**. This is likely to confuse the situation in relation to the effective regulation of cumulative impacts associated with shale gas developments.” It wants the section reinstated [RE](#).

Protests. Friends of the Earth called for an immediate moratorium on unconventional gas and oil exploration and production [\[O\]](#). East Kent Against Fracking has sent an open letter to the leader of Kent county council to raise concerns over shale extraction: “It increasingly seems to us that KCC unthinkingly endorses the government’s ill-considered dash for gas, and seeks to stifle all dissenting views” [\[KO\]](#). A petition to declare West Sussex a “Frack-Free Zone” has more than 600 signatures [\[LG\]](#).

Drilling. West Sussex council has approved Cuadrilla’s planning application for oil flow testing at Balcombe [\[O\]](#) [\[L\]](#) [\[BBC\]](#). Magellan Petroleum Corporation is backing two gas drilling projects in the Weald at Horse Hill and Broadford Bridge. Although these are conventional wells they could be the prelude for fracking: “During drilling, Magellan will have the opportunity to core and log various shale and tight formations in the Cretaceous and Jurassic sections of the Weald Basin” [\[\]](#). Protestors are furious at Celtique Energie for “writing off” the landscape of Fernhurst as “not a diverse, inspirational landscape” which “cannot be regarded as contributing directly to the special qualities of the SDNP” [\[MAPN\]](#). National Grid is threatening legal action against Cuadrilla if its operations in Cumbria undermine its power lines and pipelines [\[\]](#).

Comment and research. Shale gas production “may be a blessing for the environment,” researchers at the University of Oxford say, compared with coal production that it increasingly is replacing [\[\]](#). Professor of Environment and Spatial Planning Alister Scott said: “There are huge dangers in thinking that the scale of exploitation in the US can be replicated in the UK... The lack of any proper government-led consultation on fracking risks becoming mired in legal challenges from the Aarhus Convention... It seems strange to me that government ministers are quick to condemn ‘unsightly’ solar and wind turbine developments, but seemingly embrace landscapes of fracking infrastructure” [\[L\]](#).

Energy, Recycling and Waste

Balance of power. In its evidence to the Commons NPPF inquiry, CPRE said: “The capacity of the landscape to accommodate onshore wind turbines has been exceeded in some parts of the country. Overall, we believe the planning system has failed to strike the right balance on onshore wind between protecting the local environment and providing low-carbon power.” CPRE is advocating a more strategic approach to siting of energy infrastructure in landscapes to help avoid unnecessary cumulative effects [\[RE\]](#). Wind power is the most popular source of energy in the UK, according to a Guardian poll. Almost half of respondents (48%) said they would give a positive reception to an onshore windfarm within five miles of their home. Only a fifth would welcome a coal powered station, and just 27% a nuclear station. Fracking gained the least support at 19% [\[G\]](#). A survey by Nottingham University found that 50% of people were in favour of fracking and 31% against [\[BBC\]](#).

Biomass. There are now more than 130 operational anaerobic digestion plants in the UK and more than 340 projects under development [\[\]](#). Friends of the Earth said that by 2030 Europe could require an area of land and forest three times the size of the UK to meet bioenergy demands [\[O\]](#).

Climate and renewable targets. The EU said emissions have fallen to 19.2% below 1990 levels, putting the area in reach of its commitment of a 20% reduction by 2020 [\[\]](#). Friends of the Earth said this only shows the 2020 target is too low [\[O\]](#). The European Commission warned the UK to make “additional efforts” after statistics show it has fallen behind schedule on achieving its 2020 renewable energy targets [\[\]](#). The Renewable Energy Foundation said the planning system is bogged down with an oversupply of renewable energy projects. It said 35 gigawatt of capacity has already been consented, and is either operational or under or awaiting construction – enough to meet the government’s renewable energy targets by 2020 with a 5% margin. But there are 1,000 planning applications totalling a further 18GW of capacity in the planning system [\[Pr\]](#) [\[\]](#). Lord Deben, chairman of the Committee on Climate Change, said Britain has approved enough onshore wind turbines to meet climate change targets [\[T\]](#).

Solar. Griff Rhys Jones welcomed a planning inspectorate decision to reject build a solar farm across 94 acres of farmland in Tattingstone, near Ipswich. The inspector said: “For the lifetime of the development the regimented rows of hard surfaced solar panels would represent intrusive, utilitarian elements on an industrial scale in the open countryside... The proposal would have a considerable urbanising impact in this rural location” [\[L\]](#) [\[P\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#). CPRE Oxfordshire welcomed government proposals to cut subsidies for large solar farms. Chairman Brian Wood said: “This subsidy was encouraging people to build these solar farms just to make money out of it... There is no logic in building them on agricultural land when you could put them on office and petrol station roofs and they won’t be damaging the countryside” [\[OT\]](#). CPRE Oxfordshire is calling for district councils to adopt: “A robust local policy on solar farms, setting out where and where not they will be considered, and bearing in mind the cumulative impact” [\[OT\]](#). A planning application has been submitted for a 30-acre solar farm at The Kickles, north of Newport Pagnell [\[MKW\]](#) [\[CPRE\]](#).

Wind. Eric Pickles has rejected 10 out of 12 wind farm appeals he has recovered. Four of these decisions were against recommendations from planning inspectors. RenewableUK said: “By doing this, he’s undermining the fundamental principles of England’s impartial planning process. Frankly, his intervention looks political” [\[FT\]](#) [\[B&G\]](#). As we reported last month, Pickles is prioritising heritage in many of the decisions [\[P\]](#). Pickles went against a planning inspector’s recommendation and threw out an application for a 10-turbine windfarm at Heselton Wold, East Yorkshire. He gave great weight to the impact on the setting of the Grade I St Andrew’s church. Pickles also placed “significant weight on the harm to public enjoyment of the special qualities of the [nearby] National Park” and “very significant weight to the sum of harm to the landscape” [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#) [\[\]](#). The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology has published a briefing examining the effect of wind, solar, wave and tidal intermittency on electricity prices, carbon dioxide emissions and the provision of electricity to meet demand [\[\]](#).

Navitus windfarm. Registration for interested parties ahead of the examination in public closes 23 June [\[\]](#). A public meeting is to be held on 13 June to discuss the 22-mile onshore cable route [\[L\]](#).

Transport

Recycling rates in England are flat lining at around 44%. There has been a steep decrease in material sent for composting [R](#) [C](#). The UK will reach residual waste treatment infrastructure (incineration) overcapacity in the next four years, waste consultancy Eunomia said [R](#). David Palmer-Jones, chief executive of waste management company SITA UK, said that recycling rates in England will fall to 40%. He partly blames “green fatigue” – recycling has got so complicated, householders won’t do it. A drop in household use of paper and glass is also a factor. He said it is unlikely that England would reach the EU target of recycling 50% of household waste by 2020. The Campaign for Real Recycling countered that Wales already recycles 54% of waste [C](#) [R](#). Dorset is at a 54% recycling rate and is aiming for 68% [R](#).

Carrier bags. A 5p charge for single-use carrier bags will come into effect in Scotland from 20 October [R](#).

Airports

Airport Commission. Heathrow and Gatwick have submitted their detailed plans for new runways to the commission. Heathrow said that by 2030, it would reduce the number of people in its noise footprint by 30% and its updated runway plans would affect 200 fewer homes. Gatwick said noise from a second runway would affect 14,000 people compared with the 240,000 people affected by noise from Heathrow today [TIL](#) [TIL](#) [L](#) [BBC](#). Boris Johnson submitted a dossier restating the case for a four-runway airport on the Isle of Grain in the Thames estuary. Johnson argues that with London’s population forecast to rise to 11.3 million people by 2050, any expansion of Heathrow or Gatwick will be inadequate [Pr](#) [GLA](#).

Gatwick. The Woodland Trust warned a proposed second runway at Gatwick would destroy ancient woodland and irreplaceable habitat [TA](#) [BBC](#). East Sussex council has backed Gatwick Airport expansion. Its preferred option is a new runway 1,045m south of the existing runway and a new terminal built between the two. The airport announced that it will be “road and rail” ready for a second runway in 2021 [S](#). Gatwick is consulting on changes to flightpaths. Closes 14 August [X](#). Boris Johnson claimed MPs are moving towards a “political fix” to hand Gatwick Airport a second runway and stall Heathrow’s expansion plans [C](#).

Thames Estuary. An online survey of 2,000 adults across the UK conducted by Medway council and Kent county council found that found in five oppose the development of an airport where the Medway enters the Thames estuary. The survey found that 38% actually supported an estuary airport. But when they were told that Heathrow, City and Southend airports could close as a result, that support dropped to just 16% [BBC](#).

Farnborough. The Park Authority said plans to change the flight paths of planes flying in and out of Farnborough Airport would have a significant impact on the South Downs National Park. Margaret Paren, chair of the Authority said: “We are very disappointed that the CAA has failed to consult us directly about these plans which threaten the tranquillity, wildlife and recreational value for which the National Park’s landscapes were given special protected status. We are urging the CAA to reconsider these changes” [WST](#) [MARG](#).

High Speed 2. 1,925 petitions from local authorities, special interest groups and individuals have been received by the parliamentary committee considering the hybrid bill for the rail link. MPs on the committee have power to make amendments to the bill provided that these do not go against its principle [C](#). The Church of England is concerned that the line does not provide for buried human remains to be treated in a “decent and reverent” way and could impact adversely on heritage. The Bishop of Buckingham said: “Many people in Bucks have serious concerns about HS2. I am particularly concerned about the impact of the route on Chetwode church – a very fine but vulnerable early medieval building that requires proper respect and consideration” [BBC](#). Almost half (46%) of respondents to a New Civil Engineer survey said that they agreed that the route should be completely redesigned as a classic railway to provide capacity from London to Manchester and beyond. Just 9% of those who responded said the current planned scheme is the right one [C](#). Earl Spencer and Lord Rothschild are “leading a growing revolt by landowners” against HS2 [R](#).

Transport funding. The commons transport select committee said that new arrangements allocating transport funding from the Local Growth Fund, which will require councils and LEPs to compete for funding, were “novel and untested” and carried a “risk that some areas will be left behind.” The report, *Local transport spending: Who decides?* says: “The under-funding of transport projects outside Greater London in recent years cannot be allowed to continue... No area across our nation should be second class in relation to the allocation of transport infrastructure funds” [P](#) [S](#) [C](#).

Campaigning and Communities

Peter Waine has stepped down as chairman of CPRE after six years. He is replaced by Su Sayer, currently chief executive of disability charity United Response [CPRE](#).

Assets of community value. Ministers said 1,200 community assets have been registered including 374 pubs and 91 parks [C](#).

The CPRE eBulletins

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