

The Ash Dieback

Action and inaction. On 29 October, the government banned the import of ash trees and imposed movement restrictions with immediate effect 🇬🇧. 100,000 trees at 1,000 sites had now been burned to prevent the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus spreading. The Horticultural Trades Association said that it warned Defra about the disease three years ago and called for an import ban. The HTA claimed that Defra replied that the disease was already endemic in Europe and was likely to come to the UK, so a ban was not “appropriate.” The Forestry Commission gave a different version of events. It said that it believed that the organism was widespread in Britain, though it has now admitted that its view was based on the misidentification of the fungus responsible 🇬🇧.

Crisis management. The Woodland Trust called on the government to set up “an emergency summit” 🇬🇧. COBRA met to discuss the disease 🇬🇧. Afterwards, Owen Paterson urged the public to wash their dogs and boots and even their children after visiting wooded areas 🇬🇧. More than 500 Forestry Commission staff have been deployed across the country to spot evidence of the disease 🇬🇧. As we go to press, dieback has been found in Kent & Essex 🇬🇧.

The scientists. The University of East Anglia and the Invasive Alien Species database have teamed up to monitor the dieback. Volunteers can report sightings using iPhone and Android apps 🇬🇧. A Swedish study suggests that ash trees could be bred with greater resistance to *Chalara fraxinea* 🇬🇧.

Reaction. Mary Creagh, the shadow Environment Secretary, claimed that 25% cuts to the Forestry Commission’s budget had hampered its ability to track the disease. “After the forest sell-off fiasco, this incompetent Government has been asleep on the job with ash dieback” 🇬🇧. In a stringent attack on the laggard response, CPRE and the Woodland Trust condemned the government’s dithering neglect and said that ministers had shown the countryside was not a priority for them 🇬🇧. Roger Anderson writes thoughtfully about the potential impact on his area of Suffolk 🇬🇧.

The Heseltine Report

No Stone Unturned. Michael Heseltine published his passionate vision for economic growth 🇬🇧. He presents 80 recommendations focusing on reforming the structure of decision making, reorganising funding and revitalising government industry links. George Osborne’s 2011 *Plan for Growth* barely gets a mention. The government’s response was polite but hardly enthusiastic. It is to “consider the recommendations” but no date is given for a response 🇬🇧.

National growth strategy. Heseltine recommends that the Government appoints a National Growth Council, led by the Prime Minister. It will produce an overarching and long term National Growth Strategy by May 2013.

The role of LEPs. Local enterprise partnerships will become the main focus of measures to stimulate local economic growth. “At present LEPs simply do not have the authority or resource to transform their locality in the way our economy needs.” Under Heseltine’s vision they will be strengthened, better funded, and tasked with preparing local economic strategies by early 2015.

Reorganising the LEPs. Although established for less than two years, LEPs will be rationalised to “have a good match with their functional economic market area.” The 12% of councils that are associated with more than one LEP will be a member of just one from June 2013. They will be able to bid for a share of single pot of growth funding potentially worth £49 billion, giving five year funding from 2015.



South East eBulletin

November 2012

www.cprese.org.uk

Pedestrian Speed in the Face of a Storm

About what subject was it said? – “Nowhere else can the pedestrian speed of decision making in this country, and its effects, be more damaging than in...”

I would not be surprised if many people thought the answer to this question was environmental policy (actually it was Michael Heseltine writing about planning: see below). But Heseltine could have been talking about the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Born out of the crisis that followed the chaos of foot and mouth in 2001, Defra has never given an impression of being on top of its portfolio. Throughout 2012, it has once again shown itself to be unable to get a grip on threats to the countryside.

There are claims and counter claims about whether warnings three years ago about ash dieback were ignored. A mistake in fungal science seems to have led to Defra’s Forestry Commission believing that the disease could not be stopped. But that does not explain why Defra failed to raise a hue and cry about the threat.

The badger cull trial has been suspended because the headcount of the animals shows that they are more populous than thought. It is a great opportunity for a rethink. TB incidence in cattle is falling. Although this decrease may be a statistical blip, tighter biosecurity rules coming into place could well extend the fall into a trend. If the vaccine trials underway by Wildlife Trusts across western England show results, we may be closer to a solution to this agrarian crisis than we think.

Meanwhile, new Defra secretary Owen Paterson has joined energy minister John Hayes to say “enough is enough” over wind farms. Both think the community, landscape and financial costs are too high. They fail to see the contradiction in their support for shale gas extraction. Fracking is also strongly opposed by communities, damaging to landscape and set to receive generous tax subsidies. Moreover fracking will hamper our efforts to tackle climate change.

Alas, global warming and the low carbon economy have all but disappeared off the political agenda. The growing band of sceptics would be wise to heed Mayor Bloomberg’s warning after Hurricane Sandy:

“Our climate is changing. And while the increase in extreme weather we have experienced in New York City and around the world may or may not be the result of it, the risk that it may be — given the devastation it is wreaking — should be enough to compel all elected leaders to take immediate action.”

Tackling climate change doesn’t mean we have to cover the countryside with wind farms — but the government’s growing disinterest in the green economy and climate mitigation can only build up risks for future generations.

Andy Boddington

LEP capacity. Heseltine recognises that some LEPs are underpowered. He wants each to receive up to £250,000 over the next two years to build capacity and develop local economic strategies. They will hire private sector planners to develop the plans. Six or seven Local Growth Teams of civil servants, each structured around a cluster of LEPs, should be in place by April 2013. The Teams will be tasked with joining up government and local partners to facilitate, identify and realise economic opportunities. Ministers and permanent secretaries will be assigned as champions of LEPs.

Quangos. Non-departmental public bodies, such as English Heritage and Natural England, should “explicitly consider their potential for supporting wealth creation when developing business plans.” The government should consider devolving or transferring their functions to the local level or to the private sector. Decisions on listed building consents should be made by private firms, though English Heritage would be given call in powers.

Planning ‘pedestrian’. Heseltine said that planning decisions “are still too often lengthy and bureaucratic”. His report calls for the government to “consider on a rolling basis all the possible options to inject urgency and purpose into the planning system.” The report says: “There is simply no urgency or any understanding of the economic cost of delays. The appeals system adds more time to the process. Nowhere else can the pedestrian speed of decision-making in this country – and its effects – be more damaging than in planning.” The government should consider “on a rolling basis all the possible options to inject urgency and purpose into the planning system.”

Planning changes. The Planning Inspectorate should be given powers to investigate planning decisions proactively. The government should also “consider on a rolling basis all the possible options to inject urgency and purpose into the planning system.”

Development orders. Heseltine wants the use of Local Development Orders to be extended to allow development without individual planning permissions. The government should also consider using Special Development Orders to speed up planning decisions of strategic significance.

Councils. Heseltine wants all two-tier English local authorities outside London to become unitary.

Thames Gateway. The corridor of the Thames stretching from East London out eastwards, past south Essex and north Kent, is “probably this country’s greatest single prospective area for growth.” Heseltine calls for a new Development Corporation under a chairman from the private sector, with representatives of central government, the Mayor of London, London boroughs, Kent and Essex councils and with a majority of members from the private sector. He does not say how the Development Corporation will relate to the South East local enterprise partnership.

Airport capacity in the South East. Heseltine says that the Davies commission should report earlier than 2015. The government must say whether it favours a third Heathrow runway before the next election.

Reaction. David Cameron praised the “excellent report” and denied it criticises government policies [g](#). The British Chambers of Commerce said Lord Heseltine was concentrating “too much on the structure of delivery and too little on the needs of business to create a business-friendly environment” [FT](#). Andy Boddington said the report was “not a recipe for economic prowess [but] a summons to bureaucratic paralysis” [24](#).

Wind Power: Enough may not be enough

Davey vs. Hayes. A lively row has broken out in the Coalition between Energy Secretary Ed Davey and his energy minister John Hayes. Davey is reported to have vetoed a speech in which Hayes was to declare that “enough is enough” for onshore turbines [O](#). But Hayes later briefed the press that the march of the wind turbines is all but over.

Hayes claimed the “onshore wind debate is skewing the whole debate... Even if a minority of what’s in the system is built we are going to reach our 2020 target. I’m saying enough is enough.” Hayes suggested that only a minority of wind turbines currently put forward for planning permission are likely to be given the go-ahead. He claimed that “the salience of aesthetics to discussions about renewables has often been neglected” and warned that renewable energy must be in the “right places” with “genuine community support” [FT](#) [C](#).

Davey retorted that Hayes had “totally over-egged things.” He insisted there had been “absolutely no change in government policy. We will be reassuring the renewable energy industry we haven’t shifted our view at all. There are no targets – or caps – for technologies such as onshore wind. Nor are there reviews being done of onshore wind on the basis of landscape or property values” [BBC](#) [BG](#).

Cameron. Speaking in Prime Minister’s Questions, David Cameron denied there had been any change to the government’s policy on wind energy, but did back a future debate on renewables once the government had met its environmental targets.

Reaction. Christopher Booker was predictably delirious with delight at the thought of the government abandoning the “greatest mistake in our history” [FT](#). Greenpeace said: “John Hayes’ petulant outburst adds to the Coalition’s growing energy shambles and to a deepening divide within government between those who care about green growth and the economy and those who just want more oil and gas.” Friends of the Earth said: “The new Jerusalem the Minister should focus on is one built out of thousands of small enterprises generating their own electricity, or playing a vital role in making or building clean British energy” [O](#).

Wind in the South East

Navitus. Bournemouth’s tourism chief complained that the developers have failed to “bring meaningful data and information to the table” about the project. He expressed concern that the offshore wind farm would damage the county’s tourist industry [L](#). The project’s director defended the scheme but admitted that the company had not provided as much information as it should have. He said there could be as many as 330 smaller or as few as 100 larger turbines [L](#). **Challenge Navitus** said the scheme would damage the area’s natural beauty, unique ecology, tourism income, boating and other leisure industries [L](#). Friends of the Earth is backing the scheme [L](#). The third of four rounds of consultation on Navitus Bay has been pushed back to next year [L](#) [L](#). The developers are considering four locations – Poole, Portland, Swanage and Yarmouth – for the operations and maintenance port for the scheme [L](#).

Rampion and London. The metmast for the Rampion Offshore Wind Farm has been installed [O](#). Green groups gave a cautious welcome to the decision to base operations for Rampion in Newhaven Port, Sussex [BBC](#) [O](#). Electricity has been generated for the first time at the London Array. Permission is now being sought for the second phase which is opposed by the RSPB [BBC](#) [O](#) [L](#) [BG](#) [L](#) [BBC](#).

Planning in the South East

Hampshire county council is being recommended to ban large wind turbines and wind farms on council owned land. Officers say they: “will have very significant impacts in terms of visual intrusion, urbanisation, damage to historic character and to tranquillity” **LG**.



Oxon and Bucks. CPRE Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire have joined forces to protest against a 102 metre tall wind turbine at Ford, between Haddenham and Aylesbury. Oxfordshire’s Mike Tyce said: “The countryside does not simply have a soft emotional value... but a hard economic value too... The quality of the individual settlements within it attract wealth creators to move to and stay in our area. We damage it with alien mechanical constructions at our peril.” The farmer planning the turbine says that “fear of the unknown” is driving many worries. CPRE Oxon is also opposing a 90ft turbine at Henton, near Chinnor **RE L L**. A planning inspector has rejected a plan for a 20-metre turbine in the North Wessex Downs AONB near Wantage **L**.

More Wind

Politics. Anti-wind MP Chris Heaton-Harris has set up “Together Against Wind”, which has “a simple aim of changing government policy which is currently at risk of causing industrialization of our countryside on an unprecedented scale” **O**. Reports in The Times said negotiations over the Energy Bill could yet result in a cap being placed on new onshore wind farms. Davey is quoted as saying restrictions on onshore wind is “a price worth paying for a deal, as his priority is offshore wind” **BG**.

Separation distances. RWE Npower Renewables has launched a judicial review against Milton Keynes Council over its imposition of minimum separation distances between wind turbines and residential properties. The energy firm says the Supplementary Planning Document: “effectively prevents commercial wind energy schemes in all but tiny parts of the borough” and contravenes the NPPF **O**. Staffordshire council agreed that anything from a single 50m tall turbine upwards should be located at least 2km from any residential area. Wind farms will also be refused unless they can demonstrate “real benefits” to people living in the area **L L**. Berwick is the latest council to consider including minimum separation distances after pressure from residents **L**.

Community energy revolution. The new Community Energy Coalition, which includes CPRE, published a manifesto calling on the government to facilitate a dramatic scaling up of community and co-operative energy (CCE). It aims to start a “revolution with communities at its heart” to drive a “clean, affordable and secure energy system” **O**. CPRE’s Shaun Spiers spoke to the camera on behalf of the coalition **YT**. See also: **g BBC**.

Opinion. A survey of more than 1,700 adults for the Sunday Times found that 55% want more wind farms; solar power is supported by 72%; nuclear power 40%; gas & coal 17%; fracking 32% **O O**. Asked to choose between having the two energy sources within two miles of their home, 67% of respondents favoured a turbine, compared to just 11% who would support fracking **g**.

South East Plan. The South Downs Network looked at the implications of revocation for AONBs in the South East **O**.

Core strategies. A planning inspector found the South Oxfordshire core strategy sound. On the split between rural and urban housing, the inspector said that although the 40:60 split of housing between rural and urban areas “appears to be based more on intuitive judgement than a strict sifting of objective evidence... this is not necessarily a reason to find the choice unsound” **LG**. The South Hampshire Strategy was approved earlier this month by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) joint committee. The document proposes over 1 million square metres of new office, manufacturing and warehousing space by 2026, and around 55,000 new homes **P LG**.

| Policy 11: Provision for net additional homes 2011-2026 | |
|---|---------------|
| East Hampshire (part) | 1,050 |
| Eastleigh | 8,050 |
| Fareham | 2,200 |
| New Community North of Fareham | 5,400 |
| Gosport | 2,550 |
| Havant | 5,150 |
| Portsmouth | 9,100 |
| Southampton | 12,200 |
| Test Valley (part) | 2,950 |
| Winchester (part) | 6,200 |
| Housing released by new student accommodation | 750 |
| South Hampshire total | 55,600 |

Berkshire. Eric Pickles said he was ‘minded to approve’ proposals for up to 1,350 homes at Shinfield outside Wokingham. A significant factor in the decision is that the council cannot demonstrate a 5-year deliverable housing supply **O**. The high court reserved judgement on retrospective planning permission for a gypsy and traveller site in protected woodland at Ascot, Berkshire **L**.

Paramount Park. Plans were announced for a theme park on a 353-hectare brownfield between Dartford and Gravesend in the Swanscombe Peninsula. Local councils welcomed the project but Gravesham Friends of the Earth said it had concerns about flooding and a rise in traffic. The site is also an option for a third Thames crossing **L BBC BBC fli itv P**.



Kent. Maidstone Borough Council is planning to build industrial areas on greenfields over which had it previously fought a battle against the Kent International Gateway **L**. Natural England said a 5,000-home site in Medway must be treated as a site of special scientific interest for planning purposes until more robust evidence is produced on the nightingale population **P**.

Oxfordshire. CPRE Wallingford are pressing Eric Pickles to call in plans for an office and retirement home scheme in the Chilterns AONB, citing the protection given by NPPF paragraph 116. Arnold Grayson of CPRE Wallingford says: “This is the wrong place for a 64-bed care home, and 46 retirement homes with 49 extra care units. It is stuck out in the countryside too far from the town and will have a major impact on an unspoilt and tranquil area” **CPRE**.

Planning

Growth and Infrastructure Bill. England's chief planner Steve Quartermain denied the bill will erode localism **P**. CPRE Protect Kent said it has "yet to be convinced that this bill will promote sustainable jobs. We fear it will take away right of local people to be involved in the local planning process and will lead to an even greater threat to the countryside" **L**. The bill has been delayed in the Commons by other bills **DD**. The Western Morning News supported the viewpoint of "doughty campaigner" CPRE that the bill is a "below the radar attack on the nation's precious environment" **L**. See also our special eBulletin **CE**.

Planning permissions. Last year, 90% of office, retail and industrial developments were approved in England, up 3% in four years **P**. Planning applications dropped by 1% last quarter; 88% were granted, an increase of 1% **CE**.

Regional planning. The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the revocation of the East Midlands Regional Strategy has been published. It concludes that abolition will have a similar environmental effect to its retention. Consultation closes 19 December **CE**. See also our special eBulletin on the revocation of the South East Plan **CPRE**.

Permitted rights. The Local Government Association called for plans to extend permitted development rights for house extensions to be scrapped **O**.

Environmental Impact Assessments. The EU is aiming to streamline and strengthen EIAs from March 2014. It wants alternative proposals to be systematically considered and decisions explained more clearly. EIAs will also ensure that "impacts on human health and natural resources" will be considered for shale gas projects (fracking) **CE**.

NPPF. Design Council Cabe has commissioned a wayfinding document to help planners and others make the case for good design under the NPPF **O**. Urban Forum has produced a handy introduction to the planning system **O**. Mid-Worcestershire MP Peter Luff said the NPPF has caused a "total breakdown of planning in Wychavon" & will cost Conservative and Liberal Democrat council seats in the May 2013 elections **L**. Eric Pickles has approved 800 houses and facilities adjacent to Anne Hathaway's cottage. Lack of five year land supply was the main factor in the decision and Pickles "afforded relatively little weight" to the emerging local and neighbourhood plans **CE**. Local MP, Nadhim Zahawi was furious at "a decision that drives a coach and horses through the Localism agenda" **CE**.

Gypsies and travellers. Eric Pickles is consulting on allowing councils to issue immediate 'temporary stop notices' against residential caravans in breach of planning control **O** **PP**.

Garden cities. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) said that garden cities could be the answer to the economic and housing crises faced by the country, but councils must provide real political leadership **g**. Jon Neale appealed for garden suburbs, not new cities **g**. Housebuilder Crest Nicholson is seeking to "retrofit" garden city principles into some of its large-scale projects **P**.

Strategic planning. A TCPA report *The Lie of the Land!* argues that redistributing the population away from flood risk areas may become an "increasingly urgent imperative". It adds that climate change also provides opportunities for less-prosperous regions, such as the north east, less susceptible to rising sea levels **topd**. Lord Carnwath suggested that a specialist court be set up to deal with planning and environmental issues for major projects **DD**.

Town Centres and Services

Chain stores. As the Local Data Company reported that retail chains are shutting 20 shops a day, Action for Market Towns urged ministers to implement the Portas recommendation that all out-of-town applications should automatically be called in. The British Council of Shopping Centres said: "There is a big difference between national policy and what is happening locally" **FT** **O**. Tesco is to appeal against refusal of a store in Basingstoke **L**. Campaigners are worried that a decision by the South Downs National Park Authority to allow a discount store in Petersfield will set a precedent that will undermine town centres in the park **L**. Costa Coffee has dropped plans for an outlet in Totnes after protests, despite having gained planning permission **g**.

Independent stores. The Local Data Company said 67% of Britain's retail and leisure units were independents. Cowley, Oxford had the second lowest figure: 24% **BBC**. The 17th of November has been declared Independence Day 2012 by a group based in Frome **O**. John Harris said: "It suits big business for people to believe our town centres are dying." He asked: "Anyone, perhaps, for the Campaign to Protect Urban England?" **g**.

Portas. Bishop's Waltham, Wokingham, Woodley, Chipping Norton are among 326 towns that will receive £10,000 to help regenerate high streets **L** **L** **L**. Beth Ward wrote on her experiences of Portas Pilots in the north of England **g**.

Pubs. Cambridge has adopted a new planning policy to limit pub conversions, believed to be the first of its kind in the UK. It insists that pubs must be marketed for 12 months free of tie and that it has been demonstrated the local community does not need the facility **P** **LG** **LG**. In rural areas, campaigners have saved The Mole Inn in Mole Sherborne, Basingstoke and the Quart Pot in Milton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire from conversion to housing **L** **L**.

Housing

Home Truths. The National Housing Federation's new edition of the factsheet makes bleak reading: 417,830 more working people are now reliant on housing benefit to pay private let rents, up 86% in three years. The cost of privately renting a home has risen 37% in the past five years **O** **O**.

Berkshire. The debate over housing numbers in Basingstoke and Deane is getting lively. The district has seen an average of 1,029 homes built each year since 2006 – 9% above the South East Plan requirement of 945. Basingstoke MP Maria Miller is suggesting less than 600 homes a year should be built in future to compensate but councillors think this will fall foul of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development **O**. To the anger of green groups, Reading Borough Council has approved 78 homes on the former Thames Water reservoir site in Bath Road **L** **O**.

Kent. The first 1,400-home phase of a 5,750-home urban extension at Whitfield near Dover has been granted outline planning permission. The normal 30% affordable housing contribution has been waived **P** **O**.

Surrey. A developer is pushing ahead with plans to develop a former nursery site in Ottershaw despite the opposition of Runnymede Borough Council **L**.

Oxfordshire. Developers have failed to secure all the land needed for Bicester eco town **L**.

Northstowe. As the first stage of the new town received planning permission **CE**, journalist Tom Rose, who lives near the biggest housing development since Milton Keynes, wrote thoughtfully on the prospects **O**.

Landscapes, Food and Farming

Green belt. CPRE is hosting what it calls six connected symposia to explore the green belt and urbanism [O](#). South Buckinghamshire District Council is citing the government's urge for development on brownfield in the green belt as justification for a second attempt to get the permission for a waste transfer site in Burnham [BFP](#).

Heritage. English Heritage published the Heritage at Risk Register 2012. It also launched a programme to assess the state of Grade II listed buildings, which are not covered by the Register [O](#). The number of local authority conservation specialists has fallen by 6% over the past 12 months [P](#) [O](#). An initiative to safeguard endangered historic green spaces has been launched by English Heritage. Up to 15 councils and community groups outside London will receive £20,000 to survey conditions of landscapes and buildings and explore the costs of repairs and grant options [O](#).

Storms. The clean-up operation after the 1987 Great Storm was "overzealous" and in parts "a mistake", the chief executive of Suffolk Wildlife Trust said [BBC](#).

Badger cull. On 23 October, Defra announced that the controversial cull had been suspended until next year after English Nature discovered that badgers were twice as populous as thought [O](#) [T](#) [T](#) [O](#). The NFU said the badger cull will definitely go ahead next year [FWI](#). The Wildlife Trusts, which have several badger vaccination schemes underway, welcomed the delay [O](#) [O](#). A breakthrough in cattle vaccine could remove the need for culling [i](#). DEFRA announced a further tightening of cattle movement restrictions and testing in a bid to stop the spread of bovine tuberculosis [FWI](#).

Valuing nature. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management said that "placing a monetary valuation on nature... delivers the natural world into the hands of those who would destroy it for financial gain" [O](#).

Food and farming. CPRE Cheshire has published its local food e-newsletter with garden news and recipes [FE](#). Oxfam said that hard-pressed upland farming families are going without food so they can afford to feed their livestock [FWI](#) [O](#).

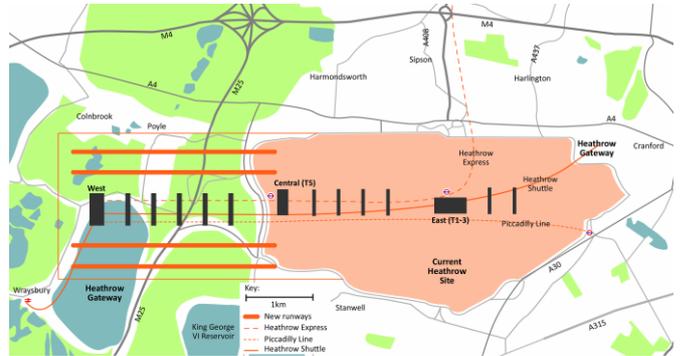
West Coast and High Speed 2

West coast debacle. Ministers kept their posts but civil servants were suspended as the government cancelled plans to award the West Coast franchise to First Group. In the Telegraph, Sue Cameron said: "Unconfirmed reports suggest that ministers were told months ago that the method being used to forecast inflation in the West Coast bids was the same as that being used for HS2, the London-to-Birmingham high-speed rail project... Ministers were warned that if the method for calculating inflation was changed for both projects then HS2 would no longer be viable" [T](#) [O](#).

High Speed 2. Patrick McLoughlin said proposals for High Speed 2 would not be disrupted by "grief" and "hassle" from backbenchers. It would go ahead with the full support of David Cameron and George Osborne and there will be no significant compromises on the route [i](#) [i](#). After plans were revealed for maintenance lines around Cubbington, the deputy leader of Warwickshire County Council said there is an "apparent culture of disregard and complacency within HS2 Ltd towards Warwickshire" [O](#). The DfT is consulting on buying affected property and on safeguarding the route from conflicting developments. Homeowners are being offered a generous compensation package, including for houses beyond the safeguarded zone in rural areas [O](#) [O](#); closes 31st January 2013 [O](#).

Aviation Capacity

Four runways? The Policy Exchange proposed retaining the existing terminals at Heathrow and building four new runways 3km to the west (map below). The report also suggested that four runways might be built at Luton in preference to a Thames Estuary hub [LES](#) [O](#). Andrew Lainton said the report's "incompetence is breath-taking" [O](#). Along with villages and employment areas, the plan would destroy a RAMSAR wetland of international importance. Luton North MP Kelvin Hopkins said the idea of four runways at Luton was "bonkers" [O](#).



Ping pong airplomacy. Boris Johnson said a new hub airport to replace Heathrow should be developed immediately at Stansted or in the Thames estuary [T](#). He threatened to take the government to court to force it to bring the Davies review forward to before the 2015 election [LES](#). Stop Stansted Expansion angrily described Johnson's proposal of a four-runway Stansted as "bonkeramus" [L](#) [L](#). Willie Walsh, chief of International Airlines Group, and Boris Johnson's transport champion Daniel Moylan clashed over the future of Heathrow [T](#) [T](#). Walsh believes that Heathrow will have to close if a Thames Estuary airport is to be successful. Moylan said Heathrow could become "a smaller point-to-point airport serving the West London and Home Counties premium leisure market." Relocation of major airlines, including BA, to the new hub would see Heathrow passenger volumes fall from 70 million to 20 million a year. The head of Dubai airport said plans for an £80 billion, four-runway hub in the Thames Estuary is "unfundable" and a potential white elephant [LES](#) [i](#).

Other Heathrow reaction. The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership said failure to expand Heathrow will jeopardise economic growth in Reading and the Thames Valley [L](#). The 2M Group of 24 local authorities, which fought to get previous Heathrow expansion plans scrapped, has re-activated because of mounting fears of a third runway U-turn [LES](#). Labour MP for Slough Fiona Mactaggart is backing a Heathrow third runway [BBC](#).

Air pollution. A study by MIT suggested Heathrow aviation pollution causes about 50 early deaths a year and may climb to 150 if a third runway is built. The researchers said early deaths would be reduced by more than 60% if a Thames estuary airport was built because weather conditions would expose fewer people to pollution [BBC](#) [g](#) [i](#). Full Fact said the claim of trebling is an exaggeration [O](#).

Gatwick has declared its intention to push for a second runway and is drawing up detailed plans for government approval. A second runway would increase capacity to 70 million passengers a year, 500,000 flights, and would also mean the construction of a third terminal building [g](#) [M](#) [LES](#). Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, parish councils and CPRE Sussex have vowed to fight the proposal [L](#) [CPRE](#).

Transport

Zombie roads. The Campaign for Better Transport published a report identifying 191 major road building projects including 76 new bypasses, 48 link roads and nine new bridges and tunnels. Twenty-six schemes are in the South East (map below). “The cumulative impact of planned roads on the natural and historic environment would be significant. Road building proposals would affect four National Parks, seven AONBs, 39 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, three National Nature Reserves, 54 Ancient Woods and 234 Local Wildlife Sites” [O](#) [g](#) [T](#). CPRE said: “New roads will ruin our precious landscape and produce even more misery-making bottlenecks and tailbacks” [CPRE](#). Recalling the shame of Twyford Down, CPRE’s Shaun Spiers wrote: “Let’s improve the potholed and poorly surfaced roads we already have before we start driving new roads through our precious and vulnerable countryside” [CPRE](#).



South East. The DfT announced £170 million for 57 road schemes, including a number of junction improvements in the South East [O](#). Whitehill Bordon eco town is consulting on four transport strategies. Closes 12 December [O](#).

Bexhill Hastings link road. A bid by the Hastings Alliance for a judicial review into the decision to fund the destructive link road was rejected by a high court judge [BBC](#). Campaigners are continuing to protest against the scheme and said: “this road scheme will be a needless blot on the landscape of a beautiful county” [L](#) [CPRE](#) [O](#).



Rail. The Secretary of State for Transport gave the go ahead for a £130 million Chiltern Railways rail link between Oxford and London [O](#). Tesco is shipping its goods to South Wales by freight train [BG](#).

Energy, Water and Waste

Supply. Ofgem forecast that there will be a 50% risk of power-cuts by 2015 if a very cold winter causes high demand for electricity [T](#). Energy generation from coal was up nearly 60% in the UK during the second quarter of the year [O](#). Renewable energy capacity will overtake nuclear power in the UK by 2018 says Renewable UK [g](#). Business leaders called for a 2030 carbon target for the power sector to be set in the Energy Bill [O](#). Fewer overhead power line projects are set to be submitted via the planning regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects [PP](#).

South East. Plans for a waste plant in Goring Heath in the Chilterns AONB have been refused [O](#).

Efficiency. The Green Deal which helps homeowners improve energy efficiency was launched on 1 October [O](#) [O](#). The EU’s new energy efficiency directive, which aims for a 20% improvement in energy efficiency across the region by 2020, was adopted by member states [E](#).

Gas. Energy minister Ed Davey said that he sees “unabated gas playing a very significant role throughout the 2020s, and, increasingly as back-up or with carbon capture and storage, through the 2030s and 2040s” [BC](#). Protest group [No Dash for Gas](#) occupied the chimney of West Burton gas plant, Nottinghamshire [O](#) [g](#).

Fracking. Brighton & Hove council is hoping the city will become a ‘Frack Free Zone’ [O](#). A poll showed that 83% of residents in Balcombe, Sussex are opposed to the plans for fracking in the parish [L](#). The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management warned the government to be cautious over fracking [O](#).

Renewables. Residents are considering installing noise barriers alongside the M40 in Oxfordshire with built-in solar panels to generate electricity [L](#). The government backtracked on plans to withdraw renewables subsidies from small scale solar, anaerobic digestion, onshore wind and hydro power installations [O](#).

Biomass. The government has increased support for biomass burners [O](#). It has launched a £2m fund aimed at encouraging bioenergy production on wetlands [BG](#). Drax is to convert to its North Yorkshire plant to biomass but has scrapped plans for a £600m biomass power plant in Lincolnshire [BG](#) [BBC](#). Centrica has withdrawn two applications to build biomass power stations [O](#).

Nuclear. Japan’s Hitachi is to buy Horizon Nuclear Power from Germany’s E.On and RWE. The sale opens the way for up to six new nuclear reactors including at Wylfa, Anglesey and Oldbury, near Bristol [BBC](#) [BG](#) [T](#).

Incineration. Norfolk county council will have to pay a waste contractor £20 million if the King’s Lynn incinerator is not approved at February’s public inquiry [BBC](#). Derby is the latest council to end up with a £1 million bill after losing a battle against an incinerator the council did not want [L](#). Ed Davey approved an incinerator in George Osborne’s constituency in Cheshire [O](#) [g](#). Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski said that Veolia would regret its decision to build an incinerator in the town, after Friends of the Earth reluctantly dropped their legal challenge [L](#). Tory party chairman Grant Shapps described approval for a waste incinerator at New Barnfield near Hatfield as “fundamentally the wrong decision” based on “flawed mathematics” [BBC](#). Plans to build a £200 million waste incinerator with an access road passing through ancient Devon woodland have been turned down [L](#). Councillors approved an incinerator at Allerton Park Quarry near Knaresborough, North Yorkshire [itv](#).

Water. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management said fixing leaks in supply pipes could reduce leakage by 30% and called on water companies to adopt customer-owned water supply pipes [O](#).

The eBulletins

CPRE London now publishes a bi-monthly eBulletin from the same stable as the South East eBulletin. September edition: [CPRE](#). The November eBulletin will be issued next week.

CPRE South East eBulletin is written and edited by Andy Boddington. To receive a regular copy or to alert me to news, please email cprenews@gmail.com. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE.