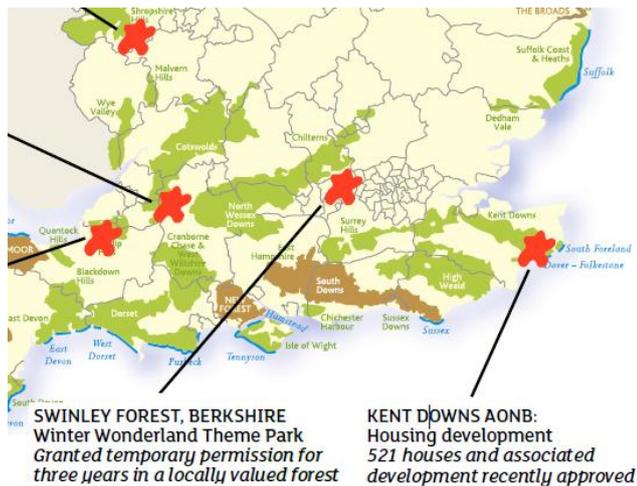




England's Disappearing Landscapes

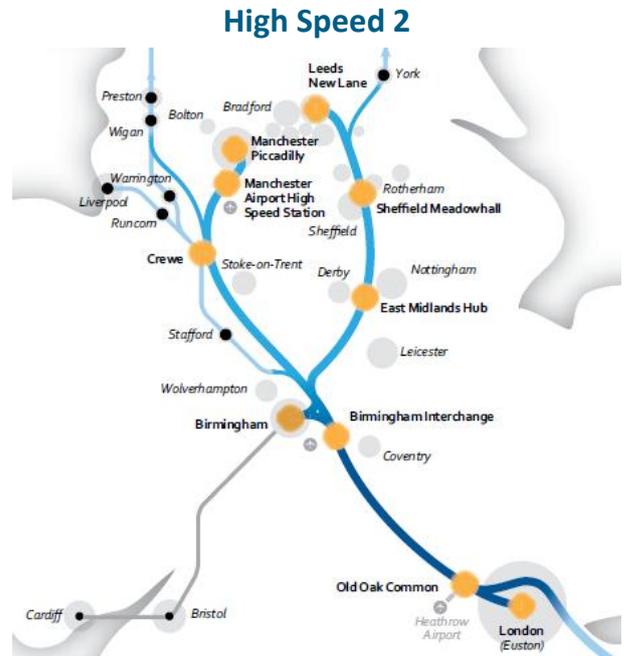
Going, going, gone? CPRE said that government policies including the National Planning Policy Framework mean that National Parks and AONBs, which should have the highest level of protection in planning, are increasingly threatened by damaging developments. It also highlighted the dangers faced by landscapes that are deeply valued by local communities lack national protection. Sir Andrew Motion warned: "Beautiful landscapes, which loom so large in our history and culture, and which exert such a powerful hold over our imaginations, may one day only exist in the mind or on the printed page" [CPRE](#) [G](#) [T](#) [M](#).



Actions. CPRE is calling on the government to:

- ◆ Strengthen national planning policy to give greater protection to nationally designated and locally valued landscapes.
- ◆ Recognise the contribution that National Parks and AONBs make to the economy and review cuts to their funding.
- ◆ Issue guidance for the planning inspectorate on implementing the major development test in National Parks and AONBs.
- ◆ Ensure applications to be 'called in' by the Secretary of State are dealt with in line with the major development test in the NPPF.
- ◆ Exempt National Parks and AONBs from permitted development rights for conversion of farm buildings.
- ◆ Review draft planning policy guidance to ensure that best use is made of the Local Green Space designation.

Inquiry. CPRE is also calling for an urgent parliamentary select committee inquiry to review how major development is dealt with in National Parks and AONBs in order to protect and enhance their beauty for future generations.



Politics. The debate over the rail line has become more political. Labour took a sceptical line with shadow treasurer Ed Balls and shadow transport secretary Mary Creagh suggesting the line might be unaffordable. Creagh said: "Labour has always supported HS2 because we must address the capacity problems... However, we cannot give a government that is mismanaging this, or any project, a blank cheque." However, Ed Miliband has appointed Lord Adonis, the Labour transport secretary that launched the scheme, to advise him on how HS2 might be delivered [G](#) [T](#) [M](#). David Cameron told the CBI: "Those who want to delay or obstruct HS2 show a lack of vision. They are playing politics with Britain's prosperity." He also announced that David Higgins, the incoming chairman of HS2 Ltd, has been tasked with cutting the project's £50 billion budget [I](#) [I](#). David Prout the government's director of HS2 said: "We have consistently underinvested in the north. Without HS2 'we can be a global city surrounded by rust belt'" [M](#).

Cost benefits. The government launched a new cost benefit analysis, showing the line will generate £2.30 for each £1 spent; that's down from £2.50 earlier in the year. It said that over 100 cities and towns could benefit from new or improved services as a result of capacity released on the existing rail network. There will be increased capacity for rail freight, with at least 1,000 lorry-loads a day carried on the network [C](#) [C](#) [I](#) [T](#). Stop HS2 campaign manager Joe Rukin said: "The government have pulled some random figures out of the air in a desperate attempt to con the public... As if by magic, they expect us to believe that, after three years, the economic case for HS2 has risen like a phoenix from the flames." The Financial Times said the report: "fails to justify the whopping price tag attached to the investment... The government will have to build a better case than the one it has presented so far" [FT](#). Other reports published by the Treasury show that improvements to existing lines would deliver cost benefit ratios of £3.10 to £3.30 for each £1. However, HS2 will provide 13,000 seats during peak times, compared to 3,000 for the alternative schemes [T](#).

Operational. The HS2 Paving Bill went through the Commons on 31 October. Just 34 MPs voted against and 350 voted in favour [BBC](#). Sir David Higgins told the Commons transport select committee that he would consider building the Manchester-Birmingham stretch of the line .

Reports. A Network Rail report claimed that rail lines would have to be shut every weekend for 14 years if existing lines were upgraded as an alternative to HS2 [\[G\]](#). Business Green reports that HS2 Ltd is preparing a sustainability case for the line, which will be published when the HS2 Hybrid Bill goes before parliament later this year [\[BG\]](#). A report from the Independent Transport Commission said that HS2 will change the geography of the UK by creating a new mega-city by bringing the Midlands, Manchester and Yorkshire within the orbit of London. It warned that capacity is more important than time savings, and that planning for rail connections and for regeneration and other development should begin now [\[O\]](#) [\[O\]](#) [\[O\]](#). A freedom of information request by BBC Newsnight revealed that many parts of the UK will lose out if HS2 is built. Areas of Scotland will lose £220m a year by 2037. Eleven areas stand to lose more than 1% of their GDP; ten of these are in a belt stretching from Wellingborough in East Northamptonshire to Cambridge [\[BBC\]](#) [\[S\]](#). Pro-HS2 group Greenguage 21 gives a detailed summary and rebuttal of arguments against the line [\[O\]](#).

CPRE. CPRE nationally said that the case for a new north-south high speed rail line has been made but the case for the current project needs more scrutiny of its costs and environmental impacts. It criticises delays in setting up a design panel for the project and says the cost benefits of scrapping the proposed green belt Birmingham Interchange [\[CPRE\]](#). CPRE said that the basis for economic and environmental assessment is flawed. On alternatives, it said: “providing extra seats on long-distance trains is of little use if there is no capacity to run local trains that stop at your station” and complains that “rural areas have seen little direct benefit in recent rail investment” [\[CPRE\]](#).

Planning: South East

Berkshire. Thames Valley Berkshire City Region has succeeded in its City Deal bid [\[Gr\]](#) [\[LEP\]](#).

Hampshire. Developers are again submitting plans to build more than 300 homes on around seven acres of land at Causeway Farm, Petersfield. East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority have previously refused development on the site [\[L\]](#) [\[S\]](#).

Causeway Farm, Petersfield, Hampshire



Kent. Lord Adonic, who is leading Labour’s growth review, is proposing a new town at Ebbsfleet [\[C\]](#).

Oxon: Cherwell council has said that it will not seek a judicial review against Eric Pickles’ approval of four schemes totalling 375 homes at Hook Norton and Bloxham. It has received legal advice that the Secretary of State’s decision is sound [\[LG\]](#) [\[P\]](#). An appeal is underway over the council’s refusal of 85 greenfield homes in Deddington [\[LG\]](#).

Oxfordshire. CPRE Oxfordshire failed in its judicial review against the student accommodation blocks overshadowing Port Meadow. Toby Porter of the Save Port Meadows campaign group said that despite the decision: “Overall, we are really pleased with the outcome. The council’s claim for costs against us of £8,500 was refused by the judge, which we take as clear evidence that he respected the merits of our legal case.” CPRE welcomed that the university and city council made a commitment in court to undertake a full environmental impact assessment [\[CPRE\]](#) [\[BBC\]](#). CPRE Oxfordshire said a 136-home plan for Botley could ruin views of the city in a similar manner to the Port Meadow scheme [\[OM\]](#). The Oxford Mail reports that the Vale of White Horse council has delayed the next draft of its local plan because new government rules mean that housing numbers must tie in with the economic strategy being produced by the Oxford Local Enterprise Partnership [\[OM\]](#).

Surrey: Chobham. After CPRE Surrey submitted a petition of nearly 2,000 signatures, Runnymede council has delayed a decision on whether to strip green belt status from a former defence site at Longcross, near Chobham Common nature reserve of its. CPRE Surrey chairman Andrew Telford told the council: “Chobham Common is an internationally designated site. It is one of England’s finest areas of lowland heath and home to some of the most endangered species in the country. If the land next to it is intensively developed, the risk of the influx of thousands of nearby residents wrecking their habitat becomes very real” [\[GS\]](#).

Surrey. English Heritage is objecting to 15 houses near the historic Sunte House at Gander Green, Haywards Heath [\[WST\]](#).

Surrey: Cherkley. Lib Dem councillors are calling for a special meeting of Mole Valley council to discuss its decision to appeal the high court rejection of the plans for a hotel and golf course at Cherkley Court. Commenting on the appeal, the Cherkley Campaign and CPRE Surrey issued a joint statement: “We recognise that this has become an important case for local planning authorities everywhere. However, we hope that the Court of Appeal will... endorse [the judge’s] conclusions as to the unlawfulness and irrationality of the planning permission” [\[TIS\]](#).

Sussex. Linfield and Linfield Rural parishes are consulting on their neighbourhood plan for before submission to Mid Sussex council. As a large housing development has been recently approved at Gravelly Lane, the plan says small scale development on brownfield will meet future needs. It also designates twelve Local Green Spaces and four areas of townscape character. Consultation closes 13 December [\[LG\]](#). Rye has begun to develop its neighbourhood plan [\[C\]](#). A local residents’ action group has been set up in Handcross to oppose housing proposals in the neighbourhood plan [\[MST\]](#). A planning decision on 75 homes at Storrington was delegated to planning officers, after councillors fiercely opposed the scheme [\[WST\]](#). Chichester District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority have cleared an illegal gypsy settlement at Three Cornered Piece, East Harting, Chichester after winning a long legal battle [\[L\]](#) [\[L\]](#).

Sussex: Mayfield. Over 400 people attended a public meeting to protest against the plans for a 10,000 home new market town at Mayfield, West Sussex. The meeting was organised by CPRE Sussex and Locals Against Mayfields Building Sprawl [\[WST\]](#) [\[C\]](#). Two days earlier, the campaigners tied a seven-mile-long yellow ribbon around the 1,000-acre site [\[CPRE\]](#) [\[BBC\]](#).

Planning: National

The presumption. A high court judge said that application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development had to be 'sustainable'. The judge backed a decision by Eric Pickles to reject 1,400 homes in a Green Wedge in Leicestershire. "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" [O](#). Judgement [B](#).

Poverty. A report from the TCPA called for planning to address issues of poverty: "Planning has simply lost its way, and it's time for planners to start really making a difference to peoples' lives" [topo](#) [B](#).

Local plans. A planning inspector has said that housing numbers in the South Worcestershire local plan are "not objective" and must be recalculated upwards [P](#) [L](#). Kirklees council is the latest to withdraw its core strategy after an inspector questioned the housing numbers and said it had failed in its duty to cooperate [L](#) [LG](#). Selby council has adopted its core strategy [LG](#). Charnwood council has agreed to submit its core strategy, which proposes 9,500 greenfield homes, to the planning inspectorate [LG](#) [BBC](#).

Neighbourhood plans. Residents of Tattenhall in Cheshire have voted in favour of their neighbourhood plan with a 52% turnout with 96% in favour. The plan restricts developments to 30 homes, cannot be adopted until a high court challenge by housebuilders who want bigger estates has been determined [O](#) [LG](#). Locality, a charity supporting neighbourhood plans, is to temporarily restrict its advice saying it has been overwhelmed with requests [P](#) [B](#).

Levies. Reforms proposed to the community infrastructure levy will allow councils to charge higher rates for supermarket developments than for small shops. It will also allow different rates for different sizes of housing development, for example, imposing a CIL charge on small developments that do not have an affordable housing requirement [P](#). Plans to restrict councils' reliance on S106 agreements for infrastructure funding rather than CIL have been delayed for 12 months [P](#).

Housing. Eric Pickles pledged to strengthen support for self-build housing, including a council tax discount for self-built family annexes and planned to exempt self-builders from "unreasonable" section 106 charges and from the community infrastructure levy [C](#). The Commons public accounts committee said the New Homes Bonus is disproportionately benefiting the South East and should be reviewed [IH](#). In the Lake District, second home and holiday let owners in Ambleside have bought up green belt land to prevent affordable housing being built [L](#) [L](#).

Planning Policy and Regulations

Planning regs. In a written statement, Nick Boles said the government would cut the number of regulations from 182 to 78. Thirty-eight "redundant" regulations which will be scrapped. A number of regulations on permitted development, class use orders, listed buildings and control of advertisements will be consolidated and simplified [C](#).

Planning conditions. Nick Boles said he wants to cut the 'abuse' of planning conditions in permissions to speed up housebuilding: "We will also... bring forward later this year additional measures to streamline and improve the end-to-end planning process... including reducing delays in getting development underway on sites caused by planning conditions" [AJ](#) [C](#).

Business and commercial projects are to be brought into the regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects under the 2008 Planning Act. Fracking, gas, peat, oil and coal are excluded from the national scheme, as are housing developments. Developers will be able to submit a broad range of office, research and development, manufacturing, conference and mixed use schemes to the planning inspectorate and Secretary of State for a decision. Schemes will normally be over 40,000 square metres internally. Leisure and sports sites over 100 hectares, sports stadia over 40,000 seats will be decided nationally, as will mineral extractions over 150 hectares above or below ground. Smaller schemes could also be considered under the national regime if they are sufficiently important. The government will accept projects likely to have a significant economic impact; that have impacts wider than a single local authority area; or which are important to the delivery of a nationally significant infrastructure project or other significant developments [BB](#) [P](#) [C](#) [C](#).

Planning politics. Ed Balls signalled that a Labour government would reintroduce a brownfield first policy [C](#). Responding to MPs in a Westminster Hall debate, Nick Boles said there is no longer sufficient suitable brownfield land to meet the country's housing need [B](#) [B](#). He said: "Housing need is intense... We don't say to the NHS provide as many GPs as you can afford right now. We say to the NHS, work out how many GPs are needed. The same is true of housing sites." Arundel MP Nick Herbert said:

I fear that, two years on, people's faith in that [the Localism Act] will be considerably undermined if we allow, by the back door, the re-entry of top-down decision making that effectively denies the localism that was promised... The CPRE's Sussex Countryside Trust makes the point well: "The figures generated by the Strategic Market Housing Assessment are an assessment of need without constraints. These figures cannot simply be passported into an emerging local plan without an effective analysis of the limitation imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic underperformance of infrastructure or environmental constraints."... I urge the Government to keep faith in the localism that was promised in our manifesto... and not to return to the bad old days of top-down targets and of allowing the Planning Inspectorate to override local decision making, which merely set up conflicts and delivered nothing, in terms of the housing that we needed.

Scotland is planning to follow England and Wales and introduce a presumption in favour of sustainable development [O](#).

Five Year Land Supply

South East. Maidstone councillors backed their officers' decision not to include windfall sites in the calculation of five year land supply. This means the presumption in favour of sustainable development overrides the local plan [KO](#). A refusal of 59 homes at Tangmere by Chichester council was overturned by a planning inspector who said that the council lacked a five year land supply [L](#). Decision [C](#).

Decisions in Cheshire and Worcestershire point to a continued confusion in methods for calculating five year land supply. At Majors Green, Bromsgrove, 26 homes in the Worcestershire green belt were rejected using the 'Liverpool' method of calculation. Decision: [C](#). Eric Pickles and planning inspectors approved two schemes totalling 440 homes in Sandbach. They claimed that the Cheshire East does not have a five year land supply under the rival 'Sedgefield' method [O](#) [L](#). Decisions: [C](#) [C](#).

Liverpool versus Sedgefield. The Liverpool method spreads historic shortfall in house completions evenly over the remaining plan period. This is obviously more practical and deliverable. The Sedgefield alternative loads the shortfall into the first five years of the remaining plan period, meaning that housing completions have to rise quickly to counter the previous shortfall. The Sedgefield method has often been applied by the planning inspectorate and the Secretary of State, and is inevitably favoured by developers. The Majors Green case stands out because the planning inspector concluded that the Liverpool method “provides a more realistic trajectory that would reflect housing delivery as market conditions improve over the plan period.” On that basis, he ruled that the council has a five year land supply, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply and the housing plans constitute inappropriate development in the green belt [P](#) [P](#).

Biodiversity and Farming

Brownfield. Scottish Nature has published a report by Buglife highlighting the importance of brownfield sites for wildlife in cities. It recommends that local authorities re-develop brown field sites in a coordinated way to ensure that, as some brownfield sites are lost, others within a city are created [X](#).

Farming. The Welsh planning minister has approved a 1,000 cow super dairy in Powys against the advice of the planning inspectorate [L](#). Want to know how many sheep graze and potatoes grow in our fields? Farming Futures has produced a useful infographic [□](#).

Common Agricultural Policy. Defra is seeking views on how the CAP should be implemented in England and deliver value for money for the public. Closes 28 November [🌳](#) [BBC](#) [👑](#) [🏠](#). Ministers plan to set aside 15% of CAP funding to:

- ◆ Grow the rural economy, including through business grants and investment in rural tourism.
- ◆ Improving farm competitiveness.
- ◆ Protecting the natural environment, including a new environmental land management scheme to replace stewardship schemes and also cover forestry.
- ◆ Protecting pollinators.

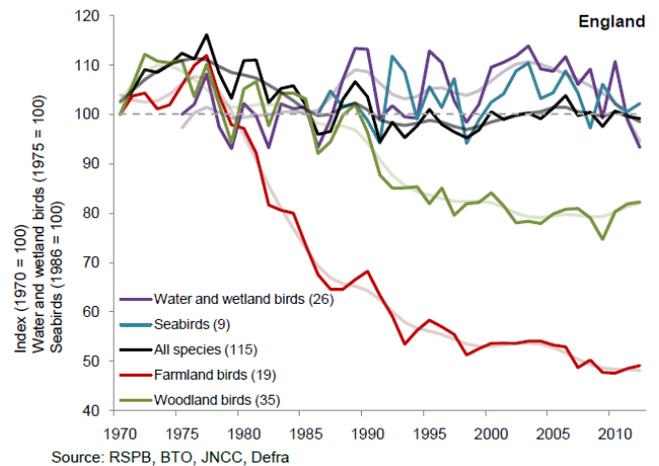
Biodiversity offsetting. The Woodland Trust told the environment, food and rural affairs select committee: that offsetting should also be used as a last resort. However, it believes: “biodiversity offsetting has a role to play in improving recognition of the importance and value of green space for both people and wildlife” [🌳](#). Owen Paterson told the committee that biodiversity offsets must be close to the development to maintain public trust in the procedure, but he would not define ‘local’. He said the offsetting scheme would probably be voluntary initially. Friends of the Earth said: “the biggest problem... is a failure to address harm in the first instance and explicitly to value biodiversity, particularly on lower-level developments, which leads to a kind of death by a thousand cuts” [🏠](#) [P](#) [🌳](#) [🌳](#). Friends of the Lake District suggests it could create a “perverse incentive” to develop biodiverse areas because the combined cost of the land and offsetting could be cheaper than prime farmland elsewhere [i](#). Writing in the Ecologist, Hannah Mowat believes biodiversity offsetting is both wrong and dangerous [□](#). Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust is optimistic about the policy [□](#).

In **Oxfordshire**, Vale of White Horse council has brokered an offsetting scheme. A housing developer at Southmoor is paying the Earth Trust to run a 15-year project to restore chalk grassland near Wallingford, 11 miles south [P](#) [🌳](#).

Biodiversity indicators. The latest biodiversity indicators make grim reading. Sites of Special Scientific Interest are deteriorating as are habitats of European importance. Farmland birds and butterflies show no improvement. The same story applies to water and wetland birds. Invasive species are thriving. There is however some good news in the marine environment and the take-up of agri-environment schemes [🏠](#) [FG](#) [g](#).

Native breeding wild bird populations in England

Figure 1: Populations of wild birds, 1970 to 2012



Badgers. The badger cull, already extended in Somerset has now been extended by six weeks in Gloucestershire after only 30% of badgers were shot [🏠](#). Owen Paterson declared the six weeks’ time limit was arbitrary. He said the cull will not be knocked off course and will be extended next year. “This is a four-year programme. We are not going to drop our spades and run away home after the first few weeks.” [FG](#) [□](#) [BBC](#). Natural England documents obtained by the BBC suggest that the target of a 70% may not be achieved even with the extension [BBC](#). The National Trust has questioned the “scientific rigour and credibility” of the cull [g](#) [🌳](#).

Apples. Shortly after CPRE called for shoppers to support local growers for Apple Day 2013 [□](#), Tesco revealed that two-fifths of apples, half its bread and two-thirds of bagged salad sold at its stores are wasted [g](#).

Landscapes

Green belt. Shaun Spiers told a CPRE public meeting in Surrey campaigners must mount a “sheer bloody-minded defence” of the green belt. Reigate MP Crispin Blunt agreed, saying he would “fight to the death” to protect it [TIS](#) [TIS](#). After council planners threw out a bid for 280 homes in the green belt outside Newcastle, Hexham MP Guy Opperman said: “We forget at our peril we are custodians of this land. Bulldozing it to build executive houses when there are brownfield sites is just plain wrong” [L](#) [L](#) [L](#).

The value of open space. National Nature Reserves contribute nearly 700 full-time jobs and £23 million into the local rural economy in 2011/12 [👑](#) [👑](#). The mental health charity Mind said that gardening, food growing or environmental conservation benefit mental health [□](#).

Trees. CPRE Norfolk is among organisations opposing a homes-for-ancient-woods swap on the outskirts of Norwich [L](#). A new National Tree Map suggests that 13.5% of England and Wales is covered by woodland, more than previously thought [□](#) [□](#) [□](#). During 2014 and 2015, there will be no grants for new woodlands. With growing impacts of tree disease, England “could be sleepwalking into a period of deforestation” [🌳](#).

Rights of way. Natural England has published its final proposals for the route of the Coastal Path in Kent and Somerset. Consultation closes 22/12 December    .

Heritage. English Heritage plans to recruit “an army” of volunteers to locate and survey heritage buildings at risk . The organisation has also published the latest Heritage at Risk register. Nationally, 4.1% of grade I and II* listed buildings (excluding places of worship) are on the Register. In the South East the percentage is 2.2% (90 buildings).



Heritage at risk in the South East

Communities and People

Rural raw deal. In its response to an environment, food and rural affairs select committee report on rural proofing, Defra denied that rural local authorities get a raw deal compared to urban areas  . Census data might no longer be available at parish level and for many rural areas under options being consulted on by the Office of National Statistics  .

Removing barriers. The government is inviting town and parish councils to put forward proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. The Act allows communities to ask central government to remove barriers that prevent them from improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area .

Town centres. New town centre minister Brandon Lewis launched a report that emphasises the role of communities in revival of town centres. He said that fast food outlets are vitally important to town centres and should not be restricted on “socialist” health grounds. He also said that councils should drop punitive parking charges   .

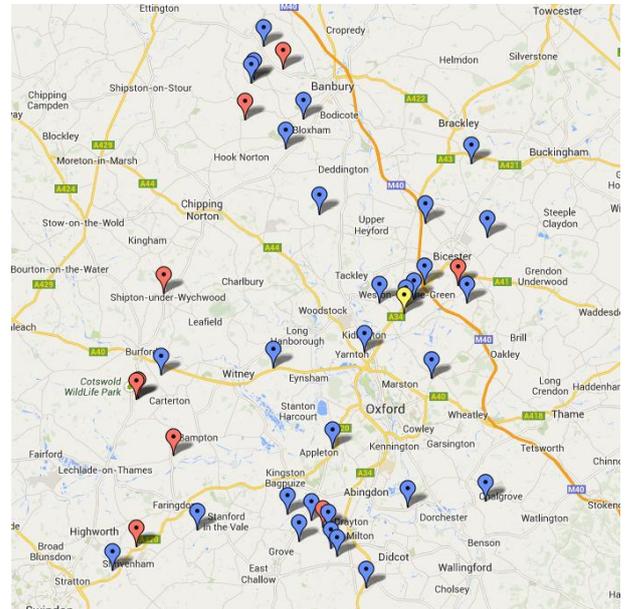
Legal. The controversial Lobbying Bill is now in the House of Lords. CPRE briefed members that Part 2 of the Bill will severely damage its ability to campaign . 38 Degrees continues to protest against the Bill. Lord Greaves said: “this Bill has had a disgraceful lack of scrutiny”  . Wildlife Link, which includes CPRE, has strongly objected to the government’s draft Aarhus National Implementation Report. Aarhus is the NATO convention that guarantees access to environmental justice, but Link believes that reduced access, and timetables for consultation and filing for judicial review undermine parts of the convention . Eric Pickles is to amend the Local Audit and Accountability Bill to ensure that right to tweet, film and record council meetings is enshrined in law .

People. Dr Freddie Gick is the new chairman of Civic Voice . Ruth Stanier is the new director for planning at the communities department replacing Shona Dunn.

Defra has confirmed new ministerial responsibilities its undersecretaries after the reshuffle. George Eustice: farming and food, fisheries and animal health. Dan Rogerson: forestry, rural affairs and environmental management. Lord de Mauley: science and research, natural environment, biodiversity and bee health.

Energy: South East

Solar. CPRE Oxfordshire warned that the county could see 1,833 acres built over with solar panels – up from 427 acres last year. Director Helen Marshall said: “We believe renewable energy is a good thing, but not at an unacceptable cost to the countryside. There are thousands of roofs and industrial buildings that can be used for solar panels before we need to start building all over our valuable agricultural land”    .



Solar farm proposals in Oxfordshire 

Fracking. Cuadrilla has signed a 30-year lease on the Balcombe site . Villagers marched through the country lanes between Wisborough Green and Kirdford against a planning application by Celtique Energie to drill an exploratory well  . Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert has suggested that Celtique Energie drill in a more remote location . A small protest camp, including veterans of Balcombe, has been set up at Wisborough .



Closed circuit monitoring is being installed at Fernhurst to protect landowners who have leased their land for fracking exploration . Chris Smith, Chairman of the Environment Agency has assured Lewes MP Norman Baker that local water sources will be protected from pollutants from any fracking . Oxford Against Fracking has been launched . Kent Green Party said the county council holds £153m of shares in companies actively involved in extracting shale oil and gas, and should sell the shares or withdraw from making decisions on fracking .

Onshore wind. A planning application for a test mast for a six-turbine wind farm at Snaves in Romney Marsh was thrown out by Shepway councillors against officers' recommendations [KO](#). Hampshire Energy Group has signed a deal to purchase a revenue share of up to 10% of the energy from the proposed Bullington Cross wind farm [L](#) [A](#). Winchester councillors voted to oppose the proposal for six turbines at Woodmancott Down, near Micheldever [HC](#) [C](#).

Offshore wind. The Poole and Christchurch Bays Association has brought together fifty residents' groups to launch a 'Save our Seaside' campaign to oppose plans for the 218 turbine Navitus windfarm off the Jurassic Coast [L](#). E.ON has begun mapping the onshore cable route for the Rampion offshore windfarm from Twineham substation on the coast, across the South Downs National Park to Worthing [WST](#). Fifteen turbines are to be added to Kentish Flats site, off the coast of Whitstable and Herne Bay [KN](#).

Biomass. Planning consent has been granted by Dover District Council for a £65 million biomass Combined Heat and Power plant at Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent. It will to supply the park and national grid [L](#).

Waste. West Sussex County Council and South Downs National Park Authority are consulting on the West Sussex Waste Local Plan. Closes 16 December [LG](#).

Energy: National

Carbon. MPs and the Lords voted against setting a binding decarbonisation target for power generation next year. The earliest the target for 2030 can now be set is 2016 [E](#) [R](#). The House of Lords defied the government and voted to ensure that existing coal power plants reduce emissions as their lifetimes are extended. The power stations will need to fit untried carbon capture and storage technology, which is likely to be uneconomic [G](#) [I](#).

Wind. Energy and climate change minister Greg Barker said more windfarms will be located offshore and admitted: "We put certain projects in the wrong place. Some planners have been too insensitive to the impact on the landscape and it has turned public opinion against the wider renewable agenda" [A](#). West Lindsey District Council threw out an application for a ten-turbine wind farm at Hemswell Cliff, near Gainsborough, saying that it would significantly intrude on the setting of nearby heritage assets, would harm archaeological sites in the area and that the scale of the development would damage the local landscape [P](#). Centrica is threatening not to build the Race bank windfarm off North Norfolk unless subsidies are increased [T](#). Eric Pickles is to recover a number of windfarm applications to determine himself as a check on whether new guidance is effective [M](#).

Solar. Eric Pickles rejected an inspector's recommendation to approve a solar farm in Suffolk. He said: "the increase in the amount of renewable energy generated by the appeal scheme does not outweigh the additional harm caused to the character and appearance of the area... Given this, and the concerns of local residents, he considers this harm to be unacceptable." The Solar Trade Association said: "We're concerned that there's a political agenda" [P](#) [C](#). Mendip councillors are investigating the impacts of wind turbines and solar farms on local communities and the local environment [LG](#).

Hydro. As plans for the Severn Barrage flounder, Cardiff and Bristol councils are planning to generate power from a £1 billion tidal lagoon [BBC](#).

Fracking. Public Health England said: "potential risks to public health from exposure to emissions associated with the shale gas extraction process are low if operations are properly run and regulated" [C](#) [R](#) [L](#). Dame Helen Ghosh suggested to the Times that the National Trust has abandoned its **presumption against fracking**, only made in August, and may allow it if the surface environmental impact is not significant. She also said the Trust is extremely unlikely to allow wind turbines on its land [T](#) [G](#) [A](#) [L](#). Shortly afterwards, the Trust denied its fracking policy had changed [B&G](#). Greenpeace called on householders who oppose shale gas or oil exploitation to assert common law rights to forbid the "trespass" of energy firms conducting exploration below their property [I](#).

Nuclear. The government has reached a financial deal for the Hinkley Point C pressurised water reactor, which received planning permission last March [C](#) [CB](#).

Incineration. The King's Lynn incinerator will be built after all, despite the government withdrawing funding, because Norfolk council said it will be bankrupted by £20-30 million in compensation payments to contractors [R](#) [BBC](#).

Recycling. The Welsh Government is consulting on an environmental bill which will ban some materials, including plastic, from landfill and energy-from-waste facilities and introduce an 'area-based approach' to natural resource management [R](#).

Transport

Aviation. South East England Councils and South East Strategic Leaders have written to the Airports Commission calling for more capacity. "Opinion is divided on the merits of a single hub versus a dual hub but there is clear opposition to a Thames Estuary airport. It is also recognised that, in the long term, expansion is likely to be needed at more than a single airport – for example further expansion outside the South East should not be ruled out" [LG](#). "Grassroots" campaign group BackHeathrow, funded by Heathrow airport, is sending a survey to 500,000 asking residents what they think of the threat of Heathrow being closed [L](#). Online survey: [X](#). Frances Maude MP told a meeting organised by CPRE and "the much-respected" Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign that Gatwick should remain a single runway [WSG](#).

Cycling and walking. The Welsh government has passed a bill that places a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists [M](#).

The CPRE eBulletins

CPRE South East eBulletin is independently written and edited by Andy Boddington: cprenews@andybodders.co.uk. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE.

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