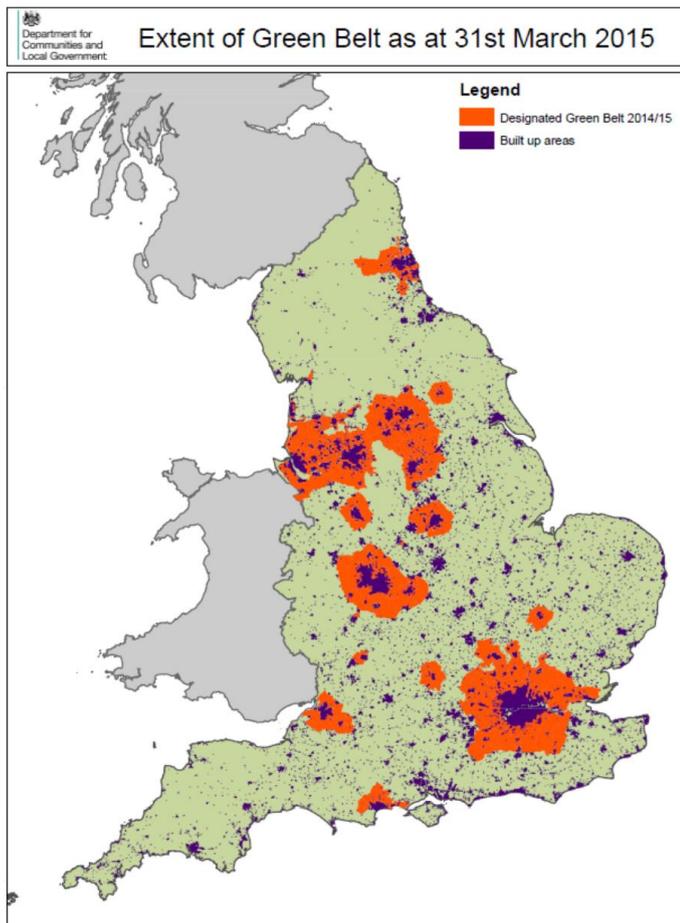


Green Belt

Green belt shrinks. Eleven planning authorities adopted local plans with revised green belt boundaries in 2014/15, up from three the year before . This resulted in the loss of 2,000 hectares of green belt, nearly 5,000 acres or 2,500 football pitches. This was the largest annual decrease in the last five years. The greatest losses were in Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire and Newcastle. There were no losses of green belt in the South East.

New green belt? Councillor Stephen Godfrey, leader of Winchester City Council is reviewing measures to limit the spread of the city and surrounding villages, including creating a new green belt incorporating the nine current green gaps ^{HAMI} _{CHRO} (see 'Southern Powerhouse', page 4).



Renewable Retrenchment

The government continues to take a harsher line on the cross subsidies in the energy sector which have underwritten the boom in renewables over the last decade. It is also turning down more wind farms, citing damage to heritage and lack of community support. Companies are also withdrawing from the renewables market citing subsidy cuts and uncertainty over revised planning rules. Meanwhile, the government continues to support fossil fuels.

Solar tariffs. Decc is proposing to cut the feed-in tariff rates for small-scale solar PV installations, including rooftop installations, by as much as 87%. Tariffs are linked to inflation and Decc is proposing using the consumer prices index (CPI) as opposed to the retail price index (RPI), which generally gives higher measures of inflation. It has already cut subsidies for larger solar farms. Now it will also cut subsidies each quarter for solar farms once they are installed. Decc estimates the change will lead to the UK's renewable generation capacity being 6GW lower by 2021, than if subsidies continued . The solar industry reacted angrily to the cuts and Friends of the Earth called them absurd . The Scottish government is to continue providing the existing levels of subsidy for existing and proposed solar schemes . The renewables industry has launched 'People Power' campaign against the cuts .

Tariffs. Developers of renewable sites have been able to lock in to feed-in-tariff rates before their schemes had been given final approval or developed. In a regime of reducing subsidies, this allowed them to guarantee higher rates of return. The government has cancelled this pre-accreditation regime from 1 October .

Wind farm plans falter. Energy giant RES has suspended plans for an eleven-turbine wind farm at Chislet near Canterbury saying it still thinks the site is suitable but is waiting for further progress on the local plan. It said the delay would allow time for Canterbury council to consider the new pf guidance. The Stop the Chislet Windfarm Committee claimed a victory and said: "We're convinced it's local opposition that has swung it" . Renewable energy giant Vattenfall has cancelled plans for the 20-turbine Nocton Fen wind farm in Lincolnshire after opposition from local residents and following the announcement that the government is cancelling subsidies for on-shore turbines . Dong Energy said that plans to construct Hornsea 2 and 3 almost 200 kilometres off the Humber estuary are now in serious doubt .

Wind farms rejected. Greg Clark has rejected plans for a ten-turbine wind farm at Hemswell Cliff, Lincolnshire, saying that the applicants had not demonstrated community support in line with the revised policy issued in June . Clark also rejected four wind turbines at Thorney, near Peterborough on similar grounds . Amber Rudd has refused planning consent for four of five wind farms and a power line in Powys, which were examined at a conjoined inquiry which closed in May 2014 .

Fracking and Gas Boost

Wind farms approved. The government has approved Dogger Bank A&B, two 200-turbine wind farms 125-290km off the Teesside coast . Permission has been given for Scout Moor wind farm near Rochdale to expand to 42 turbines, making it England's largest onshore wind farm .

Solar farms rejected. Reigate & Banstead council has rejected a second application for a solar farm on agricultural land northeast of Leigh. It said the 5.8-hectare scheme would harm the openness of the green belt . A planning inspector threw out two solar farms in Lincolnshire, citing harm to the landscape and loss of good quality agricultural land    .

Solar farms approved. The 48MW, 60-hectare Evely solar farm, near Stockbridge in Test Valley, Hampshire has been approved after Greg Clark lifted a holding objection put in place by his predecessor, Eric Pickles . Swindon council has approved two solar farms under a local development order, which means that planning permission is not required for schemes that comply with the order  .

Carbon capture. The cuts to renewables subsidies have led power station giant Drax pulling out of a carbon capture and storage after the government cut renewables subsidies and removed a tax exemption for renewable power. The White Rose CCS project would have trapped up to 90% of carbon emissions from a new power station next to the company's existing Yorkshire power plant and stored the CO2 beneath the North Sea  .

Navitus Bay Wind Farm Sinks

Rejection. The government has refused permission for the £3.5bn Navitus Bay offshore wind farm to be built off the south coast of England. The 121-turbine project has proved highly contentious with opponents claiming it would damage the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and harm tourism. An alternative, smaller scheme, known as the Turbine Mitigation Area Option was also rejected .

Reasons. The decision by Decc secretary Amber Rudd followed that of the planning examiners who said the scheme would be harmful to the Jurassic Coast and AONBs. The applicant had claimed that Navitus was equivalent to the Rampion scheme off the Sussex coast, but this argument was rejected by the planning inspector. The examiners said that the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) established a presumption in favour of conservation of heritage assets and this was a high hurdle to cross. The damage to the Jurassic Coast was given considerable weight in rejecting the scheme; a weight the examiners said was independent of the coast's World Heritage Site status. The examiners said that the applicant had understated some of the impacts on tourism and that the impact on visitors to Purbeck would be significant. They also said the scheme would result in significant harm to the quality of the area.

Reaction. Navitus Bay said it was disappointed with the decision and will consider its options. It has until the end of October to launch any judicial review .

Fast-tracked fracking. The government has extended its planning performance scheme to onshore shale gas applications. Greg Clark told the Commons that if a planning authority fails to process at least 50% of fracking applications within 13 weeks, it will be entered into special measures and applications will be determined by the planning inspectorate. Clark will also consider calling in fracking applications for his own determination and planning guidance has been changed to this effect    . Campaigners say the new rules will make it difficult for planning authorities to consider technical data adequately and will put pressure on them to approve rather than reject applications .

South Downs threatened. Government data suggests that very few authorities will be dragged into special measures under the new rules. However, the South Downs National Park has received three shale gas applications in the last two years and all took longer than thirteen weeks to process. This leads to the possibility of decisions such as that to reject fracking bids such as that at Fernhurst, rejected by the park authority last September, being taken by a planning inspector or secretary of state, with the only appeal being to the high court  .

New licence areas. The Oil and Gas Authority has announced 27 areas for which it will issue licences for shale gas exploration and extraction. These are all in the midlands and north of England. An announcement on exploration areas in the South East is expected shortly  .

Public support falters. The latest quarterly public attitudes survey for Decc found that just 21% of 2,118 UK households surveyed support fracking – the lowest percentage recorded by the survey. In contrast, 28% opposed the fracking, while 49% said they neither supported or opposed it  .

Fossil fuels. Decc ministers have approved plans for a new 1,800MW gas-fired power plant at Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire saying the scheme would help “provide flexible back-up for intermittent renewable energy from wind”  .

Planning Performance

Planning applications. As promised in the Autumn Budget and Fixing the Foundations, the government has raised the performance threshold for councils processing planning applications. They must now process 50% of applications on time, previously it had been 40%. (on time is within 4 weeks for minor applications, 13 weeks for major applications or within a timetable agreed with the developer). If councils fail to do so, they face going into special measures and having applications determined by the planning inspectorate. Christchurch in Sussex is the only South East authority likely to be trapped by the new rules. Wokingham, Rother and Test Valley are however only just within the new performance limits .

Local Plan Performance

Local plans to be speeded up. More than one-third of local authorities have yet to adopt local plans. Now Brandon Lewis has appointed a panel to recommend how to streamline the often agonisingly slow process of developing and approving plans. It will be chaired by John Rhodes, director of planning consultancy Quod and one of the architects of the NPPF. He will be joined on the eight-strong panel by MP John Howell, who wrote the Open Source Planning document for the Conservative Party ahead of the 2010 general election. Adrian Penfold, head of planning at British Land, who carried out a government review to streamline non-planning consents, will also be a member along with former chief executive of the British Property Federation, Liz Peace. Rhodes said he wanted to avoid changes that requiring primary legislation. Local plans are often blocked or delayed during examination due to disputes over housing numbers. The panel will look at how these numbers are assessed and also how adjacent authorities cooperate with each other.

Reaction. The Woodland Trust said: “We are very disappointed by the clear, development-driven bent of the panel”. Shaun Spiers, chief executive of CPRE, said: “This is developer-led panel on planning, without environment or community representation.” He added that planning is also about the communities and places people love: “Assembling a bunch of developers and politicians to streamline the process won’t work”.



Shaun Spiers
@ShaunSpiers1



Following

.@BrandonLewis Oh, dear, another developer-led panel on planning, without environment or community reps: outcome, depressingly predictable.

Planning

Unauthorised development. It is a frequent frustration of planners and planning committees that they cannot take into account that someone has started, even completed, development when assessing retrospective planning applications. Planning rules had only allowed them to assess whether the application complied with planning rules. The communities department has now changed planning guidance to make unauthorised development a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals. The planning inspectorate will monitor unauthorised development within the green belt and Greg Clark will recover and determine a number of these appeals himself.

Gypsies and travellers. The government has announced that planning rules designed to support England’s travelling community will only apply to those who lead a genuine travelling lifestyle, not those that have settled. It has updated its planning policy for traveller sites. Campaigners say this will lead to greater exclusion of the traveller community.

Right to Beauty. A report by Respublica argues for a Community Right to Beauty that would give communities more powers and incentives to shape, enhance and create beautiful places. It says the NPPF protects existing beautiful places but does not address the new beauty that could be created in our everyday landscapes. Respublica wants neighbourhood forums and town and parish councils to have powers to:

- ◆ democratically challenge new development on grounds of beauty, not to block development but to enhance it
- ◆ call for the improvement of derelict, void or unsightly buildings or spaces and take on their ownership or management to do so where necessary
- ◆ protect, maintain and improve local cherished, beautiful buildings and green spaces, especially where they have no existing legal protection
- ◆ shape, preserve and enhance their local area, beyond the existing powers of the Localism Act 2011.

Roundup. The Campaign for National Parks has updated its policy statements on minerals and transport. The Town and Country Planning Association has published report on learning the lessons from earlier new towns and garden cities.

Housing

Housebuilding. Brandon Lewis told the Times that there was no need for a national strategy for housing. He said: “I’m not entirely convinced that publishing a strategy actually achieves what we want. The outcome I’m looking for is to deliver homes”. He said that the government wanted to build a million homes in England over the course of this parliament. Currently, around 136,000 homes are started each year. According to Full Fact, the best estimate of the shortfall between housing needs and construction is 100,000 homes a year. A survey for Lloyds Bank said housebuilding was being held back by slow planning decisions (46%), public opposition to development (42%) and lack of skilled workers (25%).

Housing as infrastructure? A report by legal firm Bond Dickenson and planning consultancy Quod calls for large housing projects to be classified as nationally significant infrastructure projects and decisions to be taken by the secretary of state. It follows a similar call by planning lawyers at Pinsent Masons.

Affordable housing challenge. The court of appeal has given the communities department permission to challenge a high court decision to strike out planning guidance on affordable housing. That guidance prevented local authorities asking for contribution towards affordable housing on most developments of ten homes or fewer. The high court case had been brought by Reading and West Berkshire councils.

Starter Homes. Shelter said that the government’s starter homes programme “will not help the majority of people on the new National Living Wage or average wages into home ownership in England by 2020”. Starter home developments will not have to pay contributions towards affordable housing.

Right to Buy. After George Osborne announced that social tenants would be allowed to buy their homes, the National Housing Federation, which represents housing associations, balloted its members on voluntarily joining the scheme. Hastoe has said it will not take part, saying the policy is not properly rural proofed . The scheme will exempt rural areas from the Right to Buy but John Rowley of CPRE says the rural definition used by the government is incomplete and out of date . The CLA said the Right to Buy should not apply to rural areas . Shelter said one in three councils in England has not replaced a single home sold through the Right to Buy scheme since 2012 .

Rural Productivity Plan

Plan. The government has issued a ten-point plan to “boost productivity and ensure the countryside becomes an even more attractive place for people to live, work, start a business and bring up a family” . The measures include:

- ◆ amending planning rules to allow Starter Homes to be built on Rural Exception Sites; these houses will be only for people who already live in the area, or have an existing family or employment connection to the area
- ◆ assessing alternative solutions to deliver broadband further into rural areas, including providing high speed broadband to businesses in all Enterprise Zones in rural areas
- ◆ improving rural transport connections through the second Road Investment Strategy for 2020 to 2025
- ◆ ensuring fairer funding for rural schools and raising standards
- ◆ considering proposals for increased devolution of powers.

Writing in the Telegraph, George Osborne and Liz Truss said: “Our determination to build one nation means investing in all parts of the country, building a vibrant economy that promotes growth across the land, in every town and city and every rural area too.” They promised to review planning rules in rural areas including for barn to office conversions .

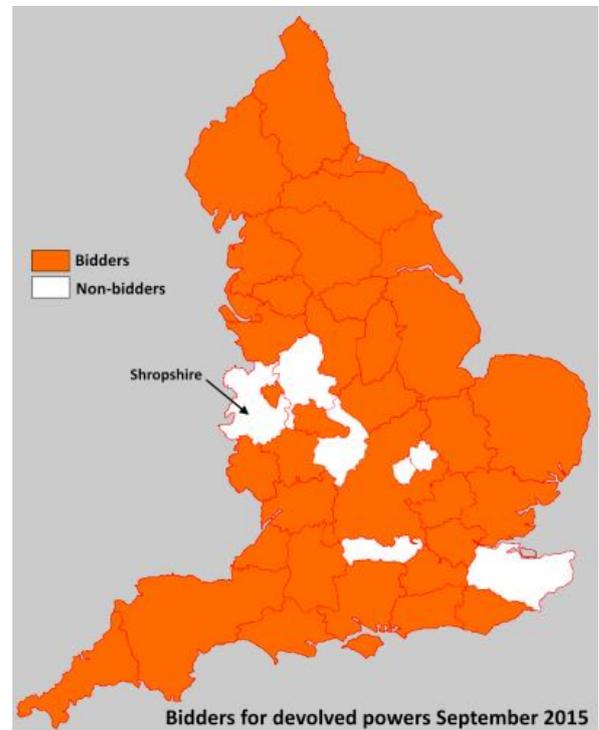
Reaction. Shaun Spiers responded in a letter to the Telegraph .

The chancellor and environment secretary are... dangerously close to reversing the policy followed by governments... for more than 60 years – of focusing economic development in towns and cities. This policy has helped keep urban centres economically vibrant and socially mixed, and the countryside beautiful, productive and relatively tranquil.

The Rural Services Network said: “Starter homes should be built on allocated sites – not exception sites. Exception sites are intended to be for housing that will remain affordable and for local needs, whereas Starter Homes can be sold on the open market after a few years” . The CLA welcome the plan but said it did not do enough to boost homes for rent or broadband in rural areas . More reaction  .

Devolution and Evolution

Devolution to councils. Counties, unitary authorities and districts across the South East have been forming consortia to bid for devolved powers from central government, including transport and housing . Planners are predicting that devolution could lead to a return to regional planning .



Three Southern Counties (3SC). East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey   . The 3SC manifesto says that demand for housing will always outstrip supply in the area but a proposed infrastructure strategy will give greater certainty to delivery. The 44 organisations involved in the bid also promise to “streamline local planning processes in return for greater freedoms and flexibilities at local level.” The 3SC bid champions Heathrow and Gatwick but does not mention extra runway capacity. It sees the environment and green belt as constraints, not opportunities. A concordat is being drawn up with Brighton and Hove council.

The **Greater Brighton Economic Board** has submitted a bid on behalf of Adur, Brighton and Hove, Lewes, Mid-Sussex and Worthing councils, along with universities and colleges and Leps. The bid overlaps with the 3SC submission .

Southern Powerhouse. The prospectus from sixteen local authorities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, along with Leps and national parks, promises to accelerate housing delivery through a joint planning committee. A land board will unlock brownfield sites. The plan also promises investment in infrastructure, universities, and the aerospace and marine industries. It says: “The designation of new green belt or similar measures to protect the settlement pattern... would provide reassurance and protection and build support for the additional development we are proposing” .

Economic Heartland. The tri-county group of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northampton established last year has submitted a bid focused on economic growth transport, including the A34/43/45 artery, and the A428/A421 Expressway corridor .

Oxfordshire is part of the tri-county group but has submitted a separate bid on behalf of all the county's councils, universities, Leps and other bodies  . The bid, which has been kept confidential, seeks greater local control over £4bn of funding for transport, skills training and health services. Northamptonshire has also bid separately though Bucks has not.

Non-bidders. In the South East, the councils in Berkshire did not submit a bid with Bracknell Forest saying there was “no wish to form a senate” . It is not clear why Kent councils did not bid, as council leaders have previously called for devolved powers . Likewise Milton Keynes, where council leader Peter Marland said in February: “I have always been clear that what is good enough for Scotland and Manchester should be good enough for Milton Keynes” .

Environment

Natural capital. Following the third report of the committee set up to examine how natural landscape and biodiversity contributes to our economic and social wellbeing, the government has committed to developing a 25-year plan to protect and improve the environment. It promises to spend £3 billion from the Common Agricultural Policy to “enhance England’s countryside over the next five years”. This includes planting “an additional 11 million trees” and launching “an ambitious programme of pocket parks.” CPRE welcomed the move and called for an update to the Countryside Survey last conducted in 2007  .

Green infrastructure. A report for Natural England says green bridges built across roads and railways can stop species from becoming isolated and reduce the number of traffic accidents . A study by the European Environment Agency emphasises benefits of green infrastructure to boost protection from landslides and flooding  .

Dark skies. Researchers analysed 14 years of data from 62 local authorities in England and Wales that had reduced street lighting. They found no association between reduced lighting and traffic accidents, at night or between overall levels of crime and changes in street lighting. Nevertheless, many communities remain fearful of the switch-off    .

Bags of support for charge. A poll for the Break the Bag Habit coalition, which includes CPRE, found that 62% of English respondents thought it reasonable to charge 5p for all carrier bags, 6% up on 2012. The new poll also found that more than half of the respondents (51%) supported the charge applying to all retailers  .

Recycling. Local authorities in England recycled 44.8% of household waste in 2014, up just 0.6% on 2013 . MPs gave a second reading to a private members bill which intends to limit food waste and ensure that unsold food is donated to charities  .

Communities and Campaigning

Broadband plea. In a letter to the FT, Hampshire council leader Roy Perry says the government and BT need to recognise the urgency of ensuring reliable fast broadband in the countryside. He wants councils to have same power to insist on good broadband connectivity when granting planning permission as they have to require water or electricity .

Policing. The National Rural Crime Network has launched a “Rural Policing Matters” campaign. This follows research that showed only one third of people living or working in rural areas believe the police are responding to issues of concern to them, compared to two thirds nationally  .

Court challenges. The government is considering doubling the liabilities campaigners face in bringing judicial reviews . Ralph Smyth of CPRE said : *In the run-up to its decision on Heathrow expansion, the government is cynically seeking to make it harder to challenge environmental decisions in the courts. What it is spinning as merely ‘measured adjustments’ would in fact impact hugely on the affordability of British justice for individuals, community groups and charities seeking to protect air quality, green belt, tranquillity and the climate.*

The ministry of justice consultation closes on 10 December .

Roundup. Academics say about 70% of rural areas now have more than half their residents employed in middle-class occupations . CPRE Oxfordshire has profiled a successful campaign against an inappropriate rural housing development by the Milton-under-Wychwood Action Group  .

Transport

Clutter. The transport department announced a taskforce overseen by Sir Alan Duncan MP to reduce traffic sign clutter    . The department is also consulting on new measures; closes 6 October . They include:

- ◆ ensuring road signs that are often used far longer than needed are given a ‘remove by’ date
- ◆ making sure traffic signs are visible on unlit roads
- ◆ stopping temporary message signs from being cluttered with adverts and distracting logos.

Sir Alan said:

I have been campaigning on this issue for twenty years. I am delighted to lead this initiative. The UK has erected thousands of road signs which are completely unnecessary, such as traffic light warning signs when you can see the lights themselves. We are going to look at how we might get rid of whole categories of unnecessary signs and improve the look of our roads and streets.

Rail. The Lewes – Uckfield line and the East West rail link are two of the twelve priorities for reopened rail lines identified by Campaign for Transport following the reopening of the Borders Railway .

High Speed 2. The Woodland Trust has identified 14 additional areas of ancient woodland at risk of being destroyed or damaged by the first phase of the high speed line 🚄🌳. However, three ancient woods will be saved by the **Chilterns Tunnel extension** 🌳.



Runway row. The war of words between Gatwick and Heathrow and the Airports Commission chairman Sir Howard Davies has continued unabated. Gatwick again attacked Heathrow's bid for a third runway, claiming that its rival airport would breach air and noise quality limits. Davies bluntly rejected Gatwick's claims saying "limited weight should be placed on the suggestion that air quality represents a significant obstacle to expansion" 🗞️📺📰📰📰📰📰. Heathrow said that its plans pass the four tests for runway expansion set by the new Labour leadership – to expand capacity, meet climate change obligations, minimise noises and air quality impacts and to be a benefit to the nation, not just London 🗞️. Gatwick said its plans also pass the tests 🗞️. Wealden MP Nus Ghani criticised Gatwick for persevering with its campaign to expand 🗞️.

South East Roundup

Berkshire. The Royal Borough has granted planning permission for a £230m major regeneration project for Maidenhead town centre. The scheme includes shops, offices, restaurants, up to 225 apartments and a central public space 🗞️. A plan to construct a 60Mw solar farm in a restored gravel pit at Brimpton, Woolhampton has been rejected by councillors on a casting vote 🗞️.

Buckinghamshire. Residents have approved neighbourhood plans for Buckingham (91% in favour; 21% turnout), Haddenham (86%; 51%), and for Wolverton (90%; 17%) and the Lakes Estate in Milton Keynes (88%; 15%) 🗞️🗞️🗞️🗞️.

Bucks... Revised plans have been submitted for 3,000 homes at Hampden Fields on the outskirts of Aylesbury. The original scheme was rejected by a planning inspector earlier this year. The new plans include a southern link road between the A41 and A413. Phil Yerby of the Hampden Fields Action Group said: "We have been waiting for this ever since the inspector's decision. The action group is fully prepared, it has all its ducks in a row and I am 100% confident we will deliver a great result for residents again" 🗞️. A planning application is expected for a solar farm on a site in the green belt and designated as a future country park at Little Marlow 🗞️.

Hampshire. A planning inspector has rejected plans to convert the Bittern pub in Southampton pub into a McDonalds drive-thru. He said that the pub might still be commercially viable and NPPF paragraph 70 takes a precautionary approach to the loss of community facilities including as pubs 🗞️. Test Valley councillors threw out controversial plans to build 140 homes on farmland in the green gap between Rownhams and Southampton 🗞️. Solstice Renewables has asked Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for a screening opinion on whether an environmental impact assessment is needed for a solar farm it proposes at Wigmore Farm, Pamber End 🗞️.

Kent planning. CPRE Kent is not opposing plans for 1,400 dwellings outside Sittingbourne on grade 1 and 2 agricultural land. The site is allocated in the Swale local plan 🗞️. Maidstone council has decided not to classify Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn as a Landscape of Local Value in the draft local plan 🗞️. The use of the former airfield at Manston for Operation Stack is to continue after the government granted planning permission using a rare Special Development Order 🗞️.

Ashford. Plans for a significant expansion of Ashford Designer Outlet have been approved despite objectors saying that it could be the "final nail in the coffin" for what some describe as Ashford's "pound shop laden" town centre. Planners hope to reduce the damage to the town centre by banning fast-food chains and restaurants such as Giraffe and Giggling Squid from the Outlet but permitting clothing brands like Scotch and Soda and True Religion (I've never heard of them either) 🗞️. The banned list was also compiled to prevent the Outlet complex competing with plans for a cinema and restaurants on a brownfield site at Elwick Road in the town centre 🗞️.

Lodge Hill developer walks. Land Securities has pulled out of plans to build 5,000 houses on the former MoD site at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. The scheme has a controversial history, being declared a SSSI to protect nightingales after planning for the development was already well underway. Nevertheless, Medway council awarded the development planning permission. The plans have been called in by the secretary of state and are to be examined at a public inquiry. The developer has said that it has withdrawn for commercial reasons, having lost £11.3 million to date on the scheme. The MoD said it would await the outcome of the inquiry and may appoint another development partner if the scheme is allowed to proceed 🗞️.

Kent energy. Teal Energy has withdrawn its plans for an incinerator on the Swanscombe Peninsular, accepting that the scheme conflicts with plans for the Paramount theme park and Ebbsfleet garden city. It is seeking an alternative site in north Kent [P](#). Kent MPs Julian Brazier and Roger Gale are calling for National Grid's Richborough Connection to be undergrounded [E](#). Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately called a public meeting to discuss a bid to create a solar farm in Headcorn. The proposal has been condemned by Protect Our Weald and the Weald of Kent Preservation Society [K](#) [M](#) [R](#) [E](#).

Oxfordshire local plan inquiries. The examination in public has opened into the Vale of White Horse local plan. CPRE Oxfordshire has criticised the ambitions for 20,560 homes saying this is "far too high, impossible to deliver, unsustainable and damaging to the rural character of the county." Oxford council wants the inquiry delayed by six months until the locations for the city's unmet housing need is resolved. During the opening sessions, Vale council planners seemed uncertain what land would need to be taken from the green belt for housing. It was left to CPRE's Helen Marshall to remind them that it was 18 sites [Oxf Mail](#) [Oxf Mail](#). The examination in public into the West Oxfordshire local plan has been delayed with the inspector citing personal circumstances [CP](#) [CP](#) [RE](#) [RE](#). Hook Norton residents have voted overwhelmingly in favour of their neighbourhood plan; 97% were in favour on a 35% turnout [Gu](#) [Oxf Mail](#) [P](#).

Woodstock East. Plans for 1,200 new homes in Woodstock, which would have nearly doubled the size of the historic town, have been rejected by Cherwell council. This follows an earlier rejection of the scheme by neighbouring West Oxfordshire council. Both councils are concerned about the size of the expansion, its conflict with local plans and the impact on the Blenheim world heritage site. The plans by Pye Homes are backed by the Blenheim Palace Estate and will inevitably be taken to appeal [Oxf](#) [Woo](#) [Tim](#).



Plans for Woodstock East

Oxfordshire roundup. Historic England said it was "not convinced" by Merton College's proposals to build 349 student rooms overlooking Holywell Cemetery in Oxford. It said the harm they would cause was "not justified or minimised" [Oxf Mail](#). Save Our Local Green Spaces is a new campaign launched by Bicester residents to protect green spaces within the town they fear will fall victim to development [Oxf](#) [Tim](#).

Surrey. Residents of Mayford, near Woking are opposing plans for a free school in the green belt, saying it would cause "noise, light pollution, car pollution and absolute traffic mayhem" [get](#). Outside Banstead, Woodmansterne residents are protesting against a waste water lagoon and associated works in the green belt, including removal of hedgerows [Surr](#) [Mirr](#). Spelthorne council says that the green belt at Kempton Park will be protected, despite the racecourse having retained Redrow Homes to look at the feasibility of building on part of its land [get](#) [SURI](#).

Sussex. Gladman Developments has won an appeal for 95 homes in Ifield, Horsham. Key to the decision was a lack of five year land supply [Cot](#) [Appeal](#) [Panel](#). Film star Kate Winslet has withdrawn controversial plans to build a 170-metre long seawall to protect her £3.25million beachside home from flooding. Natural England had objected saying: "This could set a dangerous precedent for further new sea defences along the remaining stretches of natural shoreline in the harbour. We remain unconvinced of the need for this sea defence, and that its impact on the landscape and nature conservations interests of the area of natural beauty would be acceptable" [Mail](#) [Time](#).

Infrastructure Commission

Breaking... As we go to press, George Osborne has announced that infrastructure champion Lord Adonis will chair the new National Infrastructure Commission. Adonis, transport secretary under Gordon Brown and who once wanted to run for London's Mayor, has resigned the Labour Party whip. Andrew Adonis is a supporter of HS2 and of the need for a new crossing on the lower Thames. While in transport secretary, he favoured a third Heathrow runway. George Osborne is also pledging an extra £5bn during the current Parliament for infrastructure schemes [g](#) [M](#) [P](#) [E](#).

The CPRE eBulletins

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

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