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Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SOUTH EAST

CPRE South East eBulletin

October 2006

Published 3 November 2006

As this eBulletin develops, we are becoming more focused on the work of the SE Region and the SE Branches. Thanks to all who submitted copy, especially CPRE Kent, actually only CPRE Kent! Please don't rely on me being able to pick up what you are doing from afar; sometimes I see it, as often perhaps I miss it.

1. CPRE South East Region

Gypsy sites. CPRE South East has responded to South East England Regional Assembly's consultation on provision for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. It believes that the best solution to the gypsy problem is to plan for, and provide sufficient permanent sites. <http://tinyurl.com/ym6k3c>

Regional Director. Edward Dawson has issued his report for July to October 2006: <http://tinyurl.com/ym6k3c>

Coming soon... RSS News Service (for those who recognise what this is, please email to help me with testing). And the CPRE South East blog featuring Edward Dawson.

2. Examination in Public

Water

CPRE South East and the SE Branches are gearing up for the EiP. CPRE Kent has a seat in the water sessions, and last week Kent (led by water specialist Graham Warren) and the region submitted three documents:

- ◆ Matter 1E—Water
- ◆ Summary of forthcoming report (due February 2007) on a "Water Resource Strategy for the South East"
- ◆ Achieving water neutrality in the South East Region: a discussion paper.

All three documents can be downloaded from the South East Region website: <http://tinyurl.com/ym6k3c>.

Summary of submission to Matter EiP 1E—Water

The submission suggests that the Region may, in a dry year scenario, suffer a supply/demand deficit exceeding 1000 Ml/d. A saving of 320 Ml/d might come from water efficiency and leakage control; another 100 Ml/d from existing supply proposals. The rest of the deficit will need to be addressed through reuse of treated effluent, transfers between river basins and developments being contingent on water efficiency measures.

Planning authorities must have the powers to demand water efficiency measures as a condition of planning permission. If the government does not make compulsory metering easier, more areas should be declared "water scarce" and subject to compulsory metering through this mechanism.

The structure of the water industry and its regulatory regime make it difficult to provide a unified region wide water strategy. Companies are pursuing strategies biased toward resource development (including reservoirs) with inadequate focus on demand management. Integrated water strategies are needed.

Other EiP matters

The final list of matters and participants has been issued: <http://tinyurl.com/yh6bve>.

3. Planning

"Strong and Prosperous Communities." Ruth Kelly published the long awaited White Paper on local government. Full details in a special edition of the South East eBulletin: <http://tinyurl.com/wrabx>.

The **Regional Economic Strategy** for South East England 2006-2016 has been formally launched: <http://tinyurl.com/ycaf64>. The RES sets out:

- ◆ Three challenges. Global competitiveness; smart growth without increasing the region's ecological footprint; and sustainable development.
- ◆ Three headline targets. An annual 3% increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita; an annual increase in productivity per worker of 2.4%; a reduction in the region's ecological footprint by 2016.

The RES, SE Plan and Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 together define:

- ◆ Three broad "economic contours" in the south east: the inner south east (London and surrounds); the rural south east (which has a third of the business base); and the coastal south east.
- ◆ Three growth areas. The Thames Gateway; Milton Keynes South Midlands; and Ashford.
- ◆ Twenty-one Regional Hubs, within which are 8 Diamonds for Investment and Growth.

The RES is summarised in a special edition of South East View: <http://tinyurl.com/y6lhzh>.

South East Plan to be undermined by DCLG? The executive committee of the Regional Assembly has warned that the government's plans for a new housing and planning delivery grant could jeopardise the SE Plan. Chairman Keith Mitchell, said: "It is unacceptable that this could be undermined by ill-thought-out changes to funding criteria." Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/yo8l8>.

New Growth Points. Yvette Cooper announced that 45 towns and cities are to become New Growth Points, with the potential to deliver up to 100,000 extra new homes. DCLG press release: <http://tinyurl.com/y86854>. DCLG web pages: <http://tinyurl.com/yc9twd>. CPRE questioned whether the New Growth Points will deliver sustainability and called for houses to be built on brownfield sites: <http://tinyurl.com/yeyzss>. Eight New Growth Points are in the South East. **Basingstoke:** the aim is to build around 9,650 homes by 2016; **Didcot:** 5,000; **Maidstone:** 5,040; **Oxford:** 5,692; **Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (Push):** 40,425; **Reading:** 7,000; **Reigate & Banstead Borough Council:** 5,000.

Growth area rebuttal. Lord Rooker refuted "myths" about housing numbers and water infrastructure in the growth areas. He said water problems at Ashford have been solved. Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/ykkhqs>

Ashford. CPRE Kent will publish a report in November which will detail the shortcomings of Ashford's development as a growth area and demand an immediate review of house-building numbers. It will argue that house building should be put on hold until jobs and infrastructure catch up: <http://tinyurl.com/ybk47l>.

Spatial Planning Guidance. Wildlife and Countryside Link, of which CPRE is part, has published a guide to implementing changes brought about by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It includes guidance on climate change, biodiversity, energy & water conscious planning, and transport: <http://tinyurl.com/ydvnhr>

How to campaign. People power can beat unpopular development, but only if campaigners arm themselves with expert advice, said the Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/yhkwgq>. The article features the campaign against the waste transfer station at Hollingdean, Brighton.

Sustainable Communities Bill. Support for this Private Members Bill, which aims to reverse the decline of local communities, is growing but it needs to be selected in the Commons ballot on 23 November. Sign up your support at: www.localworks.org.

Flooding. The Environment Agency is now a statutory consultee on all development planning applications where there is a risk of flooding. EA: <http://tinyurl.com/p6e2g>. Housing plans at Cookham in Bucks have been approved despite flood fears. Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/y6z2g5>. Builders withdrew proposals for 7,500 homes near Reading after protests about flood-risks. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y99mqd>.

Falmer. A planning row over the Brighton and Hove Albion football stadium will no longer be going to court after government lawyers gave assurances that local objections will be heard. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/qvo7n>

Suburban is best. Housing Corporation chief executive Jon Rouse attacked the 'urban cognoscenti' and lauded the suburbs as the natural home of the British. He outlined seven reasons for a return to suburbia and said anyone who believes the country's housing crisis can be met through the expansion of urban centres is 'frankly kidding themselves'. Europaconcorsi: <http://tinyurl.com/mvrv4>

100 mile suburban city? "Who needs the green belt anyway?" Academics from Kingston University's Centre for Suburban Studies are looking forward to "city 100 miles in diameter taking in Cambridge and Windsor and Brighton." CPRE's Nick Schoon defended the countryside: "We are about good old-fashioned defence of the environment and saving the planet." Sunday Times: <http://tinyurl.com/r9krs>

Londoners want mayor to have power. Londoners have backed plans to give Ken Livingstone the power to decide over major planning applications by 50% to 33%. eGov: <http://tinyurl.com/yhlbdy>.

The Medway is to be re-branded to highlight its role as "the main site of the Thames Gateway". BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yjkh34>

Nuclear planning. CPRE is challenging government proposals to restrict the public's rights to object to the siting of nuclear power stations and other major energy developments at planning inquiries. Amanda Brace said: "These proposals risk igniting public opposition to new nuclear power stations. And they may be open to the challenge of restricting human rights." 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/egee5>. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/egee5>

Nuclear problems buried deep. Defra has announced that it is backing recommendations for deep geological disposal of nuclear waste. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/ujwfx>. Local authorities will get inducements to host both deep disposal and the temporary stores needed for the next century. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/y4j2jj>.

4. Housing

Housing Board. East Hampshire councillor Elizabeth Cartwright has been re-elected as Chairman of the South East England Regional Housing Board. She has announced a consultation on updating the South East's Regional Housing Strategy: <http://tinyurl.com/yf8zpd>.

Statistics. There was an increase of 74,000 households in the South East between 2001 and 2004. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/yenfed>. Nearly 300,000 (1.6%) private homes in England have been empty for more than six months. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ygxjgc>. List by planning authority: <http://tinyurl.com/yczk85>

40,000 more homes. The Thames Gateway Strategic Framework Interim Report will call for 160,000 homes to be built in the Gateway by 2016, up from the 120,000 stipulated in the Government's 2003 Sustainable Communities Plan; most will be built inside London's boundary. The framework is set to endorse the Thames Estuary Parklands. Regeneration & Renewal: <http://tinyurl.com/ykor8g>

Affordable crisis in South East. The average house price in the South East will be over £322,000 in five years, according to the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing. An explosion of affordable housing need leaves 180,000 families on housing waiting lists in the region—an increase of 50% in five years. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ro8yj>. NHF: <http://tinyurl.com/pqk19>. 50% of affordable housing in England in 2004/05 resulted from Section 106 agreements; 63% in the South East. Hansard: <http://tinyurl.com/wzpt8>. The government has yet to formally respond to the Affordable Rural Housing Commission Report, but Yvette Cooper insists that it is not being ignored. Hansard: <http://tinyurl.com/wzpt8>. CPRE Oxfordshire held a public debate on affordable rural housing and is now finalising its policy on this issue: <http://tinyurl.com/yhs2fh>.

Key worker housing. DCLG launched the Open Market HomeBuy scheme aimed at helping 20,000 key workers get on the housing ladder. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/horbx>

The Swedish model. Yvette Cooper called for homes to be built to Scandinavian standards so that in "ten years time the UK will be a world leader in low cost and low carbon design." DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/lrsn>.

"Poor old Barratt, eternally damned as a byword for bad taste." The New Statesman looks at Barratt houses, the £60K house and accuses British housebuilders of being old-fashioned: <http://tinyurl.com/nueo4>

Eastbourne. CPRE Sussex has won its battle against 2,200 houses at Polegate after councillors rejected the proposals; but the developers will appeal. Eastbourne Today: <http://tinyurl.com/y39lka>

Chalets threatened. Unique seaside chalets at Swalecliffe in Kent face demolition despite a conservation area being created to protect them. Shortage of green field land is blamed (The Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/gnq6o>) made worse by the fact that the chalets are not buildings: BBC <http://tinyurl.com/s7x7l>

5. Transport

SE schemes approved. South East England Regional Assembly's transport board announced it is backing transport plans costing £800 million. The 16 schemes include 10 for public transport. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/ybb5f5>. Board papers: <http://tinyurl.com/yxwxc3>. The schemes approved are: Windsor Park and Ride; Reading station incremental Capacity Upgrade; Guildford hub Transport Improvement Scheme; Redhill Hub Transport Improvement Scheme; A34/Access to Oxford Package; Ashford Smartlink Bus Rapid Transit; Coastal Expressway; A421 Milton Keynes to M1; A27 Chichester Bypass and LTP Schemes; A2 Bean Junction; A27 Willington Improvements; A3 (A247–A31) Junction Improvements; A24 Ashington to Southwater; Thames Valley Strategic Coach and Bus Network; Package B: Strategic Development in Portsmouth; Package C: Strategic Development in Southampton.

Olympics. The Olympic Delivery Authority has announced its draft Transport Plan; it is claiming 2012 will be the "public transport games". London 2012: <http://tinyurl.com/yhv8nw>

Lower Thames Crossing. Kent and Essex councils have commissioned a £100,000 feasibility study for a crossing after claims that roads in north Kent will "seize up" without another Thames crossing. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/nqkyp>; <http://tinyurl.com/nqkyp>. CPRE Kent opposes the crossing, arguing that removing tolls at Dartford, improved technology and traffic reduction will ease the congestion. Hilary Newport said: 'Essex and Kent County Councils are displaying an imaginative bankruptcy in trying to build their way out of a traffic crisis.' <http://tinyurl.com/y838j9>

A **super-depot** for highways service vehicles is proposed by Kent County Council on green ANOB land.

The **A3 tunnel** underneath the Devil's Punchbowl in Surrey is to go-ahead. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y3axyx>

London **Ashford** Airport, at Lydd is planning to expand to handle up to two million passengers a year by 2014. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/np6oh>. CPRE Kent reports that a planning application will be submitted in November to allow 737s to use the airport, although the runway extension will go through a SSSI.

Gatwick Airport will see 80m passengers a year by 2030 the interim master plan for the airport estimated, if a second runway was built. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y672uz>. **Gatwick** Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) said it would be asking BAA to withdraw its plan in the light of growing concern about climate change. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y27eh7>

Double-deck trains are being considered for busy rail routes (The Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/twayo>), including the Brighton to London line; BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y5qyfg>. **Crossrail** will not now have a station at Woolwich; Bexley Times: <http://tinyurl.com/tdcwa>. Network Rail has received planning permission and legal powers to double the capacity of **Thameslink** but government approval for funding is needed; BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/sefrc>; The Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/yeb9k9>

Railways to open and close? The DfT has announced new guidelines for closing rail lines. The decision for closure has been passed to the independent Office of Rail Regulation, which must be satisfied of the economic case, as well as ensuring that all alternatives are considered and passengers consulted. In associated documents, the DfT suggests that air transport could be a viable alternative to rail. DfT: <http://tinyurl.com/yc28w9>. But rail lines that closed 40 years ago could be reopened under plans by which developers pay for new tracks in return for planning permission to build thousands of homes. Developers have offered to cover the cost by paying a "roof tax" of £10,000 for each home built close to the reopened routes. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ylnbq>

Has Eddington missed the boat? The long awaited Eddington report on transport policy was briefly mentioned in the Kelly White Paper, but its contents largely remain a mystery. The Guardian suggested today that Gordon Brown was preparing to reject recommendations from the review if, as expected, it proposes wide scale road building and aviation growth: <http://tinyurl.com/yhpaed>. Publication is expected on 26 November.

Roadside signage. CPRE has issued guidance on roadside signage, based on work in Hampshire and with the RAC foundation: Circular: <http://tinyurl.com/macel>; Guidance: <http://tinyurl.com/pe62w>. West Sussex has put a 12-week limit on road side memorials to car crash victims. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/g7d65>

Footpath powers. New powers to prevent motor vehicles from using English footpaths and bridleways came into force. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lf7s8>

6. Water

Upper Thames Major Resource Development is Thames Water's name for the giant reservoir it is proposing near Abingdon, Oxfordshire. CPRE Oxfordshire is opposing the proposal. Oxfordshire County Council has taken the stance: "the need is not proven". <http://tinyurl.com/ynjbxq>

Water to become scarcer. Research suggests a significant increase in severe single season droughts in the UK and changes in the nature of multi-season droughts, such as the current drought in the South East, by the 2050s. Consecutive dry winters like 2004/5 and 2005/6 will be accompanied by much drier summers presenting a threat to water supplies. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/yexezh>. The Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/yekmlz>.

Water grid. Engineers questioned claims by the Environment Agency that a national water grid to transfer water from sparsely populated regions to the south east would be expensive to implement. The Institute of Civil Engineers said that the idea had been dismissed on the basis of a narrow "desk-top study". New Civil Engineer: <http://tinyurl.com/gtbmy>. A national water grid would damage the environment and be "phenomenally expensive", a Kent MP has said, backing Environment Minister Lord Rooker who said it was "immoral" to move water around the country. Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/y3l9ux>. "Bob Little" from CPRE Kent said that: "It just seems extraordinary that someone in government should come up with a message that contradicts so much of what other parts of government are saying." BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y4vmpd>.

7. Environment and Heritage

Wirescapes. CPRE Hampshire is concerned about an increased in telephone and electric poles in the proposed national park. John Cooper for CPRE Hampshire, said: "We are concerned about the possible outcome of the court case which puts in doubt the long-standing pole-sharing agreement between SE and BT. The awful prospect of two pole networks would impose further—and unnecessary—clutter on the countryside and have a detrimental effect on a lovely landscape." This is Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/r3a2l>

Wildspace, an SSSI claimed to be a new world class riverside conservation park has been opened in the heart of the Thames Gateway at Rainham Marshes. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/r5xbk>

Biodiversity for all. All public sector bodies, from the police to the BBC, must now consider biodiversity in the work they do. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/jqrgn>

Green bridges. Grass-covered bridges may be placed across motorways in Kent to link existing habitats, and land may be purchased, to allow species to travel to join larger groups. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yeyse6>

Defra cuts key budgets. The recent National Audit Office report into the single farm payments crisis suggested the cost of the debacle might be as high as £177.5 million. As a result, Defra is cutting budgets. Among those announced so far are: Natural England: £12.9 million cut (7% of budget); Environment Agency: £23.7 million (5%); British Waterways: £3.9 million (7%). Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/yey5l8>

'Every Action Counts'. Defra is encouraging community groups tackle climate change with action packs and resources. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/ykdwht>. 'Every Action Counts' website: <http://tinyurl.com/yctw24>

8. Rural Matters

Rural insights. The government's Rural Advocate has published his first annual report which is a welcome insight into the issues facing rural England at the beginning of the 21st century: <http://tinyurl.com/rubn4>. The Commissions for Rural Communities has published a survey of on the perceptions and priorities of rural people: <http://tinyurl.com/y4bs3y>.

Rural disadvantage. The Commission for Rural Communities has published a major analysis of the characteristics of rural disadvantage. Report: <http://tinyurl.com/zh9gi>

Rural development. The Regional Development Agencies are now responsible for delivery of the socio-economic elements of the EU Rural Development Programmes. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/rhxkv>

9. Energy and Climate Change

Wind farms. A bid by a farmer to block plans for a 26-turbine wind farm on Romney Marsh has failed. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y9t9tj>. CPRE Kent is "extremely disappointed with the decision". A project for six giant turbines at Wellow, Isle of Wight has been rejected by planners. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y8pupn>; 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ye99ye>.

Power stations. E.ON UK is proposing to replace the power station at Kingsnorth and cut CO2 by up to 1.8m tonnes a year. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/ndu6n>. A 1,200 MW combined heat and power CHP station has been approved for the Isle of Grain, in Kent. The heat will be used for local industry. GNN: <http://tinyurl.com/y56y4v>

Greenpeace invaded Didcot power station to protest against it burning coal and the government's energy policies. Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/yzzpqq>. CPRE Oxfordshire and local groups have been battling the power stations plans to dump waste fly ash in a wildlife site: <http://tinyurl.com/yztntc>.

10. Government in the South East

Goodbye to Regional Assemblies? The Tories pledged to scrap regional assemblies in England and devolve more powers to local communities. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/fcahp>. On Radio Oxford, Keith Mitchell said that he was content with the policy but will remain at the helm at SEERA until the policy is enacted.

Go SE. The latest issue of the Government Office for the South East's newsletter includes articles on London 2012, crime in the South East and climate change. <http://tinyurl.com/yloqg8>

The **South East England Development Agency** made appointments to its Board (<http://tinyurl.com/yjc3lo>) and presented its annual report: <http://tinyurl.com/yhd23c>.

The **South East England Regional Assembly** has published its submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review: <http://tinyurl.com/z8enw>; and the papers from the Regional Infrastructure Summit held in September: <http://tinyurl.com/gncmm>

11. Government Arrivals and Departures

Hello to Natural England: "a starved and toothless watchdog"? The new government watchdog for landscape and wildlife arrived this month (www.naturalengland.org.uk). CPRE has warned that there is a real risk it will be too poor and too weak to make a difference. CPRE's Tom Oliver said that the "savage cuts to its core funding mean that the organisation is seriously weakened even as it embarks on its crucial work": <http://tinyurl.com/jkesu>. In a letter to the Times, nineteen environmental groups, including CPRE, cautiously welcomed the new body: <http://tinyurl.com/z8ajo>

Goodbye to English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service, all now part of Natural England.

Hello to the Commission for Rural Communities. This body has been active for some while but has now been launched, complete with a new website: www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk.

Kelly's COP. "Community, Opportunity and Prosperity" are three themes at the heart of the Department of Communities and Local Government, according to its new and blue website: www.dclg.gov.uk

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Issued by [CPRE South East](#). Editor: Andy Boddington. The information in this Briefing is gathered from a wide range of sources and views expressed are not necessarily those of the CPRE South East Regional Group. CPRE South East, c/o CPRE, 128 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SW. ebulletin@cprese.org.uk. www.cprese.org.uk.
