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Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SOUTH EAST

CPRE South East eBulletin

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South East Plan: Examination in Public

CPRE will be represented at 41 of the 52 sessions of the Examination in Public, which began on Tuesday. Only the South East England Regional Assembly itself and the Government Office of the South East have been invited to more sessions. General timetable: <http://tinyurl.com/ynadk5>.

1. EiP Submissions

Transport. CPRE South East has made a submission to Matter 3, Transport: <http://tinyurl.com/ym6k3c>. It argues that the powers of the Regional Transport Board should be extended; that there is not enough emphasis on improving the character and safety of rural roads; and that a modal shift away from car transport is needed. Road pricing will further disadvantage car dependent rural communities and promote rat runs through the countryside. There needs to be a shift of freight from road to rail with road/rail exchanges only on brownfield sites. The expansion of Gatwick is neither economically nor environmentally justified.

Water. CPRE Kent has made a submission to Matter 1E, Water: <http://tinyurl.com/ym6k3c>. The structure of the water industry and its regulatory regime make it difficult to provide a unified region-wide water strategy. In a dry year scenario, the region may suffer a large deficit. Some of this can be met from water efficiency (including compulsory metering), leakage control and existing supply proposals. The rest will need to be addressed through reuse of treated effluent, with transfers between river basins, and by planning authorities insisting water efficiency in all new developments.

SSERA initial statements: <http://tinyurl.com/yldgka>. GOSE initial statements: <http://tinyurl.com/ye7tyk>.

2. EiP in the Media

CPRE South East has issued a press briefing on the EiP: <http://tinyurl.com/y24z78>. Edward Dawson, CPRE's South East Regional Director, said: "Many of the helpful policies in the draft Plan are undermined by other policies which place the highest emphasis on economic growth. The countryside, the wider environment and our quality of life risk being sidelined as a result."

CPRE Oxfordshire press release on the start of the EiP. "It's a marathon inquiry of mammoth importance to Oxfordshire's countryside": <http://tinyurl.com/v3fe9>. Brian Wood said there is cause for cautious optimism but "Let's be clear. The current draft of the South East Plan allows for more houses in Oxfordshire and the South East than most people concerned with the environment would like."

CPRE Kent press release on water. CPRE Kent insists "that the muddle of commercially motivated strategies from water companies will not solve [the South East's] problems": <http://tinyurl.com/vza3a>. It says that "CPRE has grave doubts about the hydrological and environmental viability of the water companies' planned reservoirs... the reservoirs will have a severe impact on the countryside and they will not adequately redress the growing imbalance in the South East between supply and demand."

"Battle for the South East." County leaders from West and East Sussex, Buckinghamshire, Kent, Hampshire, Surrey and Oxfordshire launched the "Battle for the South East". SEERA leader Keith Mitchell said "We will

not roll over and let the government take decisions that will destroy our environment":

<http://tinyurl.com/yg6cu7>. Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/yffmb8>. West Sussex: <http://tinyurl.com/yyraxy>.

"Fight for our fields." The contest that really matters is between the unelected regional assembly and the government that created, says reporter Reg Little in this morning's Oxford Times. He reports with his usual wry insights from the opening sessions in a full page feature on the EiP. "Various consultants and expert witnesses, all certainly earning fortunes over the coming weeks... took up much time—to borrow a phrase from Basil Fawlty—stating the 'bleeding obvious'." Little interviewed Keith Mitchell who said that Oxfordshire will be one of the most fiercely-contested fronts. Mitchell also threatened a silver bullet. "There would be a feeling in the regional assembly that a number of homes were to be imposed [by Ruth Kelly], a majority of Conservatives would want to go [from the Assembly]." CPRE Kent is quoted from yesterday's session expressing grave doubts about the hydrological and environmental viability of the planned reservoir [near Abingdon]. The article will be online later today: <http://tinyurl.com/wf56e>.

Paul Bevan, chief executive of the South East England Regional Assembly told the BBC "the hearing is an important milestone in getting that plan approved. We dare the government to change it—it's a well researched robust plan.": <http://tinyurl.com/ygrzcu>. On BBC Radio Oxford, Bevan told Bill Heine that the plan was based on a massive consultation and that housing was the most controversial part of the plan. CPRE Oxfordshire's Mike Tyce told Heine that the SE Plan had got the "balance between development and preservation of countryside pretty well right." Recording: <http://tinyurl.com/saus8>.

GOSE on Oxfordshire. The Oxford Times said GOSE's submissions meant that the government is preparing to reopen the debate on the future of Oxford's Green Belt and the number of homes to be built in the county: <http://tinyurl.com/ucoew>. Bruce Tremayne from CPRE Oxfordshire responded (<http://tinyurl.com/yyn8mh>) saying "We will be telling the inspectors [at the EiP] that development of the South East cannot be at expense of its quality of life and its beautiful, and often still tranquil, countryside."

Kent and Oxfordshire CPRE have written to local newspapers in their counties about water saying that "we are looking forward to the report from the public inquiry rejecting the muddled aims of the water companies in favour of a wiser, more realistic strategy for the region."

"Keep off the grass". A grumpy Mick Hume ranted against planners and CPRE in The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ylj3hb>. "It is official policy to keep the grubby masses penned into brown zones of southeast England, out of the green pristine bits... With planners and the Campaign to Protect Rural England telling the plebs to "keep off the grass", the future looks dull and brown."

More news as it appears in the CPRE South East Blog: <http://blog.cprese.org.uk/blog>

3. Blogs

SEERA Blog. The Assembly's officers are blogging about the EiP as it takes place. You can read the daily updates at: <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/publications/blog/>.

CPRE South East Blog. A blog is running for campaigners across the South East involved in the EiP and other campaigns. Bloggers can talk about experiences, report events and share ideas. If you are a CPRE campaigner, you are invited to join us at <http://blog.cprese.org.uk/blog>. You need a username to read and join in the discussion. Email Andy Boddington at blog@cprese.org.uk for details.

4. Other EiP Matters

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The RSPB is trying to stop housing from being built near the SPA, which lies in Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. It is backing plans to charge developers for houses built within three miles of protected land and said the heaths were vital for rare birds such as nightjars, woodlarks and the Dartford warbler. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/ygz5fh>. The assumptions about housing levels and wildlife in the TBHSPA were criticised by the Environmental Dimension Partnership. It says that there is no significant correlation between rare bird numbers and developed land around the SPA: <http://tinyurl.com/ybpoya>.

Other News

5. Planning

PPS3 Housing. Planning Policy Statement 3 was launched on Wednesday by Yvette Cooper to a quiet reception. The new planning guidance for housing is summarised in a special edition of the CPRE Oxfordshire Briefing, along with CPRE's reaction: <http://tinyurl.com/ylnou5>. The Times says today: "As planners switch tack from flats to family homes, let's hope they focus on brownfield sites first: <http://tinyurl.com/yx95k5>."

Brownfield. Proposals to improve the rate of reuse of brownfield land and to "unlock" difficult sites have been highlighted by the National Brownfield Team. In 2005, there were 25,500 sites and 53,291 hectares of brownfield land. Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/y9vrgk>. English Partnerships: <http://tinyurl.com/ykfan3>.

SE Plan to be undermined by DCLG? The executive committee of the South East England Regional Assembly has warned that the government's plans for a new housing and planning delivery grant could jeopardise the SE Plan. Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/yzo8l8>.

Planning gain. The Royal Town Planning Institute welcomed a House of Commons report into the Planning Gain Supplement. The report "highlights that the Treasury proposal has not been properly tested. Delivering sustainable infrastructure for communities is too important to get wrong." 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/y9wc2o>

Planning power. The DTI announced new rules for planning inquiries for large-scale electricity projects and overhead lines. Timeframes will be set for local authorities to object. Inquiries may hear summaries of evidence in concurrent sessions. Upgrades to some lines will not require consent. GNN: <http://tinyurl.com/ybwf2j>. The blight of "urban sprawl" is threatening Europe's environmental, social and economic balance. The European Environment Agency called for a European Union-wide policy to coordinate and control planning. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ym6wjo>

Flooding. More money is needed to bolster England's flood defences against rising sea levels, according to the Association of British Insurers, including in east London and Hastings. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yj6wrr>. Climate change and new development will increase the risk of flooding in the South East, according to the Environment Agency's State of the Environment report. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yaz9es>

Thames Gateway. Ruth Kelly promised to "root out" poorly designed housing schemes and allow an extra 40,000 homes (160,000 in total), over a third of which should be "affordable housing". The regeneration project will be "zero carbon". The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/yfntem>; Kelly's speech: <http://tinyurl.com/y1btqg>.

Culture is the key to creating a truly new and vibrant community Lord Chris Smith said, as he proposed "ten ideas that use culture to build communities in the Gateway". The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/wz4tl>.

New things happen is the title of a Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment report, which sets out a vision for the Gateway. Four themes will help create a coherent image for the region: redefining work; reconnecting with nature; reasserting individualism; and reinventing identity. <http://tinyurl.com/ykq6xj>.

East End Amsterdam: visionaries behind the London Gateway's 'Water City' scheme have presented their action plan to create an 'East End Amsterdam' in the Lower Lea Valley. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/yzbvwb>.

The **RSPB** is calling for a "greening" of the Gateway. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/wb6gf>. **Wildlife Trusts** have called for more funds to 'green infrastructure' in the Gateway. Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/y8uhks>.

Falmer stadium. Bullish football websites are predicting that the stadium in the green belt at Falmer, Brighton will be built: <http://tinyurl.com/y9dv8a>; <http://tinyurl.com/us4zo>. Lewes District Council was accused of delaying tactics in the Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/y2jln8>. The Council said that alternatives should have been considered: Seaford Today: <http://tinyurl.com/yjztne>. Now Ruth Kelly has asked for information on how the sites were assessed at the public inquiry, citing "deficiencies" in the evidence. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/uoq4k>.

Milton Keynes Partnership has launched a new website: www.miltonkeynespartnership.info.

London powers. The Bill to give stronger planning powers to the Greater London Authority has been published. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/yd4m8o>.

6. Housing

High density city homes to save countryside? CPRE published a report calling on the government to take a new approach to high-density urban housing to save thousands of acres of rural land being concreted over. It says that mistakes from the past, like tower blocks, have blighted public opinion against high-density housing. CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/ydd9r9>. Daelnet: <http://tinyurl.com/unldh>

Record house building. Housing starts in the South East have now reached 31,033 a year: 2,133 above the SE plan target of 28,900. Social and local affordable housing has grown to 15% of housing starts. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/y6h7oh>. Ministers' forecasts that 1.5 million homes will need to be built to house the influx of immigrants are expected to rise to 2 million. The Sunday Telegraph said these numbers will be used by officials to lay down bigger targets for house building in towns, cities and the countryside. <http://tinyurl.com/yyvhwu>.

Call for more homes. Yvette Cooper said that 200,000 homes a year need to be built in order to tackle "long-term affordability problems" from a growing population and increasing demand for housing. Currently, 165,000 homes are built each year compared with 130,000 in 2001. More younger people are having to rent rather than buy in the South East; 34% have a mortgage compared to 40% five years ago; 60% of renters aspire to buy a home. 14,000 people a year are releasing equity from their homes in order to buy another property, either for themselves or family members. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ymjxp5>. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/ye3z5v>.

Second homes. Around 800,000 British householders, 3% of the population, now own a second home abroad: up by 250,000 in two years. The Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/y4gq2n>. Overseas homes have doubled from 115,000 in 1996–97 to 235,000 in 2005–06. English households also own about 260,000 second homes within England and 34,000 second homes in Scotland or Wales. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/ye3z5v>.

Affordable Housing. The National Housing Federation and others are calling for 80,000 affordable homes a year to be built to solve homelessness. The Government should invest £11.6 billion to deliver 210,000 affordable new homes over three years. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yxk5b3>. NHF: <http://tinyurl.com/y58bfx>. Almost one in four of all homes built to house key workers are standing empty. In London that figure rises to almost 40 per cent, Yvette Cooper admitted. Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/ykd22a>. CPRE Kent joined a debate in Tunbridge Wells to look at how organisations can work together to provide more affordable homes in rural communities. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/t2eed>. A **National Housing and Planning Advice Unit** has been established by DCLG to provide advice on improving housing market affordability. <http://tinyurl.com/yjy76e>.

Housing criticised. Dr Tim Williams, who chairs a Housing Corporation commission on affordable housing, design and quality in the Thames Gateway, criticised the quality of housing and accused the house building industry of failing to deliver the right type of housing. Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/y6pm99>.

Temporary enforcement measures against breaches of planning control have proved a popular enforcement tool for local planning authorities, says DCLG. Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/ymexml>.

Planning reform? Planners are conjecturing about a major overhaul of the planning system next year. Planning Portal says: "The reform will take on board recommendations from the Barker, Eddington and energy policy reviews and there is speculation this may include details of a new body which will take on responsibility for the planning of major infrastructure projects. <http://tinyurl.com/yy86ox>.

Kate Barker's review of Britain's planning system will liberate local authorities to spend less time on approving plans for loft conversions and more effort on boosting the local economy, according to the Observer. Barker will recommend that instead of considering whether a project is financially worthwhile, planners should let the market decide economic viability, and focus on deciding whether there are other reasons—such as environmental sustainability—for rejection. Barker is expected to steer clear of tearing up the whole system, and concentrate instead on freeing planners to make the right decisions. <http://tinyurl.com/y95t9j>.

Milton Keynes is to have the country's "first flexible homes", which can be easily adapted to the changing needs of families. English Partnerships. <http://tinyurl.com/yjx2vj>.

London. Ken Livingstone has launched a major consultation on the future of housing in London. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pnks>. Mayor Watch: <http://tinyurl.com/y2lq7f>.

7. Transport

Eddington report. Double-decker trains and more use of existing rail networks will be proposed today by the former British Airways chief. He will warn that the system is reaching near-saturation point and long-term targeted improvements are needed to avoid damage to the economy. Eddington is expected to avoid endorsing a new high-speed rail link from the Channel to the North of England and the introduction of magnetic levitation trains. He will put greater emphasis on improving existing networks by identifying and tackling bottlenecks on the railways. He supports the existing plans for expansion of airports but will say that aviation should be included in the EU carbon trading scheme. The Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/y9cdmf>. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/yyvp59>. Reuters quotes Eddington as saying: "A national road pricing scheme of this type could reduce congestion by some 50 percent below what it otherwise would be in 2025 and reduce the economic case for additional strategic road infrastructure by some 80 percent." <http://tinyurl.com/v6pse>. The Times says that "Bigger trains, longer platforms, extra lanes on motorways and massive improvements to motorway junctions will be proposed today." <http://tinyurl.com/y4ot68>.

High speed rail is the missing link needed to reduce unsustainable air travel, the Town and Country Planning Association said. It also outlined a new 'geography of airports', making the case for increased long haul capacity at regional airports. 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ybm77x>. TCPA: <http://tinyurl.com/yaqyaw>

Air. A planning application by BAA to expand flights at **Stansted Airport** has been rejected by Uttlesford District Council. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/sbx4t>. Guardian leading article: <http://tinyurl.com/uxkly>. **British Airways** has warned that businesses will quit Britain if the battle against global warming dictates aviation policy and a third runway at Heathrow airport is delayed. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/y3kghf>. **Air travel growth** is out-stripping forecasts and could lead to a "nightmare" expansion at Britain's biggest airports and the acceleration of global warming, said a report to local authorities. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/vezvc>. **Southampton Airport** is hoping that passenger numbers will quadruple in 25 years. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yj43un>. **Budget airlines** are mostly used by richer people taking more foreign holidays. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/yaa3db>.

Buses. The Coastal Expressway designed to tackle congestion on the main A27 trunk road along the south coast failed to get funding under the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF). BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y5qew2>.

Roads. The Local Government Association said that **road charging** is a potential solution to the congestion in towns and cities: <http://tinyurl.com/y5j2sh>. **Reading** has received a grant to look at road pricing schemes. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yb2rqd>. "**White van men** will be stuck at 56mph next year when a new move to install compulsory speed limiters on large commercial vehicles comes into force." Reuters: <http://tinyurl.com/y2gp4o>. The government is consulting on **service areas** and roadside facilities on motorways and trunk roads. GOSE: <http://tinyurl.com/y397qq>. Work on a £66m scheme to widen the **M25** near Dartford will start next summer. The Highways Agency is asking for comments on the environmental impact. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/y4bvxp>.

Kent CPRE will publish a report on congestion at the Dartford crossing next week, arguing that the crossing needs a high-speed drive-through toll system.

Statistics. The DfT has published the regional transport statistics for 2006: <http://tinyurl.com/yjh3q6>.

8. Water

Upper Thames Reservoir "case not proven." Oxfordshire County Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Environment Agency have all said that the case for a reservoir near Abingdon is "not proven" and voiced scepticism about whether a facility of this size and location is needed. Andy Boddington for CPRE Oxfordshire said "Thames Water hoped to fool the people of Oxfordshire into believing that this reservoir is essential. Councils and the Environment Agency are now telling the company that they have seen through the propaganda." Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ycn42u>. Thames Water's profits have fallen by almost a quarter and it blames the costs of the repair and replacement of leaking pipes. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ybjpgw>.

Ofwat has announced that the 2009 price review will set prices for five years, rather than ten as at present: <http://tinyurl.com/yaydwn>. Water companies will be prevented from distributing cash to owners or shareholders if their ratings fall below investment grade: <http://tinyurl.com/yana4w>. Water companies must ensure that they have sufficient supplies to meet next summer's demands: <http://tinyurl.com/yxtr2d>.

Water use. The government will consult on compulsory water metering next year but will not propose a national scheme. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/y9kmjy> The Consumer Council for Water welcomed the move: <http://tinyurl.com/t7nsh>, as did Water UK: <http://tinyurl.com/y7vtv7>. Compulsory water metering is to begin in Lydd, Kent. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/smm5r>. Thames Water is experimenting with water saving devices in Bromley and Swindon: <http://tinyurl.com/yktgdy>. Britain is using too much water, more than the Germans, Belgians and Dutch, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown warned. The Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/yexp2u>.

The Treasury has published an analysis of the long-term challenges to the UK economy and environment. Climate change and water use figure prominently. *Long-term challenges and opportunities for the UK: analysis for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review*: <http://tinyurl.com/ygybjo>

Britain's water systems are in crisis and the government has a decade to put things right, said a coalition of conservation and angling groups. It set out a 10-point plan to make UK water systems sustainable, including fair pricing, slashing waste and upgrading sewerage facilities. People should have personal allowances and homes should be metered. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/uwr2d>. WWF: <http://tinyurl.com/ymvxzw>.

Agricultural pollution. Removing harmful pesticides and nitrates from drinking water costs £7 a year a customer. Thirty-nine "Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers" are working to change farm practices to reduce water pollution. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/yey27n>.

9. Environment and Heritage

European Landscape Convention. Natural England and CPRE have welcomed the government's ratification of the Convention: <http://tinyurl.com/yzyxxk>; <http://tinyurl.com/yj76ta>.

Biodiversity in the city. A report by think tank Policy Exchange argues that biodiversity is greatest in cities. "Animals and plants appear to be conquering the cities simply because the over-fertilised soil of the country is becoming an ever-more inhospitable place for them." It is calling for a moratorium on developing inner-city green space, even when it is classified as brownfield, as gardens are. Sunday Times: <http://tinyurl.com/tlkgg>. "Living for the City: a new agenda for green cities": <http://tinyurl.com/ymmqp8>.

Minerals. CPRE has slammed the government's new policy statement on Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals (MPS1), saying "is not up to the job of conserving minerals – or of conserving the countryside within environmental limits": <http://tinyurl.com/yfqskm>. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/ynzkxz>.

SSSI improvement. Defra has issued a report on progress that has been made in conserving England's biodiversity. 73.4% of England's Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England are in favourable or recovering condition, compared to 56.9% in 2003. 22% of habitats and 11% of priority species were increasing but 38% of habitats and 27% of priority species are declining. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/ym5uxm>.

Higher Level Stewardship could be one of the main victims of the Rural Development funding crisis, farming advisor Sir Don Curry has warned. Farmers Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/y4h8se>.

NHS finds space. Natural Environment has launched a campaign to brand open spaces as a "Natural Health Service that gets, and keeps, more people healthy": <http://tinyurl.com/ye4j37>.

English rainforest. West Thurrock Marshes, Essex, in the Thames Gateway, is known as the English rainforest because of its biodiversity. Despite protests from Thurrock Council and Buglife, the site looks set to become a post office depot. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/y4lvz5>.

Kent wetland haven protest. Doug Hilton is crossing the Channel in an amphibious car in protest against Environment Agency rules stopping a wildfowl haven from being improved. BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/ymav3d>.

Waste. The Government should tax disposable and hard-to-recycle products to encourage manufacturers to produce less waste said the Institute for Public Policy Research. IPPR: <http://tinyurl.com/y3zgs6>. Municipal waste last year fell by 3%. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/yg8h5p>. Environment Agency: <http://tinyurl.com/wegax>.

Tranquillity. Buckinghamshire CPRE is proposing a tranquillity index based on CPRE's national study of so that extra planning effort can be put into preserving serenity. Sean Davies said "Everyone is affected by [tranquillity] so hopefully the face of the future developments will be changed." Bucks Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/yh5qym>.

X-List. "Help X-pose the wrecks" was the headline featuring CPRE Oxfordshire's list of ten buildings that must be demolished. Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/w6an9>. CPRE Oxfordshire: <http://tinyurl.com/y944yt>.

10. Energy and Climate Change

The **Climate Change Bill** was announced in the Queen's Speech. It will be an enabling bill which will "balance the environment and energy needs". The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/yhg6yv>

Biofuels. A House of Lords Committee called for long term tax incentives to promote biofuel use. Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/yafvc3>. It urges the government to "bring into use more EU land, including set aside, while respecting biodiversity policies." Report: <http://tinyurl.com/yd9vzx>. There has been a fivefold increase in sales of biofuels in the UK between 2004 and 2005. Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/y4dkgz>.

Nuclear promise. A new generation of nuclear power stations will be built, Tony Blair told MPs after the Queen's Speech. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/yx9sy>

Distributed Energy. Alistair Darling said a shift away from large centralised power production to "locally grown" energy could help cut carbon emissions and improve efficiency. "Making it easier for people to sell surplus electricity back to the Grid and... the potential of new combined heat and power domestic boilers must be considered. We want to understand the barriers to generating energy locally in large buildings like hospitals, hotels and universities." GNN: <http://tinyurl.com/y583kb>; DTI call for evidence: <http://tinyurl.com/t92lj>. **Wind turbines** have become the must have fashion accessory for your house this Christmas, but they are more trendy than useful for saving energy. Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/ybjfdl>.

Energy saving. Only 20% of people are making significant attempts to improve energy efficiency in the home, and most are high-earners, according to the Energy Saving Trust. <http://tinyurl.com/y9ofvo>. Millions of tonnes of carbon and billions of pounds from fuel bills could be saved by cavity wall insulation, according to the Review of the Sustainability of Existing Buildings. DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/ylxsm8>. The DTI has launched a consultation on ways to reduce energy use in the home, including smart metering: <http://tinyurl.com/y9ab27>.

CO2. The London Convention on burial of material under the sea now allows CO2 to be buried under the oceans. By 2025 this could cut British CO2 emissions by a quarter, far faster than any other option. New Scientist: <http://tinyurl.com/yvvl6c>. The first coal-fired power station purpose-built to capture carbon emissions for storage under the North Sea is to be built on Teesside. The plant will use two million tonnes of coal each year and extract five million tonnes of CO2. The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ygyobr>. Defra has published estimates of CO2 emissions for all 2004 local authorities and regions: <http://tinyurl.com/yec5mz>. The European commission has accepted the UK offer of a 13% cut in CO2 emissions from industry in the next five years but told nine other EU countries to make bigger cutbacks. The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/twnz2>

11. Other News

DTI changes. Lord Sainsbury departed and Malcolm Wicks moved from energy to become science minister. Secretary of State Alistair Darling took over the energy brief. DTI: <http://tinyurl.com/y9sjpu>.

CPRE Kent is seeking a Deputy Director: <http://tinyurl.com/ym58hj>.

12. Abbreviations and Links

DCLG: [Department of Communities and Local Government](#). EiP: [Examination in Public](#). GOSE: [Government Office of the South East](#). SEEDA: [South East England Development Agency](#). SEERA: [South East England Regional Assembly](#). SPA: [Special Protection Area](#). TBHSPA: [Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area](#).

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