



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
SOUTH EAST

## CPRE South East eBulletin

22 August 2007

---

### 1. The South East Plan

**South East Plan report further delayed.** The Inspectors' report on the Examination in Public (EiP) into the South East Plan was due to be published early in August. The report is now with ministers and publication has been delayed until at least 29 August.

**Oxfordshire** is to be recognised as the South East's homebuilding power house with 56,640 homes being built in the next two decades—20% more than first thought, according to the Oxford Mail today which claims to be aware of the EiP Inspectors' conclusions. Housing levels across the South East will be increased by 10% above those in the draft South East Plan if the report is accurate. A review of Oxford's green belt is also expected. Andy Boddington for CPRE Oxfordshire told the newspaper that "Oxfordshire needs more housing, especially affordable housing, but it doesn't need a sprawling conurbation from Begbroke north of Oxford to Abingdon to the south. It seems the green fields of Oxfordshire have become a soft target." SEERA leader Keith Mitchell said "I'm opposed to building on Green Belt land whatever the final numbers and we need to bear in mind the growing debate about building on the flood plain." (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/2m9sz7>; CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/3659vw>).

**Regional assemblies** are plotting to use the time before they are abolished to obstruct reforms to increase house building announced in the housing green paper. Keith Mitchell said "I think we're in murky waters. To get the south east [plan] up to its current stage took four or five years. Presumably a mini-review should have the same degree of consultation and go through another examination in public. If the government is trying to shortcut the statutory framework, I think that might be challenged." (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/2oe8j3>).

**£89bn needed for infrastructure.** SEERA says that the South East's growth plans for the next 20 years will need at least £89bn investment in transport, schools, hospitals and flood defences. At least £42bn is needed for flood defences, water resources, maintaining water quality, waste treatment and countryside protection (SEEDA: <http://tinyurl.com/2p3xw8>).

### 2. Green fields under attack

**Falmer.** The government gave approval for the football stadium in the Sussex Downs. Richard Allden for CPRE said: "The decision... is a sad blow to everyone who loves the Sussex Downs. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are meant to be given the highest level of protection in planning law so it's disgraceful that this development had been given permission." (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/ywlc7>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/yp4cdf>; Decision letter: <http://tinyurl.com/yv9hrh>).

**Glyndebourne wind turbine.** Permission was given for a wind turbine at Glyndebourne in the Sussex Downs AONB in June (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/2gjkyw>). But now the application has now been called in by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears. Peter Brandon, for Sussex CPRE said: "I am absolutely delighted it was felt this required further investigation. It is a great controversy which needs a thorough airing and people's views need to be carefully considered before the step is finally taken one way or the other" (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/2r4z6t>).

**South Downs National Park.** The consultation period on the South Downs National Park has been extended until 24th September after complaints from the South Downs Campaign (<http://tinyurl.com/3yrcgr>). CPRE Hampshire is campaigning against the proposed boundary, which it describes as "nonsense" (CPRE Hants: <http://tinyurl.com/3bqhw1>). East Sussex county council welcomed the exclusion of Lewes from the National Park (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2oxkqe>). More than 1,500 people have signed an online petition about the proposed boundaries: "We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to include the western Weald in the South Downs National Park" (No 10: <http://tinyurl.com/39qth2>).

**Green belt attacked.** A report by the Social Market Foundation suggested that two million homes will need to be built on undeveloped countryside or green belt around cities and towns. Andy Boddington for CPRE Oxfordshire told BBC1 Ten O'clock News that the green belt had kept Oxford a compact and attractive city. CPRE said that the report is simplistic and provides an incomplete snapshot 'that misrepresents the dynamic nature of real world of planning and development (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/398hvv>). Shaun Spiers, Chief Executive of CPRE said "Think tanks clearly hunt in packs... the SMF's simplistic, back-of-the-envelope calculation of the amount of brownfield land available ignores the dynamic nature of the real world of planning and development" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2q633e>).

### 3. Planning and Housing

**Kent.** The Public Inquiry into a proposed factory at Ightham Sandpit collapsed after a successful judicial review process by local action group, Keep Borough Green. The applicants have withdrawn their planning application, which would have paid for a bypass (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/2jhf7>).

**Planning changes.** For a full briefing on recent proposals to scrap the Regional Assembly, the Planning White Paper and the Housing Green Paper see the special edition of this Briefing issued earlier this month ([cprese.org.uk/news/ebulletin](http://cprese.org.uk/news/ebulletin)). The British Chamber of Commerce is running a campaign to get the proposals in the Planning White Paper adopted (<http://tinyurl.com/35wrjg>). In response, the Local Government Association said that it is "important that an independent planning commission's scope is limited to projects of genuine national significance. The rest should be left to local councils and people" (<http://tinyurl.com/34tbwn>). SEERA's Planning Committee said that decisions on major national infrastructure should involve elected local, regional and central government, and should not be imposed by an undemocratic planning commission (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/2q2zgm>).

**Timidity.** "We need more daring feats of engineering... A terrible timidity has entered our bones. The swaggering confidence that saw Victorian engineers transform these islands has been replaced by a pinched, bean-counting mentality that shies away from grand design" (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/2uuqdh>).

**Planning appeals.** CLG is consulting on proposals to enable most types of planning appeals to be determined by Inspectors rather than the Secretary of State. Deadline 5 November (<http://tinyurl.com/36uhr3>).

**Immigration and housing.** Four in ten homes built over the past ten years have been needed because of immigration. Nearly 600,000 properties have had to be constructed "because of the new arrivals" since 1997. Based on current levels of immigration, 1.2 million—or 40%—of the 3 million homes proposed in the housing Green Paper will be needed to house immigrants (Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/ywg36c>).

**Energy efficient housing.** CLG, councils and housebuilders have agreed that by 2016, all new homes will be built to zero carbon standards and that over the interim period, new homes will be built to increasingly higher environmental standards (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/yuz9ln>). CLG has appointed consultants to draw up new planning rules to allow permitted development rights for businesses to install small-scale renewable and low carbon technology equipment (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/29hr1q>). But it is to abolish the so-called "Merton rule", under pressure from housebuilders who do not want to bear the cost of adding things like solar panels. The Merton rule is named after the London borough that established it in 2003. It requires any new building to reduce its carbon emissions by 10% through the use of renewables (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2pdq3h>).

**Housing.** The proportion of housing on previously developed land is falling, down from 77% to 74% between 2005 and 2006. It is down 1% in the South East. The density of development continues to increase, up from 40 to 41 dwellings per hectare; 35 to 37 in the South East (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/2z3qnu>). Flats now account for 45% of dwellings, in comparison with less than 20% in 2000 (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ysnaog>). The head of

the new National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) has called for PPS3 and the planning White Paper to be given a chance. "Historically, if there is a will, there is an ability to drive up the [housing] numbers significantly. It's a matter of ensuring a coalition of the willing." (Building: <http://tinyurl.com/2kn5e6>). Since 2000-01, new build starts and completions have increased in England (19% and 26% respectively). In the South East starts are up 38% and completions are up 26% (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/2pagyx>).

**Polytunnels.** The government has published guidance on polytunnels following the campaign at Tuesley Farm, Surrey. CLG is dismissive of the importance of the case and says that it not mean that all polytunnels need planning permission; it will depend on size and permanence. Permitted development rights are restricted to less than 465 square metres. If there are no objections to polytunnels and no loss to amenity, the local authority need not take enforcement action (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/ynjl33>).

#### 4. Transport

**Litter.** The Highways Agency has teamed up with CPRE to ask drivers not to use the road side as a dustbin and to bag and bin their rubbish instead. Litters fouls the environment, puts workers at risk as they clear it up and cost money to deal with (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/3bof89>).

**Why do we keep building more roads?** Because when it comes to planning, the deck is cynically stacked in favour of the road builders—and against the environment. Tax revenues from increased traffic, proposed time saving and costs of reduced accidents all contribute to the formula to determine if a road is worth building. The low economic value assigned to the landscape by the Eddington report counts against countryside protection. CPRE's report last year showed that these assessments underestimated the scale of traffic growth and the impact on the landscape. They had also made little allowance for the way new roads increase development pressure, often leading to a rash of buildings along their length (Economist: <http://tinyurl.com/24x28m>).

**Heathrow.** The claim of a potential £7.8bn benefit to the economy, used by the Department of Transport to justify the growth of the airport, was described by consultancy Colin Buchanan as "overestimated", while the financial benefits to the UK were found to be questionable. For example, the White Paper priced passenger time at £62 an hour during work time, and £31 out of work time—2.8 and 7.4 times higher than those used for rail and road schemes. Expanding Heathrow might actually have a negative impact on British tourism, as UK tourists spend more money abroad than foreign tourists do in the UK. (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/3c3mjr>). The injunction sought, and not granted, at the Climate Change Camp at Heathrow, was served under the 1997 Protection from Harassment Act. This type of gagging measure was first used against environmentalists at Radley Lakes in Oxfordshire, where it is still in force (CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/3a5d8f>).

**Thames Gateway.** An inspector recommended the rejection of the Thames Gateway Bridge but Government has decided to re-open the inquiry (FoE: <http://tinyurl.com/34x48j>).

**Bexhill-Hastings link road.** The environment agency has put in an official objection to the plans for the proposed Bexhill-Hastings link road, describing the flood risk assessment as "inadequate" and the ecological impact as "unacceptable" (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/334mpt>; Hastings Alliance: <http://tinyurl.com/32n3bc>).

**Weymouth protest bypassed.** CPRE and Transport 2000 lost their legal challenge to stop the controversial Weymouth bypass through an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/386dg8>). Campaign groups have vowed the fight will go on at the public inquiry into compulsory purchase orders on the site (Dorset Echo: <http://tinyurl.com/2eytlj>; Bypass the Bypass: <http://tinyurl.com/3a5omm>).

**Roads and health.** The Transport for Quality of Life consultancy wants to interview people on how traffic noise in a rural area has affected how they live their lives, including that from motorways like the M40. Perhaps noise has changed where you go to walk, or how you use your house or garden. Contact Ian Taylor, Transport for Quality of Life, [ian@transportforqualityoflife.com](mailto:ian@transportforqualityoflife.com). A North Wales campaign group is calling on the Prime Minister to make a Health Impact Assessment an explicit requirement for all road proposals (No 10: <http://tinyurl.com/369lye>).

## 5. Water

**Upper Thames Reservoir.** Thames Water says that building the reservoir in the floodplain of the River Ock will not have an effect on flooding (Thames Water: <http://tinyurl.com/23essb>).

**Desalination.** Ken Livingstone has submitted an appeal to the High Court challenging the Government's green light for Thames Water's proposed desalination plant in East London (eGov: <http://tinyurl.com/368kyg>).

**Floods: EA should take control.** The Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management is calling on the Environment Agency to be given responsibility for all drainage planning and flood prevention. "Let us allow the Environment Agency to have a much stronger voice on all proposals on urban development and housing, including building on land at risk of flooding and on the planning and management of the urban drainage infrastructure. Had the Environment Agency had this oversight function from the start, it is possible that the very worst of the floods could have been prevented." But the EA is nervous of the proposal thinking it too big to handle (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/yttcxv>; CIWEM: <http://tinyurl.com/2f7qpr>).

**River basins.** The Environment Agency has launched a consultation on the best ways to tackle water management issues, such as diffuse pollution and river flows and abstraction, in an effort to further protect and improve rivers, lakes and groundwater. Each of the ten River Basin Districts across England and Wales, including the Thames, will have a management plan covering the land and associated rivers, lakes, groundwater estuaries and coastal waters within the basin. Deadline 24 January 2008 (EA: <http://tinyurl.com/2kj8ra>).

**Water leakage.** Water companies are wasting 3.42 billion litres of water every day through leaking pipes—the equivalent of two full baths for every household in the country (Daily Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/yv67g9>; Ofwat: <http://tinyurl.com/3c89mx>).

**Water quality.** Nitrate Vulnerable Zones could be extended to cover 70% of England if government proposals on water quality are adopted. The proposals are included within one of three DEFRA consultations on water quality (Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/2jzft3>).

**Waterways.** The Environment Agency is conducting a large scale survey of the users of British waterways, including the Thames. The Agency hopes that ramblers and anglers, as well as boat owners, will get involved. Deadline 7 September 2007 (EA: <http://tinyurl.com/2j6mar>).

## 6. Energy

**Renewable "no-hope".** Britain has no hope of getting remotely near the new European Union renewable energy target of 20% energy from renewables by 2020. The best the UK could hope for is 9% of energy from renewable sources such as wind, solar or hydro. The current level is about 2%. A Dber paper suggests a number of ways ministers could wriggle out of specific commitments (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2bmuod>; <http://tinyurl.com/3ax6s7>). In response, Downing St said its climate change targets are "ambitious" but it remains fully committed to renewable energy (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/35q8sx>). Greenpeace reacted angrily to the revelations (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/yqhoe4>).

**Nuclear.** No nuclear power plants are likely to be built in Britain before 2020, which will be too late to fill the country's looming power generation gap according to a report (Reuters: <http://tinyurl.com/2unksf>). "It isn't inconceivable that the government might reverse its [pro-nuclear] view and therefore we would need to come up with some proposals... about what the alternative strategies might be if nuclear should be rejected," the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform said (Planet Ark: <http://tinyurl.com/3apue4>). The private sector would foot the entire bill for the decommissioning and waste disposal costs of any new nuclear power station, Malcolm Wicks, energy minister, said (FT: <http://tinyurl.com/35booj>).

## 7. Regional Government

**County Leaders.** West Sussex County Council Leader Henry Smith has replaced Keith Mitchell as Chairman of the South East County Leaders (eGov: <http://tinyurl.com/23n8mw>).

## 8. Campaign to Protect Rural England

**Sussex.** MP Nick Herbert has spoken of the importance of protecting the South Downs and local farming in West Sussex. The MP was speaking at the Annual General Meeting of the Sussex Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) at Plumpton College. The Arundel and South Downs MP spoke about supporting local produce and increasing the supply of housing but still protecting the countryside in West Sussex (Mid Sussex Today: <http://tinyurl.com/3exhh7>).

**"CPRE: the Video"**. CPRE has published a film the Council for the Preservation of Rural England distributed to cinemas in 1938. It is a heartening rally call for the protection of the countryside. It is well worth watching not just for the nostalgia but for the message that has endured for so long. The message? "The defence of the right for the beauty of our land". It is a message that is as contemporary today as seventy years ago (Google: <http://tinyurl.com/2okvz>. Click on the stars above the video to rate it. The higher the rating the more people that will be drawn to it.)

## 9. Abbreviations and Links

CLG: [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](#).

---

CPRE South East eBulletin is a free service. [Subscribe](#). You can unsubscribe at any time.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward](#) | [Change Details](#) | [PDF Version](#) | CPRE also publishes a national **Campaigns Update**: [more information](#)

Issued by [CPRE South East](#). Editor: Andy Boddington. The information in this eBulletin 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](mailto:ebulletin@cprese.org.uk). [www.cprese.org.uk](http://www.cprese.org.uk).

---