

CPRE SE eBulletin: 28 July 2008

The South East Plan 2006–2026

1. Objectives

The latest population projections indicate that the South East may grow by an unprecedented 64,300 per year to a total of 9.5 million by 2026. This population is ageing, households are decreasing in size and affordability is worsening. The government's revised Plan promises economic growth with Gross Value Added (GVA) increasing by 3% over the period 2006-16, with economic and social disparities within the region reduced. There will be a closer alignment between jobs and homes and "a sufficient level of housing will be delivered" including "a substantial increase in the supply of affordable housing". "Adequate infrastructure will be provided in a way that keeps pace with development". This development will be of a high quality and an asset to the region.

The Plan supports the five principles identified in the Living Places report (<http://bit.ly/1TNh1P>): good governance; achieving design excellence; promoting economic strength; environmental responsibility; and social well-being and inclusion (Policy BE1).

2. RSS Principles

The South East Plan is based on six spatial planning principles:

1. Nine identified sub-regions (Policy SP1).
2. New development focused on regional hubs, including eight Strategic Development Areas (Policy SP2; Whitehill/Bordon, Hampshire and Shoreham, West Sussex are new SDAs).
3. A strategy of urban focus and urban renaissance (Policy SP3).
4. Spreading opportunities to the region's lagging areas (Policy SP4).
5. Protection of the region's identified Green Belts (Policy SP5).
6. Supporting the vitality and character of the region's rural areas, whilst protecting the valuable natural assets of the region (Policies set out in Box SP3).

3. Economy

The Plan contains two new economic policies:

- ◆ *RE1: Contributing to the UK's Long Term Competitiveness.* In line with government policy Local Development Frameworks will provide an enabling context to ensure that the regional economy contributes to the UK's long term competitiveness, especially by facilitate a flexible supply of employment land.
- ◆ *RE5: Smart growth.* Smart economic growth will be encouraged to increase the region's prosperity while reducing the rate of increase of its ecological footprint.

The Plan retains its focus on supporting nationally and regionally important sectors and clusters (Policy RE2). The government describes Plan's job forecasts as inconsistent and lacking robustness. It provides only "interim job numbers" (479,650 by 2026) with firmer numbers to be resolved in the RSS Review. The policy seeks to reduce economic and health inequalities across the region (Policy SP4). Local authorities must address the extensive regeneration needs of East Kent and Ashford; Kent Thames Gateway; South Hampshire; Sussex Coast; and the Isle of Wight.

4. Subregions (Policy SP1)

Subregions are given stronger emphasis with a new policy (SP1). There has been major reworking of the subregional policies, for clarity, consistency, to avoid duplication and to ensure that the government's development priorities are met. The EiP proposal for the Isle of Wight to be a subregion is rejected.

Subregion	Policy focus
South Hampshire	Growth and Regeneration
Sussex Coast	Regeneration
East Kent and Ashford	Regeneration (East Kent); Growth Area (Ashford)
Kent Thames Gateway	Growth and Regeneration
London Fringe	Growth
Western Corridor & Blackwater Valley	Growth and Regeneration
Central Oxfordshire	Growth and Regeneration
Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Vale	Growth Area
Gatwick	Growth and Regeneration

5. Regional Hubs and Strategic Development Areas (Policy SP2)

Twenty-two “living centres” with high density mixed land use around public transport hubs are proposed. Eight SDAs are identified (South East Milton Keynes; South West Milton Keynes; East of the M1 Motorway, Milton Keynes; Fareham, Hampshire; North of Hedge End, Hampshire; Whitehill/Bordon, Hampshire; South of Oxford; Shoreham, West Sussex). The government promises the forthcoming RSS Review will identify further opportunities for Strategic Development Areas in the ‘Golden Arc’.

6. Countryside and Landscape Management

Extensive changes have made to the supporting text. The government’s Plan claims that development can proceed without damage to the countryside. “Demand for new development in the region brings with it both risks to precious environments and opportunities to plan for growth in a way that protects and cherishes the countryside and unique landscapes that make up much of the region.” The Plan adopts the EiP recommendations that small-scale proposals should be allowed in the New Forest National Park and AONBs.

Policy C4 now says that “planning authorities and other agencies in their plans and programmes should recognise, and aim to protect and enhance, the diversity and local distinctiveness of the region’s landscape, informed by landscape character assessment”. Around London and other high growth areas, long-term goals for landscape conservation and renewal, and habitat improvement should be set. Better use can be made of the urban rural fringe, including for urban extensions, where early consideration must be given to landscape and biodiversity enhancement, woodland management, recreation provision and access routes (Policy C5).

A new policy has been added for the River Thames Corridor (Policy C7) “Riparian local authorities should work together to establish a coordinated policy framework for the River and its valley corridor”.

7. Green Belts, AONBs National Parks

The Plan tells us that “the existing broad extent of Green Belts in the region is appropriate and will be retained and supported and the opportunity should be taken to improve their land-use management and access as part of initiatives to improve the rural urban fringe” (Policy SP5). Nevertheless, the selective reviews of Green Belt boundaries are required, including:

- ◆ the Metropolitan Green Belt north east of Guildford, and possibly south of Woking
- ◆ the Oxford Green Belt to the south of the city
- ◆ the former DERA site at Chertsey.

Smaller scale local reviews are likely elsewhere, including around Redhill-Reigate. These should be pursued through the Local Development Framework process. The Plan presages the possibility of large scale intrusion into the green belts, as green belt reviews must take into

account development needs to 2031 and assume that development will continue at the same pace as in the SEP.

Protection from waste management facilities has been significantly weakened: “Waste management facilities should not be precluded from the Green Belt” (Policy W17). Protection for AONB’s and National Parks from waste sites is also weakened.

The Plan should not pre-empt designation of the South Downs as a National Park, though planning authorities must treat the potential designation as a material consideration (Policies C1–C3). The proposed South Downs and recently established New Forest National Parks are also causing the government concern over mineral supplies. It says “the potential for mineral extraction to take place as carefully considered exceptions to national policy in areas subject to these constraints should be kept under review” (Policy M1).

8. Green Infrastructure

The Plan calls for management of green infrastructure, existing and new, with the aim of maintaining and improving biodiversity (Policy CC8). Green infrastructure should deliver recreational and cultural benefits, and include play areas, parks, sports areas, woodlands, rivers and canals, allotments, domestic gardens, and countryside on the urban fringe.

The EiP supported strategic gaps between settlements of 10,000. The government has rejected this, claiming it would create a second tier to green belts. Strategic gaps are an important feature of plans for Hampshire, but the government has also deleted this policy.

9. Supporting and Protecting Rural Areas

The Plan details the many core policies that relate to rural areas but does not allocate rural areas a separate strategic policy. Policy SP3 says that new development will be focused at larger settlements but the government says there remains a need for some limited local development outside these areas to support rural communities. The Plan says that “local planning authorities should positively plan to meet the defined local needs of their rural communities for small scale affordable housing, business and service development taking account of changing patterns of agriculture, economic diversification, and continued viability of local services” (Policy BE5).

10. Urban Areas

The prime focus for development in the South East will be urban areas and at least 60% of all new development in the South East will be on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings (Policy SP3). Guidance on town centres has been brought into line with PPS6, leading to much of the supporting text in the Assembly Plan being deleted.

The Plan changes the status of twelve towns, which are now designated Centres for Significant Change (Ashford, Aylesbury, Chatham, Crawley, Guildford, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Redhill/Reigate, Southampton, Woking). Bluewater/Ebbsfleet is removed as a Primary Regional Centre. Farnham has been removed as a Secondary Regional Centre and Bognor Regis added. The size to which these towns will grow, however, will not be known until the RSS Review (Policy TC2).

Major retail developments, and other town centre uses of a large scale, should be located in the Centres for Significant Change, but these should not overly dominate. The Plan’s original opposition to out of town shopping centres is retained: “No need has been identified for any further out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres or large-scale extensions to such existing centres during the period to 2026. The role and regeneration of town centres should not be undermined by an intensification of such development.”

11. Housing Numbers

The Plan proposes 33,125 new dwellings each year in the South East, up 13% from the 28,904 proposed by the Assembly. There have been substantial additions in housing levels to most subregions (see table). Housing numbers have also been increased in areas outside the subregions. Suburban intensification is supported (Policy BE2). Market towns are to provide for sufficient, rather than small-scale, housing (Policy BE4). Such towns are up to 20,000 people, not the 10,000 proposed by the Assembly.

Subregion	Assembly	Government	% increase
South Hampshire	80,000	80,000	0%
Sussex Coast	54,000	70,300	30%
East Kent and Ashford	48,000	56,700	18%
Kent Thames Gateway	48,000	52,140	9%
London Fringe	37,360	48,620	30%
Western Corridor & Blackwater Valley	89,520	102,100	14%
Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Vale	70,000	71,450	2%
Central Oxfordshire	34,000	40,680	20%
Gatwick	33,000	36,500	11%

12. Infrastructure

The Assembly's view that infrastructure must be in place before development can proceed was rejected by the EiP. The government agrees. Despite the objective to provide adequate infrastructure "in a way that keeps pace with development", the detail of the Plan says only that "the phasing of development will be closely related to the provision of infrastructure." (Policy CC7). It promotes a 'Manage and Invest' strategy, and the government that says that better use must be made of existing facilities if new infrastructure cannot be prepared in time, and calls for demand reduction measures.

13. Transport

Roads. The government accepts that it is unrealistic to achieve an absolute reduction in traffic within the life of the Plan. The ambition to reduce "dependence on the private car" has been replaced with "reliance on single occupancy car use". The 'Manage and Invest' approach seeks to influence the pattern of activities and new development, so that more people have the opportunity to work and shop closer to their home location. It seeks greater utilisation of capacity on the existing transport system, while managing demand on the road network. The plan supports road pricing and charging, but recognises that little can be done to reduce reliance of cars in rural areas.

Air. The Plan supports development at Heathrow and Gatwick, rejecting the Assembly's objections about the environmental impact. It insists on safeguarding land at Gatwick for a possible new runway after 2019 and calls for an enhanced role for Kent International Airport as an airport of regional significance.

Schemes. Three major areas that will need investment are identified:

- ◆ West of Reading to London, to include M4 management and capacity measures, and the Thames Valley bus and coach network
- ◆ A34 in Oxfordshire, including adequate land-use/transport scenario testing such as a detailed green belt transport study
- ◆ A2/A282/M2 corridor (including Thames Crossing options).

A long shopping list of other priorities is also listed (Appendix A).

14. Climate Change and Energy

Climate change was rising on the government's agenda as the SEP was being drafted. Now local authorities are to be given performance targets for climate change and this is reflected in the Government's Plan. The government commits the South East to achieving sustainable levels of resource use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring that the region is prepared for "the inevitable impacts of climate change" (Policy CC1). The government envisages stabilising the ecological footprint of resource use by 2016 and reducing it by 2026. The EiP proposal to adopt higher energy and water efficiency standards than set out in building regulations and to seek the highest rating in the Code for Sustainable Homes is rejected in favour of the government's national targets for zero carbon homes.

The Plan backs energy from renewable sources, though these need not be on site (Policy NRM11). It suggests that in advance of local targets being set in Development Plan Documents, new developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1000m² of non-residential floor space should secure at least 10% of their energy from renewable or low-carbon sources "unless... this is not feasible or viable". The government is specifically seeking views on whether this interim target is appropriate.

15. Water

Although the twin-track approach to water management is retained, water efficiency requirements for developments have been watered down in favour of national guidance, as is the requirement for the regional planning body, Ofwat and Environment Agency to work together to increase water efficiency. However, the Plan now includes a requirement to "direct new development to areas where adequate water supply can be guaranteed from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. Where this is not possible, development should be phased so that sustainable new capacity can be provided ahead of new development" (Policy NRM1).

The Plan says there is a demonstrable need for new water resource schemes and increased demand management over the period of the Plan (Policy NRM3). Strategic new water resources that may be required include: Upper Thames Reservoir, Oxfordshire (by 2019/20); enlargement of Bewl reservoir, Kent (2014/15); Broad Oak reservoir, Kent by (2019/20); Clay Hill reservoir, East Sussex (2014/15); Havant Thicket reservoir, Hampshire (2020/21). Local Development Documents must allocate and safeguard sites identified for these reservoir schemes and any others that are identified by the companies and Environment Agency. Additional schemes, including enlargement of Darwell reservoir in north-west Sussex, together with bulk water transfers, effluent re-use and desalination may also be required.

On flooding, the government Plan follows PPS25 sequential approach and will not allow "inappropriate" development in flood risk areas "unless there is over-riding need and absence of suitable alternatives" (Policy NRM4).

16. Ecology & Conservation

Biodiversity policies are strengthened to embrace soils and to increase the wildlife value of land, requiring green infrastructure to be identified, developed and implemented in conjunction with new development and setting buffer zones around sensitive sites (Policy NRM5). Habitats Regulation Assessment has identified the seven sites of international importance for nature conservation. Development affecting these and other sites may be mitigated by buffer zones, alternative recreation land and access management measures. A detailed new policy sets out the mitigation needed for new development in the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area, though it says that priority should be given to development in areas where mitigation will not be needed (Policy NRM6). This policy incorporates the three pronged approach to mitigation: access management, habitat improvement and the Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS) scheme proposed by Natural England.

17. CPRE Reaction

CPRE South East Director, Edward Dawson said: “Housing something like a million people over the next 20 years in the South East may be a challenge too far. We are concerned about the sheer scale of the development proposed, and its impact on the countryside and quality of life” (<http://tinyurl.com/56coov>).

- ◆ **Hampshire.** CPRE Hants said that “these numbers will impose severe pressures on infrastructure, such as transport and water, and involve the loss of significant areas of valued countryside in the growth areas in the north and south of the county. Long established strategic and local gaps between settlements may come under threat from developers” (<http://tinyurl.com/5ummtq>).
- ◆ **Kent.** CPRE Kent said that “we fear that if these numbers go unchallenged, local authorities across Kent will be left with no option but to allocate new areas of Greenfield land for housing, and risk allowing developers to ‘cherry pick’ Greenfield sites for housing estates” (<http://tinyurl.com/57telq>).
- ◆ **Oxfordshire.** Helena Whall for CPRE said that “Such high levels of housing development are not sustainable. The consequent pressures on the land, including the risk of losing large areas of valued countryside and Green Belt, would be intolerable”(Thame News: <http://tinyurl.com/6gyngt>).
- ◆ **Berkshire.** The Government has rejected development at Kennet Valley Park at Reading, despite the EiP recommendation to support a Special Development Area of 7,500 dwellings. Regional Minister for the South East Jonathan Shaw MP said this development was not viable (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/5tnpog>; Reading Chronicle: <http://tinyurl.com/66x4wa>). CPRE Berkshire comments: “The strategic inconsistency is that, not many years ago, a huge campaign supported by many CPRE members and local people over a year at 4 planning inquiries, led to dismissal of plans for large new settlements in Grazeley, Spencers Wood and Shinfield south of the M4. Our preference was for distributed development, including north of the M4. Now, the government is supporting more development in those southern areas! And it may well happen that developers will again put forward plans for large settlements in those Parishes.”

18. The Next Steps

The consultation runs until 24 October (GOSE: <http://bit.ly/5w7uo>).

Other News

19. Planning

Planning Bill. As the Bill passed easily through the House of Lords, the CBI claimed that “the lights would go out” by 2015 if the Bill was not passed (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/6jwagy>). The government dropped its proposals for councillors to determine some planning appeals (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/5nzt45>). A Devon MP is furious that a clause limiting compensation for residents for nuisance has been slipped into the Bill at late stage (Devon24: <http://tinyurl.com/5oc6kn>).

CLG Consultation. The planning process is overly complex and does not involve the community, consultees or elected members effectively, a review into the system has concluded. CLG is consulting on a review by Joanna Killian and David Pretty (deadline 5 September: <http://tinyurl.com/5scr4nj>).

Planners. The draft heritage protection bill includes a requirement to compile historic environment records (HERs) but the Institute of Historic Building Conservation is warning of a funding and skills shortage among council planners (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/67qp9p>). The House of Commons’ Communities and Local Government select committee said that

there is a major risk that the Government's housebuilding and environmental targets will be missed because of a serious shortage of planners (<http://tinyurl.com/6a2shb>).

Call ins. Changes to procedures now allow the secretary of state to call in proposals of major significance for the government's climate change programme and energy policies, or which would have an adverse impact on a World Heritage Site (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/6lg9h5>).

Flooding. The RIBA is to launch a competition to create a prototype flood-proof house (BD: <http://tinyurl.com/59vs9g>). Environment Secretary Hilary Benn announced £500,000 for two pilot projects on reducing flooding through land management, including by the creation and restoration of wetlands and woodlands (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/5vhbw2>).

SNR & RDAs. The House of Commons Business and Enterprise Committee has announced an inquiry into the role of Regional Development Agencies (closing date for submissions 19 September; <http://tinyurl.com/6xxj2f>). In late June, the LGA and RDAs struck a deal agreeing that the integrated economic and spatial strategies would require approval from all councils before being submitted to ministers for final approval, but the commitment will not be binding. The Tories said that regional planning powers will be taken away from development agencies if Labour loses the next election (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/67x4zv>)

Green belt. Plans to build in the Green Belt are among proposals to accommodate 3,000 new homes in Chiltern (Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/5gnfx7>; <http://tinyurl.com/5ll2ds>).

Town centres & PPS6 consultation. Hazel Blears announced changes to PPS6 intended to protect small shops and town centres from out of town supermarkets (deadline 3 October; CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/6gpgbw>). The sequential test is retained and a new impact test will allow councils to factors including retail diversity, consumer spending, loss of trade, impact on town centre investment, scope for regeneration and job creation. The needs test, which the supermarkets claimed reduced consumer choice, has been withdrawn (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/55sje3>). The RTPI welcomed the changes (<http://tinyurl.com/55sje3>) but Tom Oliver for CPRE said "to say that local independent retailers and locally distinct town centres can be secured by abolishing the needs test would be a spin too far. No-one who understands the essential truths of local retail economies believes that." Tesco launched a legal challenge against the competition test proposed by the Competition Commission, which would prevent stores from opening in towns where they already have a high market share, into the UK planning system (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/58m8q5>). As a result, the government has not introduced a competition test into this version of PPS6.

North East RSS. The government approved the North East Plan, committing the region to 22,000 more houses than the regional assembly planned (<http://tinyurl.com/5gdkd7>).

SEERA. The regional assembly published its annual report and called for the reversal of "undemocratic" planning reforms (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/62j8bc>). Paul Bevan is stepping down as chief executive and will not be replaced (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/57w9e7>). The new leader of SEERA, Paul Carter has let it be known that he is not a "hatchet man" and intends to run the Assembly until the government forces it to close.

Bodleian. The planning inquiry into the £29 million Bodleian Library book depository commenced and closed, with a decision expected in a few months (Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/6faz89>). The plans are opposed by CPRE Oxfordshire.

Radley Lakes. Campaigners are closer to winning the battle to save the Oxfordshire lakes, after planning permission was given for an alternative dumping site (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/5bf9pp>; SRL: <http://tinyurl.com/6aygl4>).

Maidenhead. Gravel extraction plans for the green belt at Bray were rejected by councillors (Maidenhead Advertiser: <http://tinyurl.com/6k2y8l>).

20. Eco-Towns

Eco-town progress. Housing minister Caroline Flint has unveiled a progress report on eco-towns clarifying how the planning process for the controversial developments will work (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/64h4cv>; <http://tinyurl.com/5rm2a8>). A DCLG spokesman said: In each case a planning application will have to be submitted and it will be for the local authority to consider that application. The forthcoming eco-towns standards will also insist that proposed developments must comply with existing planning policy.

Eco standards. A green standard for new housing was also outlined. It will include:

- ◆ Achieving zero carbon status across commercial and public buildings as well as homes.
- ◆ Allocating 40% of land within the town to green space, at least half open to the public as parks or recreation areas.
- ◆ Providing a minimum of 30% affordable housing.
- ◆ Locating the average home within 10 minutes walk of frequent public transport and everyday neighbourhood services
- ◆ Homes built before 2016 must achieve at least level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Eco-Town Challenge Panel. The Panel has published its second report claiming that significant progress has been made in just a few weeks (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/5ojqzu>):

- ◆ **Weston Otmoor.** The proposals are criticised for not being sufficiently eco. “A town with free public transport is not an eco-town”. The proposed rail link to Oxford will only work if its is extended through the city. CO2 from construction must be tackled.
- ◆ **Bordon Whitehill.** “This is the right way to go about building an eco-town.” It wants improvement to rail links and clearer protection for the adjacent Special Protection Area.
- ◆ **Ford.** The developers need to consider the impact of the surrounding area, provide an clear employment strategy and set targets for its transport strategy.

South East Plan. Bordon-Whitehill is included as a Strategic Development Area in the revised Plan, increasing the probability it will be approved. Ford in West Sussex and Weston Otmoor in Oxfordshire are not included, but are not explicitly ruled out.

New town lessons. The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee criticised the government for not evaluating the existing new towns before embarking on its eco-town project (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/64m9je>). “There is a danger that they (eco-towns) become like new towns,” said Marina Pacheco for CPRE. “They are a lot smaller than new towns, but there are definitely lessons to be learned... There is a big danger that eco-towns just become commuter villages” (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/5pdyw6>).

Eco-cide. Proposals for Manby in Lincolnshire has been withdrawn by the local authority (CJ: <http://tinyurl.com/6h35wb>). Curborough near Lichfield has been withdrawn following a rough ride from the Challenge Panel. The developers have reverted to their non eco-town proposal (<http://tinyurl.com/6h35wb>). Developer Gallagher has withdrawn from plans to build the New Marston eco-town, blaming the lack of an overall vision for the area from the government (Bedford Today: <http://tinyurl.com/5omwov>). Confusion surrounds the Hanley Grange eco-town where the Wellcome Trust, a landowner, withdrew. Developer Jarrow upped the housing from 8,000 to 12,800 but is now submitting an initial proposal for just 6,500 homes (Cambridge News: <http://tinyurl.com/6bfaj9>). Four eco-town sites have already been ruled out in the Leeds City Region, as Yorkshire struggles to find a suitable location (Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/5ctuyp>).

Opinion. The RTPi has called on the government to shift its eco-town policy to eco-quarter schemes encompassing urban expansion projects and redevelopment (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/5n7czy>). The LGA said that the government’s desire to deliver 10 eco-towns outside the normal planning process may be open to judicial review. CLG rejected the claim (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/58c97y>).

21. Housing

The Taylor Report. The independent review by Matthew Taylor MP commissioned by the Prime Minister, found that the high cost of homes coupled with the low wages of rural workers are threatening the future of rural communities (<http://tinyurl.com/2k8rnd>). He calls for a stronger commitment to affordable rural housing and better planning for extension to market towns. Tom Oliver said: “CPRE does not agree with every recommendation in the report. In particular, we oppose relaxing planning rules which at the moment attach great importance to the presence of public transport in deciding the location of new business development”.

New growth points. The government has announced twenty new growth points to provide 75,000 new houses. Dover and Shorham are to receive 1,080 and 2,900 extra houses (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/67wxr2>).

HaCA. Some indications of the scope and power of the new body are now emerging. A draft agreement setting out how councils and the Homes and Communities Agency will work together to deliver new housing and regeneration was published. It says: “[Haca] and councils will work closely with RDAs in developing integrated regional strategies [IRs]”. (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/6aa2nf>).

Eco houses. The Royal Town Planning Institute has argued that the “green standards” required for new housing in the Government’s proposed eco-towns programme should be the norm for all new residential development (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/5dxtml>).

22. Transport

Aviation. Ruth Kelly has delayed a decision on a third runway at Heathrow, to allow time to analyse the 70,000 responses to the consultation (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/6hgkql>). A report for Friends of the Earth says the economic case for expansion is flawed (FoE: <http://tinyurl.com/5e4ogr>). Arup is proposing a high speed line from Heathrow to the continent (Building: <http://tinyurl.com/66xac8>) and local authorities say this demolishes the case for airport expansion (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/6holw6>). The chair of the government expert group on air quality said the public were being misled over claims that Heathrow’s expansion would not cause unlawful and dangerous levels of pollution. The National Trust is opposing new flightpaths proposed by NATS because of the impact on some of its properties and the damage to people’s enjoyment of the countryside. (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/6fx3lt>). Kelly’s decision on expansion of flights at Stansted has been delayed to consider night noise and she has called in the application for a second runway (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/6khdpp>; <http://tinyurl.com/6p2skp>).

Rail. Crossrail has been approved (Public Technology: <http://tinyurl.com/6ejvg4>).

23. Energy

Nuclear. The government announced a consultation on the Strategic Siting Assessment criteria for the next generation of nuclear power stations. Nominations for sites will be invited early next year. Sites at risk of earthquake or near heavily populated areas would be ruled out, but concerns of flood risk, coastal conditions and “environmentally-protected” status would be considered “less absolute” (closing date 11 November; Berr: <http://tinyurl.com/6xq4oe>).

Wind. The Glyndebourne wind turbine was approved, to the dismay of CPRE and the South Downs Environmental Protection Consortium (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/54weg3>).

Biofuels. The government promised a cautious approach to biofuels following the publication of the Gallagher report (DfT: <http://tinyurl.com/5jazpl>). The report recommends that the introduction of biofuels should be slowed until more effective controls were in place to prevent the inadvertent rise in greenhouse gas emissions. Food prices can also rise as competition for land increases (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/563hnc>).

24. Environment and Ecology

National Audit. A two-year audit of England's natural resources, its wildlife, habitats and ecosystems, was launched by Hilary Benn (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/5e7n9w>).

Set-aside. With the ending of this EU scheme, Defra has accepted advice that farmers in England should not be paid subsidies unless they leave a small part of their farm for wildlife (Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/5jbkfk>).

Rights of Way. Natural England announced a new working group to examine unrecorded rights of way. The CLA is joining the group but is sceptical (NE: <http://tinyurl.com/5ul37o>; Daelnet: <http://tinyurl.com/5ul37o>).

Wetlands. The Wetland Vision Partnership, an alliance of conservationists and government agencies, including the RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage, has produced a series of maps showing the loss and fragmentation of the country's wetlands and where opportunities exist to create new ones (<http://tinyurl.com/6gdco3>).

Badgers. The government has ruled out a badger cull, to general derision from the farming community and to the delight of wildlife groups (RSPB: <http://tinyurl.com/5vcavh>).

Incineration. As a High Court bid to stop an incinerator at Newhaven in Sussex failed, protesters climbed a crane on the site (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/634wuv>; Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/6h76zk>). Campaigners have published a map of 100 potential incinerator sites (<http://www.ukwin.org.uk/map/>).

Minerals. SEETA is calling on the government to cut the amount of gravel and sand it expects to be quarried in the South East by a third. Ministers are to cut current output of 13.25 million tonnes a year by 8%, but the assembly claimed that this does not go far enough because sales have fallen by 32% over the past decade (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/5oqmaf>).

Trees. CPRE has joined the protest over a planned BSI standard on trees (Telegraph: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/6r3kr7>).

Thames Water beat its leakage targets for a second year (<http://tinyurl.com/6qmuoq>). Oxfordshire County Council criticised the plan for the Upper Thames Reservoir, saying the company should tackle leakage instead (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/5pqp9>). "Damned if I know." Tracy Corrigan fails to shed any light on the reservoir debate in the Telegraph (<http://tinyurl.com/5suwpe>).

End Matter

25. People

- ◆ **CPRE** has elected Peter Waine as its chairman to serve a six-year term. Waine has previously served as chairman of the Brogdale Horticultural Trust. In 1979, he co-founded the London Ecology Centre, which brought together a number of small conservation groups to share good practice.
- ◆ **FoE.** Tony Juniper has stepped down after 20 years at the helm of Friends of the Earth (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/59bk7m>).

26. CPRE eBulletin

The eBulletin is edited by Andy Boddington on behalf of CPRE SE. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of CPRE. To subscribe to this eBulletin, please use this link:

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