

CPRE SE eBulletin: 1 April 2009

1. National Parks

South Downs National Park. Thousands of countryside campaigners welcomed the latest national park, the South Downs, which will include the previously disputed Western Weald. It is England's 10th and the United Kingdom's 15th National Park. The decision is a fitting way to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the introduction into Parliament of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Edward Dawson Director of CPRE South East said: "This is a major step forward for the South East. The new National Park will give vital protection to beautiful and serene landscapes which are under relentless development pressure. The government's decision today also embraces the Western Weald, rewarding thousands of people have campaigned for this area to be included within the South Downs National Park. CPRE welcomes the increased area, which will ensure this is a viable and well recognised designation, and that it can now take its rightful place in the family of English National Parks. We congratulate all involved." Neil Sinden for CPRE said: "This decision could not come soon enough... With the demands for new housing and large-scale development in the South East the National Park Authority will need to be a strong guardian of the South Downs" (CPRE: <http://is.gd/ppJr>; Defra: <http://is.gd/pQcq>). CPRE Hampshire spokeswoman Margaret Paren said: "This is fantastic news for Petersfield, it will become a gateway to the national park" (Petersfield Post: <http://is.gd/qeTV>). Chris Todd for the South Downs Campaign said: "This is a major victory for what in fact has been a grass-roots campaign from the public, and we could not have done this without their help. This is a dream come true" (Eastbourne Today: <http://is.gd/qeUo>). "What is more important, money or beauty?" (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/qeSu>).



National Parks 60th. On the 60th anniversary of *The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949*, CPRE called for stronger leadership from national parks and AONBs on climate change, and for the protected areas to be extended. Tom Oliver for CPRE said: "The power of beautiful places and beautiful views to lift the human spirit and inspire the best in human nature was recognised by the nation's leaders at a time of austerity and uncertainty. That far-sighted action has provided us with one of our greatest natural assets. We need to secure and extend it in the years ahead" (CPRE: <http://is.gd/qeWB>).

2. Planning

Sussex victories. CPRE Sussex has welcomed the refusal by the Secretary of State of three housing application appeals on the edge of Uckfield, on the grounds that the sites were in conflict with the development plan. For one site, the Secretary of State considered that landscape impact was "a major planning objection sufficient on its own to justify refusal of planning permission" and that "she agrees with the Inspector that no amount of tree screening or high quality design would compensate" (CPRE Sussex: <http://is.gd/pE2h>).

Infrastructure Planning Commission. As Sir Michael Pitt was confirmed as Chair of the IPC, CPRE asked if he is taking on an impossible task (CLG: <http://is.gd/pS8X>; CPRE: <http://is.gd/q5jd>). CLG is consulting on the procedures for the IPC (<http://is.gd/pSgD>; deadline 19 June), including:

- ◆ Procedures for consultation on nationally significant infrastructure projects, to be conducted by the promoter prior to application. "Promoters must consult people living in 'the vicinity of the land' [and] should be able to demonstrate that the rationale for drawing a boundary around the consultation zone is fair both to the promoter and to local people." Workshops, citizen's juries and the internet are among the proposed methods of consultation (though the document confuses consultation with publicity at several points).
- ◆ The information an application submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) should contain.

Planning applications. The government has responded to the Killian Pretty Review and promised to cut planning applications by 40%. Smaller businesses will more often be able to develop premises without full planning permission. Developers and councils will be further encouraged to talk about proposals before a planning application is submitted to iron out potential problems early on (Planning: <http://is.gd/q4MJ>; CLG: <http://is.gd/q4ji>). Planning applications are down by a quarter (CLG: <http://is.gd/q3hh>). The UK Saint Index claimed that the percentage of people that have objected to a development project in the past year has increased to 21% of the population, up from 13% in 2007, and that people are unhappier with council planners (Planning: <http://is.gd/q58G>). Local authorities are preparing policies to let developers pay reduced S106 contributions or defer payments until the economic climate improves, including Medway and Ashford Borough Councils (Planning: <http://is.gd/q3iA>).

Regional Spatial Strategies. 430,300 homes by 2026 is the new target in the East Midlands Plan, slightly down on the government's proposals for 434,094 homes made last year (Regen: <http://is.gd/q5AP>). The Government has rejected proposals to scrap much of the green belt around Nottingham but has initiated a full review of land availability in and around the city (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/q5Ha>).

Regional Development Agencies. An evaluation suggests that every £1 of spent by a RDA will add £4.50 to regional Gross Value Added, eventually, if current trends persist (BERR: <http://is.gd/q2zY>). SEEDA is to cut around 90 jobs (Regen: <http://is.gd/pS7f>).

Dunsfold Park. CPRE Surrey has gone head to head with Friends of the Earth at the public inquiry over 2,600 homes on the site of a former airfield in Surrey. CPRE wants the planning appeal thrown out because the site is unsustainable and the proposed eco-village would blight a quintessential English rural landscape. FoE says the appeal should be upheld because the development would be a vital step in the ultimate goal of achieving a low carbon economy. CPRE Surrey chairman, Tim Harrold said: "The site is a totally unsuitable rural location for a major new settlement, which will involve the direct loss forever of some 105 hectares of countryside and the suburbanisation of much of the surrounding countryside" (Get Surrey: <http://is.gd/q3de>). A group of local residents are offering £3 million for part of the park (Get Surrey: <http://is.gd/q3Ts>).

Around the South East. Kent parish councils have been awarded legal costs after a court battle to block a factory in the green belt and North Downs AONB (CPRE Kent: <http://is.gd/q4Ja>). South Bucks District Council is consulting over its Core Strategy (<http://is.gd/q3ZO>). Plans for 9,600 new homes in Chichester by 2026 have been put on hold because of uncertainty over the A27 Chichester bypass (The News: <http://is.gd/q51o>).

Quarry victory. The Peak District National Park Authority has won the latest round of a legal battle over plans for Backdale Quarry at Longstone Edge, which was granted planning permission in 1952. The decision may save one of Britain's most treasured limestone ridges (Planning: <http://is.gd/q3ZE>; Guardian: <http://is.gd/q6Be>; Grough: <http://is.gd/q6Ow>).

Traveller sites. Just one square mile of land across all of England would be enough to provide all gypsy and traveller families with a sufficient number of authorised sites, the Equality and Human Rights Commission said (24dash: <http://is.gd/q4as>).

3. Eco-towns

Most eco-towns not viable. The government has published a study of the financial viability study of the eco-towns programme (CLG: <http://is.gd/pSnA>). Only three of the proposals are sure to make a profit in the current property downturn and some could need public subsidies of tens of millions of pounds to go ahead. Whitehill Bordon in Hampshire and Ford Airfield in West Sussex could end up with potential losses, but Weston Otmoor in Oxfordshire has no questions over its viability. However, the study assumes that house prices will recover to pre-2007 prices by 2011 (Get Surrey: <http://is.gd/q3de>).

Eco difficulties. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee said the eco-towns policy was clearly in difficulty and the difference now emerging between the original vision and the proposals is "considerable". The committee said the eco-town scheme will not make a significant contribution towards meeting targets for new homes and that it was "highly unlikely" 100,000 new homes would be achieved by building eco towns (24dash: <http://is.gd/q41q>; Planning: <http://is.gd/q4RY>). The government is reported to be considering a 100-home pilot scheme at one of the proposed sites in an attempt to rescue the troubled eco-town programme. "The idea is to get something on site in a reasonably quick time, before the overall planning permission for the new settlement is agreed" said a source. The most likely location is reported to be the Whitehill Bordon eco-town (Building: <http://is.gd/q2XW>).

Weston Otmoor. Cherwell District Council backed a plan for a rival eco-town north west of Bicester at a stormy meeting. One farmer said: "I bitterly resent being thrown to the wolves as a decoy to divert attention from Weston Otmoor" (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/q38R>). Consultants Halcrow said the north west Bicester location is "at least as good as many of the other proposed eco town locations and better than many, e.g. Weston Otmoor" (CDC: <http://is.gd/q3aY>).

Ford. Building a Ford eco-town without improving roads in the area, including building the Arundel bypass, would be impossible to imagine, the housing minister was told by Nick Herbert, MP for Arundel and the South Downs (Chichester Observer: <http://is.gd/q2Vq>; Hansard: <http://is.gd/q3Bp>). A senior Government source last night confirmed it was possible that not one of the 11 remaining schemes including Ford would see the light of day (Argus: <http://is.gd/q4pP>). A song, *Anthem For Green England*, has been inspired by the campaign of Communities Against Ford Eco-Town against the 5,000 home scheme (hear it at the Bognor Regis Observer: <http://is.gd/q4qQ>). The South Downs Society warned the eco-town will damage the South Downs (Littlehampton Gazette: <http://is.gd/q6lm>).

Legal moves. Campaigners opposing the Middle Quinton eco-town proposal near Stratford upon Avon have gone to the Appeal Court in a bid to challenge the earlier High Court ruling that the Government's consultation on the 2008 eco-town shortlist was lawful (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/q3wD>). CPRE will be issuing a statement on the legality of the eco-towns process on Monday, 6 April.

4. The Taylor Report: A Living, Working Countryside

Last year's report by Matthew Taylor concerned rural communities, their struggle to thrive economically and live in affordable housing. But the punch line from the government's response is bigger. It plans nothing less than an overhaul of a suite of planning policy statements covering both urban and rural areas. The Government accepted almost all of the 48 recommendations of the Taylor Review, but decided against the proposal of a trial limiting second homes in National Parks.

Planning restrictions in villages and small rural towns in England will be eased to allow the development of more affordable homes and create new jobs, the government announced. Local councils and developers will be encouraged to identify "exception" sites in small villages where affordable homes can be built for local families. Rural businesses will get planning permission for sites that are suitable given their rural setting through a refreshed approach to planning policy that recognises their distinct needs. Medium-sized rural towns to develop sustainable new neighbourhoods rather than building soulless housing estates on the edge of town, including through a new £1m competition to encourage best practice. Ministers will now set out their detailed proposals in a new single planning policy statement, covering both rural and urban areas, to be published for consultation shortly. This PPS will replace PPG4: Industrial, commercial development and small firms; PPG5: Simplified Planning Zones; PPS6: Planning for town centres; PPS7: Sustainable development in rural areas (as far as it relates to economic development); and parts of PPG13: Transport. Both PPS4 and PPS6 are under revision already and were consulted on last year.

The government's response has been broadly welcomed. CPRE senior planner Kate Gordon said the use of "exceptions sites" could lead to "development in the wrong place. Landowners have a role to play, but in providing incentives for them to make sites available, it will be vital that the Government puts in place safeguards to avoid any abuse of the planning system." (CLG: <http://is.gd/pS9F>; 24dash: <http://is.gd/q3pu>; CPRE: <http://is.gd/qeWc>).

5. Housing

Population. Government statisticians predict households in England will increase by more than quarter of a million a year over the next two decades. There are expected to be 27.8 million households by 2031, a rise of 6.3 million on 2006 levels driven by population growth and an increase in the number of people living alone. CPRE said a "predict and provide" approach could lead to higher targets for new homes than needed, particularly in a recession, and force local planning authorities to allocate more land than required to meet national goals (24dash: <http://is.gd/q4dR>; CPRE: <http://is.gd/q5fy>). The South East region will have the largest absolute increase in households of 39,000 per year from 2006 to 2031, a 28% rise from the 2006 level (CLG: <http://is.gd/q4jW>). The UN projects that world population will exceed 9 billion people in 2050, a 50% increase from today (Yale 360: <http://is.gd/q5C0>).

Affordable housing. The Homes and Communities Agency is to fund councils to take enforcement action to bring empty homes back into use (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/pEfH>). Reports today suggest senior staff at the Homes and Communities Agency are to travel the country in a helicopter to speed up their work (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/q2Zc>). Rural repossessions rising at nearly double the rate for England as a whole, according to the latest recession report from the Commission on Rural Communities. It is recommending that the government takes urgent steps to build the capacity of local authorities and rural housing associations to increase production of rural affordable housing, particularly social rented housing (CRC: <http://is.gd/q2Rw>; 24dash: <http://is.gd/q4cd>).

Second homes. Vandals have daubed protest statements against holiday home owners on a luxury housing development in Worth Matravers, Dorset (PA: <http://is.gd/nwt9>).

Zero carbon. Outline planning permission has been granted for a £250 million 750-home zero carbon regeneration development in Sussex (Planning: <http://is.gd/q6hZ>).

6. Green Space and Environment

Future landscapes. The UK is in danger of becoming an "ecological desert" except for small pockets of protected areas in national parks or nature reserves according to Natural England. Rather than try to protect animals and plants by just creating more national parks and reserves, she said the whole country must be managed as a "national parkland" (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/q53h>). Natural England has also reviewed the impact of climate change on four sample landscape character areas, the Cumbria High Fells, Shropshire Hills, Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase and the Broads (<http://is.gd/q2RN>).

Green belt. CPRE Oxfordshire is stepping up its "Hands Off Oxford's Green Belt" campaign. Helena Whall said: "For some years CPRE has been saying that the City's urge to sprawl out over the Green Belt is nothing to do with housing need but simple expansionism – a wish to be Greater Oxford, a new Birmingham". CPRE says it is alarmed by the news that South Oxfordshire District Council, a professed strong supporter of the green belt, is proposing two green belt intrusions of its own (Thame News: <http://is.gd/pNWu>). CPRE is organising a walk and rally against green belt proposals on Sunday 19 April (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/q3y9>).

Green infrastructure. Margaret Beckett called on local authorities to ensure green spaces are an "integral" part of planning as part of efforts to tackle climate change. She said that two thirds of English local authorities are making green infrastructure "an integral part" of future plans and urged the rest to follow suit (Edie: <http://is.gd/q2TL>). Switching public spending from grey projects building roads and expanding airports, to green schemes creating parks and allotments, would save billions of pounds, improve health, cut climate emissions and create jobs, Natural England and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment said. Funds meant for widening the M25, for example, would buy 3.2m street trees (Guardian: <http://is.gd/othg>). Consultation with Sports England is now required for development on any sports pitch larger than 0.2ha. The protection also applies to land used as a playing field within the previous five years, or allocated for play in a development plan (Planning: <http://is.gd/q5Dh>).

Litter. The Policy Exchange and CPRE are calling for deposit schemes that offer customers a financial incentive to recycle their waste, as part of a drive to reduce litter. Levels of litter have risen six fold since the 1960s and now cost council tax payers £500m a year in clean up costs (Guardian: <http://is.gd/nFgq>). "The most obvious and universal sign of Britain's dislike for itself is before our eyes on pavements, by the side of roads, on public transport, down country lanes. Litter is the nation's favourite form of self-harm" (Independent: <http://is.gd/q5qu>). After criticism from CPRE, Environmental protection charity Encams has admitted its Keep Britain Tidy anti-litter campaign has "lost its way" over the past ten years (Marketing Week: <http://is.gd/q69o>). A fifth of England's streets are in a poor state because of rubbish, with fast food packaging and drinks containers among the litter on the rise, the Local Environment Quality Survey revealed (24dash: <http://is.gd/q4bw>; NDS: <http://is.gd/q6ph>).

Light pollution. More than 20 local authorities have tried already to reduce street and building lighting at night for economic and environmental reasons. But does street lighting reduce accidents? Not as much as previously thought, says the DfT. Oh yes it does says the Cochrane Collaboration. Tom Oliver for CPRE, said: "The arguments against the over-lighting of public buildings and offices, particularly at night, are growing both in terms of environmental impact and sheer economic waste, but light pollution is an issue that politicians fight shy of because it's unpopular" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q6ca>; <http://is.gd/q5Kt>; <http://is.gd/q5J5>).

Pests. The government has launched a campaign to stamp out the killer fungus phytophthora, the greatest threat to Britain's trees since Dutch elm disease 40 years ago (Independent: <http://is.gd/q4w0>). A deadly Asian parasite that threatens to wipe out millions of bees across England and Wales has become endemic because Whitehall does not know the location of

more than half the hives in the country, the National Audit Office said,. The NAO also blamed amateur beekeepers, much to their anger (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q4xE>; <http://is.gd/ISYK>; Times: <http://is.gd/m9Nh>).

Sustainable indicators. The government has published sustainable development indicators for the South East, which seen the largest decline in woodland and farmland bird populations, with farmland bird populations down 21% and woodland populations down 19%. 77% of river lengths were of good biological quality, 65% of rivers were of good chemical quality (Defra: <http://is.gd/q2uw>).

Set-aside. Ministers are consulting on a compulsory set-aside replacement that will see up to 5% of arable land taken out of production across England unless more farmers embrace wildlife measures under environmental stewardship. Some farming and wildlife groups say that only 1-2% is needed (Farmers Weekly: <http://is.gd/ob37>; <http://is.gd/q59I>; <http://is.gd/q67I>; Defra: <http://is.gd/q4i8>). Natural England said a purely voluntary approach on enhancing farmland wildlife habitats and the natural environment would not go far enough (Planning: <http://is.gd/q6dO>).

Sir Martin Doughty, chair of Natural England and countryside champion, has died after a long illness (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/q5Sq>; Grough: <http://is.gd/q56B>).

7. Energy and Climate Change

Wirescapes. CPRE is leading an alliance calling for any new high-voltage lines to avoid national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, green belt land or World Heritage Sites. CPRE, the Campaign for National Parks, the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales have drawn up a manifesto that calls for the use of innovative new pylon designs and measures to reduce demand for transmission via a smarter grid (CPRE: <http://is.gd/q3sL>). An investment of £4.7 billion is urgently needed to upgrade the UK's national electricity grid for new renewable and nuclear power sources the Electricity Networks Strategy Group said. The bill will fall to consumers (Energy Efficiency News: <http://is.gd/q4gB>; Guardian: <http://is.gd/q4SI>).

Windscares. Opposition to wind farms should become as socially unacceptable as failing to wear a seatbelt, Ed Miliband, the climate change secretary, said. "Windfarm windbag!" the Daily Mail cried in response (Guardian: <http://is.gd/oHKk>; Daily Mail: <http://is.gd/q6NI>). The wind industry is calling for even more government support (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q4ZN>). Planning permission has been awarded for a 10MW onshore wind farm at the Port of Sheerness in Kent (New Energy Focus: <http://is.gd/q63j>). A report to the RSPB has concluded that an increase in wind farm development was possible without undue harm to wildlife. The charity now strongly backs onshore winds farms, saying that it wants the planning system to cut needless delays and identify areas where turbines can be given priority. The use of spatial planning in locating wind farms, as recommended by the RSPB report, has been tried before with the Welsh "TAN8" planning policy introduced in 2005. This set out seven Strategic Search Areas that wind developers were to consider appropriate for wind farms to be located (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/q3EV>; New Energy Focus: <http://is.gd/q6XC>). Plans were submitted today for a 500 foot wind turbine outside the Houses of Parliament (Planning: <http://is.gd/q3AQ>). Reeves Hill wind farm in Herefordshire, secured after a controversial S104 agreement, seems set to get the go ahead after the government refused to call the scheme in. Campaigners are planning a judicial review (24dash: <http://is.gd/q5mS>; SHCG: <http://is.gd/qeZk>). After two appeals, developers are going back to the High Court in a third attempt to get approval for a wind farm in Norfolk (Planning: <http://is.gd/q6gV>).

Water power. Building tidal barrages across northern England estuaries could generate more than five% of the UK's electricity, University of Liverpool engineers said (Edie: <http://is.gd/q2Uw>). The proposed Severn Barrage would save so much carbon that the payback period for emissions released during construction would be less than six months

(Edie: <http://is.gd/q4Bd>). British Waterways announced a £120m project to create 25 hydro-electric schemes along British waterways to power some 40,000 homes (Edie: <http://is.gd/q6zo>).

Other power. The big six energy companies in Britain are investing on average only £30 per year from each customer in renewable energy projects (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q4nI>). The government is auctioning sites for up to six new nuclear reactors (Guardian: <http://is.gd/lkP2>). Decisions about any new coal-fired power plants in the UK, including Kingsnorth, have been delayed until the autumn (Guardian: <http://is.gd/lqFe>). E.ON said it could not fit carbon capture and storage at Kingsnorth unless the government funds the research (Guardian: <http://is.gd/nKbm>). Surrey County insisted that it will press forward despite losing a High Court case on proposals for an energy from waste plant (Planning: <http://is.gd/q6iM>). The government should invest £625 million in renewables to realise plans for a new low-carbon economy, says the Renewable Energy Association (Energy Efficiency: <http://is.gd/q6nN>).

Climate change. The government has created a third sector 'task force' to talk about climate change (NDS: <http://is.gd/pGFq>). The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research warned that official advice used to set the forthcoming carbon budget is "naïvely optimistic" and will not stop dangerous climate change (Guardian: <http://is.gd/nIkO>). A minimum price for carbon pollution permits should be considered to stop current low trading prices scaring off investment in cutting emissions, Lord Turner, chairman of the Committee on Climate Change said (Guardian: <http://is.gd/lMSY>). Giant microwave ovens that can "cook" wood into biochar could become our best tool in the fight against global warming (Guardian: <http://is.gd/njx5>). Monbiot called biochar "the latest utopian catastrophe" (Monbiot: <http://is.gd/q3Kt>), and told us that biofuels do far more harm than good (Guardian: <http://is.gd/lMSu>).

8. Water

Water resources. The Environment Agency Water has published its Resources Strategy for England and Wales, setting out measures to help protect water resources to 2050 and beyond. These include the universal metering of households, a review of the structure of the water industry and actions to reduce water consumption to help lower the country's carbon emissions. By 2020, demand for water could rise by 5% or 800 million litres a day. By 2050, climate change could reduce the amount of water available by ten to 15%. By 2050, average summer river flows in England and Wales could reduce by as much as 50 to 80%. (EA: <http://is.gd/q32t>). A report published by the European Environment Agency said many parts of Europe are using water faster than nature can replace it leading to drought and declining water quality (EEA: <http://is.gd/q3LB>).

Upper Thames Reservoir. Thames Water has scaled down its plans for a £1 billion 10 sq km (3.9 sq mile) reservoir in Oxfordshire. Originally planned to hold 150bn litres, the company has shrunk the proposal to 100bn litres. The project is now scheduled to be completed by 2026 at the earliest. Thames Water said: "The economic downturn has had a significant impact on our water demand forecasts. As a result, we are now predicting a slower increase in population and household numbers". The Group Against Reservoir Development said "We are still clear we can demonstrate that a reservoir is not needed" (BBC: <http://is.gd/q4v2>). Thames Water may be put up for sale by its owners Macquarie (Times: <http://is.gd/q5dM>).

Flooding. The Environment Agency has put forward radical plans for a "blue belt" to protect Derby residents from future floods (Edie: <http://is.gd/q4BU>).

9. Transport

Roads. Road traffic has increased nearly 25% in the last 15 years despite government attempts to get people to drive less, legal targets to slash carbon emissions and a major increase in rail use, new figures collated by CPRE and the Campaign for Better Transport revealed. Regional road building plans will compound the problem and push carbon emissions above levels set by the Climate Change Act 2008, CPRE senior transport

campaigner Ralph Smyth said. "Ministers should not accept the regions' wish-lists unchanged. We need a dramatic increase in the proportion of sustainable transport schemes to make up for the regions' failure to take carbon cuts seriously" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/nSA9>; Telegraph: <http://is.gd/q6Ce>). A 50% improvement in the fuel economy of new and existing cars is possible by 2050 using existing cost-effective technologies, says a joint international agency report (Energy Efficiency News: <http://is.gd/q4hf>). Reports today suggest that Brussels wants to outlaw the amber signal on UK traffic lights, as part of efforts to curb pollution (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q4w4>).

Clutter. Motorists are being driven to distraction by 71 signs along a half mile stretch of the A419 in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. Calling for the signage to be reduced, Richard Lloyd of CPRE Gloucestershire said: "There is evidence that too many signs is actually counter-productive and that is certainly the issue along the A419, it's ridiculous" (24dash: <http://is.gd/q42A>).

Aviation. Campaigners have lost their legal battle to block the expansion of Stansted airport (Guardian: <http://is.gd/q603>). The government has postponed the start of the public inquiry into BAA's plans for a second runway at the airport (Planning: <http://is.gd/q4wQ>). The Environment Agency will police the new aviation emissions scheme (NDS: <http://is.gd/q4hT>). planning permission for the third Heathrow runway will not be sought before the next election, making it vulnerable to a Tory pledge to scrap the project (Guardian: <http://is.gd/qf1r>).

Rail. Transport minister, Andrew Adonis has asked High Speed 2 to advise the DfT on extending high speed services into Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland (Planning: <http://is.gd/q5t3>).

10. Rural Affairs and Food

Supermarkets. Tesco has won its appeal against plans to introduce a competition test to the planning system. Asda slammed the judgement. The Competition Commission said the appeal was upheld on the narrow grounds and it may still try to pursue the test. (Planning: <http://is.gd/q4Ql>; Regen: <http://is.gd/q4YT>). High streets across the country risk becoming 'ghost towns' unless urgent action is taken to fill empty shops created by the recession, the Local Government Association warned (LGA: <http://is.gd/q4Y5>).

GM. The government has asked its chief scientific adviser to investigate the merits of genetically modified food in the hope that his verdict will allay public fears about so-called "Frankenstein foods" (Independent: <http://is.gd/nQg0>).

11. CPRE eBulletin

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