

## CPRE SE eBulletin: 8 May 2009

### 1 South East Plan

**In brief.** The government issued the South East Plan on 6 May, promising higher housing growth to deliver 32,700 new homes each year until 2026 (GOSE: <http://tinyurl.com/seplan>). At least 60% of homes should be built on brownfield and 35% will be affordable. Reviews of the green belt are ordered for north-east Guildford and south of Oxford. New infrastructure is promised to support the growth. Eventually, at least 16% of energy for new developments will be secured from renewable sources. Seven strategic development areas (SDAs) are designated: South East Milton Keynes; South West Milton Keynes; Fareham, Hampshire; North of Hedge End, Hampshire; South of Oxford (Grenoble Road); Shoreham, West Sussex; and Whitehill/Bordon, Hampshire. The 5,600 home SDA "East of the M1 Motorway" has been dropped (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/oyzmwv>). However, 5,600 houses are now proposed in Bedfordshire east of Milton Keynes and the M1 and will be progressed through the East of England RSS.

**Housing.** The housing target has been trimmed by one percent: 654,000 new homes are planned for the region by 2026; 32,700 homes a year, of which 35% should be affordable. This is 8,500 (total) and 425 (annual) dwellings fewer than communities secretary Hazel Blears proposed last July. It is however a slight increase on the 32,000 home target suggested by the independent panel of inspectors. It is 13% up from the regional assembly's original target of 28,900, a target supported by CPRE, and the maximum the Assembly believed the region's infrastructure and environment can take. At least 60% of the homes will be on brownfield land. Edward Dawson for CPRE SE said "The strategy has finally taken account of many of the views of the people of the region. It is good news that as well as reducing the overall housing targets the Plan no longer refers to minimum housing figures. We will work hard to ensure that homes are provided in a way that avoids harming our precious landscapes" (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/p3g8sg>). The housing numbers are no longer minimum targets. If some key developments cannot be built, the housing shortfall will not be transferred to elsewhere in the district, including at Chertsey (2,500 homes), Aldershot Urban Extension (4,500), Whitehill/Bordon (5,500).

**Oxfordshire.** CPRE Oxfordshire reacted furiously to the proposal for a urban extension in the green belt south of the city. Helena Whall described it as "shockingly bad news for Oxfordshire. The fight to contain Oxford and preserve our precious countryside will continue, if necessary in the courts." (CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/ytguff>; Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/pft77d>; Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/qfas7a>). Oxford City Council applauded the report saying: "This is extremely good news for the city" (Oxford City: <http://tinyurl.com/c6rqox>).

**Kent.** The leader of Kent County Council said: "It is all very hypothetical against the backdrop of a global recession and a recession in the building industry in this country. So, the chances over the next 10 years of getting this amount built are pretty slight." Hilary Newport for Protect Kent said: "Our response to the Plan was a muted sigh of relief because it could have been much worse". She welcomed a reduction in the housing plans for Dover and the omission of the phases two and three of the the China Gateway in Thanet from the plan (Canterbury News: <http://tinyurl.com/plqqux>).

**Hampshire.** Hugh Sheppard, for North East Hampshire said CPRE was concerned that the 60% target to build on brownfield sites was too low but said "Under the circumstances CPRE is pleased because at one time it looked as if the government was going to press for even more houses" (Get Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/ofaw3c>).

**Other reaction.** The South East Partnership Board, which is responsible for delivering the plan, gave it a cautious welcome (<http://tinyurl.com/q9qrgo>). Campaigners in Reading celebrated the exclusion of a 7,500 home site on the Kennet flood plain (Get Reading: <http://tinyurl.com/r5uhtk>). Some property developers are critical of the plan, including the 35% affordable housing target. "The housing problem will not go away and we are stoking up still further problems for the decade ahead." The "35% affordable housing target appears inflexible and does not address the realities of

financial viability... particularly in respect of brownfield land" (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/cjqtav>). Other articles: (Horsham Advertiser: <http://tinyurl.com/qt3qhr>; Kent Online: <http://tinyurl.com/qf22jw>; Land Gazette: <http://tinyurl.com/q46bc5>; Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/cmvtzf>; Eastbourne Today: <http://tinyurl.com/qm888o>; Get Reading: <http://tinyurl.com/qc4har>; West Sussex Gazette: <http://tinyurl.com/qnog43>; BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/r2uc9g>; Get Surrey: <http://tinyurl.com/qlnhav>).

Subregion	Regional Assembly	Government July 2008	Government May 2009	% increase on Assembly
South Hampshire	80,000	80,000	<b>80,000</b>	0%
Sussex Coast	54,000	70,300	<b>69,300</b>	28%
East Kent and Ashford	48,000	56,700	<b>56,700</b>	18%
Kent Thames Gateway	48,000	52,140	<b>52,140</b>	7%
London Fringe	37,360	48,620	<b>47,880</b>	28%
Western Corridor & Blackwater Valley	89,520	102,100	<b>102,100</b>	14%
Milton Keynes	70,000	71,450	<b>68,250</b>	-1%
Central Oxfordshire	34,000	40,680	<b>40,680</b>	20%
Gatwick	33,000	36,500	<b>36,000</b>	9%
Rest of SE	84,120	104,010	<b>101,180</b>	20%
<b>South East Total</b>	<b>578,000</b>	<b>662,500</b>	<b>654,230</b>	<b>13%</b>

2009 total excludes 5,600 homes in Bedfordshire to be sought through the East of England RSS.

## 2 Planning

**PPS4: Planning for Prosperous Economies.** Communities and Local Government has published a new draft policy statement incorporating all key planning policies concerning economic development in urban and rural areas. It takes forward some of the recommendations made by Matthew Taylor in his *Living Working Countryside* report and Kate Barker's earlier recommendations to replace the retail needs test with a retail impact test. PPS4 has retained the 'sequential test' which requires developers to justify why they cannot build in the centre before they seek to build out of town, and strengthened the 'impact test' to focus on the potential economic, social and environmental effects of development. CPRE gave a mixed response to the draft. Kate Gordon welcomed measures to control economic development in open countryside away from existing settlements, the emphasis given to the 'sequential approach' which gives priority to developing and re-using land and buildings within settlements and a policy on protecting village and local centres. But, she said, "The last thing we need is growth at any cost. The environment must be at the heart of our future prosperity" Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/ddr83v>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/ck83o>; CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/cu4w98>).

**Town centres.** Ministers want empty shops to be converted into places for social enterprises, local art displays or leaning centres and are planning to ease change of use consent (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/opo9ug>).

**Community Infrastructure Levy.** The levy will be delayed until April 2010, a move welcomed by property interests (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/c3kztd>).

**Thames Gateway.** The Sustainable Environment Foundation said a single authority with planning and compulsory purchase powers is needed to deliver the Thames Gateway (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/ckykbm>).

**Dunsfold Park.** The public inquiry into 2,600 'eco' homes at the former Surrey airfield has ended. On behalf of CPRE and Stop Dunsfold Park New Town barrister Paul Stinchcombe said that this was a major development in the wrong place that would choke local roads. "The reality is that Dunsfold Park's Sustainable Transport Strategy could not restrain substantial use of the private car" (Get Surrey: <http://tinyurl.com/q5cc9w>).

**Land.** The value of building land has fallen by 50% (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/de7edz>).

**RSS.** The Environment Agency said it was deeply concerned that the West Midlands RSS does not consider flood risk or the practicalities of supplying water. The proposals were also criticised by West Midlands CPRE and others for ignoring the environment and proposing too high housing numbers (Birmingham Post: <http://tinyurl.com/crlgpq>; <http://tinyurl.com/c23jfc>).

**Kent International Gateway.** Protect Kent took part in a march on Bank Holiday Monday to protest at plans for the Kent International Gateway (Kent Online: <http://tinyurl.com/cmpryo>). Protect Kent is also extremely concerned about proposals for a massive 259-acre rail-road depot site at Borough Green in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/ch4xe6>).

**Polytunnels.** Plans have been submitted for a six acres of polytunnels in Kent. Simon Evans for CPRE Kent Tonbridge and Malling said: "There are concerns, not just about the visual impact but also the wider environment. There has to be a balance between viability and the needs of the farmer and the protection of the environment" (This is Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/q7krb5>).

**London.** Boris Johnson is to review the London Plan to 2031. A "Low Carbon Capital", a "green enterprise zone" for the Thames Gateway, and encouragement of farmers markets are among the plans (closing date 30 June 2009; London: <http://tinyurl.com/cladjk>; New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/cg3n4l>; 24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ddxkan>). He also wants a 'living bridge' across the Thames lined with shops, cafes and luxury homes (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/cuean6>).

**Wirescapes.** The government has eased the consent regime for 'modest' changes to power lines in AONBs but has kept the existing restrictions for SSSIs (Info4local: <http://tinyurl.com/q75wec>).

**Population.** "Population growth is the driving force behind our wrecking of the planet, but we are afraid to discuss it" (Fred Pearce in the Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c7gok6>).

### 3 Eco-towns

**Legal doubts.** A legal opinion obtained by CPRE casts doubt on the legality of the Government's proposed policy on eco-towns. It says that the proposed policy flies in the face of established procedures whereby communities agree the level and location of new development through development plans. CPRE's Kate Gordon said: "CPRE has been urging the Government not to pursue its eco-town policy in its current form. This legal opinion adds to existing doubts over the lawfulness of the Government's approach" (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/c5h68v>). The Local Government Association has also obtained legal advice that eco-towns cannot go ahead without local consultation (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/d4jhyr>). A government spokesman refuted both claims. "The judicial review into eco-towns earlier this year, which the Government won on all grounds, concluded that the Government is 'using rather than outflanking the planning system'" (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/r9u8ac>).

**Ford.** The Bordon Area Action Group (BAAG), made up of residents from Bordon and the surrounding villages, has been formed to oppose proposals for the eco-town (Bordon Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/qe3xun>). Arun District Councillors branded Ford "a load of rubbish. The more paperwork that has been generated on this scheme the worse the case has become, not better. All these figures are fingers in the wind stuff. They are all based on hopeful expectations and no sense of reality whatsoever" (Bognor Today: <http://tinyurl.com/rckdk4>). The Grasslands Trust added its support for the eco-towns concept. "We need eco-towns to show how essential green spaces are to the fabric of urban areas and how important they are in the lives of the people who live there" (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/d4wxgu>).

**Weston Otmoor.** Oxfordshire villagers are angry that Cherwell District Council has voted for an alternative eco-suburb north of Bicester. Cherwell still faces two big hurdles—landowners do not want to sell and it does not have an interested developer (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/cmdse8>).

**Other news.** The Campaign for Better Transport called on the government to abandon its proposal for eco-towns to be "separate and distinct" from larger built areas. New developments should be adjacent if not within existing urban centres. "Otherwise the eco-towns will simply be high-powered engines of traffic growth in the middle of the countryside and the eco-town label will be a poor joke" (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/d5t4hr>). The government has ruled that Middle Quinton at Long Marston will be considered under the current West Midlands RSS review. A CLG spokesman said the move has been made because of the timing of the RSS Examination in Public (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/dh8lzz>).

## 4 Housing

**Budget.** The Chancellor put housing at the heart of economic recovery. He announced a £600 million fund to unlock stalled housing sites and deliver up to an additional 10,000 homes in England over the next 2 years. The £600m includes £100m for local authorities to build energy efficient social housing (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/pzny9k>). The National Housing Federation has welcomed the plans as a step in the right direction, but warned the measures are not bold enough to tackle the country's economic or housing crises (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/odnw4x>). The Chartered Institute of Housing said: "We need a better balance and choice of places to live. The infatuation with home ownership must be tempered. We need to talk less about housing as an investment and housing ladders, and more about ways to address waiting lists, ways to reduce housing as a polluter, and ways to close the gap between the number of homes being built and households being formed." (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/cdu7gl>).

**New Housing Strategy.** The Government is working on a housing strategy which will be published later this year alongside the 2009 Pre-Budget Report. This will cover measures to: ensure sufficient land for development through housing allocations in local plans and release of public sector land; deliver effective and coordinated infrastructure provision; and ensure an increased supply of social and affordable housing (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/c3kztd>).

**Conservative Housing Plans.** The Tories issued their housing proposals. They will revoke regional spatial strategies (including regional building targets), replacing them with incentives to develop. Planning authorities will be able to revise LDFs to protect green belt land and prevent the imposition of eco-towns. They also aim to: create a new breed of local housing trust with wide planning powers; give support to Community Land Trusts; and incentivise new house-building by matching local authorities' council tax take for new houses for six years, with special incentives for affordable housing. The classification of gardens as brownfield land will be removed to stop 'garden grabbing'. Kate Gordon for CPRE said "The Conservative commitment to scrap unrealistic top-down housing targets makes sense, as does their strong support for the Green Belt. But the challenge to density guidelines is alarming. Relaxation of these guidelines would risk unleashing a wave of development in the very Green Belts and countryside the Conservatives are pledged to protect". The Town and Country Planning Association said: "Strategic planning questions such as whether to produce the homes the country needs, will have to be answered. If local interests were pursued to the exclusion of all others this could mean disappointment for many of the large numbers of families seeking a decent home to live in" (Conservatives: <http://tinyurl.com/dgfx4p>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/olusm3>; Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/qa56hx>).

**Affordable housing.** Defra and the HCA launched the Rural Affordable Housing Project to help local authorities increase the delivery of affordable housing in rural settlements of fewer than 3,000 residents. Secretary of State Hilary Benn said: "Affordable housing is vital to sustainable rural communities. We are committed to achieving the target of 10,300 new homes in small rural communities between 2008/2011" (HCA: <http://tinyurl.com/qfgrgs>). Applications from housing associations to build new homes have outstripped those from private developers for the first time

(Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/dbbfs5>). The first national survey of the design quality of affordable housing shows that while nearly two thirds was judged to be average, a fifth of schemes was rated poor. CABE and the Homes and Communities Agency have pledged to drive up design quality (CABE: <http://tinyurl.com/qhzjzu>).

**Zero carbon.** The Zero Carbon Hub, an industry body, has issued a report examining the uncertainties and challenges of zero carbon homes (<http://tinyurl.com/cxq96a>).

**Hampshire.** Winchester councillors have improved in principle a development of 2,000 houses on greenfield at Barton Farm (Hampshire Chronicle: <http://tinyurl.com/dn5jfk>).

## 5 Green Space and Environment

**Green Belt.** Designated green belt land in England is estimated at 1,638,840 hectares, about 13% of the land area. There has been a net increase of 3,170 hectares since 2007 due to improved measurement (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/csc3bt>; map: <http://tinyurl.com/cb9u2v>). Oxford's green belt is under threat, not just from the South East Plan but also from South Oxfordshire's plans to breach the green belt. Helena Whall for CPRE accused the council of being "guilty of double standards" (Banbury Cake: <http://tinyurl.com/cvhmjq>). About 100 campaigners walked part of Oxford's Green Belt in a call to protect it from development. (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/pzw72c>). Chiltern District Council has abandoned plans for nearly 3,000 homes on green belt land (Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/qm6dr2>). Boris Johnson dismissed plans to build on London's Green Belt despite proposals from the Adam Smith Institute (Evening Standard: <http://tinyurl.com/opqp4o>).

**Town Greens.** Oxford City Council has lodged an objection to a residents group campaign, backed by CPRE Oxfordshire, to get a city centre meadow registered as a Town Green (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/r4svbr>). Warneford Meadow in Oxford has been given town green status after a campaign by CPRE Oxfordshire and local residents (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/pmpr8l>).

**National Parks.** After the legal uncertainty of whether a national park should contain more than one type of landscape character was resolved by the decision to include the Western Weald in the new South Downs park, Natural England is planning to extend the boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks "quickly, but thoroughly". CPRE's Tom Oliver said: "Everyone will benefit from this: residents; visitors and businesses alike" (Grough: <http://tinyurl.com/c5n4d6>; Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/cvdvow>). "It is an odd experience to live in the middle of almost universal jubilation about a decision, and to hear elected representatives speaking out against it". Alice Miles on living in the South Downs National Park (The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/d563x4>). Rural businesses will be forced to relocate from Sussex if planning restrictions within the new National Park are too severe, a rural projects manager at Business Link Sussex claimed (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/pwo3ln>). Tourism bosses believe the new South Downs National Park will provide a massive boost to visitor numbers in the South (The News: <http://tinyurl.com/d7jl8t>). William White for the National Farmers Union said: "For the 1,100 to 1,600 farming businesses based here, hordes of day-trippers looking to roam anywhere and everywhere will be extremely unwelcome" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ow4hor>).

**Set-aside.** In the latest move to side-step compulsory measures to replace the environmental benefits of set-aside, farmers leaders are considering launching the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, bringing together the farming industry, advisory bodies, conservation groups and government agencies (Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/djmma9>). However, England's farmers and Natural England may be approaching a compromise on replacing set-aside. Farmers may only have to remove 62,000 hectares of farmland from production in order to recapture the environmental benefits (Farmers Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/r99hp9>).

**Orchards.** "Once, the Stour Valley in Kent billowed with flowering cherry trees. No more," Clive Aslet says (The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/c5vck3>). The National Trust and Natural England have joined forces to promote traditional orchards; 60% of fruit trees have been grubbed up since the 1950s (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/dhdpwf>; NT: <http://tinyurl.com/d6s5p6>).

**Biodiversity.** Natural England has published the latest biodiversity indicators, which show both decline and improvement (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/cqjdx9>). Defra is to invest up to £10 million to help to identify the main threats to bees and other insect pollinators (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/qpsa7x>; Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/d4uakg>). Many butterfly species are at the brink of extinction. "The decline of butterflies is not all farmers and climate change. Some of our rarest butterflies have been inadvertently decimated by conservation efforts" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/d7jv7u>). Ecologists fear second generation biofuels will wreak havoc on the world's landscapes and biodiversity (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c6f5yo>).

**Litter.** The Marine Conservation Society's annual Beachwatch survey found a record amount of litter fouling Britain's beaches. CPRE said "These figures confirm what we suspect: that people are continuing to thoughtlessly drop litter and the Government should act on managing litter as a matter of urgency" (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/qwl9bt>).

**Water.** Hilary Benn published the draft Flood and Water Management Bill which aims to: reduce the likelihood and impacts of flooding; give water companies better powers to conserve water during drought; and reduce pollution and improve water quality (Deadline 24 July. NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/qk8y9w>; Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/ryenzd>). Natural England responded that the natural environment has to play a greater role in flood management (NE: <http://tinyurl.com/dnxzcr>). The Environment Agency is consulting on flood risk management through London and the Thames estuary (EA: <http://is.gd/vaPq>). The Cave review into the water industry called for more competition and easier mergers between companies, but does not address the environmental challenges of water supply (Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/c2jbjx>).

## 6 Environmental Protest

Concern is rising about legal and police actions to monitor and inhibit protest, heightened by the G20 protests and growing use of Section 44 powers under the Terrorism Act 2000. Even CPRE campaigners and our allies are now being caught in the surveillance net, some treated as "domestic extremists".

**CPRE campaigners.** Protect Kent chairman Richard Knox Johnson, complained that he was targeted by police intelligence teams ahead of the 2008 Kingsnorth power station protest. He was one of several local residents photographed leaving a public meeting discussing climate change near Chatham (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/pxt73w>; CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/r47swu>). Richard and Save Radley Lakes protester Peter Harbour feature in Radio 4's *The Report* broadcast on 7 May (listen in iPlayer: BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/q5veg4>). The documentary also spoke to Timothy Lawson-Cruttenden, solicitor-advocate and scourge of protesters, responsible for the Radley Lakes injunction and the unsuccessful attempt to slap a similar injunction of groups opposed to Heathrow expansion in 2007. The programme reports that Lawson-Cruttenden maintains a "war room" to monitor protest in his offices with walls of charts plotting links between protesters. He and Alan Thomas from Kent police make it clear that "associating" with wrong kind of protester, in the wrong kind of place, or going to the wrong kind of meeting is reason enough for suspicion. Peter Harbour, a retired physicist and conservationist, has ended up on the National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit database for domestic extremism, though the police insist this does not label him an extremist (NETCU: <http://www.netcu.org.uk/>).

**Elsewhere.** Police arrested 114 people believed to be planning direct action E.ON's coal-fired power station at Ratcliffe-on-Soar. Shami Chakrabarti for Liberty, said: "In the light of the policing of the G20 protests, people will want to be confident that there was evidence of a real conspiracy to commit criminal damage and that this was not just an attempt by the police to disrupt perfectly legitimate protest" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ct6rz9>). Strathclyde police offered tens of thousands of pounds to a student protester in an attempt to infiltrate Plane Stupid (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ql3vno>). Campaigners from the "Climate Suffrajets", a splinter group from Climate Rush, used stencils and green paint to daub the words "Every Little Hurts" on more than 20 Tesco stores to protest against an in-store promotion that offered airmiles to people who bought

energy saving light bulbs (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/caar97>). One of Europe's longest-running protest camps is being voluntarily cleared yesterday after being set up nearly 10 years ago in the Peak District national park to fight quarry near Stanton Moor. The 50-year old planning permission for the quarry has now been rescinded (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/cjsyzt>). Court documents suggest French power company EDF spied on environmentalists in Britain (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/d2jmab>).

## 7 Energy and Climate Change

**Budget.** The Chancellor presented the world's first carbon budget which committed Britain to cut carbon emissions by 34% by 2020 (DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/c4jull>). Its green measures included:

- ◆ Extra £1bn to help climate change measures.
- ◆ The world's first carbon budget, committing Britain to cut carbon emissions by 34% by 2020.
- ◆ £435m of extra support for energy efficiency measures for homes, firms and public buildings.
- ◆ £525m of new funds and support for offshore wind projects.
- ◆ £4bn for renewable energy projects from the European Investment Bank.
- ◆ Combined heat and power plants will be exempt from climate change levy from 2013.
- ◆ Landfill Tax is to continue to rise by £8 a year until 2013.
- ◆ A scrappage scheme for older cars.

The Chancellor also announced extra tax breaks for North Sea oil exploration. Environmentalists welcomed the carbon budget but said the measures were inadequate. Ben Stafford for CPRE said "the Government will have to come up with more ambitious proposals if it is to meet the 34% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 set in its carbon budgets" (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/pkycdp>). Friends of the Earth said: "The government has squandered a historic opportunity to kick-start a green industrial revolution and slash UK carbon dioxide emissions" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/cz4ada>; <http://tinyurl.com/d565rb>). The RSPB said "this budget shows the Government still has not grasped the scale of the environmental challenge. We are still in the world of a Brown budget dressed up with some green ribbon" (<http://tinyurl.com/d6v15j>). George Monbiot called the scrappage scheme "the worst scam of all" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/bg68nz>).

**Energy planning.** Under the forthcoming Renewable Energy Strategy, local authorities will be required to identify "broad areas" where renewable energy projects including wind farms could be built, energy minister Mike O'Brien said. Council planners will locate areas where projects will be "encouraged or considered for development, or where concerns are low". O'Brien ruled out imposing 2km "buffer zones" around renewable energy developments to lessen visual impacts on the landscape. He also revealed that as well as energy projects above 50MW in size, clusters of smaller projects "cumulatively more than 50MW" would also be determined by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/cwg5we>). Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband said "we need to pursue the trinity of low-carbon technologies: renewables, nuclear and clean fossil fuels... Of course, wind turbines will change the look of parts of our countryside. People are right that wind farms need to go through the proper planning process. But the truth is that the biggest threat to our countryside is not the wind turbine, it is climate change" (The Times: <http://tinyurl.com/cfr27c>). The National Grid called on the government to develop a 'masterplan' for energy in the UK. "We need a masterplan to determine the route-map for meeting government targets of 80% emissions reduction by 2050, and 15% renewable energy sources by 2020," said chief executive Steve Holliday. The masterplan also needs to address smart grids and metering, biogas production, heat, transport and conservation of energy (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/ptndas>). The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition presented over 85,000 signatures calling on the UK Government to shun fossil fuelled power in favour of green energy (RSPB: <http://tinyurl.com/cdxj2l>). Britain could save up to £12.6bn a year in imports of fossil fuels if it embarks on a large scale programme of energy efficiency and renewable technologies a report for the Renewable Energy Association said (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c3w428>).

**Nuclear.** The government named 11 potential sites for new nuclear power stations, including Dungeness in Kent in preparation for the National Policy Statement due later this year (Consultation ends 14 May; Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/qcjk2h>; DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/cxg3mf>; Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/clhn66>). In Cumbria, a community owned wind farm may be torn down for a nuclear plant (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/dcqvoh>).

**Coal.** Four coal-burning power stations fitted with carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology are to be built, the environment secretary Ed Miliband said (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/cqfwjn>; DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/czwe5e>; Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/dahqpo>). The EU has approved funding for two UK CCS projects (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/oo4p5e>). Climate Camp activists vowed to use direct action to stop the building of the first of the four planned stations at Kingsnorth (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/c2m52k>). Carbon dioxide captured from power stations can be safely buried underground for thousands of years without the risk of seeping into the atmosphere, scientists concluded (The Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/dhdpp4>). Scientists in Iceland want to turn CO<sub>2</sub> into solid rock, while scientists in Singapore have turned CO<sub>2</sub> into biofuel (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/dh4w8b>; Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/q67ebx>).

**Wind.** CPRE Hants is to oppose two 126.5-metre turbines on the crest of the South Downs National Park near East Meon (Daily Echo: <http://tinyurl.com/djksa5>). The UK's largest wind farm has opened in Scotland; 140 turbines with plans for 36 more (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/p782ac>). There is growing demand for "farm sized" wind turbines but none will be manufactured in the UK (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/dbvdxn>). The RSPB has installed its first wind turbine (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c9d8ky>). The Department of Energy and Climate Change has commissioned a report to assess the potential for marine energy in English and Welsh waters (Carbon Trust: <http://tinyurl.com/d4nbn9>). The government launched a £20 million competition to accelerate the design of new foundations for deep water offshore wind turbines (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/cgrk22>). The UK Energy Research Centre said that more options are needed to counter the intermittency of renewable electricity technologies like wind and marine energy (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/cjrpbh>). British Wind Energy Association members have raised a £3.2 million towards researching ways to avoid wind turbines interfering with air traffic control (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/dxln9d>). BWEA also launched a blistering attack on the planning system, arguing that many local councils are still subjecting projects to lengthy delays. The LGA said that decisions could not be rushed (Business Green: <http://tinyurl.com/aqn3du>). The number of planning applications for new onshore wind farms in the UK has fallen to its lowest level since early 2002 (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/q9ugql>).

**Wind nimbys.** "An epidemic of nimbyism" is holding up planning applications and threatening to derail the Scottish government's targets for renewable energy (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/d7cugt>). Energy and Climate Change secretary, Ed Miliband, said "it should be socially unacceptable to be against wind turbines in your area—like not wearing your seatbelt or driving past a zebra crossing" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c6mkxq>). Janet Dubé, a member of CPRW, responded that "arguments and name-calling over wind turbines are a diversion from the serious matter that concerns us, and on which we need to co-operate" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/cjwhj2>). Nimbys are being blamed for the loss of 600 wind turbine manufacturing jobs on the Isle of Wight (Business Green: <http://tinyurl.com/cfab65>) but Greenpeace blamed the Government's backing for coal and nuclear power (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/dljuue>). "Richard Buxton is the nimby-in-chief" who is using his legal practice to halt wind schemes, including including one planned by RWE at Romney Marsh in Kent, another involving MK Renewables near Milton Keynes (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/cjtkfo>).

**Bioenergy.** FoE issued a report claiming that biofuels often caused more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than fossil fuels (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/cuss7c>). New rules for the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) call for 3.25% of transport fuels to come from biofuels in 2009 rising to 5% from 2013 onwards. Biofuels used in the UK must also achieve emission savings compared to fossil fuels of at least 45% (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/pk63gq>). The Environment Agency attacked some forms of biomass power generation for emitting more CO<sub>2</sub> than burning gas, but

short rotation coppice chips could save between 35-85% fewer emissions than fossil fuel. It wants biomass generators to publicly report greenhouse gas emissions from producing, transporting and using biomass fuels (New Energy Focus: <http://tinyurl.com/p7nsuf>; "the media got it wrong", Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/crul4n>).

**Other energy and climate change news.** The National Trust, RSPB, WWF and the Anglers' Trust say the government's shortlist of schemes to generate clean energy in the Severn estuary is biased towards large-scale, environmentally destructive proposals (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/pvfjoe>). New research published in Nature has identified the amount of fossil fuels the world can burn if we are to have a reasonable chance of preventing two degrees of global warming (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c6mtvr>). The Energy Saving Trust has asked the British public to rekindle the wartime spirit that helped see them through the adversities of the blitz to overcome the current environmental crisis (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/qv5ygh>).

## 8 Transport

**Thames Crossing.** Transport minister Andrew Adonis has published a study identifying three potential sites for a new crossing over the river Thames (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/qt3o68>). Hilary Newport for Protect Kent said: "The environmental damage that would be caused by an additional crossing, wherever it is placed, would be immense. Instead of building a new crossing, government should be looking at practical ways to reduce our reliance on road-based freight and the burden of pollution from cars and trucks" (Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/dkdv3f>). The Thames could become a key commuter route under Boris Johnson's plan to improve river transport services (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/o5q5nd>).

**Roads.** The government published a scheme to subsidise electric cars from 2011. Ralph Smyth for CPRE commented the Government seems to have forgotten the needs of the countryside. "Many hard-pressed families in rural areas can barely afford to keep their current car let alone buy a new one" (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/rbh72x>; DfT: <http://tinyurl.com/rbhpsk>).

**Aviation.** The 2M Group of 23 borough councils have joined CPRE, Transport for London, London mayor Boris Johnson, Greenpeace, WWF-UK and RSPB to launch a High Court challenge against the government's decision to expand Heathrow airport with a third runway. They said that the new runway would be disastrous for those living near the airport and under the flight path, and will massively increase carbon emissions, and is incompatible with the pressing need to tackle climate change (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/d3a2rz>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/cekbjt>). BAA has insisted that it will not be withdrawing its planning application for a second runway at Stansted despite pressure from local councils, who wrote to communities secretary Hazel Blears urging her to call off the inquiry (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/r6xdsd>).

**Waterways.** A Treasury review into efficiency savings has rejected the option of selling British Waterways' property portfolio (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/cs9fhu>).

## 9 Rural Affairs and Food

**Countryside "boring".** More than half of Britons think the countryside is boring and many of them are unable to identify common animals and plants, according to a survey. One in 10 adults could not identify a sheep, 44% could not spot an oak tree and 83% did not know what a bluebell looked like (Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/dmzy6j>). Woodlands, countryside and parks have become out of bounds to a generation of 'cotton wool kids' with fewer than 10% playing there, according to Natural England as it launched its One Million Children Outdoors programme (Natural England: <http://tinyurl.com/com3kg>).

**Farming.** At least two organic farmers a week are leaving the movement as consumer demand for premium food stagnates and costs rise (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/c2c4qy>).

**Retail.** The British Retail Consortium, which speaks for the big supermarkets, has condemned the proposal from the Competition Commission for a supermarket ombudsman. The draft PPS4 (above) does not include proposals for a "competition test". The government is waiting for the Competition Commission's reconsideration of the issue before deciding how to proceed (24 dash: <http://tinyurl.com/c8x8md>; Competition Commission: <http://tinyurl.com/c8qxnq>; Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/ddr83v>). Lewes in Sussex has extended its local currency scheme which supports local traders (24 dash: <http://tinyurl.com/cl6jpc>).

**Pubs.** Community pubs are in danger unless Government takes urgent action to support them, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research. It argues that instead of punishing them, the Government should reward and incentivise pubs that play a positive role in their local community. The report found that pubs inject an average £80,000 into their local economy each year adding more value than beer sold through shops and supermarkets, because of the jobs they generate (IPPR: <http://tinyurl.com/c76dts>).

### **10 CPRE eBulletin**

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