

Campaign to Protect Rural England

South East Region eBulletin: News for March 2010

Transport News

1. Heathrow Third Runway Victory

The challenge. A legal challenge into the government's decision to back the third runway was launched in April 2009 by a coalition of six London authorities, local residents group (NoTRAG) and campaign groups, including HACAN, Greenpeace, CPRE, WWF-UK and several others. The High Court has now backed the challenge and the government will need to revise its case for the runway and consult again. Campaigners declared victory but the DfT is defiant saying the judgment changes nothing.

The judgement. Lord Justice Carnwarth declined to quash the government's decision to back further development at Heathrow but described government claims aviation policy was in some way divorced from requirements of the 2008 Climate Change Act as 'untenable in law and common sense'. The ruling means the government's entire aviation policy must now be reviewed to take into account the implications of the 2008 Climate Change Act. The 2003 aviation white paper, the foundation of basis for airport expansion plans across the country, effectively obsolete. Carnwarth said if the government decides to push ahead with the third runway project it must review the climate change implications of Heathrow expansion, the economic case and the issue of how additional passengers would get to a bigger airport. On the economic case for expansion, Carnwarth said he would be surprised if the recent tripling of the cost to society of emitting carbon did not have "a significant effect" on the economic case for the runway: "it makes no sense to treat the economic case as settled in 2003." He said the claimants' case that there is no credible plan to transport millions of extra passengers to an expanded Heathrow was "justified". (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/b9I9m>; Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bb0Qy>; Independent: <http://is.gd/bdUvm>; Planning: <http://is.gd/bb1vw>).

Next steps. The judge has invited the government to sign a legally binding undertaking that it will not base future aviation policy solely on its 2003 white paper. A court hearing is expected to take place next month to examine the government's response to the request. At the same hearing the coalition will seek costs from the government.

Reaction. CPRE's Shaun Spiers said: "The Government said there could be no argument about the need for a third runway. This was undemocratic and it was wrong. We were forced to bring this legal case to give people the right to challenge the expansion of Heathrow. The High Court has now made clear that a fundamental review of aviation policy is needed. This not just a victory for people living around Heathrow or around other airports, it is a victory for everyone who wants a tranquil countryside and a democratic planning system." Cllr Ray Puddifoot speaking on behalf of the local councils said: "The third runway is effectively dead because it cannot survive the proper economic and environmental scrutiny which the government tried to avoid. As local councils we call on the prime minister to do the decent thing and bury this discredited policy." David Cameron, the Tory leader, said: "The policy is in tatters. They made the wrong judgment about this, we made the right judgment".

DfT reaction: "it changes nothing". The Department of Transport rejected the campaigner's claims. "It is completely untrue to suggest the recent court ruling means the Government has to re-run the consultation on Heathrow. This judgment in fact upholds our policy and refused to quash our decisions – it changes nothing. It has been misreported that the judge said our decisions were based on flawed evidence – this is nonsense and only refers to the fact that we would need to take into account changing circumstances which has always been the Department's position."

2. The Route of High Speed Two

The route. Lord Adonis announced the route of High Speed 2, which will cut through Buckinghamshire and north Oxfordshire and onwards to Birmingham through Northamptonshire at a cost of between £15.8m and £17.4m (DfT: <http://is.gd/bbhh4>; map: <http://is.gd/bbhKr>;

Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bbplV>). Trains will run through a tunnel from Euston to Old Oak Common and then via tunnel to the Ruislip area. The route will head for Aylesbury with an overground alignment beside the A413 past Wendover in Buckinghamshire through the Chiltern Hills area of outstanding natural beauty. North of the Chilterns the line will make use of the former Great Central Railway alignment through north Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. It will join the existing West Coast Main Line at Lichfield, allowing high speed trains to continue over the existing rail network to the north of England and Scotland. Lord Adonis said the case for a £2 billion link to Heathrow is weak but might improve with if the third runway is built. The trains will be 400 metres long and have a capacity of up to 1,100 seats, with one train every four minutes passing through the Chilterns AONB.

National. Ralph Smyth, CPRE Senior Transport Campaigner, said: "By using existing and disused transport corridors as well as tunnelling, the impact on the Chilterns is less than feared. But the impact on Warwickshire, where the line is proposed to run through open countryside, is a major concern" (<http://is.gd/bbiW1>). The Campaign for Better Transport said the government had "failed to prove its high-speed rail plan would be green. The danger is that a high-speed line will suck money out of the current transport network" (New Start: <http://is.gd/bbtai>).

London. Boris Johnson refused to endorse the plan saying more research was needed (Evening Standard: <http://is.gd/bbgjA>). The Thames Gateway London Partnership said that the London hub for the line should be in East London (24dash: <http://is.gd/bbgrV>).

The Chilterns. In the Chilterns AONB, the track will be in a tunnel underneath the Chalfonts and Amersham followed by a series of cuttings and viaducts to Wendover (BA: <http://is.gd/baMGz>; <http://is.gd/bbieK>). A second option will run close to or under Beaconsfield, Seer Green and Gerrards Cross (Bucks Advertiser: <http://is.gd/bbiOV>). John Taylor, Chairman The Chiltern Society, said: "by publishing a preferred high-speed rail route through the heart of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the government seems to be indicating that it does not regard AONBs to be of overriding national importance" (Bucks Advertiser: <http://is.gd/baWjl>). Councillors from Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council said irreparable damage will be caused to the Buckinghamshire countryside the plans are given the go-ahead (Local London: <http://is.gd/bbgbn>). Aylesbury MP David Lidington told transport minister Sadiq Khan that the plan was a devastating blow (Bucks Free Press: <http://is.gd/bbgzj>). The leader of South Bucks District Council, Adrian Busby said every householder who stands to be affected by High Speed Two should get ready to fight the plans (Bucks Advertiser: <http://is.gd/bbh28>). Cheryl Gillan, Tory MP for Chesham and Amersham, told members of the public she would be prepared to speak out against high-speed rail plans and put her constituents first, even if it means defying Tory policy (Bucks Advertiser: <http://is.gd/bb4H6>). A Save the Chiltern protest group has been set up (<http://savethechilterns.org/>) and a Chiltern Action Group is planned (Bucks Free Press: <http://is.gd/bbg24>). Nearly 6,500 people have signed a petition against the line on the No 10 website (<http://is.gd/bbite>). The Bucks Free Press is campaigning against the proposed line (<http://is.gd/bb4qq>).

Oxfordshire. Helena Whall, Campaign Manager for CPRE Oxfordshire, said: "Wherever the route eventually goes, we believe that the physical impacts of high speed trains on local environments will be serious and need to be mitigated" (CPRE Oxon: <http://is.gd/bfbE0>). North Oxfordshire MP Tony Baldry called for compensation for residents (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/bbfx4>).

3. Other Transport News

Rail. A rail link between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes, part of the East-West rail project, could be operational by Christmas 2016 (Bucks Herald: <http://is.gd/bb4Ky>).

Aviation. Shepway District Council approved plans for a runway extension and a new terminal building at Lydd Airport in Kent. Protect Kent said it was "saddened" by the decision. Deputy director Sean Furey said: "The decision by Shepway Council shows little consideration has been made for the tranquillity of this unique area or opposition from local residents" (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdRhn>). Natural England and Protect Kent expressed their concerns to the government, which has now put the plans on hold (BBC: <http://is.gd/bboRQ>; Protect Kent: <http://is.gd/bfcbj>). London mayor Boris Johnson's permission to double the number of flights at

City Airport has won the 2010 "worst planning decision" award, an inscribed breeze block (Planning: <http://is.gd/baZRU>). BAA has delayed again its planning application for a second runway at Stansted airport (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdQAO>).

Roads. The Transport Select Committee called for 900 miles of new dual carriageway as well as a new motorway building and widening programme (HoC: <http://is.gd/bfdLr>). Ralph Smythe of CPRE said: "Besides the devastating environmental impact, this call for the biggest road building programme in a generation makes no sense at a time when there is a massive maintenance backlog on existing roads. The committee's attempt to make their road plans appear green by supporting a few sustainable travel initiatives is like an elephant trying to hide behind a blade of grass. These misguided proposals would be as unacceptable for the countryside as they would be unaffordable for the taxpayer" (CPRE: <http://is.gd/bdTnR>).

Planning & Environment News

4. The Budget

Alistair Darling announced a series of green measures including a Green Investment Bank and reform of the energy market. £60 million was allocated to develop offshore wind industry manufacturing sites close to ports (DECC: <http://is.gd/baWRq>). He said that expenditure on education, health, defence and public order and safety will rise, but spending on housing and the environment will fall from £29 billion in 2009/10 to £27 billion in the coming financial year.

The Green Investment Bank. The £2 billion GIB will operate on a commercial basis and involve both public and private sector capital. Offshore wind farms will be the initial priority for funding.

DCLG, told to save £200 million, said it would save £130 million from back office, procurement, consultancy and marketing and £70 million from work with arm's-length bodies, like the Homes and Communities Agency. **DEFRA** and its agencies were told to deliver £194m of savings. Hilary Benn claimed most will come from efficiency savings and administration (RSN: <http://is.gd/baSKB>; Defra: <http://is.gd/baWV9>).

Reaction. Ben Stafford of CPRE called for the Chancellor to ring-fence existing environmental budgets: "At a time of growing threats to the environment and the countryside from development, climate change and simple neglect, it would be remarkably short-sighted for any political party to advocate trimming these budgets even further." Friends of the Earth claimed the establishment of the Green Investment Bank as a campaign victory, but complained that the budget failed to tackle emissions from transport (CPRE: <http://is.gd/bbjIT>; FoE: <http://is.gd/bbjr7>).

5. PPS1: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate

Consultation. The government launched a consultation on a climate change supplement to PPS1 (closing date 1 June 2010; <http://is.gd/b9etW>).

Renewable energy. The new PPS will include guidance on how LDFs will support renewable and low carbon energy generation: "depending on their scale and impact, renewable and low carbon energy developments should be capable of being accommodated in most locations". It calls for "greater integration of waste management with the provision of decentralised energy" and "district heating networks based on renewable energy from waste, surplus heat and biomass". The Regional Strategy should "reduce the need to travel and enable the fullest possible use of sustainable low carbon transport" and should "should set ambitious targets for renewable energy and a clear strategy to support their delivery". "Targets for renewable energy should be treated as minima not maxima". Planning authorities should ensure that "local approaches for protecting landscape and townscape... provide appropriate safeguards... but do not preclude the development of specific [renewable] technologies other than in the most exceptional circumstances." Applicants will not have to demonstrate a need for renewable energy and planning authorities will not be able to refuse them because regional or local targets may have been reached.

Landscapes. "When located in the Green Belt elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development... developers will need to demonstrate very special

circumstances [which] may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources”.

Reaction. Planning and environmental groups welcomed the announcements as a “historic moment for planning”. Hugh Ellis, chief planner at the Town and Country Planning Association, said: “This policy is one of the most dramatic and significant steps forward in the development of spatial planning. The profession has to step up to the challenge of taking communities to a low carbon future.” The new draft policies were welcomed by the RPTI and Friends of the Earth (Planning: <http://is.gd/bbrRx>). Fiona Howie for CPRE said: “An open and accessible countryside, as well as green spaces in urban areas, is critical to the nation’s health and well being, and improving people’s quality of life. It’s encouraging that the consultation papers acknowledged this and seeks to protect and enhance our much loved countryside... We must not support development simply because it will have a low carbon footprint, other environmental impacts must also be considered” (CPRE: <http://is.gd/bdPnV>).

6. Planning

Energy PPS. The Energy and Climate Change Select Committee attacked government plans to speed up the planning permission process and voiced particular fears over the way greenfield sites could be transformed into nuclear power stations. It said the government’s consultation failed to adequately engage the public while the statements themselves contain significant flaws. It expressed “significant concern” that decision-making by the IPC could give rise to an energy infrastructure that risks breaching the UK’s carbon budgets. Fiona Howie for CPRE said: “The report rightly questions the Government’s claims that many new power stations are needed when enough capacity has already been approved to ‘keep the lights on’ well past 2020”. The report called for more engagement with the public over wind farms and more cooperative developments, citing Westmill Wind Farm Co-op in Oxfordshire as a successful model (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdRMM>; Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bbnQK>; Edie: <http://is.gd/bbn0C>; Report: <http://is.gd/bbmXR>). More than 90 local authorities were not consulted about publicity requirements for the nuclear PPS as required by the Planning Act 2008. FoE is among those warning up for a judicial review of the consultation process (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdS4k>).

PPS25. The government published its planning policy on development and flood risk (DCLG: <http://is.gd/b9p2b>). It also published *Planning Policy Statement 25 Supplement: Development and Coastal Change*, which says that all inappropriate development such as housing will continue to be banned in areas vulnerable to coastal erosion, but there will no longer be a blanket ban on temporary development that has wider economic benefits (<http://is.gd/bdJft>).

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The government published revised guidance which gives greater emphasis on the role the historic environment can play in regeneration and economic development, to encourage heritage to be seen as an asset rather than a barrier to development (DCLG: <http://is.gd/bbzUF>; Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/bdGeo>).

The Infrastructure Planning Commission published a map of applications and anticipated projects. Only one is in the South East, the A21 highway improvement in Kent (<http://is.gd/b9diS>).

S106 & CIL. The government has issued new guidance on the Community Infrastructure Levy and use of S106 agreements (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/b9lkZ>; DCLG: <http://is.gd/b9mn8>; <http://is.gd/baWYZ>). After 6 April, councils must be sure that any obligations are necessary to make the development acceptable, are directly related to the project and are reasonably related in scale. Planning permissions granted with obligations outside this definition will be unlawful and planners fear they will be open to judicial review (Planning: <http://is.gd/baYhG>).

Regional Development Agencies. The NAO criticised RDAs for being over-optimistic about the potential benefits of projects, failing to benchmark schemes by evaluating past investments, and increasing risk by cramming the bulk of spending into the final months of the financial year. However, it confirmed they generate at least £3.30 of added value for every £1 spent (New Start: <http://is.gd/b9iyG>). The Conservatives have confirmed local areas will be asked whether they want to scrap RDAs in favour of new bodies if the party is elected (New Start: <http://is.gd/b9iJD>).

LDFs. South Oxfordshire District Council announced it will delay consideration of its local development framework core strategy until after the general election (CPRE Oxon:

<http://is.gd/bf9WH>). An Inspector has decided that the Oxford City Core Strategy can proceed, providing the City Council makes changes and he has information on the latest legal challenges to the Plan. The Core Strategy process had been suspended to take account of CPRE Oxfordshire's successful legal challenge to the South East Plan. CPRE Oxfordshire said: "there must be a serious question after this tortuous process whether a 'sound' plan can now emerge" (CPRE Oxon: <http://is.gd/bfa58>). Protect Kent has made strong objections to Canterbury City Council's Core Strategy, which suggests that 2,000+ new houses will be built on grade 1 agricultural land on the southern side of the City (Protect Kent: <http://is.gd/bfcpN>).

7. Housing

Affordable housing. The government has set up a commission of affordable housing experts to find ways to build more council housing (IH: <http://is.gd/b9mBu>). The government approved an urban extension in Northamptonshire, despite it delivering only 20% affordable housing and conflicting with the local development plan (Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/bdSSH0>).

NHPAU. The remit of the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit has been extended by the government to include local housing markets (Planning: <http://is.gd/baMf2>). NHPAU has also launched a "conversation" on the topic. The papers suggests that "there is some question as to whether a robust, transparent easy-to-use methodology is available" for the Strategic Housing Market Assessments that underpin Regional Strategies and LDFs, i.e. they may be little better than guesswork (Planning: <http://is.gd/baQWc>; DCLG: <http://is.gd/baR1P>).

Around the South East. Councillors in Winchester raised fears that the countryside between Bishop's Waltham, Wickham and Waltham Chase might eventually disappear under housing (HC: <http://is.gd/b9pcC>). Campaigners say Kennet Meadows, a flood plain west of Reading, should be purchased by the council for the community. The meadow was saved from development after plans to build 7,500 homes were dropped by Prudential (BBC: <http://is.gd/bb1oS>; Get Reading: <http://is.gd/bbtKY>; <http://is.gd/bbtOR>). In Hampshire, Nursling residents have won the first round of their fight to stop 350 homes being built on a greenfield gap site (Romsey Advertiser: <http://is.gd/bbtyq>). Oxfordshire MP Ed Vaizey has said proposals to build 1,500 homes on the edge of Wantage should be halted until after the election (Oxford Times: <http://is.gd/bbtFN>).

Eco-towns. The North of Fareham SDA has been given eco-town status but local councillors still fear extensive loss of green fields (Portsmouth Today: <http://is.gd/bbq0a>; FDC: <http://is.gd/bbqcO>).

8. Landscapes, Tranquillity and Environment

Warneford Meadow, Oxford has finally been designated as a town green and protected from development after a High Court judge upheld the designation. The judgement is the result of a 22 year campaign, led by CPRE with local community groups. It was hailed by Helena Whall from CPRE Oxfordshire: "We hope this ruling secures the protection of this unique and valuable green space for generations to come". Kate Ashbrook of the Open Spaces Society said: "We congratulate Paul Deluce and the Friends of Warneford Meadow for their public-spirited and courageous campaign." The NHS owners of the site say they will not appeal the decision (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/b9qTi>; Grough: <http://is.gd/bbts7>; CPRE Oxon: <http://is.gd/bf9te>).

Town greens. Campaigners working to protect a Oxpens Meadow in central Oxford from development say there is a "big question mark" over Council plans to hand it to a community trust, rather than register it as town green (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/b9mKB>). The government review of village green legislation later this year must be limited to speeding up the process, the Open Spaces Society said. The National Housing Federation, Home Builders Federation and Planning Officers Society have called for the definition of village greens to be tightened up, and for registration attempts only to be allowed before a planning application is submitted (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdRa3>). In a landmark ruling, the High Court said that deferring to other users, such as golfers, did not invalidate a town green claim (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdRsQ>).

South Downs National Park. The 'Shadow' South Downs National Park Authority became the legal body responsible for running the 632 square mile National Park on 1 April, replacing the two existing AONBs. It will work to build up the full NPA in the coming year. It will be the most

populous National Park with 120,000 residents, and probably the most active with more than 10 million people within an hour's journey. Several active CPRE members have been appointed to the authority, including Margaret Paren and Minette Palmer, who are members of CPRE Hampshire and Sebastian Anstruther of CPRE Sussex. A new environmental grouping, the South Downs Network, has been created. It includes CPRE Sussex and CPRE Hampshire and is already liaising with the new authority, acting as its 'challenging neighbour'. The SDN is being consulted on the scheme of delegation, which is likely to set the pattern for planning control in the SDNP (NE: <http://is.gd/b9mhq>; CPRE Sussex: <http://is.gd/bfcaK>).

National Parks. Defra issued its Vision for National Parks, covering policies for climate change; conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural heritage; securing value for money; and fostering biodiversity (<http://is.gd/bdPZ90>). The Commission for Rural Communities responded saying that "growth, if well managed, will foster more viable local services, more affordable and well designed housing, and appropriate economic development" (<http://is.gd/bdKo8>).

Green spaces. Natural England has published its Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance, which it wants to see adopted in open space and green infrastructure strategies (<http://is.gd/b9g3y>). *Urban green nation: building the evidence base* from CABI reviews the state of England's urban green space and its impact on people's health and well-being. It finds a strong link between urban green space and people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood (<http://is.gd/b9fVS>).

Green belt. Plans to redevelop a football ground for housing and build a replacement in the Buckinghamshire green belt have been rejected on appeal (Planning: <http://is.gd/baTCD>). CPRE Hertfordshire has all but won a victory against the threat of major development on rural green belt land north of Harpenden. Regional planning officers have said that the land between Luton and Hitchin will not be included in the East of England Regional Plan (SAH Review: <http://is.gd/bbt01>). A Centre for Cities report recommends abandoning the national brownfield target and devolving responsibility for protecting greens belt to local authorities (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdQS4>).

Lost Life: England's Lost and Threatened Species published by Natural England identifies nearly 500 animals and plants that have become extinct in England, almost all within the last two centuries. Natural England blamed farming but the CLA said it was contrived to compare the situation now with how things were 200 years ago (Guardian: <http://is.gd/bbouQ>; FWI: <http://is.gd/bbksu>; NE: <http://is.gd/bbLYR>).

Light pollution. This year's Earth Hour, the third, was the biggest yet as people in a record 126 countries switched off lights in more than 4,000 cities. It generated over 75 million mentions on the internet (Edie: <http://is.gd/b9gcV>).

Litter. The British countryside is being trashed by litter, according to Bill Bryson who suggested dropping rubbish should be as unacceptable as refusing to wear a seat belt (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/b9qtp>). Environment Secretary Hilary Benn and Bryson held initial discussions with business leaders, including McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Wrigley's, to tackle the blight of litter (Govmonitor: <http://is.gd/bbnAG>; Daily Mail: <http://is.gd/bbnF8>; Business Green: <http://is.gd/bbnJ7>). Keep Britain Tidy issued a 'war cry' on litter. Its *This is our Home* manifesto demands a complete re-think on the way the country tackles dirty streets (New Start: <http://is.gd/bdGOX>; KBT: <http://is.gd/bdGni>). Charles Clover: "The laws on litter are mostly fit for purpose. We need to use them" (Times: <http://is.gd/bdHnZ>).

Noise. Defra published the Noise Policy Statement for England, setting out the long term vision of Government noise policy. It covers environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise, but does not introduce noise limits (<http://is.gd/bdJqp>). The policy means that noise must be considered in all decision-making in order to work towards a quieter, healthier country. Consultancy Environmental Protection said: "For Noise Action Planning to be successful in redressing the balance between the drone of traffic noise and the sound of people enjoying our streets and open spaces, the consideration of noise must be embedded into the work of all our architects, transport operators, planners, and open spaces managers" (EP: <http://is.gd/bdTEO>).

Footpaths. Natural England published its methodology for developing the all England coastal path. Government approval means that work on the route will begin next year, including in the Kent section. The Ramblers called for urgent action to set up the path fearing reduced political

commitment after the election (NE: <http://is.gd/bb0kA>; Grough: <http://is.gd/bb2eo>). Natural England has called for 2026 to become the cut-off date for historic rights of way to be recorded on the official definitive map (Grough: <http://is.gd/bb0sr>; NE: <http://is.gd/bbkCv>).

9. Energy, Waste and Water

Climate Change & the Carbon Economy. The government published Carbon Reduction Delivery and Adaptation Plans for all of its departments, who will adapt estates, operations and policies to meet the plans. Under the new targets, government will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 34 % by 2020 and increased waste recycling (DECC: <http://is.gd/b9m4x>). The government is pushing for a new international climate change deal (<http://is.gd/b9mbJ>). A report from Natural England, *England's Peatlands – Carbon Storage and Greenhouse Gases*, reveals that almost three quarters of the deep peat area is now damaged, degraded or subject to inappropriate management such as drainage, regular burning or cultivation (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdSij>).

Wind Energy. The public inquiry into a wind farm at Fewcott in Oxfordshire, opposed by CPRE Oxfordshire, has been adjourned (CPE Oxon: <http://is.gd/bfbl1>). A detailed study of Britain's onshore wind farms suggests some landscapes may have been blighted for only small gains in energy. Britain has 245 onshore wind farms operating under the Renewables Obligation subsidy system, under which consumers pay roughly double the normal price for energy from wind (Times: <http://is.gd/baXXh>). "Many of these wind farms got planning permission only because they had claimed levels of power output that have never been achieved" (Times: <http://is.gd/baXIV>). George Monbiot: "If every windfarm company pledged 10% of its income to the local community, many more would be approved" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/bb1AH>). Natural England published guidance on how it will assess on-shore wind energy development proposals. Andrew Wood for NE said: "We want to do all we can to help identify areas where production of renewable and low carbon energy can be best located with minimal impact on the natural environment". The guidance does not rule out wind farms in National Parks, AONB, SSSI, National Nature Reserves, SPA etc. but the designation will "substantially reduce the degree to which wind energy development can be accommodated" in these areas. Cumulative impacts of wind farms will be taken into account. (<http://is.gd/bblMR>; NEF: <http://is.gd/bboGH>). At least one in six of the 255 wind farms in Britain have resulted in complaints about noise. Defra has commissioned research on how councils should be investigating turbine noise (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bdHPk>). Siemens is looking for a UK site for a £80m wind turbine factory (BBC: <http://is.gd/bb26H>).

Water power. The Environment Agency published a map of 26,000 potential hydropower turbine sites, enough to power almost a million homes. 3,000 sites were identified in the South East. Dustin Benton for CPRE said: "If designed well, small scale hydro has low impacts on the countryside and can play a valuable role in helping rural communities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions" (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bbrAm>; EA: <http://is.gd/bbmwu>; CPRE: <http://is.gd/bfhM0>). The government published its Marine Energy Action Plan, aiming to generate enough power for 15 million homes and save 70 million tonnes of CO2 by 2050 (DECC: <http://is.gd/bdSLZ>). The Wildlife Trusts called on the government to reconsider its plans for a scheme to generate tidal energy from the River Severn (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdRW1>).

Biomass. The government is consulting on its support for dedicated biomass, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste projects under the Renewables Obligation (NEF: <http://is.gd/baKsE>).

Nuclear. The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) said that while the process for siting a geological disposal facility is sound, it is uncertain whether an appropriate combination of community and site can be found in the UK (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdS9v>).

Conservative energy policy: Rebuilding Security. The Tories promised a streamlined planning system to help safeguard UK energy supplies. They confirmed IPC will be folded into the Planning Inspectorate, with the retention of a dedicated team for major infrastructure projects (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdPQ1>). The Conservatives also promised a Green Investment Bank to finance offshore wind parks and new nuclear reactors (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/bbyZZ>).

Recycling. A Waste and Resources Action Programme report said that recycling is still the greenest waste management option (Edie: <http://is.gd/bbne8>).

Water. CPRE South East has submitted to DEFRA a joint Statement of Case from CPRE Oxfordshire and CPRE Kent. This is in advance of the public inquiry into the Thames Water Resources Management Plan, which includes a large reservoir near Abingdon (CPRE Oxfordshire: <http://is.gd/bfaGX>).

10. Rural Affairs, Farming and Food

Warning that young are leaving countryside. Dr Stuart Burgess, the government's rural advocate warned that the future of the countryside is at risk unless the government finds ways to help young people remain in rural areas. Lack of affordable housing, work and transport means rural communities are in jeopardy as young people are forced to move away from the countryside. He called for: flexible planning to create more affordable rural housing; new ways to meet employment and training needs in more isolated areas; a renewed integrated public transport focus; and prioritising rural areas in the Next Generation Access broadband programme (CRC: <http://is.gd/bbm8L>; FWI: <http://is.gd/bbmbo>).

Warning that pensioners are displacing young from countryside. The National Housing Federation warned the number of pensioners living in rural England will increase by nearly one million over the next decade, but communities will struggle to support the ageing population boom unless more affordable homes are built for families and younger people. It predicts the number of over 65s living in rural England will hit 3.23m by 2020, a rise of 907,900 (39%) from 2008 (NHF: <http://is.gd/bdPw2>).

Rural opinion. The Commission for Rural Communities published a survey that showed people living in rural areas are more satisfied with the area in which they live than those living in urban areas; 94% versus 89%. Two-thirds of rural people are optimistic their local area will get better (65%) but this falls to 59% in rural sparse areas. Priorities for improvement in the future are: public transport (18%), affordable decent housing (15%), activities for teenagers (15%) and job prospects (14%) (CRC: <http://is.gd/bdJ9Z>).

Defra announced initiatives to promote grow-your-own food, including using stalled building sites and sites waiting for planning permission (<http://is.gd/bdJl7>; Planning Portal: <http://is.gd/bdKyZ>).

Supermarkets. Following a long campaign by CPRE Norfolk, North Norfolk District Council voted to support an application by the Greenhouse Community Project for a Waitrose store in Sheringham and to turn down an application from Tesco. James Frost, Director of CPRE Norfolk said: "This is a brave and important decision. It shows that local authorities can resist the market power and muscle of the largest retailers and fight for the right decisions to be made to prevent the wrong development taking place. This decision offers hope to many other towns fighting similar proposals for more large supermarkets" (CPRE: <http://is.gd/bdP68>). The decision is, however, subject to legal advice (NNDC: <http://is.gd/bdSYR>). About 350 people joined a CPRE organised protest march against supermarkets in Oswestry, Shropshire (Borders Advertiser: <http://is.gd/bfjV1>).

Rural services. Business Secretary Lord Mandelson announced a major expansion of the financial services offered by the Post Office and £180m of new funding (NDS: <http://is.gd/baSGS>). Pubs minister John Healey urged Councils to use planning powers more flexibly to protect community pubs (Planning: <http://is.gd/bdQN3>). Government funding for health and education discriminates against rural people, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services said (RSN: <http://is.gd/bdTW1>). With the cost of service delivery up to 90% higher than in urban areas, across-the-board budget cuts would immensely damage vulnerable rural communities, a report, *Rural Review of Public Services 2010*, warned (RSN: <http://is.gd/bdUkl>).

11. Campaigning

New Energy in England's Countryside. Ed Miliband and Shaun Spiers have made their concluding summaries in the online debate, which saw received 150 contributions. Among Ed Miliband's comments are "The key question for me is not about whether we need windfarms, but where they should be... It is economic growth not population growth that is the main reason why emissions are rising" (CPRE: <http://is.gd/b9egt>; <http://is.gd/b9ehd>).

Election. *Third Sector* says charities are going "manifesto mad" in the run up to the election and asks, "What are they for?" Ben Stafford, head of campaigns at CPRE said: "One of the strengths of the CPRE is our local network. The election is a great opportunity for people on the ground to raise issues during the campaign when speaking to candidates on the doorstep. All our branches and district and regional groups have been given copies of our manifesto" (TS: <http://is.gd/bbs8c>). Bill Bryson spoke to the leaders of the three main parties in a major article for the Times (<http://is.gd/bbtgg>).

Ordnance Survey. The OS has issued several of its map datasets for free. Many are in specialist mapping formats suitable for developers, but Street View and the 1:250,000 map are in raster (pixel) format (Guardian: <http://is.gd/bdNsY>; OS: <http://is.gd/bdNmM>).

CPRE South East eBulletin

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