

CPRE South East eBulletin News for December 2010

Welcome to the CPRE South East eBulletin. Our audience is CPRE and its friends. Please feel free to circulate it. If you are not on our circulation list and want to receive the eBulletin regularly, just let me know at cprenews@gmail.com.

The main news this month was the Localism Bill (special eBulletin: <http://tinyurl.com/cprelocalbill>). In this edition, the main news items are the National Planning Policy Framework, High Speed 2 and an opportunity to reduce the march of the pylons.

Andy Boddington, Editor

1. National Planning Policy Framework

On Tuesday this week, Decentralisation Minister Greg Clark unveiled “a radical overhaul of planning policy” (<http://is.gd/janFL>). He claimed the new framework will:

- ◆ hand power back to local communities instead of imposing excessive rules from the centre
- ◆ be more user-friendly making it easier for the public to engage in planning decisions
- ◆ make sure that planning is used as a mechanism for delivering government objectives only where it is relevant, proportionate and effective to do so
- ◆ establish a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The forty-odd planning and mineral policy statements will be streamlined and folded into the National Planning Policy Framework. Clark said that too much weight is given to the hundred or so guidance notes accompanying the policies. They will be substantially cut back.

National Policy Statements remain intact.

Clark promised that “The Government will continue to maintain green belt protection, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations which protect the character of our country's landscape, stop unsustainable urban sprawl and preserve wildlife.”

2. Major Infrastructure Planning Reform

The government issued a work plan setting out its plans for infrastructure planning (CLG: <http://is.gd/jhkOC>; Hansard: <http://is.gd/jhkT8>). The work plan:

- ◆ announces the establishment of a new ministerial group to drive performance and examine the effectiveness of the new major infrastructure planning regime
- ◆ sets out a timetable for the production and designation of National Policy Statements and provides details about the process for approval of National Policy Statements
- ◆ confirms which Secretary of State will be responsible for decision making.

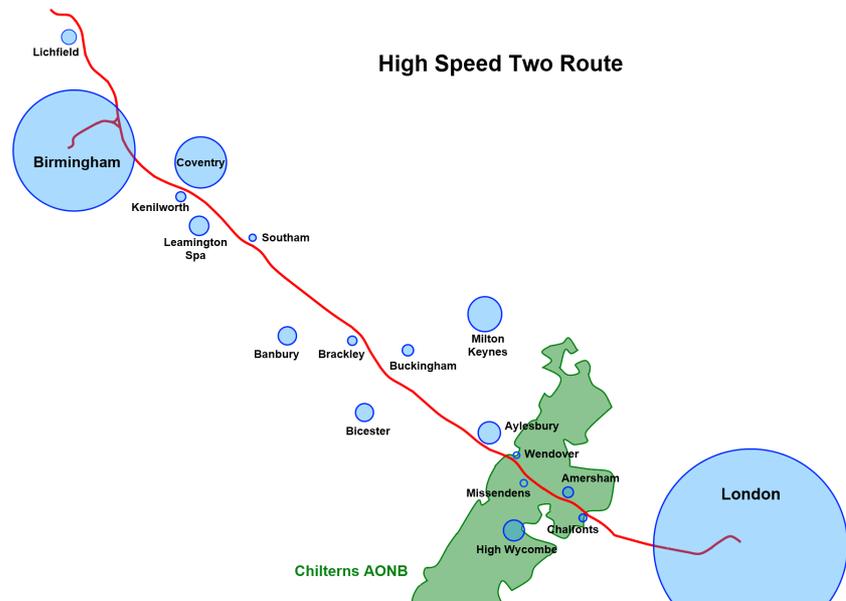
The decision makers are:

- ◆ Energy: Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change
- ◆ Transport: Secretary of State for Transport
- ◆ Hazardous waste: Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- ◆ Water and waste water: jointly Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government and Environment, and Food and Rural Affairs.

The airports National Policy Statement has been abandoned. The DfT will now “will develop a new policy framework for UK aviation which supports economic growth and addresses aviation's environmental impacts [and] issue a scoping document in March 2011 with a view to publishing a draft policy framework for formal consultation in March 2012.”

3. High Speed Two

Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond published details of the Government's proposed route for the first phase of the line. He said that the impact of the route had been exaggerated and that will be "something people will be pleased to look at". Campaigners were furious at "Ministers grinning and congratulating one another on something that will destroy people's lives... this will be the next Great Train Robbery."



Route changes. The proposed route has been redrawn over half of its length:

- ◆ the proposed tunnel at Primrose Hill in London has been shifted to locate vent shafts alongside the existing railway
- ◆ a green bridge and green tunnels have been incorporated into the route between Amersham and Wendover to reduce its visual impact and avoid severance of public rights of way
- ◆ the route has been moved further from the National Trust property at Hartwell House in Bucks "to ensure that the line would not be visible from the House itself"
- ◆ the alignment has also been moved away from Edgcote House to the north of Aylesbury.
- ◆ the new alignment will move the line further from Lichfield.

A massive infrastructure depot has been proposed north of Charndon and Calvert Jubilee Nature Reserve in Bucks. Residents hopes of a deeper tunnel underneath Ellesborough Road in Wendover to prevent demolition of cottages has been rejected. A two mile tunnel under Ruislip was also rejected on cost grounds (Uxbridge Gazette: <http://is.gd/jChRW>).

Connections. Hammond also confirmed that the completed 'Y'-shaped network will eventually allow journey times of around 80 minutes from Leeds and Manchester to the capital. Connections onto existing tracks will allow direct high speed train services to be operated to cities including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle and Liverpool. There will now be direct links to Heathrow and to the HS1 line at St Pancras. A Crossrail interchange station will be built at Old Oak Common in West London. A second interchange station could also be located south east of Birmingham, offering direct links to Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre and the M6 and M42.

Noise. More than 21,000 households will suffer a "noticeable noise increase" and a further 130,000 people in London and the Chilterns could also "experience vibration" from tunnels underneath or near their homes (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/jeqIP>).

Timing. A public consultation is planned for February 2011. Enabling works for the initial London-Birmingham phase may begin in 2015 with line opening in phases from 2026.

4. Comment

Government. Hammond told the BBC: "I believe there is some complete misinformation out there about the extent of the impact of the railway and when people understand precisely what is being proposed, I think many of them will realise that the impact will be far less than they have been led to believe." He said many parts of the line would be dug into cuttings and minor deviations included to avoid the most sensitive spots (BBC: <http://is.gd/j3Q6P>). Announcing the route, Hammond told MPs that HS2 will be "something that people are pleased to look at... It is about long-distance commuting. Places like Milton Keynes and Coventry will find they are well within commuting distance of London" (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/jepyF>; <http://is.gd/jepTv>).

Campaign groups. Lizzy Williams, chairman action group Stop HS2 (Twitter @stophs2) said she was in tears listening to the planned route. "It was the attitude of the Ministers, grinning and congratulating one another on something that will destroy people's lives and already has. I find that completely callous and unacceptable" (BFP: <http://is.gd/jejNu>; <http://is.gd/jCT5z>). Wendover HS2 said: "Our beautiful countryside and villages would be devastated. We would face at least seven years of building chaos, road closures and diversions, heavy construction traffic and noise. At the end of this period up to 36 trains an hour would generate noise for 19 hours a day that would reverberate around Wendover and the surrounding areas" (<http://is.gd/jCHT2>).

Buckinghamshire. Councils are joining forces and setting aside funding for the battle against HS2. David Shakespeare, leader of Bucks County Council said "We have a once-in-a-lifetime battle on our hands with the prospect of HS2 cutting through the heart of our county... with our partners [we] are pooling our resources so we can present a stronger, more cohesive and united opposition to this scheme... It poses a threat to our unique and fragile Chiltern countryside, and to the way of life in many communities.... I believe we have a duty to fight to protect Buckinghamshire for future generations." Councillors from Bucks County, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council and South Bucks District Council are all supporting the campaign (Mix96: <http://is.gd/jeiJC>; Bucks Herald: <http://is.gd/jegcu>).

Chilterns. The Chilterns Conservation Board branded the multi-million pound scheme a "white elephant" which would destroy ancient woodlands and the area's unique chalk streams. Joe Rukin for the StopHS2 protest group said: "High Speed 2 will be profligacy on wheels. At a cost of £1,200 each for every family in the UK... this will be the next Great Train Robbery". Amersham and Chesham MP Cheryl Gillan said she was "disappointed" with the announcement and would continue to fight the proposals (BFP: <http://is.gd/jekdh>). Steve Rodrick, Chief Officer of the Conservation Board said: "Our opposition is based on solid facts. The Government claims it will be a green form of transport but the [HS2 report] indicates it... will not reduce national carbon emissions" (Thame: <http://is.gd/jekw3>).

West Midlands. Warwickshire County Council voted to oppose HS2. We "can see no benefit from HS2 for Warwickshire" (<http://is.gd/jhOEK>). Residents of Lichfield celebrated the news the line had been moved away from the town (TI Lichfield: <http://is.gd/jCGXU>). The Heart of England High Speed Railway Action Group (HHAG) said there is still no business or environmental case for HS2 (Solihull News: <http://is.gd/jCSXt>).

National. Friends of the Earth said "We urgently need investment in faster, better rail travel, but current high speed rail plans will do little to cut climate-changing emissions or entice people out of planes and cars. The Government's priority should be to upgrade our existing overcrowded rail network" (<http://is.gd/jdoCc>). Scottish Nationalists claimed Scotland had been sidelined under the proposals (Herald: <http://is.gd/jeoi7>).

Press. The Telegraph said that despite loss of "some magnificent stretches of countryside... and the fury of people living there... the construction of HS2... in the fullness of time will help unite us" (<http://is.gd/jep1w>). Andrew Gilligan, also in the Telegraph, said: "The Daily Telegraph has carefully scrutinised the small print of the HS2 prospectus... it makes clear that virtually every argument you will hear for high-speed rail... is either based on deeply shaky assumptions, or is just plain wrong. This line will not be green. It will not greatly benefit the economy. And, most remarkably of all, it will probably make your journey slower, not faster" (<http://is.gd/jersI>). "Middle-class homeowners' revolt forces Government to re-draw route for high-speed London to Birmingham rail link" (Daily Mail: <http://is.gd/jhdKB>). "Midsomer Massacre: The high-speed rail link will blight some of England's most beautiful countryside" (Daily Mail: <http://is.gd/jmn9s>).

Industry. The CBI said that line will be good for the economy but "rail cannot be allowed to swallow up all the money available for other transport infrastructure upgrades, such as the road network" (<http://is.gd/jeeCC>). The benefits of the line are a myth and the high cost risks taking resources away from local projects, a rail consultant warned (Birmingham Post: <http://is.gd/jCSxW>).

5. Planning

RSS abolition. The status of Regional Spatial Strategies remains uncertain as Cala Homes continues its legal challenge. The RSS remain in place and probably remain a material planning consideration until the outcome of the judicial review is known. The case comes to court begins in the week beginning 17 January 2011 (Planning: <http://is.gd/jhctV>).

Reaction to the Localism Bill. CPRE said: “The Bill promises to be a significant step towards devolving power to local people through neighbourhood plans and stronger powers to tackle unauthorised advertising in the countryside [but] If people are really to be fully empowered the reform needs to introduce safeguards [including] a limited ‘community right of appeal’” (<http://is.gd/jdLMy>). Hilary Newport for Protect Kent welcomed the emphasis on more local control of planning but said “The New Homes Bonus could incentivise councils to build the wrong types of homes... since the amount raised will depend on the value of these homes, this could encourage councils towards expensive executive homes, when the real need is for affordable housing” (Kent News: <http://is.gd/jhdwf>). The CLA welcomed the bill but said “Radical proposals for neighbourhood planning seem to assume that economic growth and housing delivery will just happen if communities are given the opportunity to make decisions for themselves” (<http://is.gd/jdZTv>). Friends of the Earth claimed: “Local democracy and action to tackle climate change will be undermined, not boosted” by the bill (<http://is.gd/jdntl>). “The tendency for strife will be great and the localism bill does not recognise there is a skill to planning” (Observer: <http://is.gd/jhddF>). Waste firms said the bill does not provide the community buy-in that new waste infrastructure requires to win local support (Lets Recycle: <http://is.gd/jhpPM>; FT: <http://is.gd/jCO3s>). Sir Christopher Kelly, chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, warned the bill would leave the criminal law or appeals to the ombudsman as the only way of punishing bad behaviour by councillors between elections (24dash: <http://is.gd/jdhNI>).

Infrastructure. The Policy Exchange said that despite efforts to streamline planning, vital projects are not going ahead because of over-elaborate and unrealistic economic predictions. Its report claims planners waste use deeply-flawed tools to make predictions (<http://is.gd/jhpwy>).

The **Planning Inspectorate** is cutting staff after a 35% budget cut (Planning: <http://is.gd/jhcQE>).

“Chaos is better than planning”. Nicholas Boles, Tory MP for Grantham and Stamford, told a debate: “I mean, bluntly, there comes a question in life - do you believe planning works, that clever people sitting in a room can plan how people's communities should develop? Or do you believe it can't work? I believe it can't work, David Cameron believes it can't, Nick Clegg believes it can't. Chaotic therefore in our vocabulary is a good thing” (Planning: <http://is.gd/jedv0>).

Flooding. The government's cuts to the UK's flood defence budgets risk leaving five million at-risk homes less protected and poorest communities losing out to richer areas, the Environment, Food and Rural affairs select committee said (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd3r2>). The Environment Agency published maps of areas at flood risk from reservoir collapse (<http://is.gd/jdyv2>).

6. Housing

Fareham Borough Council has abandoned a consultation on plans for 7,000 new homes in the North Fareham strategic development area after receiving a flood of responses. The council leader claims it was “hijacked” by CPRE Hampshire, which had the audacity to tell people about it. The consultation will be relaunched (The News: <http://is.gd/jmphG>).

CPRE Sussex is appealing for help with costs of the public inquiry into 520 houses adjacent to the South Downs National Park at Polegate which begins on January 11th and expected to last a month. CPRE is leading a group of five environmental protection organisations, each a Rule 6 party. They will be retaining a barrister and calling a full suit of witnesses on planning policy, landscape, cultural heritage, transport and access (<http://www.cpresussex.org.uk/>).

“Rocket fuel” for empty homes. Planning and environment cooperative URBED said the ‘Community Right to Buy’ powers in the Localism Bill could be “rocket fuel” when combined with the little known Public Request to Order Disposal, bringing thousands of derelict houses and historic landmarks back into use (24dash: <http://is.gd/jdjHk0>).

Housing numbers. The latest 2008-based household projections from CLG predict 20,500 fewer households will be formed in England each year between 2008 and 2031, compared to the 2006 based projections (CLG: <http://is.gd/jdMwi>). Kate Houghton for CPRE said: “This fall demonstrates the folly of basing targets for house building solely on projections that can change dramatically from one year to the next” (<http://is.gd/jdMNn>). Grant Shapps attacked the previous government’s “obsession” with affordable homes (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/jCZT2>).

“Nimbyism on the rise”. A New Homes Marketing Board survey found that although people understand that new homes are needed, only half want them in their immediate neighbourhood. Shaun Spiers said: “It really is unhelpful to label people as ‘nimbys’... It is no surprise that people resist new developments when they see the [low] quality of too much of the new housing built in recent years. Local people are much more likely to embrace new development if it improves their local area, if it is well-planned, well-designed and well-built” (<http://is.gd/jdOxF>).

Low carbon homes. The Zero Carbon Hub has delivered its recommendations for carbon compliance levels for new homes from 2016, aiming in part to ensure the gap between “as designed” and “as built” standards is closed (24dash: <http://is.gd/jdivB>). Work has begun on a demonstration house for the Oxfordshire eco-town in Bicester (Edie: <http://is.gd/je7Jp>).

7. Defra Cuts

On 23 December, Defra slipped out details of its cuts to its quangos. Lying below the headline across the board cut of 22% is a 90% cut to Keep Britain Tidy, 37% to waste recycling body WRAP, 30% to Kew and 23% to biodiversity champion JNCC, and more (<http://is.gd/jePS5>):

Arms Length Body	2010-11 (millions)	2014-15 (millions)	Percentage Reduction
Keep Britain Tidy	4.8	0.5	90%
WRAP	48.1	30.1	37%
RBG Kew	24.6	17.3	30%
Forestry Commission	44.8	33.4	25%
Environment Agency: Flood Management	629.0	485.0	23%
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	4.8	3.7	23%
Marine Management Organisation	30.9	24.4	21%
Natural England	197.1	155.1	21%
British Waterways	48.0	39.0	19%
National Forestry Company	3.3	2.7	18%
Environment Agency: Environmental Protection, Water, & Collaborative Partnership on Forests	199.9	167.0	16%
National Parks & Broads Authorities	53.6	46.6	13%
Gangmasters	4.2	3.9	7%
Total ALB	1292.9	1009.0	22%
Total Defra	3113.0	2434.0	22%

8. Landscapes and Biodiversity

White Paper. 15,000 people and organisations responded to the consultation on the Natural Environment White Paper due in the spring. Caroline Spelman pre-empted the responses by publishing details of the proposed offsetting scheme saying “greater use of offsetting could help compensate society for biodiversity loss” (Defra: <http://is.gd/jdBRb>; <http://is.gd/jdBVC>).

The Big Tree Plant, which will plant one million extra trees across England in the next four years, was launched by Defra, the Tree Council, Woodland Trust, Trees for Cities, England’s Community Forests, Civic Voice and the Forestry Commission (Defra: <http://is.gd/jdINI>).

Forests for sale. Environment minister Jim Paice said the government may sell all publicly owned forests, but he is “concerned about the possibility of established forest being bought by energy companies who would proceed to chip it all for energy recovery” (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jdPIB>). More than 100,000 people have signed a petition against the sale (<http://is.gd/jdRxP>).

Green belt. The localism bill is to contain provisions to ensure the York green belt does not disappear along with the abolition of regional spatial strategies (Planning: <http://is.gd/je9W2>). Villagers near Sevenoaks are preparing to renew their battle to save their green belt from housing (TI Kent: <http://is.gd/jhdZC>). Approval for a 50-unit sheltered housing complex on Green Belt land at Meopham is being challenged. Alex Hills, spokesman for Protect Kent said he believes there is a definite case for the matter to be “called in” (Gravesend Reporter: <http://is.gd/jhhne>).

National Parks. The New Forest National Park Authority adopted its core strategy (Planning: <http://is.gd/je9BY>).

Biodiversity. Caroline Spelman pledged £2 million over the next four years to the new UN Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Defra: <http://is.gd/jdB4X>). A survey of environmental schemes has shown government-funded measures to help birds in winter are working (Farmers Guardian: <http://is.gd/jDOAI>; NE: <http://is.gd/jD1dH>).

Peat. Defra published plans to phase out the use of peat for horticultural purposes (<http://is.gd/jdxPT>). The NFU complained British growers could be put at a competitive disadvantage (<http://is.gd/je424>).

Litter. England's litter problem has not improved in the past year and may get worse as public spending cuts bite, Keep Britain Tidy said as it published the annual Local Environment Quality Survey for England (24dash: <http://is.gd/jhiHF>). The National Litter Convention brought together partners from government, local authorities, business and the voluntary sector to launch a new anti-littering message: “Love Where You Live” (Defra: <http://is.gd/jdyTr>; Keep Britain Tidy: <http://is.gd/jdz5K>; CPRE: <http://is.gd/jdyYQ>).

Pollution. Air pollution in Britain took almost two years off the lives of some 200,000 people in 2008 the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants said (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/jdqeW>).

Waste and recycling. The IPC has appointed a Panel of 3 Commissioners to examine the application for an Energy from Waste Generating Station at Rookery South, Bedfordshire (<http://is.gd/jhfGF>).

9. Transport

Clutter. CPRE and others have lost their battle against roundabout advertising in Doncaster (Star: <http://is.gd/jf1yz>).

Weather. The doubling of travel in the UK since 1971 has collided with more unpredictable weather to cause Britain's transport trauma (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd351>).

Green vehicles. The first electric and ultra-low carbon cars to qualify for a subsidy of up to £5,000 were named by the government (Independent: <http://is.gd/jdd6q0>). The government has approved funding for electric charging points for the cars in five regions, though not the South East (Planning: <http://is.gd/jhO5T>).

10. Energy and Climate Change

Undergrounding. The National Grid has launched a public consultation into its approach to undergrounding the electricity lines needed to connect new power generation (<http://is.gd/jdEVr>). The consultation will run until 16 March 2011 and the National Grid “will consider all feedback received before publishing our revised approach to undergrounding in April”. CPRE said it wanted people to respond to the consultation with a firm ‘No!’ to new overhead lines in our finest landscapes. Paul Miner said: “National Grid wouldn’t run pylons through Regent’s Park or Hampstead Heath, so why should we put up with them in the most beautiful parts of Somerset or Suffolk?” (<http://is.gd/jdDnd>). Author Terence Blacker said its “a protest worth making if you care about our landscape” (Independent: <http://is.gd/jdHcx>).

Cancún. At the climate change negotiations at COP 16, world governments agreed to try to keep global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with a commitment to look at whether 1.5°C is a safer alternative on the basis of new, improved science in 2015 (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd9i2>; Independent: <http://is.gd/jdbON>). A bottom-up approach holds out better prospects for success than the cumbersome United Nations negotiations, George Soros said, arguing against a single price for carbon (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jdadE>).

Global warming. 2010 looks likely to be the hottest or equal hottest year. The world has experienced the warmest January to November period since global records began 131 years ago (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd1Vu>). Professor Julia Slingo, the Met Office's chief scientist, said the current cold weather is merely a natural fluctuation and does not mean that global warming is a myth (Independent: <http://is.gd/jdbzt>). “The warming of the earth's northern half could result in cold winters”, climate change researchers said in mid-November (Potsdam: <http://is.gd/jeYYq>).

Tackling climate change. Britain needs to return to old-style central planning of its electricity market with the government deciding who builds power stations where, and offering contracts with guaranteed prices for electricity, the independent Committee on Climate Change told the government in its fourth carbon budget (Independent: <http://is.gd/jdcG5>; CCC: <http://is.gd/jeXC7>). The CBI's Climate Change Tracker shows that progress on low carbon schemes is slipping (<http://is.gd/jcZXXJ>). The Guardian reported that the coalition was planning to scale down the green bank. Huhne retorted “Ducks quack and banks borrow as well as lend” (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jhi0B>; <http://is.gd/jd8IO>).

Green Deal. The government published its Energy Bill, which will deliver the “Green Deal” of well insulated households and businesses (DECC: <http://is.gd/jdmGC>). Friends of the Earth said “the cold reality is that it will do little to help millions of [tenants] shivering in fuel poverty” (<http://is.gd/jdnbF>). The Existing Homes Alliance says a cap of £6,500 or even £10,000 will ‘undermine the ability to meet the UK’s carbon targets’ (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/jCXQt>).

Power supply. Union leaders joined the CBI in pressing the government to clear “logjams” they claim have led to 37 major energy schemes being held up. 50,000 jobs (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jcZtQ>; CBI: <http://is.gd/jd0k9>). Damhead Creek on Isle of Grain combined cycle gas turbine has been waiting for permission since June 2009; the other 36 schemes are outside the South East (DECC: <http://is.gd/jd1Kx>).

Energy market reform. The government has published a consultation on market regulation (<http://is.gd/jd7yT>). Climate change secretary Chris Huhne said the reforms will allow the required £110bn investment in low-carbon power by 2020. The reforms are designed to deliver 30% of the UK’s energy from renewable power, rather than the 7% today. The main reforms are:

- ◆ **A carbon price floor** to underpin investment in low carbon generation.
- ◆ **A ‘contract for difference’ Feed In Tariff.** Long term contracts will give top up payments to low carbon generators when wholesale prices are low and claw back money for consumers when prices are higher than the cost.
- ◆ **Additional payments** to encourage the construction of reserve plants or demand reduction measures “to ensure the lights stay on”.
- ◆ **A back-stop** to limit how much carbon the most dirty power stations - coal - can emit.

Huhne said the reforms will bring billions in investment (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/jd80L>; Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd85n>). David Cameron said “we've got a very clapped-out electricity generating capacity that is pumping carbon into the atmosphere and we need to replace it” (24dash: <http://is.gd/jdjeJ>). Chris Booker said Huhne “has a blueprint for a green, cold, dark Britain” (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/jdeJs>). The Green Alliance said “low carbon energy reforms will test coalition's courage” (<http://is.gd/jeZF1>).

Renewables. The government launched a consultation on microgeneration strategy (Closing date 16 March: <http://is.gd/jeLe3>; <http://is.gd/jeKyO>). Cofely District Energy in Southampton, and three universities are the winners in the government’s competition for funding for geothermal energy projects (DECC: <http://is.gd/jeMb5>). Permission has been granted for a 4.5ha solar energy farm in Cornwall (Planning: <http://is.gd/jCYwb>). Defra published a framework document setting out the steps needed to increase energy from waste in England through AD (<http://is.gd/jdxnw>).

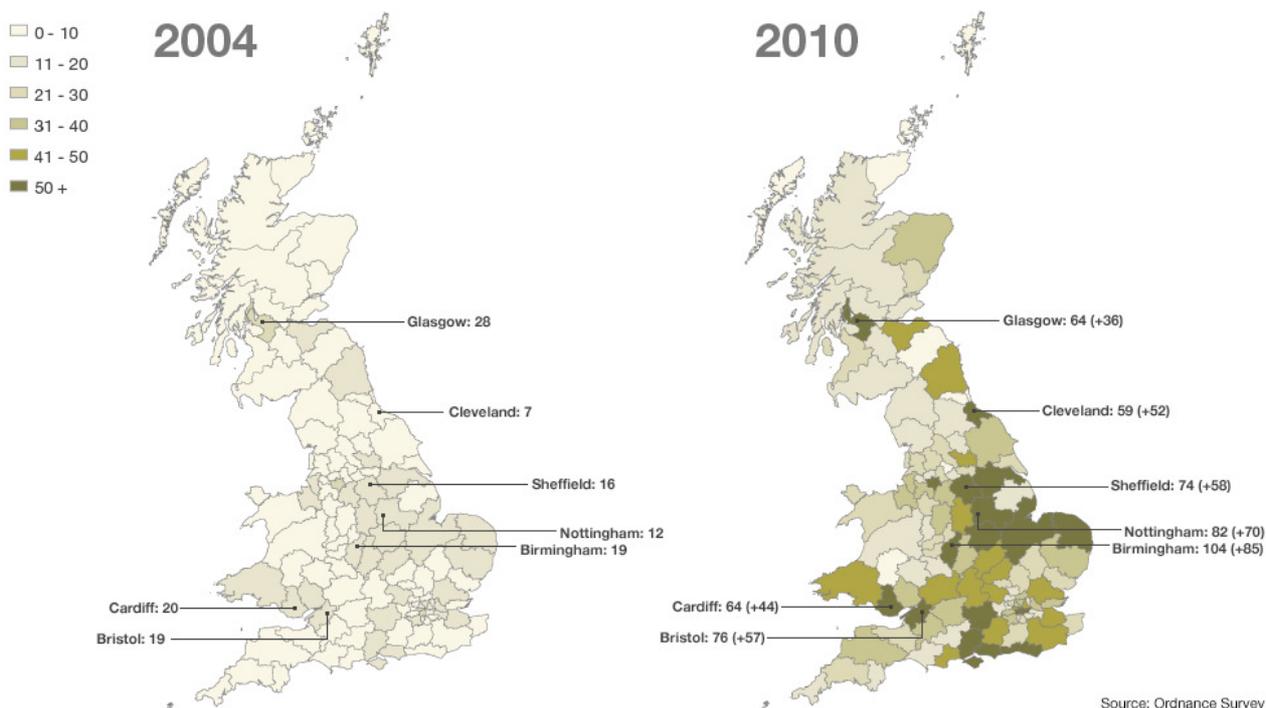
Wind. The Sunday Telegraph identified plans to build wind farms with turbines about 493ft (150m) tall in Norfolk and in Lincolnshire. It said there are about 20 projects planned for turbines taller than any built so far onshore, including in Berkshire (<http://is.gd/jdpaM0>). Terence Blacker blogs his 10 lessons after a after a successful anti-turbine campaign in Norfolk: “environmentalism begins with a concern for own your back yard” (<http://is.gd/jdJ2e>). Eight

127m-high wind turbines near Huntingdon were given the go-ahead (Cambridge News: <http://is.gd/jhaG7>). An 18-turbine wind farm in North Lincolnshire was rejected after fierce public opposition from residents and CPRE (TI Scunthorpe: <http://is.gd/jhmg0>). The RSPB has objected to a wind farm at Sedgemoor (TI West Country: <http://is.gd/jD022>).

Waste. Defra said commercial and industrial waste generation in England is estimated to have been 48.0 million tonnes in 2009, a decrease of 29% since 2002/3 (<http://is.gd/jdo4D>). “Waste crisis means 80 giant furnaces set for go-ahead in 2011” (Independent: <http://is.gd/jCY8t>).

11. Food, Farming and Retail

Supermarkets. BBC Panorama said one of the big four supermarkets gets planning permission every working day of the year and at least 577 Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Asda stores have been approved over the last two years. Tesco leads with 392 stores approved in the last two years; Sainsbury's 111; Morrisons 41; Asda 33 (BBC: <http://bbc.in/dObinm>; Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd3Ra>). The map below is from the BBC website (<http://is.gd/jdubqj>). The programme is available for a short while on BBC iplayer (<http://is.gd/jdw5k>).



Orchards. Natural England issued advice on managing orchards (24dash: <http://is.gd/jdka60>).

Food. Soil erosion threatens to leave Earth hungry (Guardian: <http://is.gd/jd9On>).

Farming. The government has rejected rules that would force farmers to notify nearby rural residents before spraying pesticides (FWI: <http://is.gd/jhfTu>). Farmers protested against Asda's decision to cut the price of milk (FWI: <http://is.gd/jhgXI>; BBC: <http://is.gd/jhggol>).

12. Rural Economy and Services

Uplands. A CLA report makes recommendations for sustaining the Uplands including changes in institutions and the CAP; improving the productivity and profitability of hill farming; providing renewable energy; more afforestation; improving rural services and telecommunications, and, “critically”, introducing changes in planning, affordable housing provision, and cultural heritage. It calls for larger exception sites, organic and incremental growth of villages, housing for retiring farmers in farms, and for village green applications to be limited to the planning application stage. “The CLA is concerned that National Park Authorities, in particular, are resistant to renewable energy at all scales in the Uplands. The CLA does not suggest that very large-scale wind turbines are appropriate [but] recommends that national planning policy should encourage local policies for the delivery of farm and woodland scale renewable energy proposals” (<http://is.gd/je0lt>).

Poverty. The Commission for Rural Communities said a quarter of farming households live below the official poverty line (<http://is.gd/je5je>).