

CPRE South East eBulletin

News for May 2011

Contents

Farming Regulation Task Force	1
Planning and Localism	2
National Planning Policy Framework	2
Politics	2
Rural Planning and Policy	2
Housing	3
Enterprise & Economy	2
Landscape	3
Transport	3
Climate Change & Carbon	4
Renewable Energy Reviewed	4
The Grid	5
Renewable Energy & Efficiency	5
Fossil and Nuclear Energy	5
Water	5
Recycling and Waste	6
Farming, Food & Retail	6
Communities	6
Campaigning	6

Editor's Notes

The suggestion by the Farming Regulation Task Force (right) that footpaths and bridleways should be semi-permanently diverted around 'valuable' crops has somehow not attracted attention. Perhaps we can gain comfort from the knowledge that among the old-style campaign groups, the Ramblers, like the RSPB, is mighty when roused. But there is a very real danger of the quality of many footpaths being sacrificed just as the government, the National Trust, CPRE and many others are urging people to get out into the countryside more.

Defra has announced that it would no longer impose a 50% recycling target on councils. With higher targets in place in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the recycling commitment in England is in danger of quickly unravelling. Meanwhile, incinerators are becoming the latest Alice in Wonderland fantasy in planning. In Cornwall, the council leader implored Eric Pickles to approve an incinerator despite his own council opposing it. Shropshire Council is backing an appeal for an incinerator rejected by... Shropshire Council. Whether or not we need incinerators, the planning system is beginning to play second fiddle to council finances (page 6).

CPRE is sometimes accused of negative campaigning, offering objections not solutions. In Hampshire though CPRE is being positive, urging villagers to leave their cars at home for electric bikes (page 4).

Wind farms divide opinions across the country but the cumulative impact of a battalion of wind farms in mid-Wales—and the pylons that will march out from them across precious landscapes—has brought protesters onto the streets of Cardiff. (page 5).

Andy Boddington, Editor

About the CPRE SE eBulletin

The CPRE South East eBulletin is issued monthly, with occasional special editions when required. We cover all the planning and environmental news with a relevance to the remit of CPRE. Views expressed are those of the editor, not of any part of CPRE.

Our audience is CPRE and its friends. Please feel free to circulate this eBulletin. If you are not on our circulation list and want to receive the eBulletin regularly, just let me know at cprenews@gmail.com. Please send suggestions of items for future inclusion, including images, to the same email address.

Farming Regulation Task Force

The **Task Force** made 215 recommendations for changing or abolishing regulations affecting the farming and food industries, saying: 'government must trust industry, must involve it in the development of non-regulatory and regulatory solutions, and must set the framework for industry to take responsibility.' It complained that 'planning is a substantial barrier for development. It is vital that current regulations are changed to allow farm businesses to adapt, innovate and grow... The forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework must explicitly support sustainable and productive farming and must promote sustainable intensification.' Local planners should be offered training in agriculture, horticulture and the food industry (Task Force: <http://bit.ly/FarmTG>).

Planning permission. Farmers should be allowed to build larger farm buildings and structures without planning permission or prior notification to the planning authority:

- ◆ **Agricultural buildings** under 465m² on an agricultural unit of 5ha or more should be permitted development without prior notification, as was the case before 1995.
- ◆ **Agricultural buildings** between of 465–1,500m² surface area, on agricultural units of a minimum size of 5ha, should be subject to the prior notification procedure rather than full planning permission.
- ◆ Construction of **on-farm winter-fill reservoirs** up to 25,000m³ should be permitted development. Planning authorities 'should expedite their construction, with appropriate conditions regarding siting and design'.
- ◆ **Polytunnels** should become permitted development 'under specific conditions' (which are not specified in the Task Force report), and would be subject to prior notification but not full planning permission.
- ◆ Planning authorities should take a pragmatic, non-regulatory approach to **horticultural support structures**, such as 'table tops' (which support crops like strawberries), training systems and fruit-netting. These should all remain outside the planning system.

Footpaths and village greens. The Task Force report will be unhappy reading for many ramblers (paragraphs 4.28–4.39 of main report). It says some rights-of-way are 'incompatible with current land use' and the cost and complexity of obtaining a Diversion Order is too great. Landowners complain about the continued discovery of historical rights-of-way and the attempted recording of new routes by established use. They are similarly unhappy about Town Green designations. The Task Force calls for the 'proliferation of inappropriate village green designations' to be addressed. It is calling for early resolution of 'unrecorded rights of way' or a cut off date of 2026 for new additions to the Definitive Map. Temporary diversions of several years duration should be permitted through agreement at a Local Access Forum. The Task Force recommends no changes to hedgerow regulations.

Seasonal workers. The Task Force recommends seasonal workers' accommodation in established horticultural businesses should be permitted development for buildings up to 465m² surface area and be subject to prior notification for buildings between this threshold and 1,500m².

Reaction. CPRE welcomed some of the proposed changes, but said the 'effects of other proposals on establishing village greens and allowing other agricultural developments, including allowing permanent buildings for seasonal workers without proper planning controls are ill considered' (<http://bit.ly/iokWjg>). Environmental groups warned that removing many of the regulations would lead to the loss of important wildlife and damage to habitat (Telegraph: <http://bit.ly/IOJsQd>; Guardian: <http://bit.ly/lx4xsC>). Farm minister Jim Paice said Defra will start cutting red tape immediately (FWI: <http://bit.ly/jQ8Nov>).

Planning and Localism

The Localism Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons. The government tabled a raft of amendments. It begins its passage through the House of Lords on 6 June. There will be more on the Localism Bill in a later eBulletin.

Abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies. Judgment has been reserved in the Appeal Court challenge by CALA Homes against the government's insistence that its intention to abolish regional housing targets is a material consideration when deciding on planning applications (Planning: <http://bit.ly/j67SE4>).

Change of use. The Coalition is consulting on its proposals to scrap the need for change of use permission for conversion of commercial property into residential use (Closing date 30 June: <http://bit.ly/fkLaLR>).

Landbanking. A BBC investigation has revealed how investors are persuaded to buy land, often in the green belt, without any hope of development (<http://bbc.in/jG3PTs>).

Design. The Design Council has launched a review of support for good design in the built environment (<http://bit.ly/mDrLrE>). It also announced grants for eight design review panels across England, which will conduct 250 CABE-style local design reviews over the next year (<http://bit.ly/jyNWqO>). Chief Planner Steve Quatermain wrote to planning authorities saying: 'the Design Council is well placed to build on the strong legacy left by CABE' on design for homes and neighbourhoods (<http://bit.ly/jPadRr>). English Heritage rejected concerns that listing decisions on 20th century buildings will suffer without advice from CABE and said it was strengthening its listing team (BD: <http://bit.ly/k7R52A>).

Flooding. The Institute of Civil Engineers is calling for more funding to protect critical infrastructure assets, fearing the government's plans to allocate grants according to the number of households will be insufficient (<http://bit.ly/mFN2jS>).

Infrastructure. The newly formed National Infrastructure Planning Association is seeking members (<http://bit.ly/kTN8ST>).

National Planning Policy Framework

The Practitioners Advisory Group has produced a proposed draft of the NPPF which will replace the current system of planning policy statements, though it will not apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) processed by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (<http://bit.ly/nppfdraft>). The PAG says 'there is no contradiction between facilitating increased levels of development and the environmental role of planning, as long as development is planned and undertaken responsibly'. There will be more on the NPPF in a later eBulletin.

The **TCPA** (<http://bit.ly/lw1JQ1>) warned that the proposed framework falls short of the kind of guidance necessary for an effective planning framework for England because:

- ◆ it contains new definitions of key concepts such as sustainable development.
- ◆ there is insufficient detail on implementation
- ◆ crucial policy elements are missing, such as human health and social justice.

The **CLA** said the NPPF is too cautious for the needs of the rural economy. 'It rather grudgingly takes account of rural housing needs by accepting that some growth for villages is necessary. However, it ignores extensive rural areas with few village settlements, apart from conversions. National planning policy must encourage all rural settlements, no matter how remote, to be sustainable in the long term with sufficient housing of all types.' It said the draft framework on heritage is 'a big step back' from PPS5 (<http://bit.ly/leRYp4>).

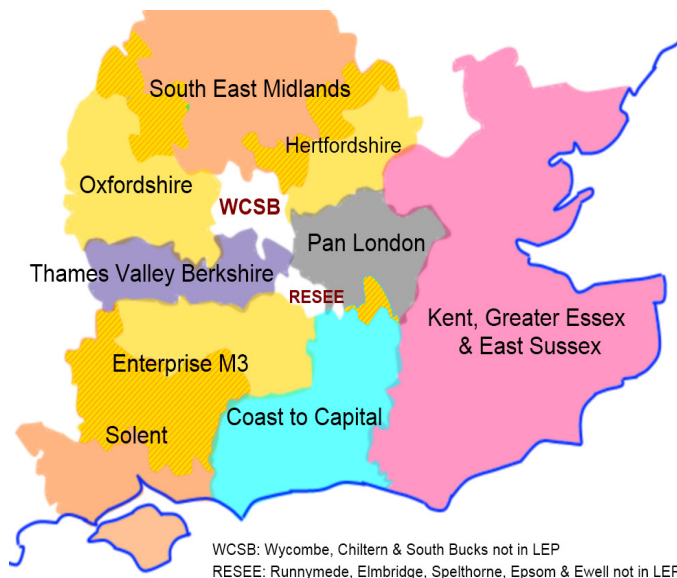
The **National Housing Federation** welcomed the NPPF intention to significantly increase housing supply to meet demand, and not just need (<http://bit.ly/l9g6qG>).

Enterprise & Economy

Local Enterprise Partnerships. There are seven LEPs in the South East:

- ◆ Coast to Capital (www.coast2capital.org.uk)
- ◆ Kent, Greater Essex & East Sussex (www.kenteconomicboard.co.uk/lep)
- ◆ Oxfordshire (www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk)
- ◆ Solent (www.solentlep.org.uk)
- ◆ South East Midlands (www.southeastmidlands.org.uk)
- ◆ Thames Valley Berkshire (no website)
- ◆ Enterprise M3 (www.enterprisem3.org.uk).

Seven South East districts are not served by a LEP. Districts hatched orange on the map are served by two LEPs (National LEP contacts: <http://bit.ly/kO8Z3g>; National map: <http://bit.ly/IRDTa8>).



A report by the **Centre for Cities** said LEPs should have greater powers, including over planning (<http://bit.ly/iI9lnU>). They should:

- ◆ Prepare 'joint, strategic spatial plans for their area to identify and prioritise the need across local authority boundaries for employment land, housing and major investments.'
- ◆ Become designated consultees for Local Plans, allowing them to oversee and co-ordinate the development of planning policies to promote growth.
- ◆ Coordinate development of a LEP-wide transport strategy.
- ◆ Take the lead on Enterprise Zones.

The 33 **LEPs** will share £5 million to recruit staff, Business Minister Mark Prisk announced (Telegraph: <http://bit.ly/jrgumk>).

Enterprise Zones. The Coast to Capital LEP has submitted the Gatwick Diamond, Croydon and Bognor Regis areas as three potential sites for Enterprise Zones (C2C: <http://bit.ly/kiWPbb>). Dozens of LEPs around the country are preparing Enterprise Zone bids including Humberstone, the Marches, Great Yarmouth-Lowestoft, Selby, Peterborough, Plymouth and Wakefield.

Strategic National Corridors. The DfT has recognised as routes of strategic national importance the A1 from north of Newcastle and a route from Bootle to the Twelve Quays Ferry in Birkenhead. It said it will wait until LEPs are more fully established and their role in transport is clearer before defining other corridors, including in Kent (<http://bit.ly/jYz27p>).

RDAs. The Homes & Communities Agency could take control of assets owned by the regional development agencies when they are abolished, *Planning* reports (<http://bit.ly/jhDqqw>).

Unemployment is less in rural areas (5.3%) than urban districts (8.2%), according to a Defra review of the impact of the recession on the rural economy (<http://bit.ly/iUOnl9>).

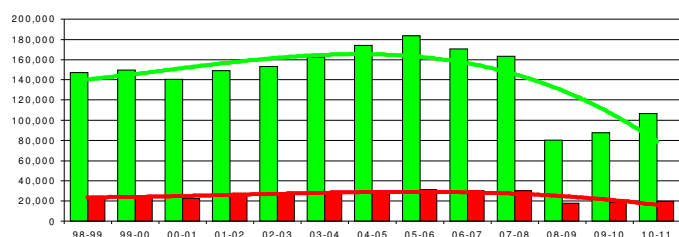
Politics

Coalition one year on. The first year of a government David Cameron declared to become the greenest government ever 'has delivered precious few successes for the environment department to celebrate', press commentators said (Guardian: <http://bit.ly/kL1vE4>; Independent: <http://ind.pn/koRoGq>). Prior to Chris Huhne's statement on the carbon Budget (page 4), the leaders of 14 environmental groups including CPRE wrote to David Cameron saying: 'your Government started with a strong sense of purpose on the environment but is now in danger of losing its way'. They urged his government to accept the Committee on Climate Change report (<http://bit.ly/mIo23S>).

Brighton and Hove City Council has become the first local authority in the country to be run by the Green Party, which is a minority administration (Inside Housing: <http://bit.ly/iqe5RM>).

Housing

Housebuilding starts reached more than 29,000 in the first quarter of 2011, the highest for almost three years (LocalGov: <http://bit.ly/j52Xoz>). In the South East, 5,150 dwellings were started, up from 3,080 in the first quarter of 2009 but well below the peak of an average of 8,260 a quarter in 2007 (CLG: <http://bit.ly/kuiKz6>). A study by the TCPA said that the proportion of lone parents and households without children will grow, leading to increased under-occupation and increased demand for affordable family housing (<http://bit.ly/kZPx2u>).



Housing starts 1998-2010
(Green = England. Red = South East)

Zero carbon. Housing Minister Grant Shapps confirmed the government's controversial revised definition for zero carbon homes, which excludes life time emissions. He said builders 'should not be responsible for the amount of television the families who buy the homes watch or the number of cups of tea they make each day' (Planning Portal: <http://bit.ly/javUXC>; Inside Housing: <http://bit.ly/lAkROP>).

Kent housing strategy. Kent Council has published a development plan that calls for a bottom-up approach to housing growth in the wake of the abolition of the South East Plan, with local authorities working together to secure adequate investment. It also requires each of the 14 local authorities across Kent to identify space to start building 100 homes on land they own this year (Inside Housing: <http://bit.ly/lxoakn>).

Affordable housing. Eric Pickles condemned councils that use S106 agreements on small housing developments to raise funding for affordable housing as a 'tax on aspiration' (Mail: <http://bit.ly/ipIX2x>).

Around the South East. Eric Pickles threw out a 500-dwelling scheme at Polegate in East Sussex as prejudicial to the Core Strategy (Planning Portal: <http://bit.ly/jK7Jqd>). A two week public inquiry has begun into a planned new town of 7,000 homes in the North of Fareham Strategic Development Area. The Inspector challenged the council on the need for the SDA, which it admitted was to designed meet regional as well as local need (The News: <http://bit.ly/iAOPJC>). The MoD wants to build 1,900 homes at Graven Hill, south east of Bicester, but Cherwell District Council is opposing the plans as it is backing the NW Bicester eco-town (Oxford Mail: <http://bit.ly/lmeBDP>).

Landscape

The Independent Panel on Forestry has invited everyone interested in forests and woods to 'share their views and join in a public conversation'. The IPF will be visiting 'Woods in Kent' on 16 September (Closing date 31 July: <http://bit.ly/mPRFAf>; <http://bit.ly/jCwBqS>; Woodland Trust: <http://bit.ly/m37mdF>). The Forest Access User Group, nine walking and open space groups, said that protecting and enhancing public access must be at the heart of the IPF's work (Ramblers: <http://bit.ly/jSiPFf>). The Woodland Trust called on the government to create a carbon scheme to encourage businesses and individuals to invest in planting trees and for it to commit to creating 15,000 hectares of new woodland a year (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/IVlw8g>).

Orchards. An inventory of orchards by Natural England and the Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species found that only 9% of England's orchards are in excellent condition and that 45% are in poor condition (NE: <http://bit.ly/kuPXEK>).

Allotments. Councils have sold off or redeveloped more than 50,000 allotments in the past 15 years, despite soaring waiting lists (Daily Mail: <http://bit.ly/jUtrNk>). The Independent claimed the century-old right of people to demand an allotment from their council may be abolished by the government under plans to scale back red tape (<http://ind.pn/jz8Owb>). Ministers retorted 'this is simply untrue' (<http://bit.ly/mN1G3o>), leading the Independent to claim a resounding success in its Dig for Victory campaign (<http://ind.pn/lBtUTf>). The government later said that allotments could be protected under neighbourhood plans and that 'requirements for councils to provide allotments will be safeguarded as part of a wider review into reducing statutory burdens on local authorities' (<http://bit.ly/ms5eFk>).

Green Belt. A planning inspector has rejected plans for an underground hotel on green belt land in Surrey (BBC: <http://bbc.in/ipKa2I>). Eric Pickles however approved an underground eco-house for a footballer on moorland in the green belt between Bolton and Bury (Mirror: <http://bit.ly/jL7flq>).

South Downs National Park. Controversial plans for a sand quarry at Horncroft Farm near Fittleworth have been withdrawn (Grough: <http://bit.ly/jsJ5uY>). Protests against a landfill site at Filching Quarry are growing, with campaigners claiming roads will collapse under the strain (Eastbourne Herald: <http://bit.ly/mcsQOz>).

Biodiversity. The annual UK biodiversity indicators were released by Defra without press publicity. They show that one third of the measures are in decline, including populations of breeding farm birds (<http://bit.ly/mzGawz>).

Heritage. English Heritage has launched the National Heritage List for England, an online database of all nationally designated heritage assets (<http://bit.ly/mS8wl7>).

Clutter. Natural England is promoting a scheme to encourage runners in the countryside despite strong opposition. A petition has been launched against the installation of intrusive electronic boxes in remote locations (Grough: <http://bit.ly/mdlRcY>).

Light pollution. The annual star count by CPRE and the Campaign for Dark Skies showed that 59% of people taking part could see just 10 or fewer stars within Orion, indicating severe light pollution in their area (<http://bit.ly/lFnqo8>). Winds farms in Wyoming are to use radar controlled warning lights to cut light pollution by only operating when aircraft are near (Billings Gazette: <http://bit.ly/lDcmwl>).

Litter. CPRE, Keep Britain Tidy and the LGA proposed an amendment to the Localism Bill to give councils extra powers to fine people seen throwing rubbish from cars, even if they are not the driver or vehicle owner (KBT: <http://bit.ly/j3qrhl>; Bill Byson on Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/l9GAJY>).

Rural Planning and Policy

Upland response. The government published its response to the Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's report into farming in upland areas (<http://bit.ly/iqvIPE>). It relies heavily on the *Uplands Policy Review* published in March (<http://bit.ly/uplandr>). The government:

- ◆ dismissed concerns that the abolition of the Commission for Rural Communities would diminish rural expertise in government
- ◆ rejected the committee's call for a UK or English statutory definition of 'uplands'
- ◆ wants rural councils to change planning policies to support residential conversion of unwanted farm buildings rather than insisting on employment reuse
- ◆ said it will consider amending national park legislation to reflect the importance of sustainable development but says there are no overwhelming arguments for adding a specific obligation for national parks to promote socio-economic development.

The government also confirmed its plans to publish a **Rural Policy Statement** setting out its policy priorities, including economic priorities, before the summer Parliamentary recess.

Transport

Roads. In a CPRE initiative, twenty residents from a Hampshire village have signed up for a national trial to give up their cars for electric bikes (BBC: <http://bbc.in/jCcGWB>). George Monbiot finds that Oxfordshire's experiment with turning speed cameras off led to a doubling of speeding & a 50% increase in deaths (<http://bit.ly/jJA0yR>). The police will have the power to issue spot fines for careless driving and penalties will increase under government plans to improve road safety (Telegraph: <http://bit.ly/mJP7lY>). CPRE accused the DfT of ignoring rural areas, where there are more deaths, and playing 'rural road roulette' (<http://bit.ly/jzJ679>).

High Speed 2. Only 53% of adults are aware of the HS2 proposals according to a survey for DfT, most of whom only know a little or not very much about the scheme. Despite not knowing much about HS2, the survey reports that nearly half of adults, 47%, are in favour of the scheme (<http://bit.ly/iSmjPr>). Railway Gazette is hosting a live webinar on Wednesday June 8 to debate the pros and cons of HS2 (<http://bit.ly/izHD4M>). At a London conference of opponents, Alice Barnard of the Countryside Alliance said: 'HS2 will fundamentally alter large sections of the British countryside and have a huge environmental impact. The environmental impact of HS2 is just one of the costs, which has been underestimated and the so-called national benefits of HS2 are wildly exaggerated' (NC&E: <http://bit.ly/lbuVzQ>). The RAC is also calling for the project to be axed (NCE: <http://bit.ly/ixkf4E>). The leader of Buckinghamshire County Council was replaced, according to press reports, because he was not aggressive enough in the battle against HS2 (BFP: <http://bit.ly/l1F4sF>; <http://bit.ly/k4Dbnx>). The Chiltern Society has produced an anti-HS2 video voiced by actor Keith Hoffmeister (<http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk/hs2/>).

McNulty Rail Review. Sir Roy McNulty's independent study into rail value for money concluded that £1 billion a year could be saved by 2019 (Report: <http://bit.ly/loZFZV>; NDS: <http://bit.ly/iPW2bD>; Business Green: <http://bit.ly/ilvh2v>; Telegraph: <http://bit.ly/kaGajE>).

Lydd Airport. At the public inquiry protestors claimed that the expansion plans were a 'Fukushima in the making' due to the proximity of the runway to Dungeness nuclear power station (Kent Online: <http://bit.ly/jk55NH>). Controversial Ryanair chief Michael O'Leary was described by Pro-Lydd campaigners as 'rude and arrogant' for backing growth at Heathrow and Gatwick over Lydd (TI Kent: <http://bit.ly/lKiOcq>).

Buses. Cambridgeshire County Council is facing legal action following its decision to cut all subsidised bus services. The action is supported by the Campaign for Better Transport (LocalGov: <http://bit.ly/l4tBYA>).

Shipping. The Sustainable Shipping Initiative, which draws together leading shipping companies and organisations and the WWF, has published a 'Call for Action' to improve sustainability (<http://bit.ly/l6Xmhq>).

Climate Change & Carbon

UK Carbon Budget aims for 50% cut. Energy and climate secretary Chris Huhne accepted advice from the Committee on Climate Change that the UK should aim for a 50% cut in greenhouse gas emissions relative to 1990 by 2027. But the committee's recommendations that carbon budgets for the non-traded sectors (residential, commercial, transport & non-energy intensive industry) be tightened will not be implemented, unless the EU implements a higher 30% economy-wide greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020. Similarly, the 50% target will be reviewed in 2014 if insufficient progress on emissions reduction is made at EU level (CCC: <http://bit.ly/mTKs4n>; DECC: <http://bit.ly/jxtx6F>; Independent: <http://ind.pn/lps5yu>). Climate change minister Greg Barker denied the planned review in 2014 was a 'get-out clause' secured during inter-departmental horse-trading (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/mN7Wca>). 'It's not often that a prime minister overrules his two principle economic departments to support an environmental objective,' the Green Alliance said (<http://bit.ly/mOAmMN>). Robert Mckie claimed the budget is a 'golden opportunity for Britain to lead the world in energy production' (Observer: <http://bit.ly/mOHF5h>). Matt Ridley blasted: 'Welcome to the neo-medieval world of Britain's energy policy. It is a world in which Highland glens are buzzing with bulldozers damming streams for miniature hydro plants, in which the Dogger Bank is to be dotted with windmills at Brobdingnagian expense, in which Heathrow is to burn wood trucked in from Surrey, and Yorkshire wheat is being turned into motor fuel' (Spectator: <http://bit.ly/jHwnJJ>).

Cambridge Econometrics said that the UK had achieved only a 15½% reduction in carbon emission by 2010. The 20% target for 2010 is, on current policies, not likely to be crossed until 2020 (<http://bit.ly/kq72h1>).

Infrastructure. Defra published a report on climate resilient infrastructure, setting out its vision on how industry should adapt to the threat of climate change (<http://bit.ly/kdxxMQ>). Defra also published a series of reports from water and energy companies detailing how they plan to adapt to climate change (<http://bit.ly/m689lW>).

DECC is ending core funding for the **Carbon Trust** and **Energy Saving Trust** from April 2012 (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/lSkgbp>). The Energy Saving Trust will transform into a social enterprise before seeking charitable status later this year (<http://bit.ly/mMRNte>), while the Carbon Trust said it was well-positioned to cope with the end to guaranteed government funding and had been preparing for the cuts for several years (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/jXxCet>).

Green Investment Bank. Vince Cable published a progress report and appointed an advisory board. Nick Clegg gave further details of how the GIB will operate (Guardian: <http://bit.ly/mkbR4j>; NDS: <http://bit.ly/jBv1e>; Business Green: <http://bit.ly/kENGIP>). From the GIB could be investing in a host of climate-related technologies, including new rolling stock for trains, nuclear power plants, or even flood defences (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/j9Sr38>). The CBI director general John Cridland questioned whether the GIB will work 'if it needs the Treasury's permission to blow its nose.' He backed green growth saying we need to: 'see green growth as something we all have a stake in, see it as the future for us all, regardless of sector, and we can lead the world' (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/meNQ8e>).

Renewable Energy Reviews

A review by the **Committee on Climate Change** said that renewables should generate between 30% and 45% of energy by 2030. It called for a portfolio of technologies, including nuclear, and for strengthened support for renewable heat projects. However it came out against further expansion of offshore wind energy on grounds of cost. 'One way to achieve this... would be to increase ambition for onshore wind. This would require that society (and specific communities) accept greater landscape impact in return for slightly reduced electricity bills.' It accepted that 'questions over the scale at which [onshore] can be deployed given uncertainties relating to site availability and planning, in turn reflecting concerns about the local visual impact.' But if onshore wind farms could not be delivered, there was a case for central Government to support the imperatives of its carbon budgets 'possibly under new planning legislation that explicitly sets this out' (CCC: <http://bit.ly/lO94Ni>).

A report from PwC, however, said **offshore wind energy** could become economically viable and subsidy free within 15 years as the market grows and turbine technology improves (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/ktZne8>).

A review said **Ofgem** should play a greater role in overseeing low carbon policies (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/kOVahf>).

The House of Commons **Energy and Climate Change Committee** claimed government plans will 'effectively' provide subsidies to nuclear generators through new long term contracts and a carbon price floor that could hand them windfall profits, despite a pledge not to subsidise the industry. It called on DECC to completely rewrite its plans to reform the electricity market into a 'straightforward and coherent' strategy that will decarbonise the energy sector at minimal cost to customers (Edie: <http://bit.ly/kDkvM9>; Business Green: <http://bit.ly/mfYdRi>; BBC: <http://bbc.in/jSHGvw>; Tim Yeo: <http://bit.ly/mo2AIH>).

Scotland. The new government has raised its 2020 renewable electricity target to 100%. First Minister Alex Salmond said: 'we intend to be generating twice as much electricity as Scotland needs—just over half of it from renewables and just under half from other conventional sources' (<http://bit.ly/iDoUfg>).

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** said 80% of the world's energy needs could be met by renewables by the middle of this century (Edie: <http://bit.ly/mlmlQH>).

Renewable Energy & Efficiency

Wind. The government is prepared to back a plan by Vestas to build a wind turbine factory at Sheerness in Kent (BBC: <http://bbc.in/mdZisw>). Energy minister Charles Hendry wrote to Powys Council telling it to 'get its act together and that he wants to see progress on the outstanding wind farm applications' (Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/mJneXa>). Wind turbines were paid almost £1M to power down during a storm in April (Edie: <http://bit.ly/j3dV2g>). A report commissioned by the John Muir Trust gives a detailed analysis of output from wind farms in Scotland, finding it at lower levels and intermittent than that claimed by the renewables industry (JMT: <http://bit.ly/nowind>; Yorks Post: <http://bit.ly/jEBnVa>).

Solar. Cornwall Council told the government that its planned cut in solar Feed in Tariffs will cause economic damage to the county (<http://bit.ly/m6slGD>).

Tidal. A two month trial of a tidal turbine is underway in the Thames at Westminster, with the hope of eventually powering 35,000 homes with hundreds of tidal turbines along the river from Westminster to Margate. (BBC: <http://bbc.in/kVyWE9>; Nautricity: <http://bit.ly/k4Dbnx>).

Biomass. Energy created from burning organic matter could increase emissions and decimate forests—and questions remain over sustainability and security of supply, according to a review article in the Guardian (<http://bit.ly/jZsRiO>).

The Grid Marches On

Protests against wind farms in Wales erected under policy TAN-8 have often been at their strongest over the logistics of building the turbines and connecting them to the grid. Anger over the policy, which opponents say sacrifices beautiful landscapes to power inefficient buildings in distant cities, came to a head on Tuesday when 1,500 marchers descended on Cardiff (Wales Online: <http://bit.ly/jmgaFG>). Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies said an electricity substation and dozens of pylons in mid Wales will 'totally destroy' the area. Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski asked the chairman of the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs to hold an inquiry (BBC: <http://bbc.in/loL8h3>; Planning Portal: <http://bit.ly/ld4loD>).

Pylons. Chris Huhne and the National Grid launched a pylon design competition. For CPRE, Jack Neill-Hall said it accepted that new power lines would be needed, but believed it was economically viable to run the lines underground or under the sea, preventing disfigurement to the landscape. 'Although a less intrusive pylon design would be welcome, the real focus should be on how we can get pylons out of our national parks and other valued landscapes' (Guardian: <http://bit.ly/irVWkU>; <http://www.ribapylondesign.com/>). CPRE Kent has launched a campaign against the threat of pylons in the North Downs if the Holford rules which protect the most outstanding countryside are relaxed (<http://bit.ly/m6o1iL>). Concern is growing about potential power line routes through the Bowland Fells, the north Pennines and the Lake District. Consultation begins in the autumn (L&RV News: <http://bit.ly/iCDKjP>).

Interconnector. A £530m cable linking the UK and European grids via the Isle of Grain in Kent and Maasflakte near Rotterdam has been opened (BBC: <http://bbc.in/lXtbzg>).

Fossil & Nuclear Energy

Post-Fukushima. In an interim report, chief nuclear inspector Mike Weightman said that 'the UK has displayed a strong safety culture in its response to Fukushima and current safety measures are adequate.' In response, Chris Huhne said he would bring forward the Energy National Policy Statements as soon as possible, including the list of potential nuclear power station sites (DECC: <http://bit.ly/msq9tI>; Angus Walker: <http://bit.ly/kwXjCo>). In contrast, Japan is abandoning ambitions to obtain half of its electricity from nuclear power and will instead promote renewable energy (Guardian: <http://bit.ly/izqYoO>).

Nuclear support. A Populus poll showed that support for a new generation of nuclear power stations remains mixed in the UK. 42% are in favour of building new power plants, 31% are against building new power plants. Only 23% of women are in favour compared with 63% of men (<http://bit.ly/kqMoXI>).

Fracas grows over fracking. Unease is growing worldwide on the dangers of fracking to recover oil and gas from shale, which could release more greenhouse gases than coal mining (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/kZCizG>). France is part-way to banning the process, protests are growing in the US, while the UK government is considering granting further licences alongside those already in operation for gas extraction near Blackpool (Independent: <http://ind.pn/jQSIj9>; Telegraph: <http://bit.ly/lwuDq6>; Reuters: <http://reut.rs/jrhbuq>). MPs on the House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Committee dismissed ideas of a ban on shale gas extraction in the UK, saying it could play a small but important role in boosting the country's energy security and cutting carbon emissions. Tim Yeo, Chairman of the Committee said: 'There has been a lot of hot air recently about the dangers of shale gas drilling, but our inquiry found no evidence to support the main concern—that UK water supplies would be put at risk' (<http://bit.ly/kBegMQ>). Dustin Benton for CPRE said: 'Even full exploitation of UK shale gas would only deliver a year and a half worth of gas, so why put some of our finest landscapes at risk?' (<http://bit.ly/lniqve>).

Water

Climate change. After the dry spring, Environment Minister Lord Henley warned that water companies must plan for a drier climate (Defra: <http://bit.ly/loTaJ1>).

Recycling & Waste

50% recycling target for councils abandoned. Although the EU revised waste framework directive sets the UK a target of recycling 50% of waste from households by 2020, environment secretary Richard Benyon announced that: 'while this sets an overall ambition for the UK, the Government do not intend to pass this target on to local authorities on an individual basis' (Hansard Column 23W: <http://bit.ly/jp1ZLA>). Waste contractor Biffa Municipal said the decision was a 'slap in the face' for councils that had led the field on recycling (LocalGov: <http://bit.ly/kT3p10>). The final announcement will be made when the Waste Review is published in a few weeks time. With Scotland and Wales aiming for 70% recycling and Northern Ireland 60%, the way is open for English authorities to reduce their commitment to below 50%.

Waste recycling is increasing with 45% going to

Incineration. The Infrastructure Planning Commission held its first hearing into Covanta Energy's application for an incinerator in Bedfordshire. For an inside view see Angus Walker's blog (<http://bit.ly/kAchWa>). A public inquiry will determine whether a £120 million incinerator can be built at Hartlebury in Worcestershire (Worcester News: <http://bit.ly/jfzNIE>). Over 10,000 objections have been received by the IPC to the Brig y Cwm near Merthyr Tydfil (<http://bit.ly/jsCQUc>). Eric Pickles has approved a controversial incinerator in St Denis after lobbying by the leader of Cornwall Council, despite his council opposing the scheme as against the local development plan. Cornwall Council faced heavy compensation payments if the incinerator was not built and Eric Pickles said 'the financial implications of rejecting the appeal proposal is a matter that should be accorded substantial weight' (BBC: <http://bbc.in/jg1uTz>; CCN: <http://bit.ly/kiOlcl>; Appeal decision: <http://bit.ly/wasteaiw>).

Food waste. A UN report found consumers in rich countries waste almost as much food as the entire net food production of sub-Saharan Africa leading to calls for supermarkets to stop stocking only the best-looking fruit and vegetables (Business Green: <http://bit.ly/jwC1fE>; Guardian: <http://bit.ly/jFgdOE>; Report: <http://bit.ly/kjbjEQ>).

Farming, Food & Retail

Campaign for the Farmed Environment failing. Defra said that 76% of farmers had not taken any measures under the voluntary scheme and 79% said they had no intention of doing so in future. CPRE suggested that regulations may be needed when the scheme ends in a year's time: 'We can't just hope for the best and leave it to a dedicated few when it comes to protecting our countryside and its wildlife' (GBP: <http://bit.ly/knboKa>; CPRE: <http://bit.ly/lle8iG>).

Meat. CPRE was among farming and countryside groups that signed a letter to the Times, condemning plans by the Food Standards Agency to more than double the cost of abattoir meat inspections (FWI: <http://bit.ly/jNgbJH>).

Supermarket 'killer' boom. Channel 4 News said there will be 20% more supermarket space in Britain built in the next three years: 'That's equivalent to 350 football pitches worth of new Tescos, Sainsbury's, Asdas, Morrisons and Marks & Spencers.' (*It might be useful to note that this is the area of 467 million baked bean tins, Ed.*) 'Supermarkets kill free markets as well as our communities', Peter Wilby argued in the Guardian. 'Across the country local shops have been wiped out by supermarkets. This is an issue for the right as much as the left' (<http://bit.ly/jerqZE>; <http://bit.ly/kTIELG>).

Supermarket applications. A controversial Sainsbury's at Bishop Waltham in Hampshire has been approved by Eric Pickles, though campaigners say the battle is not over yet (BBC: <http://bbc.in/lJ1Osw>). Pickles also approved an edge-of-town scheme at Eccles, Lancashire (MEN: <http://bit.ly/mlC26b>). He decided not to call in a scheme at Kirkby allowing a Tesco Extra and other developments to go ahead (BBC: <http://bbc.in/jgVCTG>). Protestors against a controversial Tesco Express store in Bristol, which has just reopened after riots, have secured a new hearing to determine the future of a judicial review into how Bristol city council handled the planning application (Planning: <http://bit.ly/mGwHpD>).

Ombudsman. Ministers are to publish a draft Bill which would give a new supermarket ombudsman powers to prevent Britain's 10 biggest grocers from bullying their suppliers. But the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA), will probably not begin work until the summer of 2013 (Independent: <http://ind.pn/iZiT2R>).

High Streets. Retail guru Mary Portas is to lead an independent review into the future of the high street. She will look at the problem of vacant shops, consider new business models, investigate ways of preventing the proliferation of 'clone towns' and look at ways of increasing the number of small and independent retailers in town centres (BIS: <http://bit.ly/miSxki>; Mary Portas: <http://www.maryportas.com/>; @maryportas).

The government published a plan for mutualisation of the **Post Office**, with subpostmasters and employees owning the new body. Customers might have a share at a later date. The will be a public consultation later this year (NDS: <http://bit.ly/j2ZDV5>).

Communities

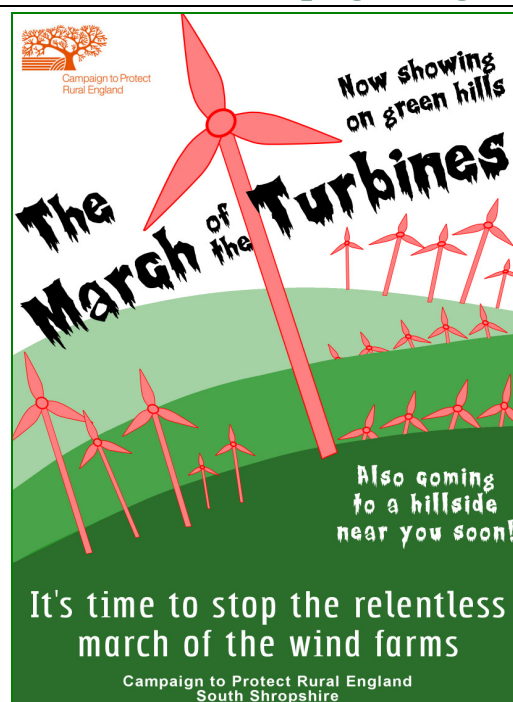
Broadband. Kent County Council is rolling out superfast broadband, giving £100,000 to each of ten communities (Kent Online: <http://bit.ly/m82Mpu>).

Campaigning

Defend the Right to Protest has been launched to challenge the methods used by the police after a wave of arrests for peaceful demonstrations (Independent: <http://ind.pn/kcvTsZ>; <http://defendtherighttoprotest.org/>).

Civic Day is on 25 June this year (<http://www.civicday.org.uk/>).

This Month's Campaign Image



Please send images for future eBulletins to cprenews@gmail.com.