

CPRE SE eBulletin: 8 November 2008

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A larger eBulletin than of late as we consider CPRE South East's response to the South East Plan, a heap of planning related legislation and the latest developments in the eco-town saga.

1. CPRE SE responds to the South East Plan

CPRE South East told the government that "the environmental quality and quality of life of the South East will decline overall if this Plan is carried to its conclusion." In its comments on the Secretary of State's proposed revisions it criticised the government for a "dogged commitment to uncertain data and an unswerving determination to build housing in numbers beyond capacities or proven need in the region". The government's introduction of a plethora of initiatives (such as New Growth Points) alongside the SEP "creates an impression that the Government has little commitment to the planning system". CPRE SE questions "the level of attention given by government to the views of stakeholders and local people", especially in relation to subregions. The SEP imposes narrowly defined economic targets and housing policies with little or no regard for the implications on infrastructure and the environment. The role of Hubs has become confused and CPRE calls for a return to their original transport focus. 'Late additions' such as Bordon/Whitehill and Shoreham Harbour should have a 'provisional' status.

SDAs. CPRE SE said that the government should remove the Strategic Development Areas South of Oxford; East of the M1 at Milton Keynes; and at Shoreham, West Sussex. The SDA North of Fareham should be regarded as a 'reserve' and that at South West Reading should be subject to further testing, especially in relation to flood risk management.

Housing. Wording that suggests that housing targets in the plan are minimal levels should be removed. CPRE says that in current conditions "it is extremely doubtful that existing housing targets are deliverable - higher targets even less so" and to impose unachievable targets in planning authorities is unfair and inconsistent with national planning policy. It is calling for a phased approach with lower targets in the short-term.

Green space. At least 75% of all new development should be on previously developed land, not the 60% proposed in the SEP. CPRE SE does not accept the need for small scale local reviews of green belt, or a review of the green belt to the south of Oxford. " We vigorously object to major reviews that undermine the character of the cities the green belt aims to protect." CPRE also objects to the removal of the policy on strategic gaps. The new policy on green infrastructure is supported. There is an over-emphasis on the role of environmental scheme funding to maintain landscape quality; CPRE says this alone cannot be the basis of a vibrant and well-managed countryside.

Rural areas and communities. CPRE says that the statement that "extensive parts of the region are largely undeveloped" is symptomatic of the planning mindset in the South East and demonstrates an approach that views urban as superior to rural. Where development is necessary in smaller towns and villages, CPRE says it must be located "where it will increase local self-sufficiency and tackle identified deficiencies, whilst protecting, and where possible, enhancing the quality and character of the wider countryside".

Infrastructure and transport. CPRE says the new policy wording goes some way to ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure, but it is concerned that the proposed emphasis on behaviour change and demand management to free up capacity is unlikely to free up sufficient capacity in infrastructure to meet the needs of new development. CPRE supports demand management in rural areas and says that actions such as traffic calming are important to the character, tranquillity and safety of the countryside in the South East. The environmental impacts of airport expansion, including noise, emissions, and increased demands on infrastructure, and how they might be mitigated, should be acknowledged.

Water. CPRE supports the inclusion of separate policies on water resources and water quality but says that the Plan needs to give a clear lead to achieving higher levels (80%+) of metering in existing homes. It says that the policy for the Upper Thames Reservoir should be deleted. The new policy for the River Thames Corridor is welcomed, CPRE saying it may establish a model for elsewhere.

2. Other reaction to the South East Plan

SEERA rejected the revised housing numbers at a meeting of its full assembly. Chairman Councillor Paul Carter said: "There is a clear mismatch between Government's housing ambitions and their lack of commitment to invest in the South East. Without investment in roads, transport, health services, schools, sewerage and water supplies to support new homes we will see a decline in quality of life for both new and existing residents" (24dash: [tinyurl.com/6jdw9k](https://www.tinyurl.com/6jdw9k); SEERA: [tinyurl.com/6e9qjp](https://www.tinyurl.com/6e9qjp)). South East minister Jonathan Shaw has nevertheless refused to guarantee funding for infrastructure (The News: [tinyurl.com/69f53t](https://www.tinyurl.com/69f53t)).

Local reaction. There is near universal anger in the local newspapers at the SEP housing targets. Recent articles include: The South Downs Campaign called the South East Plan a recipe for environmental destruction (Argus: [tinyurl.com/5tnbjc](https://www.tinyurl.com/5tnbjc); Planning Daily: [tinyurl.com/6obd2b](https://www.tinyurl.com/6obd2b)). Mid Sussex District Council has said it will not rule out taking the government through the courts (This is East Grinstead: [tinyurl.com/5e3n3j](https://www.tinyurl.com/5e3n3j)). CPRE Kent, Maidstone Council and SEERA are all objecting to housing levels in the SEP (Kent News: [tinyurl.com/6hsuxz](https://www.tinyurl.com/6hsuxz)). MP Chris Huhne raised in Parliament the spectre of south Hampshire being turned into a giant "Solent city" (Daily Echo: [tinyurl.com/6xw9qq](https://www.tinyurl.com/6xw9qq)). Bracknell Forest Council said "We will defend our Green Belt. We don't want any weakening by these weasel words" (Get Bracknell: [tinyurl.com/6rvkc3](https://www.tinyurl.com/6rvkc3)). Nicholas Soames MP has branded housing plans for Mid Sussex "completely unreasonable" (This is East Grinstead: [tinyurl.com/6n4vnc](https://www.tinyurl.com/6n4vnc)).

3. Legislation

Planning Bill. The government tabled several amendments to the Bill. It will contain an explicit climate change duty: National Policy Statements and regional plans will have to show how they mitigate and adapt to climate change, and Government must explain how it does this to parliament. A Lords Committee will now have a key role in reviewing and scrutinising National Policy Statements (CLG: [tinyurl.com/6ghn8t](https://www.tinyurl.com/6ghn8t)). Friends of the Earth and the Planning Disaster coalition said the climate change commitment was not strong enough, taking advertisements in two national newspapers to make their point (Telegraph: [tinyurl.com/6yexdy](https://www.tinyurl.com/6yexdy); FoE: [tinyurl.com/5rg6hs](https://www.tinyurl.com/5rg6hs)). After amendment in the Lords, National Policy Statements will now also include design quality (Architect's Journal: [tinyurl.com/58q2h9](https://www.tinyurl.com/58q2h9); BD: [tinyurl.com/59wht7](https://www.tinyurl.com/59wht7)). Another amendment allows the secretary of state to prescribe further grounds on which she may intervene if the IPC is not working as intended after two years (Planning Resource: [tinyurl.com/6fvzch](https://www.tinyurl.com/6fvzch)). The government dropped controversial proposals to remove the right to appeal to a planning inspector for smaller applications. It removed the link between the level of the community infrastructure levy (CIL) and land value increases following planning approval. The CIL will now be calculated with reference to local infrastructure needs and economic viability of development in the area (Planning Daily: [tinyurl.com/5oxam6](https://www.tinyurl.com/5oxam6)). CPRE and a coalition of groups successfully called for the removal of Clause 151, which would have extinguished rights of residents to seek compensation over noise, pollution or disruption from major infrastructure projects (Planning Daily: [tinyurl.com/6x9g8s](https://www.tinyurl.com/6x9g8s); CPRE: [tinyurl.com/6quxw5](https://www.tinyurl.com/6quxw5)). FoE's Hugh Ellis told the Guardian that the Planning Bill "is deeply undemocratic, it marginalises communities, and it does nothing to tackle climate change" ([tinyurl.com/66ml8u](https://www.tinyurl.com/66ml8u)). Hazel Blears struck back. "During tough economic times a quick, predictable and fair planning service that can deliver new renewable energy supplies, public transport and clean water is vital. We simply can't create a green economy with an industrial-age planning system" ([tinyurl.com/65ezxo](https://www.tinyurl.com/65ezxo)). The Bill has its third reading in the House of Lords on 18 November.

Climate Change Bill. The Bill will commit the UK to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. It will include targets for aviation and shipping. The Bill, the result of a three-year campaign by Friends of the Earth, met with broad consensus in the House of Commons, including support from the Conservatives (Edie: tinyurl.com/6fp876; FoE: tinyurl.com/6ou2x5). The Bill will now ping pong between the Lords and Commons before receiving Royal Assent later in the year.

Energy Bill. The Bill sets the framework for renewable energy, offshore gas and oil, carbon capture & storage, nuclear waste and smart metering. It now includes a Renewable Heat Incentive (New Energy Focus: tinyurl.com/5wpl4c) but FoE criticised the arrangements for feed-in tariffs as being too weak (FoE: tinyurl.com/68vcxa). The Bill is now due to ping pong between the Lords and Commons before receiving Royal Assent later in the year.

4. Planning

RSS condemned. CPRE investigated Regional Spatial Strategies and found that:

- ◆ over 2,250 hectares of greenfield land, including green belt, is set to be developed for housing every year
- ◆ by 2020 this will mean the loss of greenfield the size of the city of Birmingham
- ◆ proposals by regional planners to reduce the environmental impact, respond to public concerns, and plan for sustainable housing levels are routinely overridden by government
- ◆ regional strategies frequently contain contradictory policies, in particular policies to reduce carbon emissions.

A Communities and Local Government spokesperson said the CPRE analysis was "flawed and one sided" (Planning Portal: tinyurl.com/5txrx6).

Consultation. Councils and communities are to be given government cash to strengthen consultation and participation in planning (NDS: tinyurl.com/68zr8w).

Hampton Court. Developers have been given preliminary approval to build a four-storey hotel, flats and retail outlets across the river from the palace, to the fury of custodians and David Starkey (Times: tinyurl.com/6e4uta).

Slough has had its core strategy approved, one of just 5% of planning authorities to achieve this (Planning Resource: tinyurl.com/69wjxy).

Dunsfold Park is to appeal against Waverley Borough's decision to refuse its plans for 2,600 homes on Dunsfold aerodrome near Guildford (Planning Daily: tinyurl.com/6cvfu5).

CPRE Hampshire is backing opposition to a Tesco "Megashed" near Andover. The proposal goes to planning committee at the beginning of December (Stop Mega Sheds: tinyurl.com/657uor). The branch has also been trying to prevent a large warehouse development at New Greenham Park, near Newbury.

CPRE Kent has expressed disappointment that the China Gateway business park on Thanet has been given the go ahead (tinyurl.com/6c7gtt).

5. Eco-towns

Eco announcements. The government launched its sustainability appraisals and its draft PPS for eco-towns. The appraisals condemned the majority of eco-town proposals as unsustainable, yet Margaret Beckett is nevertheless pressing on with the eco-towns project. "I do not expect all of these locations to go forward - the eco-town standards are tough and I think some of these shortlisted schemes could struggle to meet them", she said (Telegraph: tinyurl.com/67cths; CLG: tinyurl.com/5r35gb). CPRE said that the eco-towns programme should be scaled back, with a focus on one or two truly exemplary schemes. It said that requiring an eco-town to be a new settlement or contain a minimum of 5,000 homes will stifle innovation. Government policy should address ways in which existing places can become 'eco-towns', including through the development of 'eco-extensions' or 'eco-quarters' (CPRE:

tinyurl.com/6rd4f2). The LGA met Margaret Beckett to stress that the eco-towns should not be forced through where they are not wanted and to warn the government its approach may be illegal. "Using a national planning policy statement to create bias towards a particular government scheme isn't just ill-advised, according to our lawyers it may be unlawful. (PublicNet: tinyurl.com/68rckq; LGA: tinyurl.com/5ngn8o).

Planning Policy Statement. The government published its long awaited planning guidance which is subject to consultation until 19 February (CLG: tinyurl.com/5htcr9). The sustainability standards proposed in the PPS include:

- ◆ Achieving zero carbon status across all the town's buildings, including commercial and public buildings as well as homes. The definition of zero carbon is that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the development are zero or below. The definition excludes emissions from construction and transport.
- ◆ Allocating 40% of the area within the town to be green space, at least half open to the public as parks or recreation areas.
- ◆ Creating options for travel so that residents are able to make the majority of their journeys without a car; locating homes within 10 minutes walk of frequent public transport and everyday neighbourhood services; and ensuring a minimum of one job per house can be reached by walking, cycling or public transport.
- ◆ Providing a minimum of 30% affordable housing.
- ◆ Requiring individual homes to reach the Building for Life silver standard and also achieve 70% carbon savings above current building regulations.
- ◆ Individual homes must all at least level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which includes standards for household waste recycling, construction waste, water efficiency measures and reduced pollution.
- ◆ Eco-towns in areas of serious water stress should "aspire to water neutrality".

The government is also proposing to change PPS3 to add eco-towns to the list of options regions and local planning authorities should consider when planning the distribution of needed housing.

Planning permission. The government claims it remains committed to the plan led system, but it makes clear that its decisions and the PPS will be material considerations that it expects to be taken into account. Development plans, it says, remain the starting point for the determination of eco-town planning applications "unless material considerations determine otherwise... This PPS and the list of locations emerging from the Eco-towns Programme will be a material consideration". The government does allow for eco-towns to be refused when local plans are up-to-date and cater for all the housing needed, but with only 5% of Core Strategies approved and RSS housing targets rising this will apply to few if any eco-towns. Planning permission "may not be granted" for eco town proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on internationally designated nature conservation sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or result in a net loss of biodiversity from the local area.

Reaction to the PPS. The TCPA echoed CPRE in saying said that the government should extend this policy to eco-quarters and eco-burbs in existing towns and cities (tinyurl.com/62zv28). Natural England said the 40% green space standard is "a welcome step in the right direction" but it called for more focus on how the green space standards measure up in terms of supporting biodiversity, delivering high quality landscapes and helping adapt to climate change (NE: tinyurl.com/5cap3c).

Sustainability Appraisal. 'Not sustainable and not eco': that in essence is the conclusions of the sustainability appraisal published by CLG (tinyurl.com/5jy7zh). Rackheath, near Norwich, is the only surviving eco-town site with a grade A for its suitability. Weston Otmoor was given the lowest grading (C: "Location only likely to be suitable for an eco-town with

substantial and exceptional innovation"). Ford, Whitehill Bordon and the other eight towns scored B ("Location might be suitable for an eco-town subject to meeting specific planning and design objectives"). The appraisal admits that for the three South East eco-town proposals, "adverse effects could not be ruled out" on sites protected under European environmental legislation. The appraisal claims that the 40% green space provision will mitigate recreational pressure on habitats, but acknowledges that the pressure on water resources and water quality will remain. One option being considered for Whitehill Bordon is to provide a 400m buffer zone between housing and the nature reserves, or to use this buffer land for business park and light industry (CLG: tinyurl.com/5jcaba).

New eco-towns. Two more eco-towns were added to the diminishing list. Rackheath is a replacement for Coltishall in Norfolk. Cherwell District Council has put forward a new site north west of Bicester in Oxfordshire in a "bid to kick the Weston Otmoor plan into touch". This vague proposal is for a 5,000 home urban extension on greenfield and the Council rather unconvincingly argues that "the site has the capacity to establish a self contained eco-town". Helena Whall for CPRE said: "Whether the urban extension is needed overall, or should be given an 'eco-wrapper' or not, needs to be debated" (Oxford Mail: tinyurl.com/5puvhn; CDC: tinyurl.com/68owys; Oxford Times: tinyurl.com/6n8nep).

Whitehill Bordon. East Hampshire District Council is convinced that this eco-town will be selected and says that the "we're not going to create a 21st century folly. It's got to be a community, not an environmental experiment" (Public Servant: tinyurl.com/5sd6c3).

West Otmoor. CPRE Oxfordshire called for the government to consider eco-towns through the RSS review. It slammed Shelter's "clumsy propaganda" in favour of Weston Otmoor and said that the eco-town is set to become "Warehouseville" (tinyurl.com/5znpja). Local campaign group the Weston Front said: "It's time central government recognised it's a monstrously bad site and took us off their mailing list" (Telegraph: tinyurl.com/67cths). Developers Parkridge said they would press ahead with the Weston Otmoor eco-town despite its 'C' rating (Oxford Mail: tinyurl.com/5puvhn).

Ford. Campaigners delivered a 10,000 signature petition against the town to Downing Street (West Sussex Gazette: tinyurl.com/5g56kf). Campaign group Communities Against Ford Ecotown want Bordon chosen instead of Ford (Argus: tinyurl.com/6jro8v).

Other proposals. Leicester City Council has agreed to support the Co-op's proposal for an eco-town in Pennbury (LocalGov: tinyurl.com/66ap2z). Local campaigners claim that the town is an urban extension not a free standing town (CASCET: tinyurl.com/5eez97). The Leeds City Region is proposing four 5,000 home eco communities in place of plans for a 20,000 home eco-town (Telegraph and Argus: tinyurl.com/6ryyp7).

6. Housing

Housing "targets". The Environmental Audit Committee said that the government should revise its target of three million homes by 2020 downwards so that more emphasis can be placed on environmental concerns and local authorities are not forced to approve excess building on greenfield sites. EAC warned that during the downturn, "the effect of Government policy is to make it impossible for local authorities to prevent planning permission being granted for development on land that is not currently needed and that would not otherwise be granted." It said that the government's aim to meet a projected growth in aspirations for bigger homes and gardens is "unconvincing, given that it is not necessarily a question of meeting urgent needs. Moreover, such aspirations are potentially unlimited, and could be used to justify ever increasing house-building targets, which would be, by definition, unsustainable". EAC recommended that "the government suspends the implementation of its regional spatial strategies until it has carried out and published an environmental appraisal of its house-building targets" (EAC: tinyurl.com/57n8z6; Planning Resource: tinyurl.com/5csmu2). Kate Gordon for CPRE said: "The committee's excellent report hits the nail on the head. We

wholeheartedly endorse its recommendations" (CPRE: tinyurl.com/6ny9p3). CPRE Kent Director Dr Hilary Newport said the three million target was "unrealistic and arbitrary" and would lead to greenfield sites being needlessly sacrificed (Kent Online: tinyurl.com/5vpzmu; CPRE Kent: tinyurl.com/6mew2n). MP Sir Paul Beresford told Margaret Beckett that the targets for housing in the South East are "more than just very, very, extremely challenging" (CLG Committee: tinyurl.com/6sasn4).

Three million and three months. In September, Caroline Flint told the Labour party conference "Sceptics ask me to scrap our target of 240,000 new homes a year - 3 million more homes by 2020. They want us to admit defeat. We won't give up that easily" (Planning Portal: tinyurl.com/5prosm). In the House of Commons in October, Margaret Beckett denied that the three million target was a target: "I think the most challenging of the targets was the three million, but that was an ambition actually, rather than a target" (Inside Housing: tinyurl.com/575r2l). In November, she said: "now is not the time to scale back on long-term ambitions because of current economic difficulties" (BBC: tinyurl.com/6gymf7).

House building falls. Applications were made for 23,185 new homes in the three months to the end of September, 54% lower than a year ago. Projections show about 113,000 homes will be completed in 2008/09, down from 177,000 last year (NHBC: tinyurl.com/5vmzxn; Inside Housing: tinyurl.com/65h79n). In Kent, applications fell by 89% (Kent Online: tinyurl.com/6jf7mu). New housing developments in the Thames Gateway will be mothballed until the market picks up, the South East England Development Agency said (Contract Journal: tinyurl.com/6ppk9o) The ONS says that contracts for new housing fell by 33% in the three months to September (Regen: tinyurl.com/6c9txb).

Affordable housing. The LGA said that the social waiting list may double by 2010 due to the leap in rate of repossessions (tinyurl.com/672b72). The government is considering powers to ensure shared ownership homes in the countryside stay affordable, by preventing tenants buying a 100% share of a home (Inside Housing: tinyurl.com/5ce62s).

7. Green Space

Warneford Meadow. Campaigners intent on saving this large meadow with the city of Oxford have succeeded, with the backing of CPRE Oxfordshire, in getting it declared a town green. The decision is subject to County Council approval. The meadows was originally given to a hospital for the health of its patients but the NHS wishes to sell the site with planning permission to plug a deficit (FoWM: tinyurl.com/36z6k3).

Green health. Life near a city park can be as healthy as out in the country, according to an article in the Lancet, which demonstrates the health benefits of green space (Independent: tinyurl.com/57r59e).

National Trust. The UK has fundamentally failed to manage land sustainably, Fiona Reynolds, secretary-general of the Trust said (Planning Daily: tinyurl.com/6ov3v4). The National Trust also says that too many of the government's planned 3 million homes by 2020 will be built on greenfield sites, and it is to strengthen its stance against the government's house building plans (Inside Housing: tinyurl.com/67hu9u). A Trust survey found one in eight people living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland suffer from 'green place poverty' (Telegraph: tinyurl.com/518dak). The Trust has made a determined start on this policy by approving a development of more than 200 homes on greenfield land it owns at Wrexham (Evening Leader: tinyurl.com/6fx3jo).

The **Environmental Audit Committee** called for stronger protection for green belts. "We recommend that the Government specifies how much existing green belt land has been lost since 1997, separately from the amount that has been offset by new green belt land elsewhere, and amends planning policy and guidance to strengthen the 'exceptional' test and emphasise the importance of protecting and where possible extending existing green belt boundaries" (EAC: tinyurl.com/69wlfq).

Pinewood Studios near Gerrards Cross has unveiled plans for a 44-hectare site which would include mock-ups of some of the world's most famous cities and 1,500 houses on green belt land (Bucks Free Press: tinyurl.com/5fhn6y).

Oxford City Council is to set up a development consortium with Magdalen College and Thames Water to develop an urban extension in the green belt south of the city. The land lies in South Oxfordshire District but the city council is petitioning the Boundaries Commission for it to be transferred to the city (CPRE Oxfordshire: tinyurl.com/ytguff).

Ancient woodland is being lost at an unprecedented rate, says the Woodland Trust. Nearly half the threatened woodlands are in the South East, including Lake Wood and Horton Wood in Sussex, and Bramley Frith Wood in Hampshire (Guardian: tinyurl.com/5n5dvw). The Trust has launched a website identifying woods under threat (tinyurl.com/5nhaue).

8. Environment

Natural England. CPRE accused the government of ignoring the advice of Natural England. "Unless the Government really listens to [it], the nation risks losing its fabulous inheritance of landscape and wildlife through bad decisions" (24dash: tinyurl.com/6js3et).

Waste. Defra has published data showing that recycling is at record levels and landfill of household waste is down 7%. FoE says this shows that incinerators are not needed (Defra: tinyurl.com/5oo4ax; FoE: tinyurl.com/5zgyvs). The march of the incinerators continues regardless, with plans for incinerators underway at Ardley and Sutton Courtenay in Oxfordshire. Protest is growing at both sites (Ardley: tinyurl.com/5gxzm6; Sutton Courtenay: tinyurl.com/6gnhdo; tinyurl.com/67m87h). Surrey County Council failed in a High Court challenge to planning consent for a waste recycling facility on green belt at Woodham (Planning Daily: tinyurl.com/6p99zx). A new waste sorting facility will be built in Oxford's green belt despite opposition from CPRE Oxfordshire and others (Oxford Mail: tinyurl.com/6bjv6q).

Detritus. The LGA said the law must be toughened to tackle louts who throw litter from cars, describing current legislation as a mire of confusion (tinyurl.com/6rgkp5). CPRE is pushing for a 10p deposit scheme for bottles and cans, and "Beardie Anglophile" Bill Bryson welcomed the introduction of bomb proof litter bins (Independent: tinyurl.com/5ueykn; Inquirer: tinyurl.com/5tqmb6). Nationally, fly-tipping is down by 7.5% in a year (Defra: tinyurl.com/5g3sqv). In the South East, there were 119,100 incidents, a 4% decrease from 2006-07, costing £5.7 million per year (Defra: tinyurl.com/6gyr2f). The CLA hit back at claims that fly-tipping is under control (CLA: tinyurl.com/6cvcsq).

Water. Natural England called for better protection for the environment in water companies' business plans, and for reduction in extraction and consumption (Planning Resource: tinyurl.com/5hwu2d) NE: tinyurl.com/5kwcq4). Developers say the Code for Sustainable Homes will not reduce water consumption (24dash: tinyurl.com/5a3xnq).

Farm birds. Wildlife minister Huw Irranca-Davies called for renewed action to protect farmland birds as statistics point to a continued decline in populations (Times: tinyurl.com/6fezbt; Defra: tinyurl.com/6x8ljd).

9. Energy & Climate Change

Coal. CPRE Kent joined the Rainbow Warrior with Medway Council, the RSPB and the Women's Institute to protest against the new coal fired power station at Kingsnorth (CPRE Kent tinyurl.com/6avrwp; Kent Online: tinyurl.com/6fojzh). Drax, the archetypal enemy of green groups, is to spend £2 billion on three biomass plants (Guardian: tinyurl.com/5f57mn). The European Parliament wishes to ban non Carbon Capture and Storage coal fired stations from 2015 (Planning Resource: tinyurl.com/6geq5x). The government's long awaited CCS trial is likely to end up in the courts after energy supplier npower failed to make the shortlist (Environmental Finance: tinyurl.com/6eex3u).

Wind. CPRE has objected to wind farms paying communities goodwill payments from wind farms, saying that these should instead be subject to S106 agreements (Telegraph: [tinyurl.com/3z9zz3](https://www.tinyurl.com/3z9zz3)). The Shadow Minister for Energy, Charles Hendry said the Tories will change business rates to encourage approval of wind farms (New Energy Focus: [tinyurl.com/653myu](https://www.tinyurl.com/653myu)). 13,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity (mostly wind farms) are stuck in the planning process, enough to add 17% to UK electricity generation. Approval will take the country half-way down the road to the 2020 renewable energy targets (Independent: [tinyurl.com/6fdty3](https://www.tinyurl.com/6fdty3)). A number of smaller wind farms have been rejected by planners, to the bafflement of energy companies (Energy Focus: [tinyurl.com/57grnl](https://www.tinyurl.com/57grnl)). The Scottish Government is to launch a study on offshore wind energy, with the aim of enabling more wind farms. The Carbon Trust says offshore restrictions should be relaxed and the farms built nearer the coast (Planning Daily: [tinyurl.com/579y2b](https://www.tinyurl.com/579y2b); [tinyurl.com/6lclw7](https://www.tinyurl.com/6lclw7); Guardian: [tinyurl.com/3koyky](https://www.tinyurl.com/3koyky)). Consultants Entec have warned that guidance on establishing the cumulative impacts of extending wind farms or building successive wind projects is insufficient. It calls for further guidance on the impacts on landscapes, view, cultural heritage and ornithology ([tinyurl.com/5jw7nd](https://www.tinyurl.com/5jw7nd)). CPRW is seeking a moratorium on wind farm applications in Wales (Planning Resource: [tinyurl.com/6znzhh](https://www.tinyurl.com/6znzhh)).

Biofuels. The government is to take on the conclusions of the Gallagher report and take a more cautious approach to biofuels because of their environmental and social impacts (NDS: [tinyurl.com/5lsu3c](https://www.tinyurl.com/5lsu3c)).

Ashford will increase its ecological footprint by 9% and use the equivalent of 3.6 planets by 2031, according to a study by the Stockholm Environment Institute. It may be able to reduce this to 2.8 planets (Edie: [tinyurl.com/5dhpep](https://www.tinyurl.com/5dhpep)).

Street lights. Two-thirds of street lights have been turned off in Powys to vocal local opposition, but in Germany you can dial a street light when you need it (BBC: [tinyurl.com/5yworm2](https://www.tinyurl.com/5yworm2); Daily Mail: [tinyurl.com/67fapm](https://www.tinyurl.com/67fapm)).

10. Transport

Aviation. The government gave the go ahead for a 40% increase in passengers from Stansted to the anger of environmental groups (24dash: [tinyurl.com/64pak2](https://www.tinyurl.com/64pak2); DfT: [tinyurl.com/5f3kqu](https://www.tinyurl.com/5f3kqu)). The public inquiry into a second runway at Stansted will run in parallel sessions in order to expedite a decision (Times: [tinyurl.com/6b9zzv](https://www.tinyurl.com/6b9zzv); Planning Resource: [tinyurl.com/6phulw](https://www.tinyurl.com/6phulw)). The Conservatives told BAA to scrap the Stansted application, along with that for a third runway at Heathrow. It favours a high speed rail link instead of the third runway and, unsurprisingly, this proposal has angered the airlines (24dash: [tinyurl.com/62em5z](https://www.tinyurl.com/62em5z); Guardian: [tinyurl.com/3rjsrt](https://www.tinyurl.com/3rjsrt)). Even Cabinet ministers are objecting to a third runway at Heathrow (Guardian: [tinyurl.com/6cwxcv](https://www.tinyurl.com/6cwxcv)). An Early Day Motion calling on the government to rethink has attracted more than 120 signatures ([tinyurl.com/5momdd](https://www.tinyurl.com/5momdd)). The government has bowed to pressure and has allowed a debate on Heathrow on Tuesday 11 November (FT: [tinyurl.com/5epq8l](https://www.tinyurl.com/5epq8l)). CPRE Kent said it is firmly against the plans to expand two existing airports and build one new airport in Kent ([tinyurl.com/6qwa6j](https://www.tinyurl.com/6qwa6j)). Boeing said that biofuels will fuel aircraft within three years, but supply will be a problem. Fuelling the world's 13,000 commercial planes with soya bean based fuel would require a land area as large as Europe for bean production (Guardian: [tinyurl.com/67jcu3](https://www.tinyurl.com/67jcu3)).

Rail. BAA has agreed to invest £230 million in Crossrail (FT: [tinyurl.com/5b7aq8](https://www.tinyurl.com/5b7aq8)). Transport minister Lord Adonis is to head a group that will look at the future of railways, including options for a second high speed rail (24dash: [tinyurl.com/5p353q](https://www.tinyurl.com/5p353q)).

Roads. Traffic levels continue to fall with a 2.2% decrease in the last year, including 2% on minor roads, and reduced urban congestion (DfT: [tinyurl.com/5ebcl4](https://www.tinyurl.com/5ebcl4)). More than 1,000 residents of Witney have backed CPRE Oxfordshire's campaign against the Cogges Link Road (Oxford Mail: [tinyurl.com/69ewfn](https://www.tinyurl.com/69ewfn); CPRE Oxon: [tinyurl.com/6rvelx](https://www.tinyurl.com/6rvelx)).

Thames Gateway. Boris Johnson has dropped plans for the controversial Gateway Bridge and is considering alternatives (Regen: tinyurl.com/58wop5; FoE: tinyurl.com/5duvso).

11. Rural Affairs

Rural issues marginalized. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee said country issues have been marginalized by Defra in favour of climate change. It says rural areas already "punch above their weight" in economic terms but their contribution could be boosted further if more was done to tailor Government help to the diversity of specific needs in rural areas. Tom Oliver for CPRE said: "The goose of a protected and respected countryside lays golden economic and social eggs" (Telegraph: tinyurl.com/5n7zsc; CPRE: tinyurl.com/64cbbn).

Food. Dame Suzi Leather has been appointed chair the Council of Food Policy Advisers, a short-term Defra body that will advise on how to achieve available and affordable food, and sustainable production, distribution and consumption (NDS: tinyurl.com/6pkm4m). After one of the wettest harvests in memory, the wheat harvest is up 28% (NDS: tinyurl.com/6l8oy7).

Gongs. Seven CPRE volunteers, including six from the South Downs Campaign in Hampshire, have been recognised by the first Marsh Awards for the Benefit of Rural England (CPRE: tinyurl.com/5rbhat).

And finally... The Women's Institute has turned to eco-activism, boarding the Rainbow Warrior to protest against the Kingsnorth coal-fired power station (Guardian: tinyurl.com/5bavc8). Fortunately, our female campaigners in CPRE have not have to go through the naked calendar phase before becoming activists...

12. CPRE eBulletin

The eBulletin is edited by Andy Boddington on behalf of CPRE SE. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of CPRE. To subscribe to this eBulletin, please use this link: cprese.org.uk/news/eBulletin/signup/sign-up.htm