

CPRE SE eBulletin: August 2009.

This is a longer eBulletin than usual. The government last month issued a huge number of consultations for us to work on during the summer break and more arriving as we go to press. Announcements were also made about the eco-towns and the new UK Low Carbon Transition Plan. [PDF version.](#)

Part 1: Eco-towns

Four eco-towns in Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Norfolk and Cornwall were given the government's approval and must now go through local planning procedures. Gordon Brown said: "The revolutionary concept of eco-towns is a unique opportunity for us to confront two of the most urgent priorities. Eco-towns will help to relieve the shortage of affordable homes to rent and buy and to minimise the effects of climate change on a major scale". Developers of the four sites will be able to bid for a share of £60m to support local infrastructure. DCLG is providing up to £5m available for councils in the six other short-listed areas to work on proposals for the next wave of towns, with the aim to build six more eco-towns by 2020 (DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/dggvfn>). A competition announced by Yvette Cooper to find the best designs for eco-towns has been mothballed. Instead, design watchdog CABE will expand its design review panel to include more sustainability experts. Cooper's promised citizen's juries have not appeared either (BD: <http://tinyurl.com/mm8953>).

The Towns

Whitehill-Bordon, Hampshire. Around 5,500 homes (2,000 affordable) will be built on Ministry of Defence land. DCLG said "Whitehill-Bordon's potential strengths include providing cycling and walking routes extensive enough to aim for just a quarter of journeys to be made by car by 2036 – going well beyond the standards set out for eco-towns" (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/ng9n77>). Edward Dawson for CPRE SE said "CPRE believes that it is possible to give this site a positive recommendation in principle as an eco-town" (CPRE SE: <http://tinyurl.com/m4k3bh>).

North West Bicester, Oxfordshire. This rival proposal to Weston Otmoor will build around 5,000 homes (1,500 affordable). DCLG said "Development potential in Bicester includes powering street lighting through a combination of solar panel and micro-wind turbines, with no need for a grid connection". Oxfordshire County Council leader Keith Mitchell welcomed the urban extension and Cherwell councillor Michael Gibbard said "This decision gives us the chance to build an exemplary, eco-friendly development which will attract more investment and jobs to Bicester". Cherwell has already had interest in developing the site from P3Eco, a new company created to fund and facilitate eco-town construction (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/nur8uv>; <http://tinyurl.com/myzy38>). Helena Whall for CPRE Oxfordshire branch said she was pleased the Government had "seen sense" over the Weston Otmoor proposal but she said the group had concerns over North West Bicester because more green fields would disappear, and landowners and nearby villagers opposed the proposal. She warned that CPRE would not support the development if the 5,000 new houses were not part of Cherwell's 13,400 home allocation in the South East Plan (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/nt6h82>).

Rackheath, Norfolk. Opinion on the town of around 6,000 homes (1,800 affordable) to the north east of Norwich is reported as divided (EDP: <http://tinyurl.com/kmdakw>). The Green Party said "The development is part of an oversized growth plan for Norwich and is certainly not yet eco enough. A proper eco-community should contain local jobs and local services as well as excellent public transport links and zero carbon homes" (Green Building: <http://tinyurl.com/l7ny98>).

St Austell, Cornwall. The project of around 5,000 homes (1,500 affordable) has been broadly welcomed. Eden Project chief executive Tim Smit said the project must "take account of the tremendous challenges that the next 30 years will throw at us" and Matthew Taylor MP said: "I can't think of anywhere else in the country where the housing and employment need is greater" (WMN: <http://tinyurl.com/l4sfva>).

Rejected Towns

Ford. Edward Dawson said “CPRE is pleased that the Government has dropped Ford as an eco-town” (CPRE SE: <http://tinyurl.com/m4k3bh>) and district councillor Graham Tyler said: “We are delighted that common sense has prevailed” (Bognor Regis Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/nce6jb>). Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert hailed the Government’s decision as a “victory for people power” (Worthing Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/l6tgjq>). “Ford’s escape from being concreted over in the name of ecology is seen as a triumph. Not least by those, myself included, who campaigned to save it” says Ben Fogle (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/mlkusw>). With the Ford proposal dismissed, Arun’s long-term housing plans are likely to centre around urban extensions at Littlehampton and Bognor, with between 500 and 1,500 homes built at Angmering (Worthing Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/kvvtrr>). West Sussex County Council said it will oppose any new Ford eco-town proposal (eGov: <http://tinyurl.com/mxp4bn>).

Weston Otmoor. Founder of the Weston Front, Tony Henman said he was delighted and gave credit to the coalition that opposed the town: “We are extremely grateful for the support we have had from the local community and various local bodies. Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Bicester Chamber of Commerce, BBOWT and CPRE in particular have been instrumental in persuading the government that Weston Otmoor is the wrong place for an eco-town” (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/kvqplq>; <http://www.westonfront.com/>). Edward Dawson for CPRE commented: “We are very pleased that Weston Otmoor has been firmly rejected” (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/m4k3bh>). Because DCLG said that “This location has not demonstrated the potential... as an eco-town at this time” the Weston Front has promised to campaign on.

The PPS

Planning. “Eco-towns should be allocated as a strategic development option within the Core Strategy, but may also be considered as part of an Area Action Plan or Allocations DPD where the Core Strategy has already been adopted... There is no requirement to allocate an eco-town if a better way of meeting future needs exists... Local planning authorities must determine planning applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This PPS including the list of [the 4 eco-towns]... will be material considerations that should be given weight in determining planning applications for eco-towns.”

Zero carbon. “The definition of zero carbon in eco-towns is that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole are zero or below... It excludes embodied carbon [from construction] and emissions from transport.”

Homes. Housing should “achieve Building for Life Silver Standard and Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes at a minimum... and provide for at least 30% affordable housing.”

Employment. “It is important to ensure that eco-towns are genuine mixed-use communities and that unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum.”

Transport. Homes should be within ten minutes’ walk of neighbourhood services and frequent public transport. Planning applications should include travel plans which demonstrate how the design will enable at least 50% of trips originating in eco-towns to be made by non-car means.

Green infrastructure. “Forty per cent of the eco-town’s total area should be allocated to green space, of which at least half should be public.”

Landscape and historic environment. Planning applications for eco-towns should demonstrate that they have adequately considered the implications for the local landscape and heritage.

Biodiversity. “Eco-towns should demonstrate a net gain in local biodiversity and planning permission may not be granted for eco-town proposals which have a significant adverse effect on internationally designated nature conservation sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest.”

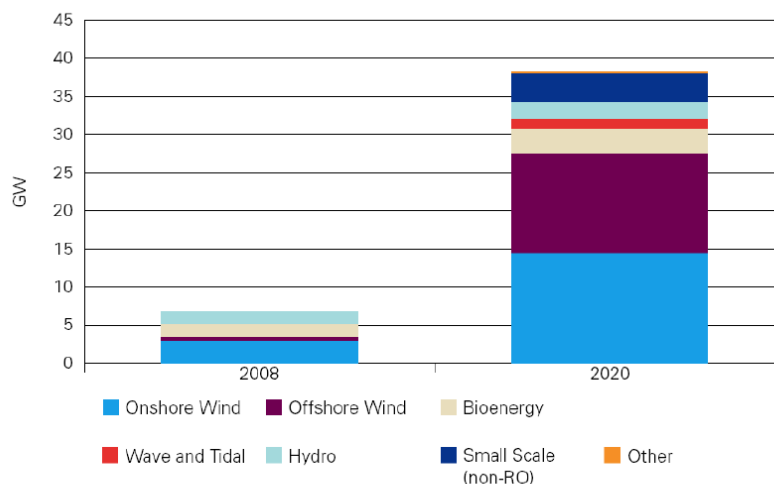
Water. “Eco-towns should be ambitious in terms of water efficiency across the whole development, particularly in areas of serious water stress.”

Reaction

CPRE welcomed the initial scaling back of the eco-towns programme but called for tougher standards in order for sustainable living to become a reality. Kate Gordon said: “From a list of deeply worrying and unsustainable locations, the Government has chosen to go with the least damaging, which is encouraging.” Ralph Smyth said: “The aspiration for eco-towns is that 50% of journeys could, not would, be made other than by car. Far from this being the ‘toughest ever green standard’, it’s just business as usual” (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/lmzd3o>). **Jonathan Glancey**: “Only four of the wretched New Labour eco-towns have been given the go-ahead... Ford in West Sussex and Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire are among the lucky places in England to have been reprieved from the eco-town menace. Now, one hopes they can develop naturally and intelligently, without being bullied by a government keener on airports, big business and bigger shops than in true quality of life” (BD: <http://tinyurl.com/kn66eg>). The Environment Agency said that the standards drawn up for the eco-towns initiative should be more widely used for other publicly-supported building projects. Julie Foley said “It’s very unusual to have a Planning Policy Statement developed that will apply to just four towns [but] we’re not necessarily suggesting that the Growth Points should achieve everything in the PPS” (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/mrcw8x>). **Ecologist**: “Sadly, there has been little exemplary about the exemplars. Too much political grandstanding has been done with Eco-Towns - the basic idea is sound, but poor planning and a lack of local involvement will doom them to failure” (<http://tinyurl.com/mzeu23>). **Review**: “Eco-towns - a good idea lost in translation” (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/lowkpr>).

Part 2: The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan

The government published the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan which plots how the UK will meet a cut in emissions of 34% on 1990 levels by 2020 (DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/nws3lu>). It includes the Renewable Energy Strategy (RES), which sets out a scenario for the renewable energy mix required for electricity generation to meet the EU RED target. The majority (around two-thirds) of new renewable deployment is expected to be from wind energy. On-shore wind energy is projected to expand from around 2 GW to 14 GW, a seven-fold increase.



Source: Energy Trends (June 2009) and DECC analysis based on Redpoint/Trilemma (2009) and Element/Pöyry (2009)

The growth in renewables 2008-2020

Planning. £11.2 million will help local authorities speed up planning decisions on renewable and low-carbon energy projects. The Planning Inspectorate will be expected to give high priority to the handling of appeals relating to renewable energy proposals. But “this strategy does not change existing environmental protections, such as... national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty”. A new draft climate change PPS is expected to be issued by DLG by the end of the year “to update PPS1 and PPS22 so as to ensure they set a clear and challenging framework for delivering energy infrastructure and cutting carbon emissions consistent with national ambitions”.

Energy (responsible for 35% of UK emissions). More energy for power generation, transport and home heating will be supplied from renewable sources such as wind, wave and solar power (from 2% to 15%). By 2020 about 30% of electricity will come from renewables (up from 5.5% today), principally from more wind power. Another 10% of electricity will come from non-renewable low-carbon energy sources, mostly new nuclear power stations and coal linked to carbon capture and storage. 12% of renewable heat will be supplied by biomass, biogas, and solar and heat pump sources. Gas imports will be halved. An Office for Renewable Energy Deployment will be set up within DECC, which will take responsibility for a new grid access scheme from Ofgem (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/mnl6p8>). Later this year plans will be published for a smart National Grid. The government announced: consultation on extending the existing Renewables Obligation to 2037; increased use of sustainable biofuels through amendment or replacement of the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation; and consultation on feed-in tariffs.

Transport (20% of emissions). The DfT announced its Low Carbon Transport plan, which includes few new initiatives and does not mention the “rural” word (NDS: <http://tinyurl.com/mvks88>; Report: <http://tinyurl.com/kuysa>). By 2020 transport emissions will be cut by 14% on 2008 levels. CO2 emissions from new cars will have to fall by 40% by 2011. £30m will be invested in low-carbon buses and there will be more support for new technology for low-carbon cars. £145m is being invested to promote cycling. 10% of transport energy will be supplied from renewables. Friends of the Earth said “We’re pleased that the Government accepts the need to change the way people travel - but today’s announcement contains few new initiatives to make this a reality” (FoE: <http://tinyurl.com/nwqe64>). The strategy sets out no new stance on aviation or shipping, and Miliband promised to protect mass air travel (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/15gsxb>).

Industry (20% of emissions). High-carbon industries will be included in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. The government promises to boost green industries with £405m for new technologies, up to £120m of investment in offshore wind; £60m for marine energy; and promises to help develop the South West as the UK’s first Low Carbon Economic Area.

Homes and Communities (13% of emissions). Emissions will be cut from homes by 29% on 2020 levels by much greater energy efficiency through the wider use of insulation and smart meters. Pay-as-you-save energy makeovers are promised for 7 million homes and support for 1.5 million homes to generate their own energy. From 2016 all new homes will have to be zero-carbon.

Farming and Waste (11% of emissions). Farmers will be encouraged to cut emissions by 6% by 2020 through more efficient use of fertiliser and better management of livestock, manure and waste.

Reaction

CPRE, National Trust and RSPB welcomed the strategy saying “A renewable energy revolution in the UK is long overdue. We look forward to working with Government to ensure this takes place within the timescale needed to tackle climate change; that it happens in harmony with the natural and historic environment and respects sensitive landscapes; and that harnesses the support, skills and enthusiasm of local people and communities” (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/lesxx6>). **Shaun Spiers** for CPRE said “There is a concern that [wind farms] become a redundant symbol of our desire to do something but we are not actually doing it – then it is a nightmare vision of the future. There will be no public consent for renewable energy infrastructure if it... causes great damage to the beauty of England’s countryside” (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/lzt22t>; <http://tinyurl.com/m4euap>). The **Tories** complained the Low Carbon Transition Plan is just re-announcements of existing policy or pilots, and that the UK is already behind in tackling climate change (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/kj4zgx>). The **CBI** said the UK must invest more in nuclear and clean coal energy and put less emphasis on wind power (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/mslssz>). **Natural England** said society needs to move beyond the “knee jerk nimbyism” that rejects wind farms in any area of the countryside. “We have to move to an informed consensus that there are landscapes where sustainable renewable energy infrastructure is desirable and should be encouraged” (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/m3sev3>; NE: <http://tinyurl.com/mawgw5>).

Comment. Paul Kingsnorth on wind farms: “Does this sound very “green” to you? To me it sounds like a society fixated on growth and material progress going about its destructive business in much the same way as ever, only without the carbon. It sounds like a society whose answer to everything is more and bigger technology; a society so cut off from nature that it believes industrialising a mountain is a sustainable thing to do. It also sounds like an environmental movement in danger of losing its way” (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lyxtao>). **Simon Jenkins**: “The British government is to permit the desecration of upland and coastal Britain in the hope that this will shift the climatic balance of Planet Earth... The current anger at the march of turbines and pylons across the hills of Britain is not from nimbys... It comes from those who appreciate the beauty of the countryside and who question the industrial spoliation of miles of open landscape for a pitiful net gain to climate change” (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lo8pn4>). **Charles Clover**: “The Severn barrage is a test case for a new political proposition: that it is all right to cause massive environmental damage in order to tackle other potentially catastrophic environmental problems – such as the warming and sea level rise... with climate change” (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/nef64x>).

Part 3. Planning and Housing

South East Plan

Oxfordshire. CPRE Oxfordshire was among protestors outside Oxford Town Hall making a case against a 4,000 home development at Grenoble Road. Michael Tyre [sic] said: “We are against the urban extension. The planning inspector won’t be able to go against the South East Plan but we are going to ask him to delay it as long as possible. Oxford should be aiming for quality not quantity and leave the other towns to pick up the quantity” (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/nwaw8>). The Oxford Mail said that the city’s housing crisis will not be solved until the city Council “wins the battle with South Oxfordshire District Council, the county council and the Campaign to Protect Rural England – a battle that looks increasingly likely to end in court” (<http://tinyurl.com/nzenkb>).

Green Infrastructure. Following publication of the SEP, planning authorities in the South East have been urged to draw up strategies to ensure that green space is integrated into planned growth (GOSE: <http://tinyurl.com/mn6ycc>).

Planning

IPC to survive election. In a further softening of stance on planning, the Conservatives said that the Infrastructure Planning Commission will be incorporated into the Planning Inspectorate and not abolished outright (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/nkzawu>). An overarching national plan for England could be introduced under a Conservative government. Tory Communities spokesman John Howell said: “At the moment there are two regimes - planning policy statements and planning policy guidance. Now we have new policies in relation to national infrastructure projects. It would be logical to run all these together” (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/mgf763>). The government has written to planning authorities explaining how to handle nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) and National Policy Statements (NPSs). It has reminded them that government policy and NPSs are material considerations that must be taken into account in decisions, including for nuclear power plants (DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/mqekq9>). The ambitious timetable for NPSs is slipping further. The energy, nuclear power and ports policies will be issued in the autumn; road and rail will be finalised over the course of next year. Waste water is due next spring, hazardous waste next summer, water supply in late 2010 and airports in 2011. The IPC will begin accepting applications for energy and transport schemes from 1 March 2010 (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/mt9amh>). Developers are preparing to submit more than 50 schemes in the IPC’s first year, with large energy projects and wind farms topping the list (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lffubd>).

Planning reform. Caroline Lucas MEP, leader of the Green Party, gave a keynote address to CPRE calling for urgent planning reform to promote environmental sustainability. “It is possible to have firm planning regulations to ensure that green spaces, green belts and biodiverse brown-field sites are protected, while at the same time providing space for the renewable energy industry to grow”

(Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/mmz2e3>; CPRE Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/lczvxx>). Regional planning strategies undermine the Government's commitment to protecting green belt land and should be scrapped, the Tories said (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/kwro8u>). Fiona Howie for CPRE said "If people really want to ensure we prevent further 'photocopy democracy' they need to raise their concerns about [regional planning] with their MP" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ntmmwy>).

PPS25 Coasts. Councils are to be given powers to boost local economies and tourism and protect against coastal erosion and flooding, according to a draft supplement to PPS25, which replaces PPS20. Areas at risk of coastal erosion could see temporary projects such as beach huts, cafes and car parks to boost tourism. Residential development will continue to be banned in these areas. Councils will be encouraged to consider the relocation of developments to safer locations. Paul Miner for CPRE expressed concern over a loss of distinction between developed and undeveloped coast and said councils should regenerate coastal towns instead. Deadline 12 October (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/lv9wdr>; DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/n5ypb4>; <http://tinyurl.com/l9ho2>).

PPS15 Heritage. A new PPS, combining PPG15 (historic environment) and PPG16 (archaeology), says planners should focus on the significant heritage of a place and not just protect all of it for its own sake. "Within the plan-making process, the historic environment should be seen as a stimulus to inspire new buildings of imaginative design that respect and harmonise with their setting and help to enhance the appearance and character of an area". Planning minister John Healey said the "policy sets out that the historic environment is an asset not an obstacle to development". Deadline 30 October. (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/ksqfdv>; DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/lugxt5>).

Garden grabbing. DCLG announced researchers are to examine changes in the rate of garden development between 2003 and 2008, the impact on this of the brownfield land building target, and how widespread the practice was (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/lp4jfh>).

Around the SE. Protect Kent expressed serious concern about Shepway District Council's preferred strategy for its Local Development Framework Core Strategy which would see up to 8,000 new homes built in the district over the next 17 years (Protect Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/lt3dkf>). Developers may make a new bid to build 100 cabins Site of Importance for Nature Conservation near Micheldever (This is Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/np2vcg>). Rob Douglas has been appointed chair of the South East England Development Agency (Seeda: <http://tinyurl.com/lx66ok>).

Housing

Affordable housing. Rural housing waiting lists have hit a record level of 750,000 people and the National Housing Federation said people applying for an affordable home in ten rural districts face an average wait of up to 90 years (NHF: <http://tinyurl.com/mfntsg>). The government has reduced its affordable house building targets from 70,000 a year to about 55,000 a year (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/mspmsgx>). Developers and housing associations in the South East will receive £100 million to kick start stalled housing projects (DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/l9yh3z>). Gordon Brown's £1 billion pledge for building new affordable homes is to be paid for from existing budgets, including the decent homes fund and growth area infrastructure (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/nnsbyf>; Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/ktjh5f>). DCLG is set to hand a £1.5 billion underspend back to the Treasury (Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/n39gdl>). Matthew Taylor is to be the next chair of the National Housing Federation (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/mutuxm>).

Developments. New home starts remain at low levels across the country (Inside Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/mrutoy>). A severe shortage of new build housing will emerge in the South East next year, according to Knight Frank (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/lqggd9>). 51% of homeowners would oppose more homes being built in their area compared with less than a third 31% of non-homeowners. Attitudes to new housing development need to change urgently, the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) said (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/mz9m9l>).

Zero carbon. Housing Minister John Healey confirmed the government's commitment to zero-carbon new homes by 2016 and set up another task force (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/l6gg46>; Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/mhxvrk>).

Part 4. Environment

Landscapes and Ecology

Green belt. Tim Harrold for CPRE Surrey expressed concerns that “Woking will have to review the green belt boundary to the south of the town in order to accommodate the amount of housing suggested. We are dead against this because the gap between Woking and Guildford is important” (Get Surrey: <http://tinyurl.com/lu56bc>). CPRE Oxfordshire is opposing the Northern Gateway development in the green belt north of Oxford (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/mtoohy>; Witney Gazette: <http://tinyurl.com/nokhlc>). Communities Secretary John Denham gave the go-ahead for 1,200 homes on green belt land in Nottinghamshire (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/luoah7>).

Natural England is consulting over its Protected Landscapes policy. “There is now an increasing expectation that protected landscapes should help deliver a range of ecosystem goods and services including assisting species migration and habitat connectivity as well as increasing the public’s enjoyment, contribute to sustainable development and further understanding, health and well-being, particularly targeting socially excluded individuals and groups. This will need to be achieved alongside the conservation and enhancement of the nationally important qualities for which protected landscapes are designated”. Deadline 5 October 2009 (NE: <http://tinyurl.com/lgoa33>). Natural England also unveiled its “Natural Health Service” drive, calling for a step-change in the way that people access green spaces (NE: <http://tinyurl.com/ko8oej>).

Packaging. Supermarkets are handing out half as many carrier bags (Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/ntg8x9>; Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/kwqcrw>). The Local Government Association has called on Environment Secretary Hilary Benn to force supermarkets to reveal how much packaging they produce (MRW: <http://tinyurl.com/l9e4kd>).

Habitats. An EU report says that nine out of 10 UK habitats are in unfavourable condition. Only 6% of threatened habitats and 23% of threatened species were found to be favourable, and only one of the 14 grassland and heathland habitats included on the directive. MPs however said that Britain’s SSSI’s are improving (Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/nhra7y>; Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/kw78cz>; Natural England: <http://tinyurl.com/m98e97>). The RSPB urged farmers to consider incorporating flowers into margins, after a study found that grass alone will not help wildlife (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/kmm9hr>; RSPB: <http://tinyurl.com/kp5cj4>). A legacy to CPRE is funding hedgerow surveys in Oxfordshire (Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/nfus5x>). Defra may license release of an insect from Asia to halt the spread of Japanese knotweed (Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/l75ee8>).

Water. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee urged the Government to develop a ‘water efficiency obligation’ to encourage reductions in water consumption (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/kkpnol>).

Part 5. Energy & Climate Change

Climate Change

Emissions. Gordon Brown published a report claiming that international carbon trading is essential for tackling climate change (DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/n3cve6>). The G8 countries agreed to cut their carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 and urged developing countries to cut their emissions by 50% (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/m3k695>). Changes to farming could cut CO2 emissions by 25% (Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/npz4ss>). The Energy Saving Trust and the Environment Agency said that the government is overlooking the energy wasted by water heating and water efficiency and this is the key to cutting household emissions (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/lna6nz>).

Porritt’s attack. Gordon Brown spent years preventing British domestic action on climate change, according to Jonathon Porritt, as he stepped down as chairman of the Sustainable Development Commission. Porritt also accused the DfT of following an outdated ‘Thatcherite’ model of economic growth (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/msd82s>; BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/nn9jqy>).

Wind Energy

Natural England has launched a consultation on guidance for its staff responding to wind farm applications. It suggests that “large scale” landscapes such as rolling uplands or expansive plains and smooth and convex hills will be suitable for wind farms. Turbines on small hills should avoid tops and not exceed hill height. Upland commercial forests will be good as they will screen turbines. Urban and industrial landscapes are also favoured. Distinctive skylines, wild and tranquil landscapes, and landmark coastal features are not favoured. Cumulative impacts of wind farms should be taken into account. Separation distances ranging from 6km to 12 km are desirable to prevent the landscape becoming dominated and to reduce intervisibility. Valley landscapes between upland wind farms should generally be kept free of wind turbines, so that the wider landscape does not become dominated by wind energy. NE is producing “capacity maps” which show ecological, geomorphological, cultural and landscape features and associated designations, but not CPRE’s tranquillity data. Closing date 2 September 2009 (NE: <http://tinyurl.com/newindcon>).

Nimbys and turbines. A row blew up over the closure of the UK’s only turbine factory on the Isle of Wight, which Ed Miliband blamed on nimbys (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/mck59l>; Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/nxzdmp>). Workers Climate Action retorted: “It seems that Miliband and his government are more prepared to defend the interests of big business than to solve the problem of climate change and keep people in work” (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/nbyvkf>; <http://tinyurl.com/l4snpx>). In Oxford, Miliband said “There’s a big, big persuasion job... The biggest threat to the countryside is not the wind turbines; it’s climate change... A vocal minority has stopped [wind farms] going ahead and the silent majority has not done enough to ensure they go ahead” (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/n3qru8>; Miliband’s CPRE Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/milidebate>).

Intermittency. A number of reports examined the issue of intermittency, one finding that the variability of wind generation could be as much as 13% annually. The CBI said the UK could find itself reliant on imported gas as a result. The National Grid suggested that intermittency should be managed across Northern Europe and by smart metering. Another report argued that requirements for spinning reserve might not increase but that for a four-hour reserve will. A report to Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, RSPB and WWF suggested that because demand varies substantially, managing intermittency should not be a problem (Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/monm77>; Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/kow8hw>; FoE: <http://tinyurl.com/l4yeb2>).

Planning. Plans for a wind farm in the South Downs National Park have been scrapped after CPRE Hampshire and residents formed the Stop the East Meon Windfarm Action Group. Christopher Napier for CPRE, said: “We really had to win this one. If turbines had been put in East Meon, there would hardly be a site in England where they could have been stopped” (Midhurst & Petworth Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/mk9q2u>; Portsmouth News: <http://tinyurl.com/naq778>; Petersfield Post: <http://tinyurl.com/nvuzvc>). The biggest onshore wind farm in the South East of England on Romney Marsh was officially opened (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/ksolpr>). The South East is making good progress towards achieving its 2010 renewables target, having already delivered 80% of the required generating capacity. Planners are concerned about inconsistency in obtaining planning permission for wind developments (particularly single turbines) and the way in which regional planning policy priorities for renewables are applied by local authorities (DCLG: <http://tinyurl.com/nl3fl2>). Four wind turbines have been approved just outside the Peak National Park (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/l5k5c6>). Planners in East Northamptonshire have been told that they cannot restrict wind farm development in contradiction to national policy (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/m5m6b3>). CPRE Shropshire and residents won a battle against a wind farm (Shropshire Star: <http://tinyurl.com/lwqnw3>; CPRE Shropshire: <http://tinyurl.com/nt2ywm>). CPRE Vice President Jonathon Dimpleby is to erect a 50 foot turbine in his garden. “I have a vision of every village like mine getting together and having several turbines that we could share”, he said (WMN: <http://tinyurl.com/npw7yt>; Times: <http://tinyurl.com/n7pcuk>). Plans for 150 turbines on the Shetlands have met objections from the RSPB and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/n4t4xp>). Advertisements by E.ON promoting its wind farms in

Northumberland have been banned after using images of turbines half the size (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/n7yfzl>). Wind power companies fear rapid increases in capital costs are undermining the viability of offshore projects (NCE: <http://tinyurl.com/n2rjsa>). The government unveiled £1 billion in bank loans for wind farms halted by the credit crunch (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/kjv3yr>). Grants of £10 million will be available for offshore wind projects (DECC: <http://tinyurl.com/kvjzpz>). Conservative councils are turning down more renewable energy planning applications than they are approving (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/n6ucas>). The LGA said residents should be offered discounts on their energy bills and free energy efficiency measures when wind farms are built nearby (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lhb9pm>). Small-scale domestic wind turbines on 450,000 UK properties could generate enough electricity to power 825,000 homes, says the Energy Savings Trust (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/n5yrf6>).

Other Energy

The **Royal Society** brought together competing energy interests who concluded: “We have reached a point in the UK when our existing energy systems are no longer fit for purpose... What is required is vision and commitment [by the UK]: the vision to put aside the vested interests of the status quo, and the commitment to large scale investment in research, development and deployment of new technologies... This vision must be translated into action now” (<http://tinyurl.com/mwqt3t>).

Renewables. The government has chosen five options for Severn Barrage for further consideration, including the main Cardiff-Weston barrage (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/kwyjwjt>). The Environment Agency said the main scheme would be so ecologically destructive it should not be built (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/nujruo>). A £500 million biomass power project has been announced for Teeside (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/lxp2fm>).

Wirescapes. Electricity companies opposing the routing and burial of power lines will be able to recover the costs of fighting protests from customers bills (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/njfnpc>).

Coal. Harvard University said the cost of capturing and storing CO2 emissions from coal-fired power plants is likely to double the price of electricity in the near-term but fall in the long term, (e360: <http://tinyurl.com/nwzw97>). Scotland has opened the UK’s first CCSS demonstration project (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/kmkryr>).

Nuclear. A deal between councils and a nuclear energy firm to process plans for a new reactor at Hinkley Point in Somerset has led to fears that it bypasses the democratic process. Paul Miner for CPRE said: “The government has advised that Planning Performance Agreements can be used in such situations. The IPC procedure is based on local authorities representing local people. We are deeply concerned that the PPA creates a conflict of interest” (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/mhslr2>). Gordon Brown published “Road to 2010”, a roadmap for new nuclear power stations, nuclear security and non-proliferation (Cabinet Office: <http://tinyurl.com/kjz8j>).

Transport

Southampton Port. Associated British Ports has launched a consultation on a 20-year masterplan for Southampton port, including development of Dibden. Original plans for a container report were rejected on environmental grounds in 2005 but the masterplan says: “In identifying the Dibden reclaim as the only possible location for port expansion, ABP is fully aware of the nature conservation value of the site and the adjoining foreshore... Expansion into the Dibden reclaim will become necessary between 2021 and 2027” (ABP: <http://tinyurl.com/mrfs2n>).

Funding. The Department for Transport’s spending on transport in the eight years to 2018/19 is reported to be almost a third lower than set out two years ago (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/n9uqch>). Nevertheless, DfT has provisionally endorsed over £5 billion of priority transport schemes in the eight English regions. “Given the fiscal uncertainty [and] increasing carbon constraints, a 10-year programme must necessarily remain provisional at this stage”, the department admitted (DfT PR: <http://tinyurl.com/njyv6l>; DfT Advice: <http://tinyurl.com/lakgp9>).

Roads. The Campaign for Better Transport warned that congestion on motorways and trunk roads will get significantly worse unless the government rethinks its transport policy (CBT: <http://tinyurl.com/nbsexy>). MPs said that the cost of driving has fallen while charges for using public transport have soared. Ralph Smyth for CPRE said “The government’s plans will subsidise those who can afford a new car, while hitting hard those who need a car some of the time but cannot afford to buy a new, efficient one” (Politics: <http://tinyurl.com/m2xhn5>). Biofuel supply has exceeded government targets but only 24% of suppliers meet sustainability targets (Energy Efficiency: <http://tinyurl.com/nuj5ox>). A £580 million scheme to widen part of the M25 began (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/lz6dzy>).

Logistics. Protect Kent protested that the applicants keep moving the goalposts as revised plans were submitted for the controversial KIG freight depot (Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/mdswfn>). Natural England is under pressure to explain why it is not objecting to the mega depot planned between Fleet and Farnborough (Get Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/mf3zte>).

Rail. The government announced electrification of the Great Western rail line over eight years at a cost of £1.1bn (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/m4llv2>). Lord Adonis warned the government not to drop plans for a high speed line to the north (Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/looz5l>; Times: <http://tinyurl.com/mbk3ur>).

Aviation. More than 1,000 people are objecting to plans to increase flights at Farnborough Airport to 50,000 a year. Hugh Sheppard for CPRE Hampshire said doubling the number of flights “runs totally counter to the government’s renewable energy targets” (Get Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/npu8nc>). Wild birds in the Dungeness area are flourishing, but airport expansion at Lydd could threaten them. Protect Kent says it is bitterly disappointed Shepway District Council has delayed a decision over the planned expansion (Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/myryag>). MPs said the forthcoming aviation NPS should consider landside airspace impacts and a third runway should be built at Heathrow to cut stacking. CPRE’s Ralph Smyth said: “Understanding what makes areas tranquil formed a key part of the inquiry’s consideration of the environmental impacts of flying” (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/ntn2ae>; FT: <http://tinyurl.com/nbf3dc>; Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/n23bj7>). Building a third runway will gain the UK economy £30 billion (London Today: <http://tinyurl.com/ko8pp7>). An engineering study has concluded that a Thames Estuary airport is feasible and could be built on two artificial islands. The RSPB said: “An airport in the Thames estuary is a complete non-starter ecologically, environmentally and economically” (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/lgtjwo>). Friends of the Earth has condemned the expansion of London City airport (Evening Standard: <http://tinyurl.com/kscbw6>).

Noise. Defra is consulting on noise action plans (Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/n2s5lu>). Two reports reveal that many people are affected, some seriously, by exposure to environmental (mainly traffic) noise (Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/loh59y>; HPA: <http://tinyurl.com/md9m65>).

Rural Affairs And Farming

Conservative policy. The Conservatives have brought together recent statements on rural life into a “Rural Action agenda” leaflet and website. They promise to protect rural post offices, allow villages to build low-cost housing, and give country communities more power to resist school closures and start new village schools. They will abolish the regional planning system, and give local councils power to resist construction on green belt land and offer business rate discounts to small rural businesses (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/m2zaf2>; Shoreham Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/le9kb2>; Conservatives: <http://tinyurl.com/mojg7d>; <http://www.conservativeruralaction.com/>). Shadow environment secretary Nick Herbert said “The wider question of how we reconcile the need to produce more food while avoiding a return to an intensive and potentially environmentally damaging agriculture is real. So, too, are the challenges of adapting to climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the over-exploitation of natural resources” (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/mrutoy>). Country dwellers with infrequent or non-existent bus services are to be offered a subsidised shared ‘dial-a-taxi’ scheme if the Conservatives win the election (Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/nq2374>).

Set aside. The government has backed down from a compulsory replacement for set aside in favour of voluntary action to protect water quality and birds, plants and wildlife on farmland. Farmers leaders promised to double the uptake of in-field agri-environment schemes to cover 40,000 hectares and increase the amount of uncropped land by 20,000 hectares on current levels of 159,000 hectares. It is hoped that at least 60,000 hectares of the land left fallow will be managed in a more environmental way and that voluntary measures such as sowing bird-friendly seed will be introduced on at least 30,000 hectares of other land. The 20% of farmers not currently involved in agri-environment schemes must start undertaking voluntary action for the environment on their farms by 2010. The RSPB, which had called for a compulsory scheme, said it would back the voluntary campaign but the Tories called for a scheme based on biodiversity indicators. Dr Helen Phillips, Chief Executive of Natural England, which was reported to have opposed a voluntary scheme, welcomed the scheme and said: “As we all know, one volunteer is worth a thousand pressed men”. CPRE expressed serious concern at the decision to adopt a voluntary scheme (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/lffpxl>; Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/lducfz>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/kj794z>; Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/lrx3ty>).

Retail. The Lewes pound has been relaunched (Transition Culture: <http://tinyurl.com/mkor5j>). Protesters fear for Worthing town centre and the tranquillity of the nearby South Downs as the “Tesco-town” gets a bigger store (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/n56dty>). A record 52 pubs a week are now closing in the UK, leading to the loss of 24,000 jobs in the past year (BBPA: <http://tinyurl.com/lvacey>). Local authorities and Government must pay greater heed to the range of benefits that local markets continue to bring to their towns and communities, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee said. Oversight of retail markets at a national level is too fragmented and the committee is calling for DCLG to take the lead (Parliament: <http://tinyurl.com/ma7cc6>). The Competition Commission has published fresh analysis of its proposed competition test, designed to prevent grocery retailers from squeezing out rivals in local areas, concluding that the test is likely to have long-term benefits for consumers (Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/nwh3qx>). A Commons committee said the government should retain the retail needs test as part of town centre planning guidance (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/n2f4sd>).

Food. Britain must boost its production of fruit, vegetables and grains to reduce the country’s future exposure to food shortages around the world, the Select Committee on Environment Food and Rural Affairs said (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/nhzjdv>). Natural England is consulting on food security; deadline 25 September (<http://tinyurl.com/neconsult>). An unpublished report to Defra by Cranfield University suggests that food grown overseas may be more emissions friendly than UK produce (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/nnq8k>; Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/lhdnjo>). But local distribution systems (for example, farmers markets) are excluded and all food is considered be handled by Regional Distribution Centres, so the report is essentially saying that intensive mass production and long distance distribution of non-seasonal food in the UK is less energy efficient than intensive production overseas (Report: <http://tinyurl.com/life-cycle-analysis>; MLFW: <http://tinyurl.com/mtk4ec>). More than half of UK households are choosing to buy direct from the farm (MLFW: <http://tinyurl.com/nkwrkj>). GM crops are again being grown in Britain, protected by CCTV, guards and fencing (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/lq4osu>).

Footpaths. A farmer has ended up with a £1 million bill after a woman was injured by a cow when finding a way past a blocked footpath (Farmer’s Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/lavgkx>).

Rural broadband users get internet connections a third slower than those living in urban areas, according to Ofcom (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/mtk78f>).

Campaigning

Protect Kent. CPRE Kent launched its rebranding to Protect Kent at the Kent Show. “Being a sponsor at the Kent Show this year, gave us the platform to position our new ‘Protect Kent’ brand in the ‘eco’ market”, Protect Kent Chairman Richard Knox-Johnson said (Protect Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/nebdw8>).

Protest. Kent police's blanket use of stop-and-search powers on thousands of environmental activists at the Kingsnorth demonstration was "disproportionate and counterproductive", according to an official review. Officers who conducted the 8,218 searches were under-trained, did not understand their powers, lacked knowledge of basic public order terminology and were given outdated intelligence (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/15c973>; Kent Police: <http://tinyurl.com/kovksa>). Parliament's joint committee on human rights is proposing that independent mediators should settle disputes between police and protesters (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/15w3hn>). Climate Camp activists are expecting more aggressive police tactics this summer (Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/m7tj13>). Is Climate Camp anarchy or the saviour of the environmental movement? (Ecologist: <http://tinyurl.com/nfgftb>).

People. CPRE Vice-Chairman Anne Robinson has been elected as chair of the Campaign for National Parks (Grough: <http://tinyurl.com/nae5nq>).

CPRE eBulletin

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