



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SOUTH EAST

CPRE South East eBulletin 6 November 2007

1. The Queen's Speech

There was nothing very new from CPRE's point of view in the Queen's Speech, the planning and environmental bills having been announced earlier. But despite extensive lobbying, they remain unchanged bringing in the Infrastructure Planning Commission and driving forward the house building target of building 240,000 houses a year by 2016 and three million by 2020.

Planning Reform Bill. A planning bill will create a new infrastructure commission to make decisions on major infrastructure schemes. The Bill's aim is to deliver "more timely and predictable" decisions on infrastructure projects which are key to economic growth, energy provision, quality of life and tackling climate change. CPRE said "This looks like being a developer's charter, and risks dealing a body blow to the planning system created 60 years ago by the post-war Labour government, which has done much to protect England's precious countryside." It gave warning that it would fight to try to block the legislation and had already had one-to-one meetings with 24 Labour MPs who were apprehensive about the plans. Friends of the Earth said the plans to overhaul the planning system were "bad news for democracy and bad news for the environment. It is particularly disingenuous for the Government to use climate change as an excuse to push through these changes. In reality the majority of the projects that will be given the green light under the new system, from motorway widening-schemes to new airport runways, will lead to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions."

Housing and Regeneration Bill. The Homes and Communities Agency will replace English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation. It aims to improve the provision of social and affordable housing, release public sector land for building and establish eco towns. CPRE said "the policy needs to be driven by quality design, affordability and location. The new Homes and Communities Agency must meet these objectives, and resist greenfield sprawl—there also need to be appropriate checks and balances on its sweeping powers. The agency should be a vehicle for delivering the right housing in the right place, not a sausage-machine churning out new housing regardless of need and local concerns." The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors said "The current fixation on housing numbers could overshadow the regeneration focus of the merged body. Communities are more than houses and flats, people must also be able to work, socialise and live their lives within a safe and attractive environment, something the merged organisation would be well placed to do." The National Housing Federation said the ambitious house-building programme was sorely needed. "We are particularly pleased to see the Government is now aiming to build 70,000 social homes a year from 2010-11."

Climate Change Bill. This sets a legal requirement cut CO₂ emissions by 60% from 1990 levels by 2050 and "real progress" by 2025. Britain will be the first country in the world to have such a legal carbon emissions limit. The Bill will allow councils to introduce "pay as you throw" charges for domestic refuse. WWF said "We welcome the Climate Change Bill, although it needs a much more ambitious 80% target. But at the same time the government is driving a coach and horses through the planning system which it says supports renewables but which also allows much more high carbon developments". Friends of the Earth said "The government must strengthen its proposed legislation if it is to be truly effective and deliver the scale of action that scientists are now calling for." It called for annual not five-year carbon targets and inclusion of emissions from aviation and shipping.

Energy Bill. The Bill paves the way for new UK nuclear power stations. It will facilitate private investment in offshore gas supply projects and carbon capture and storage, and strengthen the Renewables Obligation to boost renewable energy. The Bill also has provisions to fund the decommissioning and waste management of nuclear power stations if a decision is taken to build new stations. Early next year the Government will run a consultation on what to do with nuclear waste. It will also produce a formal plan on decommissioning costs, which could be financed from an industry fund. Greenpeace said "This is the latest chapter in the government's shameful attempts to blight the UK with more nuclear power stations. They fully intend to use the Energy Bill to implement this farce without looking at cleaner alternatives, or dealing with any of the problems of waste and economics."

Transport Bills. The Crossrail Bill was announced alongside a bill giving local areas the freedom to develop road-pricing schemes.

(CPRE Press Release: <http://tinyurl.com/28w77y>; Times: <http://tinyurl.com/2pe3gt>; Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/2dh3nv>; Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/36xte5>; Greenpeace: <http://tinyurl.com/2n6dsh>; Queen's Speech: <http://tinyurl.com/ywq3l6>)

2. South East Campaigns

Kent International Gateway. The campaign against the 113 hectare freight terminal west of junction eight of the M20 is being stepped up by CPRE Kent and local campaigners. Maidstone Borough Council is midway through a three-week consultation on the application. Sean Furey for CPRE Kent said "The developers claim that a rail freight terminal there will reduce lorry traffic, but with the growth of imports coming into the country it is clear that any traffic to and from the site will represent a huge growth in traffic movements. The freight terminal will just add to the woes and blight the lives of local people by the noise and light pollution for its 24 hour operations" (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/2jhwfk>; BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yt3x35>; <http://www.stopkig.org/>).

South Downs National Park. The public inquiry is to be reopened. CPRE said it would press the case for a National Park with the widest possible boundary. CPRE's Emma Marrington said "The heart of this campaign is to ensure the western Weald remains in the National Park. It is misguided to suggest, as the Planning Inspector did, that it should be excluded as it is a different landscape character type to the chalk downlands. There is no requirement in any legislation that a National Park should only be of one character type." (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/38fxmp>; Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/2lvrlk>; Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/385tq2>; Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/27ylwa>). Chichester MP Andrew Tyrie said "Most of my constituents do not want to see local planning decisions taken by an anonymous body by fiat. That is what a South Downs Park Authority may mean" (Worthing Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/2zlvfz>).

CPRE Kent has taken the Forestry Commission to task for development of a Christmas attraction in Bedgebury Forest in an AONB without planning permission (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/32oazg>).

CPRE Hampshire has launched an annual Countryside and Design Awards Scheme for projects which improve the Hampshire environment. The award categories are Schools; Voluntary and Community; and Public Sector and Business (CPRE Hants: <http://tinyurl.com/3dtmu8>).

3. Town Green Campaigns

Oxford. The Warneford Meadow town green inquiry met for a week and adjourned until January to allow examination of evidence of submitted by the NHS landowners (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/32p3yy>; <http://tinyurl.com/39tx8w>; CPRE Oxfordshire: <http://tinyurl.com/3bzfdx>). At Radley Lakes, the application for town green status has been refused. An inspector found that all the criteria for town green status had been met but that people's use of the area was more consistent with use of rights of way than a town green. It is a major blow for the campaign but campaigners have vowed not to give up. They are reviewing options to stop RWE npower dumping ash in the lakes (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/23uv96>; Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ytb74t>; CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/yp52c4>). Npower spokesman Leon Flexman told Radio Oxford that the bottom line is that a 24 by 7 power operation needs to resort to dumping. Andy retorted that "the bottom line is npower's profits. Let's get into the twenty first century, the bottom line is now communities and the environment. If npower really were a modern company, they would not dream of destroying Thrupp Lake" (recording: <http://tinyurl.com/352w43>).

Buckinghamshire. A picnic and conker competition was held underneath the horse chestnut trees in Aylesbury in support of a town green campaign (Bucks Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/27ns23>).

Berkshire. A public inquiry is to be held into calls for land in Woking to be given village green status to save it from development (Woking News: <http://tinyurl.com/22f5w9>).

4. Housing

Affordable housing boost. A £10.2 billion fund for affordable homes was announced by Yvette Cooper. 50% more new social houses—45,000 in total—will be built in the year 2010-11 than are being built this year. The South East gets £1,372,000 over the three years (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/2e8z9u>). Councils are to be given a £1,000 cash bonus for each extra house they build above minimum levels in a bid to speed up affordable developments, Yvette Cooper said, announcing a grant of £510 million over three years. The sums could rise to £5,000 per dwelling by 2010/11. Councils will be given the freedom to use money for any purpose. Ms Cooper also gave councils a licence to tear up regional development plans to allow them to build more homes, freeing planning authorities from the constraints of, for example, the South East Plan (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/3x2lrk>; CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/yv4xx5>). The Local Government Association said "What is now necessary is the for funding for the roads, public transport, schools and hospitals needed to make sure we do not build desolate dormitories, but places where people can live and work" (LGA: <http://tinyurl.com/yo3vex>).

The National Housing and Planning Advice Unit Report. Plans to build 3 million new homes in England by 2020 will not be enough to meet the deepening affordability crisis NHPAU warned. Another 250,000 homes might be required to ensure a generation was not prevented from joining the property ladder because of high prices. Any fall in prices will be short term. Economist and NHPAU chairman Professor Stephen Nickell defended his report. "We built more than that number back in the 1930s in Britain when we had a considerably smaller population. England is an aspirational, prosperous and growing nation and that means a demand for more housing. If we fail to act a generation of buyers will be unable to get a foothold on the housing ladder... and homeowners will not be able to move on to bigger and better homes" (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2f4pm5>; Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ywzgu8>; NHPAU press release: <http://tinyurl.com/2m2f4s>; report: <http://tinyurl.com/3ahxwb>). Yvette Cooper, seemed to reject the report in defending the current plan to build 240,000 a year by 2016, saying it balances environmental and sustainability issues with housing demands (Politics: <http://tinyurl.com/2n4a6s>). Kate Gordon for CPRE said "The number of new homes proposed goes far beyond what is actually needed. Increasing housebuilding to this level will not make homes affordable. New homes comprise only a very small proportion of homes for sale at any one time and other factors have more influence on house prices, notably interest rates, mortgage lending policy and speculative investment" (CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/2rebjw>). SEERA criticised the report. Keith Mitchell said "A 64% increase in building to 46,000 homes a year would still see South East prices rise from 8x average salary to 11x average salary in 2026. The figures also ignore the cost of services and infrastructure for new homes and cut across the democratic process of agreeing regional housing figures" (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/2adpym>). The chief executive of Shelter applauded the NHPAU report (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2ratt8>).

Sussex. "Most people accept that more homes need to be built in Sussex. But where they go and exactly how many are built is becoming one of the hottest political potatoes of our day." The Argus looks at the debate in depth (<http://tinyurl.com/3ddoaz>).

White Paper. The Government's proposals to reform the planning system are expected to provide £300m of savings on infrastructure projects a year, according to government minister John Healey. Shaun Spiers for CPRE said "We believe the planning system is complicated for a reason. These changes would create a significantly weakened planning system which will have disastrous consequences for the countryside and environment" (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/ywdsq5>; Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/2mgt4w>).

Brownfield. The proportion of new homes built on brownfield land in England dropped last year, for the first time since 1997. Figures released today by the DCLG show that the number of homes built on previously-developed land in 2006 was 74%, a drop from the previous year's figure of 77% (Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/36osa2>).

CPRE Kent is backing protests against a mini-city plan in West Hythe. Newport: "We have concerns [about] over-provision of dwellings at this site, with more than twice as many houses proposed as the local plan identifies as being necessary or desirable for Hythe" (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/3yqagh>).

5. Eco Towns & Houses

Eco-towns. Housing and Planning Minister, Yvette Cooper, has confirmed that an ideas competition would be run to develop and set the design standards for ten new eco-towns. She wants to engage the leading creative thinkers on architecture, urban and landscape design and transport planning on proposals for the new developments of up to 20,000 homes (CLG: <http://tinyurl.com/35stau>). CPRE said the plans will fail unless they are integrated with existing settlements and agreed with, not imposed on, local communities. It said citizen's juries are "no substitute for consulting local communities on the need for, location and design of eco-towns" (CPRE: <mailto:http://tinyurl.com/2woa5w>). There have been 57 applications for eco-towns

Urban extensions could qualify as eco-towns. English partnerships chair Baroness Margaret Ford said she has personally encouraged authorities to bid for eco-town status for developments that don't fit the government definition. "I've had people come to me and say we don't think we can have 20,000 people, we've got maybe 5,000. I've encouraged that," Ford said (Regen: <http://tinyurl.com/2szpp7>).

Sites. Gordon Brown had announced that Northstowe in Cambridgeshire would become the first eco-town but now Yvette Cooper has ruled it out because the status would delay building (CEN: <http://tinyurl.com/2xqlqx>). Plans have been submitted to the Government to create an eco-town in a disused quarry north of Oxford but Andy Boddington, for CPRE Oxfordshire expressed grave concerns about the Shipton Quarry. "The greatest problem is traffic. The surrounding roads are already clogged. Having thousands of people travelling to and from there, with a large park-and-ride would make the situation far worse. There is no infrastructure for it." (Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/2dzs75>).

Affordable housing. The government wants town halls to offer their own low-cost deals for new homes built on their land. The initiative, being worked up with 14 local authorities, is likely to be far more important than the relatively small-scale return to council house building being trialled (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2hul6t>). Just 88 homes have been bought using the Social Homebuy scheme aimed at helping people onto the property ladder launched in 2005 (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/yqfmqf>).

Energy efficient housing. The Merton rule, which allows councils to order that all new buildings supply 10% of their power from renewable sources, was to be scrapped then not to be scrapped. Now it is to be revised to include offsite energy sources (Green Building: <http://tinyurl.com/2gcrqm>). Councillors in Milton Keynes are pitching one Government minister against another in an attempt to beat off a threat to the city's energy-saving housing programme (Citizen: <http://tinyurl.com/365lmo>). All Berkeley homes built from January 2008 will have their carbon emissions reduced by 25% and water consumption cut by 30% compared to average UK households (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/26wr6w>). Ashford is to build South East's first 'zero-carbon' affordable homes (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/yplrep>).

6. Green Belts

Natural England attacks the green belt. The nature watchdog proposed that the best and most environmentally valuable green belt land would be safeguarded and improved, but other areas could be considered for housing schemes. "We have to consider... permitting development on the green belt in order to minimise impacts on the natural environment elsewhere. These areas could be the basis of a new, less extensive green belt. Its form would probably be one of green gaps, green wedges and buffers rather than continuous belts" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2met6o>; Natural England: <http://tinyurl.com/36pre6>). "England has plenty of brownfield land and urban areas in desperate need of regeneration without squandering greenfield sites... The most important thing about green belts is their openness and permanence, not their attractiveness in landscape terms" (CPRE's Kate Gordon in the Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/3ywdp7>). "When the government's chief adviser on conservation argues that this 70-year old concept needs updating, might she not have a point?" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/38ze6x>). "The marvel is that through its 50-year history, the green belt has become a sacred symbol for middle class conservationists... It's not hard to imagine a way to modernise the green belt—transform it into

what people have always thought it was: nature reserves with great swaths of forest" (Madeleine Bunting in the Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/382xzz>). "Boring green belt should make way for new eco homes" (Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/2atdj8>). The Leader of Enfield Council attacked the Natural England. "We are absolutely determined that no houses should be built on our Green Belt" (Enfield Independent; <http://tinyurl.com/2z5anf>) The Telegraph blog has received dozens of comments on the topic (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/29zypz>). Hilary Newport of CPRE Kent said she was "very, very concerned that strict controls could be relaxed". She said "The important thing about green belt land is that it is permanent. To allow it to be built on would be the death knell for some of the lovely countryside we have got" (Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/3avuxv>).

National Trust to save the green belt? The conservation charity is tackling the Government head on over threats to the green belt. The trust is exasperated because ministers appear ready to develop green fields without considering the quality of life offered to local communities by the presence of open spaces. It is calling for a new method to evaluate the landscape and to take local views into account, and it will buy threatened land. The trust will ask its members to contribute to individual fighting funds set up to preserve specific areas of Britain where it believes there is a realistic chance of buying the land (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/2xm782>; <http://tinyurl.com/yruzhc>; <http://tinyurl.com/29bhgz>; <http://tinyurl.com/3avuxv>).

Oxford Green Grid. CPRE Oxfordshire has drawn up a plan to protect Oxford's threatened open spaces with a new 'Green Grid' to limit development. A Green Grid could be drawn up within the city and in the neighbouring Green Belt to stop meadows, sports grounds and nature reserves disappearing in a piecemeal fashion. Andy Boddington of Oxfordshire CPRE said "With both the Green Belt and green spaces within the city at their most threatened for decades, it's time to think more strategically" (Oxford Times with map: <http://tinyurl.com/3y55bo>; Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/3479yp>; CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/32evjc>). The Oxford Times said in its leader "The Green Grid proposed by CPRE is a welcome addition to the debate on protecting the Oxfordshire's cherished spaces... The flip side is that CPRE will have to recognise that it will lead to more pressure for the development of Green-Belt land outside the city" (<http://tinyurl.com/3y468r>).

Green belt threats. Tandridge council said it would fight to protect the green belt, which is under pressure from development. Caterham, Warlingham and Oxted as towns which could accommodate more homes (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/3dlyya>). Marlow Football Club has re-submitted plans for a new ground to be built on Green Belt land. The Chiltern Society said "There's a brand new policy in the South East Plan for the River Thames Valley corridor. That again would reinforce the approach of keeping this more open and natural land" (Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/2zro5t>). The Mole Valley Housing Association plans 300 affordable homes by 2012 sparking fresh fears of threats to the Green Belt (icSurrey: <http://tinyurl.com/yujr6m>).

7. Planning

SEERA attacked. Housing minister Yvette Cooper said it was "unacceptable" for local authorities in the South East to decide they did not want housing developments. She said "I am disappointed by the South East England Regional Assembly effectively wanting to cut the numbers of houses built in the South East, when the level of housing demand is growing and there is a huge influx of first-time buyers. It's a betrayal of first-time buyers to argue against it." She warned that financial support in the form of planning delivery grants would only go to those authorities that were responding to the level of need for homes in their area. And she said planning decisions against "reasonable" developments could be overturned on appeal (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/yvbgg6>).

Planning tax. The Government has abandoned proposals for a Planning Gain Supplement in favour of a planning charge. This will build on the current s106 approach and the tariff pioneered in Milton Keynes (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/2h5dft>; <http://tinyurl.com/2frl5b>; eGov: <http://tinyurl.com/ynnrlz>).

London. The Mayor of London has assumed widespread new powers over planning including for planning, housing and waste (summary of powers: <http://tinyurl.com/2uv46w>; Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/yvj4xm>).

8. South East Local Development Frameworks

Kent. Consultation on the Wealden LDF concluded there was need for small scale development in rural areas to meet local, affordable housing needs even though two thirds of the district is classed as an AONB. There was strong support for reinstatement of the Uckfield—Lewes railway line, but little for a new settlement to take the increased housing requirement (Eastbourne Today: <http://tinyurl.com/ytkl2x>).

Berkshire. Councillors at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead have unanimously rejected an order to use green belt land for new housing and has asked the government to review its decision. The Planning Inspectorate had instructed the borough to conduct such a review of the green belt boundaries for its LDF (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2z2qgy>).

9. Water

25 Year Water Plans. The water companies are preparing and consulting on their draft 25 year plans, which must be submitted by the 31st March 2008 (EA: <http://tinyurl.com/2gmk94>). **South East Water** is holding roadshows to discuss plans on how to cope with climate change and population growth (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/29rqtc>; SE Water: <http://tinyurl.com/2pfqdo>). **Southern Water** customers have until November 30 to comment on the 25 year plan (Southern: <http://tinyurl.com/yrfqgug>). At **Folkestone and Dover Water**, the consultation closed on 5 November (<http://tinyurl.com/yvjcaaw>). CPRE Oxfordshire has expressed deep scepticism at the **Thames Water's** consultation on its 25 year strategy, now closed. Andy Boddington for CPRE Oxfordshire said "This is much a propaganda exercise as a serious attempt at consultation. Thames Water claims it has made 'excellent progress at reducing leakage'. That is a risible claim". CPRE Oxfordshire is calling for a strategy that is less dependent on development of new resources like the Abingdon Reservoir and a 25 year strategy based on "repair, reduce and recycle" (CPRE Oxfordshire: <http://tinyurl.com/2mhss8>).

SEERA calls for reservoirs. The South East England Regional Assembly has called for new reservoirs as well as water-saving. The assembly said it was "too risky for national water plans to rely solely on residents using less water" and it said proposals also needed to examine water resources, for example, new water reservoirs (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/yvsrhy>).

Upper Thames Reservoir. The Vale of White Horse District Council in Oxfordshire says up to at least one million people a year going to the reservoir. The council is also complaining that Thames Water is dragging its feet in responding to its concerns (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/3awoft>).

Sewerage. The Consumer Council for Water has raised serious concerns about the proposed Thames Tideway Tunnel. The £2 billion tunnel, which will collect overflows from London sewers (CCW: <http://tinyurl.com/2mdjuj>; Thames Water: <http://tinyurl.com/2sp6sg>).

10. Energy and the Environment

Light pollution. Almost two thirds of people believe the night time sky is lighter today than it was 10 years ago. A third admitted that light outside their bedroom window contributed to sleepless nights. A spokeswoman for CPRE said "Light pollution has become a significant issue in the UK over the past 50 years. All direct light pollution is wasted energy" (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/32xrds>).

Waste. A gasification plant on the Isle of Wight—the first of its kind in the UK—will convert residual waste into gas rather than incinerating it and divert thousands of tonnes of rubbish from landfill. It is expected to generate 2.3 MW of electricity, which will power more than 2,000 homes from next year (Edie: <http://tinyurl.com/2d2ycb>). Opponents against the siting of a waste incinerator in south Bucks may take legal action if plans to build a waste incinerator in Beaconsfield go ahead (Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/34sp94>). Beaconsfield's MP said that burning waste can be done safely but criticised the proposed sites (Bucks Free Press: <http://tinyurl.com/33p5s9>). Sussex residents and councillors are protesting against proposals to dump almost five million tonnes of London's waste in the county, leading "to the nightmare scenario of roads jammed with waste lorries and more tips across the countryside" (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/27ur8v>). Green Party activists have called for the permanent closure of an incinerator near Maidstone in Kent, which is currently out of operation while furnace linings are repaired (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/38mg6z>).

Energy. Milton Keynes District Council will consider the application for a windfarm between the city and Bedford on 17 December (Your Energy: <http://tinyurl.com/28q3nb>). Greenpeace volunteers entered Kingsnorth coal-fired power station in Kent in a protest designed to stop Gordon Brown from approving the UK's first new coal plant in more than 30 years (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2pj2tk>). The world's largest offshore wind farm, the London Array, which will occupy a site of 90 square miles off the coast of Kent, will provide clean power for a quarter of London's homes by 2010. But a sharp increase in costs for the scheme from the original estimate of £1.5bn to closer to £2bn could still push it off course. Costs have soared while the project has been delayed 18 months because of local opposition to an electricity sub-station near Faversham (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2x35wn>).

Ecology. London's only grazing marsh Erith Marshes could disappear unless it gets official protection, conservationists say (Evening Standard: <http://tinyurl.com/2bq3qt>). Egrets have nested in the middle of the proposed Kennet Valley Park development, where 7,500 houses could be built in the next 25 years (Get Reading: <http://tinyurl.com/2u566w>). Beavers may be reintroduced by Natural England to the New Forest (Dorset Echo: <http://tinyurl.com/yudsfz>).

City footprints. The WWF found that South East towns have some of the UK's largest carbon footprints, with eight of the worst ten UK performers: Portsmouth: 3.21 planets; Southampton: 3.27; Oxford: 3.40; Canterbury: 3.40; Brighton and Hove: 3.47; Chichester: 3.49; St. Albans: 3.51; Winchester: 3.62 (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/26sxn>; WWF Table: <http://tinyurl.com/28xjgs>).

Environmental Impact Statements can be carried out in stages, where a development is subject to a multi-stage process, for example, outline planning permission followed by full permission, following a ruling by the European Court of Justice (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/33yp36>).

11. Infrastructure and Transport

White Paper. Personal travel plans are part of a new push to change the travelling public's behaviour in favour of low-carbon alternatives. Government officials will visit households to give bespoke advice. A national road charging scheme remains off the government agenda, but urban congestion charging and motorway tolls are being considered. The document called for aviation to be included in European emissions-trading schemes, but the document said there would still need to be "some growth in capacity" of airports (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/37k3v9>; DfT: <http://tinyurl.com/yvupf3>). Environmentalists said the strategy did too little to combat climate change, attacking the decision to allow further airport expansion and road building and widening (Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/ywggk22>). The White Paper supports, in principle, plans to build High Speed 2—an inter-city rail link connecting London with Birmingham and Manchester (Transport Briefing: <http://tinyurl.com/293f39>).

Rural transport. Bus and train services in rural areas are being killed "by a thousand cuts", a survey has found. Routes are being reduced and services run less frequently because of chronic underfunding. Eight times less public money is being spent on transport in some country regions than in more densely populated areas. CPRE said country dwellers were getting a "raw deal", while the Campaign for Better Transport called for a dramatic increase in funding for rural transport (Telegraph: <http://tinyurl.com/2e8lme>). A £33 million project to transform Guildford's park and ride scheme into a regional transport centre is being considered (Surrey Advertiser: <http://tinyurl.com/23m9uv>).

Rail. Investment in improved rail services won't keep pace with the region's 20-year growth unless it has a longer timeline, says the South East England Regional Assembly's Planning Committee. The committee calls for longer term funding commitments to allow train operators to plan on the same 20-year timescale as the Assembly (SEERA: <http://tinyurl.com/2lkgjr>). The £16 billion Crossrail scheme will be Europe's largest civil engineering project. Scheduled to be ready for passenger use by 2017, Crossrail will be able to carry 200 million customers a year, representing a 54% increase in rail capacity to Canary Wharf (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/yooq7f>; Transport Briefing: <http://tinyurl.com/366576>). Critics say that it will not link with the new international rail terminal at St Pancras, Stansted airport and the north-west corridor route to Milton Keynes and Northampton (FT: <http://tinyurl.com/2aoxbz>).

Air. The RSPB continues its opposition to expansion plans at Lydd airport, which it says will have a disastrous effect on the nearby nature reserve at Dungeness. Its petition now has nearly 8,000 signatures (Rye & Battle Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/356kvw>). Half of the residents living near Heathrow would support a third runway there, a poll for a group supporting expansion at the airport showed (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/3yekhq>). The company responsible for national air traffic services, NATS, has proposed changes to the airspace structure which will have a noticeable impact on quiet landscapes. CPRE Vale of White Horse and CPRE Hampshire have objected to the proposal. However, as before, NATS has brushed aside objections and is presenting its plans to the Civil Aviation Authority unchanged (CPRE Oxfordshire: <http://tinyurl.com/37ns7d>).

Roads. CPRE Kent is calling for a new park and ride scheme for Canterbury to be scrapped. Chris Lowe for CPRE Kent said that "The real aim must be to reduce pollution and global warming emissions which can only be achieved by reducing car use. For example, why not increase the frequency of buses from Faversham to give a level of service similar to that provided by park and ride buses?" (CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/2po7wf>).

Tranquillity lost says Bellamy. Sir David Bellamy and many others wrote a letter to The Times saying through-traffic is destroying village life and calling on the authorities to restrict long-distance commuter traffic to A-roads. The letter cites Selborne, in Hampshire: "There is a complete loss of tranquillity and the atmosphere that [Gilbert] White describes as 'soft' is now heavily polluted with petrol fumes and vehicular noise" (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/35mzej>).

12. Rural Affairs

Supermarkets. The Competition Commission has called for the planning system to be changed so that there can be more supermarkets, saying that too many people do not have enough supermarkets near them to choose between. CPRE said the report showed "a depressing failure to care about the interests of local communities, which threatens to consign England's towns to more monotony. We are offered a bleak prospect of yet more ruthless price wars which undermine farmers' livelihoods and yet more land-hungry superstores in sprawling, car-dependent suburbs" (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2czej8>; Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/3bjqew>; Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/2hppbp>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/yrkhf9>). Friends of the Earth said the report was a "totally inadequate response" to the growing power of the big four. "The Competition Commission acknowledges supermarkets bully their suppliers and reduce consumer choice, but then bizarrely recommends making it easier for them to expand." (Times: <http://tinyurl.com/24koh6>; FoE: <http://tinyurl.com/266q9o>). The Commission has concluded that the Supermarket Code of Practice is not sufficient to prevent supermarkets abusing suppliers (Farmers Weekly: <http://tinyurl.com/2xfwxo>). An ombudsman scheme may now be set up to help protect farmers and small businesses that sell to supermarket chains (Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/ysdec5>). The NFU said that a supermarkets ombudsman would need real powers (Farmers Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/2h9ecj>).

Clutter. A proposal to display 13 advertisements on roundabouts in Surrey has been rejected following an inspector's ruling that they would appear as unduly prominent commercial features and undermine local amenity. Some were in rural locations where their impact would be even greater, the Inspector concluded (Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/2cr4kg>). Farmers markets in west Oxfordshire have been told they could be prosecuted for putting up roadside signs (Oxford Times: <http://tinyurl.com/24qhny>).

13. Regional Government

Regional Sustainability Framework. Seera is consulting on the Framework which aims to help guide sustainable development in the region. Deadline 26 November (Seera: <http://tinyurl.com/yujm9o>).

Seera has published its latest newsletter, including extensive commentary of the Inspectors' report into the South East Plan (<http://tinyurl.com/2o7wfp>).

Seeda held its annual open meeting at Milton Keynes, which can be viewed as a webcast (Seeda: <http://tinyurl.com/2ycxdt>).

14. Jobs

The **Heritage Lottery Fund** is seeking member to join the South East England Committee. Closing date for applications is 5 November (www.hlf.org.uk, decisionmakers.recruitment@hlf.org.uk).

CPRE Oxfordshire is looking for a campaign manager to replace Andy Boddington who has departed for the tranquillity of Shropshire (CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/26g3nv>).

15. eBulletin Dates

The next South East eBulletins will be issued on 6 December 2007 and 8 January 2008.

Abbreviations, Links and Definitions

CLG: [Communities and Local Government](#). EiP: [Examination in Public](#). GOSE: [Government Office of the South East](#). SEEDA: [South East England Development Agency](#). SEERA: [South East England Regional Assembly](#). SPA: [Special Protection Area](#). TBHSPA: [Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area](#).

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