



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing June 2011

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing June 2011

CPRE Oxfordshire will be represented at the Environment session of Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy on 20th July, where we will argue against the proposed review of the Green Belt at Wheatley and Berinsfield on the grounds that there are no exceptional circumstances to justify a review.

Following the withdrawal of the application for a huge wind turbine in the Green Belt at Horspath due to MOD concerns, it seems that the City Council may, in the future, submit a planning application for a number of smaller wind turbines on the site instead.

South Oxfordshire District Council has recently announced the proposed sites of 800 new homes in the District. SODC has named an extra 204 homes for Wallingford, 284 in Thame and 326 homes around several other villages in the District. These are in addition to those already allocated as part of the council's plans for 4,000 new homes.

West Oxfordshire is now consulting on its Draft Core Strategy which CPRE Oxfordshire will be responding to in due course.

CPRE Oxford District Committee is preparing its response to the City Council's Sites and Housing Development Plan Document - Preferred Options.

The Oxford District Committee is also preparing its response to the Barton Area Action Plan, which includes a proposal to build 1,000 new homes at Barton, many of which will be affordable. While supportive of the plan to build much needed new homes at Barton, CPRE will be examining the potential impact of the proposed development on local green spaces, existing footpaths, and the Green Belt.

The closing date for responding to the Department for Transport's Consultation on HS2 is July 29th. CPRE Oxfordshire has responded to the consultation endorsing the Right Lines Charter for High Speed Rail that summarises CPRE's policy concerns.

CPRE Oxfordshire welcomes Hansons announcement that they intend to withdraw their application for gravel extraction in the Cassington / Eynsham area, which was submitted in August 2007 and was due to be determined by Oxfordshire County Council this summer. Hansons stated that the decision was prompted by the economic downturn, meaning that local demand for sand and gravel can be met from other sites in the county.

CPRE National Office has expressed its support for the thrust of the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) which is full of commitments that, if fully implemented, will mark a significant step forward for our natural heritage.

CPRE National Office has accused the Government of using the term 'sustainable' as a fig leaf for a pro-growth agenda regardless of the environmental consequences. This followed the publication of a 'potential approach' for a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in the forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework, in which the Government intends to require planning authorities to 'approve all individual proposals wherever possible'.

For more information about these and other issues see: [CPRE Oxfordshire website](#) .

In this Campaign Briefing:

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaigns:

- 1. Green Belt**
- 2. Energy**

Other Oxfordshire News:

- 1. Planning**
- 2. Transport**
- 3. Minerals**

South East News

CPRE National Office News

Diary

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaigns:

1.Green Belt

Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

The Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy opens on Tuesday 12th July, following an Exploratory Meeting/Pre-Hearing Meeting that took place in May. The sessions are expected to last for three weeks.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be represented at the session on the Environment on 20th July, where we will argue against the proposed review of the Green Belt at Wheatley and Berinsfield on the grounds that there are no exceptional circumstances to justify a review.

2.Energy

- Smaller wind turbines for Horspath?

Following the withdrawal of the application for a huge wind turbine in the Green Belt at Horspath due to MOD concerns, it seems that the City Council may, in the future, submit a planning application for a number of smaller wind turbines on the site instead.

Oxford City Council has just published its Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) - Preferred Options, which allocates sites in Oxford for a variety of uses such as housing, student accommodation and offices. Future planning applications will be judged against these policies.

In its analysis of the Horspath site, it says on page 121 of the above document:

"The City Council is keen to locate a wind turbine in Oxford and this site was identified as an option although the MoD have concerns meaning that a large turbine is unlikely to be suitable here. There may be scope for smaller turbines to be located here but care would be needed in siting them so as not to cause shadow flickering over the sports pitches."

It goes on to say that due to a future shortage of cemetery space in the City, the City Council is looking for possible sites for a new cemetery and that the Horspath site has been ranked joint second when considering issues such as landscape character, access, sustainability and environmental conditions, but this was not based upon weighing up the sites against alternative uses.

The report concludes: "With the cemetery study still in draft and with the need to look further into the possibility of locating smaller wind turbines on the site there is not preferred option stated."

CPRE Oxfordshire will be keeping a close eye on any future applications for smaller wind turbines at Horspath.

- Solar Farm put on hold

Plans for a 16-hectare solar farm at the site of a former World War Two airfield in Oxfordshire have been put on hold despite getting planning permission.

The developers of Kencot Hill Solar Farm, near Carterton, said it was no longer economically viable following a decision on 9th June by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to reduce the payment for the electricity such farms produce.

Previously the government had a feed-in-tariff (FIT) scheme which guaranteed a certain price for that electricity, but following a review, it has decided to reduce the tariffs available to large-scale solar projects to protect the money available for smaller schemes.

From 1st August, new entrants into the FIT scheme, including the Kencot Hill project, would receive the reduced payment.

Other Oxfordshire News:

1.Planning

- South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

South Oxfordshire District Council has recently announced the proposed sites of 800 new homes in the District.

SODC has named an extra 204 homes for Wallingford, 284 in Thame and 326 homes around several other villages in the District. These are in addition to those already allocated as part of the council's plans for 4,000 new homes.

SODC was asked to specify the locations after an inspector said previous plans could not be guaranteed to meet the District's housing needs.

The remaining homes will be allocated to Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wheatley, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Woodcote and Bayswater Farm.

The new proposals will be discussed at a Cabinet meeting on 28th June.

- West Oxfordshire Draft Core Strategy

West Oxfordshire is now consulting on its Draft Core Strategy.

The Draft Core Strategy was published for consultation in January 2011. A large number of comments were received during this consultation, including detailed submissions from agents/developers pursuing development options on the fringe of Carterton.

CPRE Oxfordshire responded to this consultation. In general terms CPRE supports the strategy of focussing development on the sub-areas outlined in the draft Core Strategy. Our main concern is how the development at Carterton might be managed, both in the adverse effect of a large strategic site development on the adjacent countryside and villages and in ensuring that, in conjunction with the West Witney developments, any development of the intervening countryside is firmly resisted.

As far as the strategy for Witney is concerned, CPRE supports the main provisions of this strategy. However, CPRE has consistently opposed the Cogges Link Road because of the damage to the Windrush water meadows and the tranquillity of a valued area for recreation in the town. We do not consider that it will do much to solve Witney's traffic problems, that it will create new ones in the Ducklington and Station Lane areas and that it is expensive. As such we have made it clear that we continue to support the Downs Road junction.

The Council has since published new documents and an opportunity is being provided until 31st July 2011 for comments to be made on this latest material which includes:

- Carterton Strategic Site Submissions
- Demographic Projections Review May 2011
- Affordable Housing Viability Study Position Statement May 2011
- Green Infrastructure Study June 2011
- Housing Land Supply Position Statement June 2011

CPRE Oxfordshire will be taking the opportunity to comment on this latest material.

What you can do

Comments can be made until 31st July 2011.

You can view the documents on the Council's consultation [website](#) .

Alternatively visit the Council's Elmfield Offices in Witney.

Or [email](#) your response or send a hard copy to: Planning Policy, Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB.

- Oxford City Local Development Framework

Oxford City is currently consulting on its Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD), which will form part of its Local Development Framework (LDF). This will allocate sites for development for housing, employment and other uses as well as setting out detailed planning policies that planning applications for housing development will be judged against. Once the Sites and Housing DPD is adopted, all the site allocations, and policies dealing specifically with housing in the adopted Oxford Local Plan will be replaced.

During November and December 2010, the City held Pre-Options consultation events asking for the public's initial views on what should be developed on specific sites and ideas on key housing issues. CPRE's City District Committee attended the events.

The City has now produced its Preferred Options for each site and for each housing issue and it now wants to know what the public think about these.

The Sites and Housing Preferred Options Consultation ends on 22 July 2011.

CPRE's City District Committee will be responding to the consultation.

What you can do

You can see the Preferred Options document on the City Council [website](#).

You can respond using one of the following methods:

Answer the online [questionnaire](#).

Or collect a questionnaire from the Ramsay House office, Oxford.

Alternatively, go along to one of the new Area Forums where you can either pick up a questionnaire or indicate on the display boards the options you like and do not like. Information will be available for you to comment on the options or to talk to officers and councillors.

Provisional dates and venues for the Area Forums are shown below. These times may be subject to change, so please check again before arriving. The times shown are for the formal start of the meeting, but officers will be available to talk to up to half an hour before the advertised time.

North:

14th July 6.30pm
North Oxford Community Centre

North East:
5th July
6.30pm
New Marston Primary School

Cowley:
14th July 7pm
John Bunyan Baptist Church, Crowell Road

East:
27th June 6.30pm
East Oxford School, Union Street

The Central, South and West Area Forum was held on 14th June 6pm, at the West Oxford Community Primary School.

- Barton Area Action Plan, Oxford City

CPRE Oxford District Committee is preparing its response to the Barton Area Action Plan, which includes a proposal to build 1,000 new homes at Barton, many of which will be affordable.

While supportive of the plan to build much needed new homes at Barton, CPRE will be examining the potential impact of the proposed development on local green spaces, existing footpaths, and the Green Belt.

The deadline for responses was Friday 24th June.

- Our response is available to view on the Oxford City Council [website](#).

2. Transport

- High Speed Rail (HS2) Consultation

In February 2011 the Department for Transport published a Consultation Summary: 'High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future'. The closing date for responses is July 29th.

A number of members of the Executive Committee of CPRE Oxfordshire oppose any high speed rail line across open country and HS2 in particular, based on the fact that it would be contrary to CPRE's commitment to protect the countryside.

The Henley and Mapledurham District of Oxfordshire CPRE have opposed HS2 without qualification.

The consultation poses 7 questions and we have provided our answers to these questions below, based on the [Right Lines Charter for High Speed Rail](#) that summarises CPRE's main policy concerns.

In summary the Charter sets out four principles:

Principle 1. National Strategy

High Speed Rail proposals need to be set in the context of a long term transport strategy stating clear objectives.

Principle 2. Testing the Options

Major infrastructure proposals such as High Speed Rail, need to be 'future-proofed' by comprehensive testing against different scenarios. This will help identify solutions for genuinely furthering sustainable development

Principle 3. Public Participation

Early public involvement in the development of major infrastructure proposals, including High Speed Rail, is essential. People need to be involved when all options are open for discussion and effective participation can take place.

Principle 4. Minimising Adverse Impacts

High Speed proposals need to be designed from the start to avoid significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, cultural heritage and local communities (including biodiversity, landscape, tranquillity and access) during construction and operation.

We believe that many improvements can be made to the HS2 proposals as they stand, and we will be submitting a separate response which deals specifically with local details and which suggests amendments to the proposal in an attempt to be helpful should the development go ahead (see the item: 'Mitigation Measures and Detailed Design' below).

CPRE Oxfordshire's response to the 7 questions posed in the HS2 Consultation:

1. Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network to support economic growth over the coming decades?

Yes.

2. Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

No

This asks the wrong question as the non- monetised costs and benefits are as important as the 'money solution' and considering the latter in isolation is likely to give a false answer leading to a wrong decision. The minister has already stated that the non-monetised costs and benefits underpin the strategic case.

There is a good case for a new High Speed Line between London and the Midlands, to relieve congested main lines that have very limited potential to provide train paths for additional passenger or freight services. However, until a study into the best options for upgrading the lines between the Midlands and the North is completed, which should include consideration of upgrading existing lines rather than building new ones, it would be premature to come to any conclusion about what the best option would be.

3. Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

No

It is accepted that whatever solution to the rail capacity problem is finally approved, expenditure will have to be phased.

The principle of the link to HS1 is supported.

The case for a link to Heathrow has not been made and any decision on that must be premature.

4. Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?

No

The failure to consult on the terms of reference before this stage was reached is most regrettable.

The 400km/h design speed is unnecessarily high and there is no compelling case made for it.

The requirement for parkway stations to be included was wrong

These principles and specifications should have been subject to public consultation and should have been tested within a wider transport strategy and appraisal process that tests proposals against a range of future scenarios. This needs to be done before any detailed routes are proposed for phase 2.

5. Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?

No

As noted in the answer above, there has been a failure to develop and test route options for High Speed Lines with different design speeds.

The approach to mitigation was flawed in that mitigation has only been considered once the route had been designed to particular specifications, rather than those specifications being influenced by the need to balance environmental and social impacts with economic benefits.

6. Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

There has been a failure to consider alternatives properly and the AoS is particularly weak in this regard. The AoS has no information on HS2's potential impact on tranquillity, in particular, quiet areas in open country.

7. This question is about blight and compensation (Annex A): Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?

We welcome the introduction for the first time of an exceptional hardship scheme and trust that this will now be extended to other major infrastructure projects as soon as blight is created and before the statutory compensation provisions come into effect.

What you can do

Please copy, amend or add your own words to CPRE Oxfordshire's responses above. A hard copy of our consultation response can be found on the CPRE 'Transport' campaign [webpage](#).

You can access the response form on the CPRE National Office [website](#).

Alternatively, complete the questionnaire on the Department of Transport [website](#).

Or you can get a hard copy by calling: 0300 321 1010.

-HS2 - Mitigation Measures and Detailed Design.

Alongside the main consultation, the Government held a series of road shows across the regions affected at which the designers were available for discussion and comments were invited. CPRE Oxfordshire has attended the roadshows and held discussions with the designers about the impact of the proposed route on Oxfordshire and we will be submitting a separate response which deals specifically with local details and which suggests amendments to the proposal should this proceed to the next stage based on the published line.

It is a partial response concentrating on mitigation, much of which is relevant to whichever line is adopted.

Our specific concerns involve the impact of the scheme on the tranquil countryside in and around the Oxfordshire parishes of Godington, Newton Purcell, Finmere and Mixbury.

The key local issues are:

- a) the visual impact of the works in the landscape and the aesthetics of structures etc.
- b) noise nuisance and destruction of tranquil countryside.
- c) the impact on wildlife and bio-diversity.

Particular measures called for include:

- Remote tree planting and reconnection of the hedgerow network off-line
- Retention of old railway embankments as screens
- A short tunnel to conceal the cutting into the side of the Ouse valley
- Lowering of viaducts using U section through decks
- Open parapets on over-bridges
- A suggested objective for out-door noise of below 64dba.
- Preparation of a comprehensive bio diversity action plan for the corridor
- Incorporation into the Parliamentary Bill of land acquisition powers to enable an overall improvement of the impact of the scheme in the countryside

See: CPRE Oxfordshire's 'Mitigation Measures and Detailed Design' response on the CPRE 'Transport' campaign [webpage](#).

-Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan, 2011 - 2030

Oxfordshire County Council adopted the third Local Transport Plan as policy on 5th April 2011, following its approval by Cabinet on 15th March 2011.

CPRE Oxfordshire contributed to the development of the Plan.

What you can do

The Local Transport Plan can be accessed on the OCC [website](#) .

Alternatively, if you would like a hard copy of the Plan summary, or have any queries, please contact the Local Transport Plan Team on: 01865 815093, or by [email](#).

3.Minerals

- Oxfordshire County Council Consultation on Minerals and Waste policy

There have been further delays to the Oxfordshire County Council consultation on its Minerals and Waste preferred approach document.

OCC took the document to Cabinet on 24th May and Cabinet deferred a decision on the item, partly because there has been a change of Cabinet member for Growth & Infrastructure. The new Cabinet member, Cllr Lindsey-Gale, had only been in post a few days when the Cabinet meeting was held. OCC is therefore taking its preferred approach consultation document back to Cabinet for approval on 19th July.

Subject to Cabinet's agreement, OCC will start the public consultation in September. The consultation period will last for at least 6 weeks.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be responding to the consultation.

- Gravel extraction in Cassington / Eynsham

CPRE Oxfordshire welcomes Hansons' announcement that they intend to withdraw their application for gravel extraction in the Cassington / Eynsham area, which was submitted in August 2007 and was due to be determined by Oxfordshire County Council this summer.

Hansons stated that the decision was prompted by the economic downturn, meaning that local demand for sand and gravel can be met from other sites in the county.

Hansons recently secured permission to extend its site at Stanton Harcourt and it still has mineral reserves at Sutton Courtenay near Didcot, which it says will enable it to meet predicted market demand in Oxfordshire for the next few years.

Whilst most of the technical issues at Eynsham had been overcome, Hansons admitted there were still some legal obstacles that would make it difficult for them to deliver the proposed nature conservation afteruse in its current form.

The Eynsham Society and the Parish Councils of Eynsham and Cassington, which have opposed this application since it was submitted to Oxfordshire County Council in 2006-7, welcomed the news with caution.

Fred Wright, Chairman of Eynsham and Cassington Gravel Committee, said: "Our conclusion is that we have won another battle but we must still be wary of a future new

application after the new Minerals and Waste Framework comes into operation in 2012 or later."

CPRE Oxfordshire lent its support to the parishes in opposing Hanson's application and we will be watching closely future Minerals developments in the county.

South East News

The June issue of the '[CPRE South East e-Bulletin](#)' is now available.

CPRE National Office News

- Localism Bill update

The Localism Bill has now had its second reading in the House of Lords. CPRE National Office sent a briefing note to 120 peers, and held meetings with nine of these in advance of the debate. Around 12 peers made speeches which focused on the planning aspects of the Bill, with eight peers calling for reform of the planning appeals process, and nine expressing concern about clause 124 of the Bill, which would give material weight to 'local finance considerations' when determining a planning application

The Committee stage began on 20th June.

- Natural Environment White Paper

In early June, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published a bold agenda for the natural environment. CPRE National Office expressed its support for the thrust of the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) which is full of commitments that, if fully implemented, will mark a significant step forward for our natural heritage.

However, in a Press Release, CPRE cautioned that, unless the White Paper has buy-in from Departments across Whitehall, particularly from the Department for Communities and Local Government which is pushing forward the Government's planning reforms, it will not achieve its potential.

Ben Stafford, Head of Campaigns at CPRE, said: "Reading through the commitments in this White Paper, there is much that will get three cheers from those who love and want to improve the English countryside.

"Perhaps most encouragingly, the Secretary of State Caroline Spelman highlights the intrinsic value of nature in her foreword to the White Paper, showing that she understands that the natural environment is at least as much about inspiration as economic value.

There are many positives to take from the NEWP, including:

- Support for local community engagement in landscape planning;
- A commitment to the importance of landscape character;
- Proposals for Nature Improvement Areas;

- The establishment of Local Nature Partnerships;
- Recognition of the role of voluntary activity in tackling litter;
- The prospect of new work to combat light pollution, a blight on the lives of many people that has been neglected for too long.

The big disappointment of the White Paper is what it says – and doesn't say – about planning. The planning system has been the most powerful tool for environmental improvement and protection over the past 50 years. It has driven the regeneration of our towns and cities and has protected valuable landscapes and the countryside around towns. The NEWP contains few details about the environmental role of planning. Ministers will need to make this explicit link if they are serious about protecting the natural environment.

Ben Stafford continued: “The big question now is whether the whole of government can be relied upon to support the good work of Defra and the aims of this White Paper. While this is in many ways an inspiring document, sadly every silver lining has a cloud. In this case that cloud is the failure to be more confident about the critical environmental role of planning. “We are concerned that the Treasury and Department of Business have already sought to distort the ongoing planning reforms. There is a risk they will attempt to water down the commitments in the White Paper as well. In the interests of the Government's green credibility, this cannot be allowed to happen.”

- See: CPRE National Office [Press Release](#) .

- **National Planning Policy Framework**

CPRE National Office has accused the Government of using the term ‘sustainable’ as a fig leaf for a pro-growth agenda regardless of the environmental consequences.

This followed the publication of a ‘potential approach’ for a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the Practitioners Advisory Group, in which the Government intends to require planning authorities to ‘approve all individual proposals wherever possible’.

Paul Miner, Senior Planning Campaigner for CPRE, said: “This proposed policy is as insidious as it is misleading. It's as if Ministers believe that by using the word sustainable no one will think to question any of the details. In reality, this proposed presumption could open the floodgates to environmentally damaging development across the country.

“This Government said they would bring local people back into real decision making on the future development in their area. But people will not be empowered by the planning reforms if the system merely promotes development, at any cost to the environment.”

The Minister of State for Decentralisation, Greg Clark, has described the proposed draft as a ‘high quality submission...but not Government policy’.

A full Government consultation is expected in July.

- See: CPRE National Office [Press Release](#) .

Diary

CPRE Member's Events

Tuesday June 21st, 2.15pm

Visit to Ditchley Park, Enstone

This important house by James Gibbs with interiors by William Kent is now owned by the Ditchley Foundation and is not open to the general public. The visit will include a guided tour of the state rooms of the house and there will be access to the gardens and extensive park, plus tea and biscuits.

There is disabled access to the house.

Cost £9.00.

If you would like to book for this event please contact [Gill Salway](#).

Thursday 23 June, 2.30pm

Visit to Rousham House & Garden

Private guided tour of the Rousham House from 2.45pm to 3.30pm, with the opportunity afterwards to wander in the walled gardens, church and parkland by William Kent. Picnics welcome, but no dogs or children, please. For more information see: [Rousham House website](#). Please book early by sending £10 per head (plus SAE or email address; cheques made out to 'CPRE') to Hubert Beaumont, Taston Barn, Taston, Chipping Norton OX7 3JL. Tel: 01608 810232 or [email](#).

- Please see: ['Events'](#) webpage for more details of CPRE Member's Events.

Saturday 24th September, 4.30 - 6.30pm

CPRE's 80th Birthday Party

To mark the 80th anniversary of CPRE Oxfordshire, we are holding a birthday party at Jarn Mound Garden, Boar's Hill, Oxford, with kind permission of the Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT).

Welcome by John Craven (Presenter of BBC Countryfile).

Music by the Oxfordshire Jazz Collective.

Wine and birthday cake.

Parking at [Open University, Foxcombe Hall](#) .

As part of the celebrations there will be a 4-mile guided walk by Dick Stevens, OPT, along part of the CPRE [Oxford Green Belt Way](#), starting at 2.00pm, from the Open University Car Park, Foxcombe Hall.

Please advise if you would like to join the walk, since numbers are limited.

There are a small number of (free) tickets still available for the party!

If you would like to attend, please contact Becky Crockett at [email](#) or tel: 01865 874780.

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing is a free service. [Subscribe](#). You can unsubscribe at any time.
| [Forward](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [PDF Version](#) |

Published by [CPRE Oxfordshire](#). Editor: Dr Helena Whall. The information in this Briefing is gathered from a wide range of sources and views expressed are not necessarily those of CPRE Oxfordshire. CPRE Oxfordshire, Punches Barn, Waterperry Road, Holton, Oxford OX33 1PP. campaign@cpreoxon.org.uk. www.cpreoxon.org.uk. 01865 874780. CPRE also publishes a national [Campaigns Update](#)

Join the Debate. Join the Campaign. [Join CPRE](#)
