



CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing

April 2011

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The first hearing session of the Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy will begin on 12 July. CPRE will be represented and we will be arguing that there are no 'exceptional circumstances' for reviewing the Green Belt at Wheatley and Berinsfield.

CPRE Oxfordshire has objected to a planning application for an 87 metre wind turbine at Cherwell Valley Services on the M40, on the grounds that it will be an "intrusive and alien development" in the local landscape.

P3Eco, A2Dominion and the consortium behind the NW Bicester Eco Development have submitted a revised planning application to Cherwell District Council for the first 'Exemplar' phase of this pioneering project.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be responding to the consultation expressing our concern that the first phase of the NW Bicester eco-town has advanced rapidly without an agreed Masterplan and recommending that a clear and robust Masterplan is adopted to guide the scheme in a coherent manner whilst ensuring that its intended eco-credentials are being met.

On 14th April, the Environment Agency wrote to DEFRA with its technical advice on the work required by Thames Water to deliver its final water resources management plan (WRMP). A smaller reservoir at Abingdon is proposed as an option as CPRE feared.

CPRE Oxfordshire is challenging South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) claim that it is entitled to flout its own planning policies on outdoor advertising. CPRE has asked the High Court for a Judicial Review of the Council's actions.

The County's Cabinet has now reviewed the results of consultant Atkins' work on future minerals figures for the county and has accepted the report.

Arkins predict a relatively low level of demand and no new strategic areas apart from one were proposed for working sand and gravel.

CPRE National Office has taken a leading role in setting up a powerful alliance of respected organisations that has drawn up a Charter to hold the Government to account on its approach to high speed rail. The Right Lines Charter sets out four core principles 'for doing High Speed Rail well'.

CPRE National Office, with partners the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), has been awarded a Government grant to promote and enable greater public involvement in the planning system.

For more information about these and other issues see: [CPRE Oxfordshire website](http://www.cpre-oxfordshire.org).

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CPRE Oxfordshire Campaigns:

1. Green Belt

- Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

The Secretary of State has appointed Mr Roy Foster MA MRTPI of the Planning Inspectorate to conduct the Examination into the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy.

The first hearing session of the examination will open at 10.00 am on Tuesday 12 July and the sessions would be expected to last for three weeks.

However, the Inspector has decided to hold an Exploratory Meeting/Pre-Hearing Meeting before the hearing sessions commence. This will take place at 10.00 am on Tuesday 17 May 2011 in the Council Chamber of the Council Offices.

The purpose of the Exploratory Meeting will be to provide the Inspector with an opportunity to discuss issues about the 'soundness' of the strategy with the Council and others so that the way forward for the examination can be determined.

One of the concerns that the Inspector wants to address at the Meeting is Policy CSEN2: Green Belt. In the Inspector's letter, he asks: "Is the CS proposal for local green belt reviews at Wheatley and Berinsfield (to be taken forward in detail through the Site Allocations DPD) founded on evidence of clearly demonstrated „exceptional circumstances"? What is that evidence?"

CPRE will be represented at this Meeting and we will argue that there are no 'exceptional circumstances' for reviewing the Green Belt at Wheatley and Berinsfield.

- For more information see: ['Planning - South Oxon LDF'](#) webpage.

2. Energy

- Wind turbine at Cherwell Valley Services

CPRE Oxfordshire has objected to a planning application for an 87 metre wind turbine at Cherwell Valley Services on the M40.

We have objected on the grounds that the wind turbine will be an "intrusive and alien development in this sensitive farmland plateau and wooded estates landscape, and because of its height will have an impact far beyond the well-shielded Motorway Service Area itself".

- For more information see: ['Wind Farms and Energy'](#) campaign webpage.

- Solar Farms

In the light of the many applications being submitted for solar farms in the county, CPRE Oxfordshire has produced a branch policy briefing and policy statement on solar farms to assist the branch and districts in responding to planning applications in the future.

For a copy of the Policy Statement and Policy Briefing contact: [Helena Whall](#) .

Other Oxfordshire News:

1. Housing

NW Bicester Eco-Town

P3Eco, A2Dominion and the consortium behind the NW Bicester Eco Development have submitted a revised planning application to Cherwell District Council for the first „Exemplar“ phase of this pioneering project.

This follows an extensive period of consultation, to which CPRE Oxfordshire responded, and changes made to the original proposals which were first submitted in November 2010.

The planning application for the Exemplar, first submitted in November 2010, was refined through extensive public consultation during last year and underwent statutory consultation in the early part of 2011.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be responding to the revised planning application, expressing our concern that the first phase of the NW Bicester eco-town has advanced rapidly without an agreed Masterplan and recommending that a clear and robust Masterplan is adopted to guide the scheme in a coherent manner whilst ensuring that its intended eco-credentials are being met.

- For more information and to see the revised planning application see: ['Housing - NW Bicester Eco-Town'](#) campaign webpage.

The deadline for responses is Friday 13th May.

2. Planning

- West Oxfordshire draft Core Strategy

CPRE Oxfordshire has submitted its response to the consultation on the West Oxfordshire draft Core Strategy, issued in January 2011.

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.

- For more information see ['Planning - West Oxon LDF'](#) campaign webpage.

- Oxford Core Strategy

Oxford City Council's Core Strategy, which was formally adopted by the City Council in March, is being challenged in the High Court, by Sean Feeny, a resident of Oxford, on grounds of breach of the Habitats and Species Directive which stringently protects the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation, including the world-renowned Port Meadow, an inspiration for Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' stories.

The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation contains a "perhaps unique in the world" habitat and "Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Apium repens*" according to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). Creeping marshwort "is listed as Critically endangered in Britain".

CPRE Oxfordshire will be keeping a close eye on the outcome of this challenge.

3. Reservoir

On 14th April, the Environment Agency wrote to DEFRA with its technical advice on the work required by Thames Water to deliver its final Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP).

A smaller reservoir at Abingdon is still proposed as an option, as CPRE feared, but there is encouraging instruction to Thames Water to look at large scale Reuse and Unsupported Severn Transfers and even more importantly to radically change their methodology for the next WRMP.

4. Environment and Landscape

Advertising on Roundabouts

Following a long campaign, CPRE Oxfordshire has decided to mount a legal challenge to South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) claim that it is entitled to flout its own planning policies when it is in its own commercial interests.

"SODC acknowledged they were breaching their own policies, but they went ahead anyway" said Michael Tyce, Chairman of CPRE Thame District. "If the Council SODC think it is OK for them to flout the policies to protect our rural environment, then it leaves those who care for the countryside no option but to take them to the courts."

CPRE has asked the High Court for a Judicial Review of the Council's actions.

5. Minerals

County's Minerals and Waste Policy

After Greg Clark MP made clear to Oxfordshire County Council that a new figure for the county's minerals and waste policy could be adopted only if a "robust evidence base" were supplied, consultants Atkins were commissioned "to produce a robust local assessment of the quantities of sand and gravel and crushed rock that need to be supplied from quarries in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030".

The County's Cabinet has now reviewed results of Atkins' work and has accepted the report. It has also added its own views on locations.

An important result of the decision to accept a relatively low level of demand proposed by Atkins is no new strategic areas, apart from one, were proposed for working sand and gravel.

The new addition to areas of working is that of Cholsey. CPRE is naturally concerned with this decision, which came out of the blue, as it is with the continued dependence on the Lower Windrush Valley and the Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton group of sites for supplies of sharp sand and gravel.

- For more information see: [„Minerals“](#) campaign webpage.

6. Transport

- A Charter for High Speed Rail

CPRE National Office has taken a leading role in setting up a powerful alliance of respected organisations that has drawn up a Charter to hold the Government to account on its approach to high speed rail. The Right Lines Charter sets out four core principles „for doing High Speed Rail well“.

The Charter calls for a national transport strategy, better future-proofing of big transport proposals, effective public participation and a more strategic approach to minimising adverse impacts.

CPRE National Office believes the approach to high speed rail currently falls well short of the Charter's principles, so it is using the Charter as a way to change the Government's thinking.

The Right Lines Charter Group comprises 9 national charities, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, as well as the Chiltern Society.

- For more information see: ['CPRE National Office'](#) website.

- HS2 Consultation

The Department for Transport are holding the following consultation road shows in Buckinghamshire during May:

Gt Missenden – 12 May – Link Road Car Park
Wendover – 13/14 May – Wendover Memorial Hall
Amersham – 18/19 May – Amersham and Chiltern Rugby Club

What you can do

To help understand the case against HS2 and to formulate questions for the Road Shows the following local meetings in Buckinghamshire are being held:

Little Chalfont – 14 May 9am-1pm – Village Hall also Farmers Market
Amersham – 15 May 2pm – Recreation Field

South East News

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

CPRE National Office News

- Localism Bill - update on progress through House of Commons

The Localism Bill is now at the Report stage in the House of Commons, following its first and second reading and Committee stage. Its third reading will be on 17th and 18th May. The Bill will then go to the House of Lords. After there has been due consideration of any proposed amendments, the Bill could get Royal Assent in the summer of 2012.

CPRE National Office has circulated a detailed and well-researched paper produced by the House of Commons Library, which summarises the committee stage debates on the Localism Bill, which concluded on 10 March (see link below).

Amongst other issues, CPRE NO is working to ensure that an amendment is taken forward to place a strong definition of Sustainable Development on the face of the Bill, around which we expect there to be a robust debate about the pro-development agenda outlined in the Budget.

- See: [House of Commons paper](#)

What you can do

CPRE NO would like its supporters to write to their MPs, urging them to sign New Clause 4, the latest version of CPRE's Community Right of Appeal amendment, which has been tabled for a second time by Steve Gilbert MP.

- See: CPRE NO [website](#) for a draft email text for this purpose.

- CPRE wins grant to promote public planning engagement

CPRE has a long history of promoting and facilitating public engagement with the planning system and to further this aim CPRE National Office, with partners the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), has been awarded a Government grant of £600,000 to promote and enable greater public involvement in the planning system.

Shaun Spiers, CPRE Chief Executive, said: "The Planning system has always been the most powerful tool local people have to shape and care for the places they live. With our partners NALC we look forward to helping people understand the positive role that local and neighbourhood planning can play in bringing about sustainable development, while also protecting our environment."

The grant will contribute to three distinct strands of work:

- Advice on the planning system, including training materials, targeted advice material, an advice phone line and website.
- A programme of local training events to train people in how to contribute to their local plan.
- A national network of planning champions drawing on the experience of NALC's county associations and CPRE's branch network.

- For more information see: '[CPRE National Office](#)' website.

Diary

Saturday 14 May, 3.00pm

CPRE 2011 AGM

The CPRE 2011 AGM will be held at Towersey Manor near Thame.

The AGM meeting will be followed by a talk to be given by Dr Sarah Rutherford. The title of her talk is 'Scholars, Soldiers and Sculpture - Oxfordshire's Historic Parks and Gardens Revealed'. Afternoon tea will be served and guests will be able to walk in the garden.

For more information contact: [Mary Isaac](#) , CPRE Thame District Secretary.

Saturday 28 May, 10.00pm

CPRE Guided Walk along Oxford Green Belt Way

As part of Oxford Preservation Trust's 'Discovering Places 2011', David Godfrey, Rights of Way Consultant to the Oxfordshire Branch of the CPRE, will be leading a 7-mile circular walk from Abingdon to Radley, via Radley Lakes.

Please meet at 10.00 am, at Abbey Close (Abbey Meadows) car park in Abingdon and bring a picnic to have at Radley Lakes.

Those who wish can leave at Radley and return to Abingdon by the no. 35 bus.

There will be a short guided tour of the lakes showing the restoration work that is being done by Friends of Radley Lakes and Northmoor Trust.

This event is free and booking is not necessary.

For more information contact [David Godfrey](#) .

Sunday 29 May, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Discover Oxford's Green Spaces

As part of Oxford Preservation Trust's 'Discovering Places 2011', the CPRE City District, in association with the Friends of the Trap Grounds, the Friends of Warneford Meadow, and the Friends of Oxpens Meadow, will be manning information stalls and organising trails and other activities on the three sites to promote CPRE's Oxford Green Spaces Circular Walk, a nine-mile self-guided route that links the three open spaces.

This event is free and booking is not necessary.

For more information about this event contact [Michael Daniell](#) .

If you would like to volunteer to help out on the day, please contact Michael Daniell.

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](#).

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