



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing March 2011

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The Oxford Core Strategy was finally adopted this month. CPRE Oxfordshire will be campaigning against the inclusion of two parcels of Green Belt land at the proposed site of the Northern Gateway business park when the Area Action Plan is consulted upon.

The proposed 130m wind turbine, to be sited on City-owned land in the Green Belt at Horspath, has been axed after the Ministry of Defence said it would cause unacceptable interference to surveillance radar. CPRE Oxfordshire has been campaigning against the proposed turbine since it was first mooted two years ago.

P3Eco, the firm that put in a planning application for the first phase of the 5,000-home eco-settlement on farmland at North West Bicester, has been asked to go back to the drawing board. CPRE Oxfordshire and others had raised concerns that the scheme was not green enough.

The County Council has adopted a new Local Transport Plan (LTP3), the blueprint for transport schemes across the county until 2030. In its consultation response CPRE Oxfordshire called for a much clearer focus on the effect of transport policy on the rural environment.

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

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CPRE Oxfordshire Branch News

Advertisement of Branch Director. The details of the new post of Branch Director can be found on the branch website [here](#).

CPRE Oxfordshire Campaigns

1.Green Belt

Oxford Core Strategy finally adopted. At a meeting on 14th March, the Core Strategy for Oxford was finally adopted, despite opposition from Lib Dem Councillors who said it was not ambitious enough in its housing targets.

The Core Strategy sets out the size and shape of the City's development until 2026 and contains plans for 8,000 new homes and the Northern Gateway business park near Pear Tree, north Oxford.

CPRE Oxfordshire, which fought against a proposal in the draft Core Strategy to build 4,000 homes south of Grenoble Road, will be campaigning against the inclusion of two parcels of Green Belt land at the proposed site of the Northern Gateway business park when the Area Action Plan is consulted upon.

For more information see: 'Planning' campaign webpage [here](#).

2.Energy

- Horspath wind turbine scrapped. On 30th March, Partnership for Renewables (PfR) told CPRE Oxfordshire that the proposed 130m wind turbine, to be sited on City-owned land in the Green Belt at Horspath, had been axed after the Ministry of Defence said it would cause unacceptable interference to surveillance radar.

CPRE Oxfordshire, along with the Oxford Green Belt Network and the parish of Horspath, has been campaigning against the proposed turbine since it was first mooted two years ago.

Responding to the news, Michael Tyce, Chairman of CPRE Thame District, who has led CPRE's campaign, said in a Press Release:

“It would be good if the news about Horspath represented a victory for common sense and Oxford City Council had come to understand that building monster turbines where it isn't windy would have been an environmental catastrophe, not a green triumph.

However, while the MOD has made it clear that the radar problem is one affecting the whole of Oxfordshire, the city council seem undeterred and are now looking for alternative sites to build a turbine, including Green Belt land at Sandford Brake, near Grenoble Road.”

He continued: “CPRE urge the city council to accept that neither Oxford nor its surroundings is a suitable place for wind turbines and give notice that we will strenuously oppose any future proposals to do so”.

Michael Tyce concluded: “If the city is really serious in its commitment to renewable energy, as CPRE is, it needs to join us in calling for a national, joined-up, strategic approach to the siting of turbines only where it is windy and where they cause the least environmental harm.”

Partnerships for Renewables, the city council’s partner in the scheme, said although the MoD had objected for “some time”, it had pressed ahead with the plans on advice of aviation consultants. It said: “Despite many months of consultation with aviation consultants and the MoD, we have been unable to find a resolution that will allow a turbine of this scale to be installed at this site without causing unacceptable interference to the MoD’s primary surveillance radar.”

A similar city council turbine plan for Cutteslowe Park in North Oxford was withdrawn last year because it would have interfered with RAF radar systems.

While the MOD has made it clear that the radar problem is one affecting the whole of Oxfordshire, the city council seem undeterred and are now looking for other sites to build a turbine, including land at Sandford Brake, near Grenoble Road. But they have ruled out a long-mooted site at South Hinksey because of the impact on Oxford’s historic skyline.

Just a few days before PFR’s announcement, CPRE submitted its letter of objection to the proposed test mast which was to be sited on City Council-owned land next to the BMW plant.

For more information see: 'Energy' campaign webpage [here](#).

What you can do

The *Oxford Times* is running a poll on the front page of its on-line edition as to whether there should be an attempt to site turbines elsewhere around Oxford (a scheme which it and CPRE both strongly oppose).

So far this is running at 65% against turbines to 35% for.

Please go on-line and vote if you haven't done so, as the more votes the more significant the result.

Go to the *Oxford Times* website [here](#).

- Oxfordshire gets its first Solar Farm. A planning application for a solar farm next to the Wind Farm at Westmill Farm, Watchfield, in the Vale, has been passed.

The solar panels will cover an area of approximately 10 – 30 acres of agricultural land and each panel, which will be covered in a non-reflective material, will measure 2.5m high.

Adam Twine, the farmer and landowner, says he expects the panels to generate electricity for 1,000 homes per year.

The solar farm will be the first of its kind in the county and the panels are expected to be erected in the summer following the harvest.

Other Oxfordshire News

1. Housing

NW Bicester Eco-Town not green enough. P3Eco, the firm that put in a planning application for the first phase of the 5,000-home eco-settlement on farmland at North West Bicester, near Caversfield, has been asked to go back to the drawing board.

All three local councils, parish councils, and a host of experts, including CPRE Oxfordshire, have raised concerns about the plan for 393 houses, shops and offices. They claim there is a lack of biodiversity, no green jobs and too much car parking at the site for it to be considered eco-friendly.

Alan Jones, Chairman CPRE Oxfordshire told the Oxford Times: “I think it has yet to prove its credentials. What’s being proposed could work, but what we are concerned about is it’s a very tall order to get it right and I’m not sure the consortium is going to be able to deliver.”

He continued: “Our main concern with turning this out is it needs a big company with lots of resources behind them. It doesn’t look as if P3Eco have those resources. I think the aspiration is right, but we are concerned about the way it’s shaping up at the moment.”

P3Eco director Ian Inshaw said they were working with partners including architects Farrells and housing association A2 Dominion.

He said: “All remarks have their part to play in informing our revisions to the scheme, and in making sure that we produce a first rate development with excellent eco credentials.”

A revised plan is due to be submitted in April 2011.

For more information see: 'Housing' campaign webpage [here](#).

What you can do

Between 12th and 16th April at a location in the town centre the NW Bicester team will be showing updated plans for the Exemplar stage of the development. This will be a chance to see the exact plans that will be considered by the Planning Committee in May.

While a planning decision on the Exemplar is awaited work has been continuing on the emerging Masterplan for the NW Bicester Eco Development, and stakeholders, including

CPRE, will soon be asked for input to help shape the designs which will be completed later in the year.

There will be workshop activities on the Masterplan in the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 13th April in Bicetser town centre.

For further information see the NW Bicester Eco-Development website [here](#).

2. Transport

New Local Transport Plan adopted. At a County Council Cabinet meeting on 15th March, the Council adopted a new Local Transport Plan (LTP3), the blueprint for transport schemes across the county until 2030. Approximately £40m projects will be carried out within the next five years, with many projects having to be shelved due to current spending cuts.

In CPRE's response to the consultation, we called for a much clearer focus on the effect of transport policy on the rural environment both for those who live and work there and for its importance to those who visit the countryside with its towns and villages.

For more information see: 'Transport' campaign webpage [here](#).

3. Waste

Mechanical Biological Treatment plant at Sutton Courtenay. Waste Recycling Group's application to build a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant on Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site, is expected to be considered by the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Committee on April 11th.

For more information see: 'Waste' campaign webpage [here](#).

4. Green Spaces

Oxpens Meadow signs MOU with City Council. Oxford City Council, which owns Oxpens Meadow in the West of the city, remains intent on retaining the option to use part of the Meadow for possible flood remediation works. If the Friends of Oxpens Meadow (FOM) were successful and won Town Green status for the site, this option would not be possible as there are strict rules under the Commons Act 2006 as to permitted changes to a registered Town Green.

As a result, since last August the Friends of Oxpens Meadow have been negotiating with the City Council to try to find a means other than Town Green status to secure the Meadow in perpetuity as a public open space for informal recreation. Towards this goal, the town green application has been frozen but can be reinstated at any time.

So far a number of ideas have been pursued; a Trust to manage the Meadow, a partial Town Green covering only those areas which would not be included in any flood works and, most recently, a Covenant between the City and the parishes of St Ebbe's and St Thomas. The outcome of this last idea is still awaited.

Meanwhile, FOM has negotiated on behalf of its parent body, the local residents' association

SENDRA, a Memorandum of Understanding with the leader of the City Council, Bob Price, which confirms that until a solution is found the City Council 'will not propose or undertake changes to the Area which would alter its open green character and its recreational use'. SENDRA wishes to have this Memorandum ratified by the whole City Council.

For more information see: 'Green Spaces' campaign webpage [here](#).

South East News

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

CPRE National Office News

Budget 2011: Green shoots buried under concrete.

This was the response by CPRE National Office to the government's 2011 Budget. In a Press Release, CPRE said the budget was 'a massive threat to the environment'.

"The triple whammy of scrapping national brownfield targets, introducing a default yes to development, and pursuing half-baked proposals for land auctions could be devastating to treasured countryside" said CPRE.

To read the Press Release see: CPRE National Office website [here](#).

Beauty, Tranquillity and Power Stations.

Chris Huhne MP, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, gave this year's CPRE annual lecture on how Britain's beautiful places may be affected by the energy options we choose.

To listen to Chris Huhne's speech or to have your say, see: CPRE National Office website [here](#).

Diary

Saturday 30th April. CPRE Bicester and Ploughley District Spring Walk. Join us in a morning walk through the glorious countryside of the Heyfords.

Start at 10.30am from the Bell Inn Lower Heyford, OX25 5NY. Circular walk of about 4 miles, returning to the Bell Inn for lunch (for those that wish).

Parking available in Lower Heyford. Children and dogs (on leads) most welcome.

For more information contact Bruce Tremayne, CPRE Bicester and Ploughley Chairman: telephone 01865 331289 or [e-mail](#).

Saturday 14 May. The CPRE 2011 AGM will be held on Saturday 14th May 2011 at 3.00

pm, 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 [e-mail](#) Mary Isaac, CPRE Thame District Secretary.