



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
OXFORDSHIRE

## CPRE Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing

December 2011

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*CPRE welcomes the decision made by the Inspector of SODC's Core Strategy, not to include an allocation for 4,000 homes in the Green Belt to the south of Oxford, and his confirmation that there are 'insufficient grounds' to change the Green Belt boundary at Wheatley.*

*On 1st December, Cherwell District Council Planning Committee refused Regeneco's planning application for a temporary wind monitoring mast at the site of a proposed wind farm straddling north Oxfordshire and south Warwickshire. Members of CPRE Banbury District were relieved at the outcome.*

*The Department for Transport has reportedly found an extra £500m for a 1.5-mile tunnel to go under the Chilterns to avoid scarring the landscape. The government's announcement on the scheme, due on 20th December, has been postponed until mid-January 2012.*

*The CPRE National Office Star Count Week will take place in January 2012. This follows on from the successful Star Counts in 2007 and 2011. Branches and district groups are encouraged to consider arranging Star Count events in their areas or promoting the initiative locally.*

*Responding to George Osborne's Autumn Statement delivered earlier this month, Shaun Spiers, CEO of CPRE National Office, said: "There was worrying rhetoric about environmental goals being a burden on business, an attack on habitats regulations placing 'ridiculous' costs on British businesses, and a statement that 'our planning reforms strike the right balance between protecting our countryside while permitting economic development that creates jobs'."*

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

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## CPRE Oxfordshire Branch News

### Farewell from the Editor!

Sadly, this will be the last Campaign Briefing under my editorship since I will be leaving CPRE Oxfordshire at the end of this year (after more than four years as branch Campaigns Manager), to take up a campaign post elsewhere. I trust you have found the monthly e-newsletters of interest. Happy campaigning!

Helena Whall (Editor)

## CPRE Oxfordshire Campaigns and News:

### 1. Planning

#### **-The draft NPPF and planning decisions being taken now**

There is currently some uncertainty about what status the draft National Planning Policy Framework has in planning decisions, prior to the policy being finalised as expected in the next few months. In the Winter 2011 edition of CPRE's *Fieldwork*, which subscribed CPRE members will receive by post shortly, one of the regular Q+A articles is devoted to this question. It outlines guidance given by the Planning Inspectorate on the issue, as well as the general precedent that is being set by Inspector decisions in the last few months.

The Q+A can be found on page 13 of the Winter 2011 edition of *Fieldwork*.

If you don't receive *Fieldwork* and would like to see the text of this article, then please contact [Kate Houghton](#), who will be happy to send it to you.

#### **- Localism Act - update**

CPRE National Office has provided the branch with the following information on the Localism Act and the commencement of the various parts of the Act.

Coming into force 2 months after the passing of the Act (15th January) are clauses on:

- Predetermination (s.25)
- Clauses on local development schemes, adoption and withdrawal of development plan documents, and local development: monitoring reports (s.111-113)
- Local finance considerations (s.143)

Most other clauses of the Bill are caught by subsection (2) of the commencement section, which states they will come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by order appoint.

This includes:

- Assets of community value
- Abolition of regional strategies
- Neighbourhood planning
- Use of community infrastructure levy
- The enforcement chapter
- The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects chapter

Commencement dates for these sections will need to be set through orders, approved by Parliament through the Statutory Instrument process.

Coming into force immediately are clauses on:

- Assets of community value - but only powers to make regulations etc. under that section (ch 3 of part 5)
- Duty to co-operate (s.110)
- The power to make regulations etc. on neighbourhood planning (s.116 and 121, Schedules 9 to 12)
- Sections relating to meeting costs on neighbourhood planning (s.117-20)
- The power to make regulations etc. on pre-application consultation
- Community Infrastructure Levy (approval of charging schedules) (s.114)

For more information see: [Localism Act 2011](#).

#### **- Hook Norton fighting 70-house development**

CPRE Banbury District is supporting residents of Hook Norton who are opposing a planning application for 70 houses which would put serious strain on local resources. This is in addition to a further 30 house application likely to come in shortly. Concerns include the impact on services such as power and sewage, the lack of available school spaces and the increase in traffic.

For more information see: [Hook Norton village website](#).

## **2. Green Belt**

### **Examination in Public on SODC's Core Strategy**

The Government appointed Planning Inspector, who has been examining the council's proposed Core Strategy, has produced some draft conclusions following the hearings held at the beginning of November (issued on 30th November). These are not his final conclusions, which will be contained in a report that is not expected until April 2012 at the earliest. Nonetheless, these draft conclusions provide a strong indication of the Inspector's likely findings on some key areas.

The principal changes he is proposing are:

- the allocation of land to the south of Wallingford for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 555 homes - instead of allocating land to the west of Wallingford, as the council had proposed, and;
- for the allocation of land for 775 homes at Thame to be determined through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan - instead of the allocation of land to the north west of Thame for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 600 homes and the allocation of 175 homes through the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

CPRE welcomes the Inspector's decision not to include an allocation for 4,000 homes in the Green Belt to the south of Oxford, and his confirmation that there are insufficient grounds to change the Green Belt boundary at Wheatley.

To find out more about the EiP on SODC's Core Strategy see: [SODC website](#).

## **3. Energy**

### **CPRE welcomes rejection of wind monitoring mast at Hanwell**

On 1st December, Cherwell District Council Planning Committee refused Regeneco's planning application for a temporary wind monitoring mast at the site of a proposed wind farm straddling north Oxfordshire and south Warwickshire.

Members of CPRE Banbury District, who were present at the Planning Committee meeting, were relieved at the outcome.

The parishes affected by Regeneco's proposal to build a wind farm of up to 6 huge turbines alongside the M40, which have organised themselves into a campaign group called SHAMWAG (Shotteswell, Hanwell and Mollington Windfarm Action Group) objected to the application and protested outside CDC's offices during the Planning Committee meeting.

In its letter of objection, Hanwell Parish Council argued that the "scale and nature [of the proposed wind farm] would clearly have a devastating effect on the two villages of Hanwell and Shotteswell, other nearby villages and this pleasant rural landscape."

Tony Baldry, MP, also objected to the test mast and upheld the objections raised by Hanwell Parish Council. He said: "I would suggest that, taken in their totality, these detailed objections make the point...that there has to be a determination of where the public benefit lies in submissions of this type and that there is no evidence to suggest that such a development would provide sufficient public benefit to override the visual harm, its impact on existing wildlife habitats and biodiversity and in this specific instance, the harm and impact on the safety of aircraft using Shotteswell airfield."

Stratford upon Avon District Council also objected to the application.

#### **4. Transport**

##### **Post-consultation decision on HS2 delayed until January 2012**

The Department for Transport has reportedly found an extra £500m for a 1.5-mile tunnel to go under the Chilterns to avoid scarring the landscape.

CPRE National Office has welcomed plans for more tunnelling but said it was concerned the additional funding would potentially come from cutting back on mitigation measures elsewhere on the scheme. Ralph Smyth of the CPRE said the alteration would be "something to help swallow the bitterness".

He added: "Just because countryside is not nationally designated does not mean it should not be valued and protected. In the context of more road building and aviation expansion, we support the principle of investing in rail. The question is the detail of how it is going to be done."

The government's announcement on the scheme, due on 20th December, has been postponed until mid-January 2012.

#### **5. Landscape and Environment**

##### **CPRE Star Count Week 2012 - take part!**

The CPRE National Office Star Count Week will take place **Friday 20 - Friday 27 January 2012**. This follows on from the successful Star Counts in 2007 and 2011. Branches and district groups are encouraged to consider arranging Star Count events in their areas or promoting the initiative locally.

CPRE Banbury District will be joining Hanwell Community Observatory for the second year in their annual 'Stars and Snowdrops' fundraising weekend, taking place Saturday 11th February - Sunday 12th February (see 'Events' below).

##### **What you can do**

If you would like to take part and wish to know more, please contact Emma Marrington at CPRE National Office: [emmam@cpre.org.uk](mailto:emmam@cpre.org.uk) or call: 020 7981 2840.

If you would like to read more about the results of the CPRE 2011 Star Count please see the [press release](#) that was issued at the time.

## **6. Open Spaces**

### **- Consultation on Oxford's Sites and Housing DPD in New Year**

The City Council's Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD), which will form part of Oxford's Local Development Framework (LDF), will be open for consultation in January/February 2012. The Sites and Housing DPD will allocate sites for development for housing, employment and other uses in Oxford, as well as setting out detailed planning policies that planning applications for housing development will be judged against.

There are 100 sites around the city which the Council is considering, many of which would impact upon key green spaces.

During November/December 2010, the City Council consulted the public on the sites and housing issues through its Pre-Option informal consultation planning events, and in the summer of this year, the Council consulted the public and stakeholders through its consultation on the Preferred Options document. CPRE Oxford City responded to this consultation raising concerns about the threats to many of the city's green spaces.

CPRE City District will be preparing its response to the consultation on the City's Proposed Submission document consultation in the New Year.

Subject to the outcome of consultation, the Council will submit the draft DPD to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

See: [Oxford City Council Housing and Sites DPD website](#).

### **- Head of City Development seeks approval for Proposed Submission Sites and Housing DPD**

There was a full council meeting at the Oxford Town Hall on Monday 19th December at which the Head of City Development submitted a report which seeks the approval of Council to publish the Proposed Submission Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) for public consultation next year.

The CPRE Oxford Committee have grave concerns about aspects of the Proposed Submission Document, most notably the proposal to build on the Barton Nature Reserve, which it has previously objected to. It is also concerned that the Sites and Housing DPD is being prepared before a Green Infrastructure Strategy and Development Management DPD has been published.

Members of the CPRE Oxford Committee attended the council meeting and circulated a Statement outlining its concerns with the City Council's Proposed

Submission Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD).

See: CPRE Oxford District's [Statement to the Full Council Meeting](#).

## South East News

See the latest issue of [CPRE South East e-bulletin](#).

## CPRE National Office News

### Government's Autumn Statement

George Osborne delivered his Autumn Statement on Tuesday 6th December. Responding to the Statement, Shaun Spiers, CEO of CPRE NO, said: "There was worrying rhetoric about environmental goals being a burden on business, an attack on habitats regulations placing 'ridiculous' costs on British businesses, and a statement that 'our planning reforms strike the right balance between protecting our countryside while permitting economic development that creates jobs'."

The Autumn Statement also dusted off a number of road schemes that the Government would like to see taken forward in an effort to stimulate growth.

In a [press release](#), CPRE National Office questioned the wisdom of these proposals.

## Diary

**Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th February**, CPRE Banbury District 'Stars and Snowdrops' weekend, at Hanwell Castle, Banbury. Open noon till 5:00 pm on Saturday and 10:30am till 5:00 pm on Sunday.

The Hanwell Castle grounds are covered with snowdrops, and the public are welcome to explore the 20 acres of woodland. Tea and homemade cakes will be available by a roaring log fire.

CPRE Banbury District will be manning a stall and would love to see you!

Find out more about [Hanwell Community Observatory](#)

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