



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

Parliamentary News: March 2009

Transport – CPRE's current campaign priorities

Transport policy is key to creating a sustainable English countryside, whether through the prevention of new schemes that damage green spaces, or promotion of innovative ways to increase accessibility and alternatives to cars. CPRE branches across the country have a long and rich history of campaigning on local transport issues and can advise on the sensitivity of schemes to the local environment.

Regional Funding Advice (RFA)

At the end of February, regional bodies submitted wish-lists of transport projects for Government funding. CPRE is concerned that many regions' lists include projects that will increase carbon emissions, and that few are taking advantage of new rules that allow spending on rail and small schemes with higher economic returns. We have collated details of the most damaging proposals in each region, as well as alternatives that could be included on the lists – see www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns for further details.

Please write to Paul Clark MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, to encourage him to amend regional lists to reduce carbon emissions by increasing the proportion of sustainable transport schemes.

Aviation

Controversial aviation expansion decisions are being based on the 2003 Air Transport White Paper, which significantly pre-dates the current economic downturn and the Climate Change Act 2008, and is therefore increasingly out of tune with current priorities. The High Court appeal into the Stansted expansion this March made clear that it is unlawful for expansion decisions not to consider the impact on climate change or on domestic tourism. We would like to see more investment in higher speed rail services and a greater emphasis on the value of domestic tourism and local - rather than imported - goods and services, particularly food, which provide a financial lifeline for many rural areas.

CPRE is keen for parliamentarians to press the Government to commission an urgent, independent review of the Air Transport White Paper 2003.

Road Safety

Consultation on the DfT's next Road Safety Strategy is due at the start of summer. Almost two-thirds of road deaths occur on rural roads, and people feel increasingly unsafe walking or cycling on them. There is clearly a pressing need to reduce danger on rural roads, and this can be done without cluttering the countryside with new signage.

Please contact Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, to support:

- Lowering the default national speed limit to 50mph on rural single carriageways
- Creation of new signs for 40mph zones on minor rural roads, and 30mph zones in villages without street lights

Do you want to know more?

Please contact Sam Redding for further information.

Registered office: 128 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SW
Tel: 020 7981 2800
Registered charity number: 1089685

Changes to regional planning threaten English countryside

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, currently in the Lords and due in the Commons in the summer session, proposes some key changes to the regional planning system.

It proposes a new single Regional Strategy, and entrusts Regional Development Agencies and newly-created Local Authority Leaders' Boards with its planning and implementation.

CPRE is concerned that the new regional strategies will be too focused on delivering economic growth and housing numbers, and that communities will have insufficient opportunities to input into the process. This will hamper, not improve, local democracy.

The All Party Future Housing and Planning Group will be meeting to discuss the Bill after the Easter recess. Communities and Local Government Minister John Healey MP has been invited to address the group, and environmental stakeholders will also be present to answer questions from members. Please contact Adam Royle for further details.

'Pig Business'

CPRE has been working with CIEL Media and campaigner Tracey Worcester on a documentary called 'Pig Business' which will air on 31st March on More 4. It highlights the problems with the labelling system for pig meat in the UK, and we have been promoting the benefits that clearer labelling will provide, in terms of allowing consumers to support British food production.

Look out for an EDM in support of the documentary in April.

Protecting Coastal Landscapes

CPRE is working to secure improvements in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill, currently in the House of Lords. We want the Bill to be amended to include the protection of unique 'seascapes' which make the coast so attractive. These should include coastal protected landscapes which the Government has already recognised as special, for example as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We urge parliamentarians to support the inclusion of 'seascapes' in the Bill.

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A Smart Grid

A new alliance of environmental organisations has joined forces to launch a campaign for major investment in smart electricity networks. CPRE, Campaign for Rural Wales, Campaign for National Parks and National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are working together to influence the Government's promised vision for a 'Smart Grid', and a new national planning policy on the future of our electricity transmission network (expected in the summer).

Over 22,000 high voltage pylons have been constructed across England and Wales, and the alliance is concerned that requirements for more (as envisaged by DECC and Ofgem) could lead to damaging effects on our countryside.

The alliance has produced a manifesto 'A Countryside Friendly Smart Grid', which presents many alternative options, including:

- encouragement of local small-scale energy generation
- use of innovative new pylons that are up to 33% shorter

We would encourage Parliamentarians to contact Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State for Energy, to ask him to support the much needed investment in our electricity transmission network, but to ensure that the protection of our countryside is considered the smart way forward. Please contact Sam Redding for further information.

Date for your Diary

CPRE will officially launch Vision 20:26, our vision for the countryside in 2026 (CPRE's centenary year) at a reception on Wednesday 13th May in the Macmillan Room, Portcullis House, 18:15-19:45. If you would like to join us there, please contact Sam Redding.

We're here to help

Contact our National Office policy and campaigns team for information on our work:

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You can also find out more about our work by visiting www.cpre.org.uk