



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

**NORTH SOMERSET DISTRICT
NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 14**

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'Are they listening?'

On the 21st January 2009 CPRE along with other campaigning groups attended a meeting in Westminster to discuss the proposals in the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Several MPs and campaigners had secured a meeting with Iain Wright, Junior Minister, Department of Communities and Local Government. At the last minute Iain Wright refused to meet with campaigners and also explained that he had taken legal advice, and that, although he would meet the groups of MPs he was not able to relay any of the MPs concerns to the decision-making Minister, as this would prejudice the Minister's quasi-judicial role. He could respond on points of general policy, but not on the specifics of the South West RSS. Whilst MPs saw Iain Wright, discussion in the packed Committee Room started with CPRE commenting on the policy background and summarising the current position. This was followed by contributions from six other local action groups setting out their concerns. When MPs returned, they updated the group on their meeting with the Minister and the items discussed.

These included:

- Timing - consultation on the South West RSS began just before Parliament's summer recess and ended shortly after the house returned. This had restricted the opportunity for MPs to have discussions with Ministers during the consultation period.
- The lack of debate in Government time on Regional Spatial Strategies and silence from our South West Regional Minister, Ben Bradshaw.
- The inconsistency of Government's professed desire to protect the Green Belt with proposals to build in large parts of it.
- The record number of 35,000 representations to the South West RSS - Ministers needed to listen to ensure public confidence.
- Inflated GVA figures being used and the changed economic situation.
- High housing numbers - predict and provide rather than plan, monitor, manage.
- The need for a sequential approach.
- Developers using the draft RSS to 'cherry pick' the easy-to-develop green field/Green Belt sites.

Our local concerns are:

- High housing numbers making assumptions of economic growth - 26,750 for North Somerset.
- The lack of sequential approach across local authority boundaries.

- No phasing of greenfield supply to support brownfield first policy.
- Removal of Green Belt for urban extensions
- Removal of land at the Port and Airport from Green Belt
- No recommendations for extensions to Green Belt (apart from a small area between Portbury Docks and Portishead).

We are pleased to note that North Somerset Council has written to the Minister with their concerns but we are already seeing developers pushing forward with applications locally and would urge you to continue to write to Hazel Blears, your local MP and District Councillor with your views. We understand a response is due from the Minister in June.

Our full CPRE response to the South West Regional Spatial Strategy can be found on www.cpresouthwest.org.uk

Georgie Bigg

Bristol International Airport

Following a flurry of 'permitted development' applications from Bristol International Airport (BIA) including more car parking, a new Fire Station on the south side of the runway and the eventual submission of a Certificate of Lawfulness for the Walkway ensuring they did not need a full planning application for a structure almost a third of a mile long, BIA presented a pre-application consultation for their expansion plans. The consultation is now complete and a planning application is due shortly to increase passenger number to 10 million by 2016. Proposals include doubling the size of the terminal, a multi-storey walkway across the whole of the site, more aircraft stands, multi-storey car parking to the north, plus further car parking to the south outside the operational boundary and in Green Belt.

For further information see

http://www.bristolairport.co.uk/about_us/our_future/planning_application.aspx

For a critique of the consultation document see <http://www.nobristolairportexpansion.co.uk/>

Stop the Drop!

Our President, Bill Bryson is still working hard on the campaign to keep our countryside free of litter and fly tipping. Now's the time many villages will be entering the Village of the Year Competition and we hope good use can be made of the special 'Stop the Drop' pack which has been issued to all CPRE Parish Council members. Local schools can play their part as well by using the new 'How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign - our new education pack produced jointly by CPRE and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. *Full details on 'How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign' and the 'Stop the Drop' pack can be found on*

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/stop-the-drop/litter-and-fly-tipping/litter-campaign-update>

Hedges

CPRE along with other interested partners, have supported the issue of a new DVD called 'A cut above the rest - managing hedges for the future'.

For further information and details on how to obtain a copy go to:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/hedgerows/hedgerows-video>

Energy update

Last month three of the CPRE North Somerset committee members attended CPRE's South West Energy group meeting in Taunton. One of the main items on the agenda was the Government's consultation on the Severn Tidal Power study interim report.

The Gloucestershire branch representatives had prepared a paper on the report. It was decided to base CPRE's response to the consultation on that paper with modifications arising from the discussion at Taunton.

Twelve proposals have been submitted to be studied from which the report gave a short list of five preferred options plus two "runners up". There was general support at the meeting for some form of tidal power generation in the estuary provided that the project is affordable and that the consequent environmental damage is limited. A strong element of this support arose from the need for massive reductions in fossil fuel use and an appreciation of the difficulties of developing energy sources that use non-fossil fuel.

It was felt that the "Weston to Cardiff" barrage, that has been widely reported, would take too long to build and be too environmentally damaging as the reduced upstream tidal range would destroy the very large areas of internationally protected wildlife habitat.

The report concluded that the technology for the two "runners-up" was not sufficiently well established to implement them without considerable further development. As these two options (tidal reef and tidal fence) were significantly less damaging than the main barrages significant additional funding to study them has been allocated.

The report failed to take account of onshore developments to support the various options and there were serious omissions from the Strategic environmental.

In February HM Government issued their Heat and Energy Saving Strategy for consultation. The CPRE South West Energy Group, which includes three members of the North Somerset District Committee have been discussing this document and via CPRE National Office will be responding to the Government's many questions. One might be forgiven for thinking why such a Strategy would interest the CPRE. Well, there are many aspects of energy, which can have a profound effect on the countryside. Examples of this include, electricity power stations whether thermal or hydro, pylons, wind turbines, barrages, fields of bio-fuels and their processing plants, oil refineries, coal mines, natural gas terminals and storage, large pipelines, just to name a few. The Government is signed up to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This will affect us all. However the Heat and Energy Saving Strategy focuses mainly on reducing carbon dioxide emissions from our existing housing stock and there is an aim to have emissions from all buildings cut to zero by 2050. What this means, more or less, is that none of the energy used in the home for either water or space heating, lighting electrical power for appliances, gas, oil etc will have produced any carbon dioxide in its production or if it has, it is required to be offset in some way, say by producing green electricity and feeding it back into the grid for credits. Achieving this aim will be a huge task and will certainly affect how our buildings will look and what we will have to do to them. There is no doubt that there will be impacts on the countryside and the CPRE will be making its contribution to look after the interests of rural England but at the same time helping the Government to choose those

technologies which have the least damaging effect for the countryside and its settlements as a whole. By 2030 the Government hopes through a series of de-carbonising measures, in conjunction with financial support, that all existing homes will have received a 'whole house' package including cost effective energy saving measures, plus renewable heat and electricity measures as appropriate. All roof lofts and wall cavities will be insulated where practical by 2015. In addition new ways are to be developed whereby homes can make use of renewable energy improvements. Such improvements might be installing house solar panels for hot water and electricity together with small-scale wind turbines. CPRE North Somerset will provide members with further information on this topic as development unfolds.

Dave Gray & Stephen Edwards

Management of HGV's in the South Area of North Somerset

Since the last bulletin on this topic there has been considerable progress. As many will know CPRE with TMTV (Traffic Management for The Villages) have both been campaigning over many years for North Somerset Council (NSC) to put a weight restriction on the A368 east of Churchill. This section of road is seen by many as being important because many non-local HGVs, which are short cutting through the villages in the South Area, use the A368 through Upper Langford and the B3134 through Burrington Combe. CPRE is delighted to report that NSC has now completed the signage for an experimental weight restriction for the non-local HGVs and the scheme was implemented in late summer 2008. The NS Councillors involved are to be congratulated for their support and hard work in bringing about the scheme. HGV counts taken 'before and after' and also in January of this year, show that there have been substantial reductions in HGV's, about 50%, and the scheme is being regarded by residents and Councillors, as a success. CPRE has always been concerned that HGV's should not just be displaced from one road to another and that the HGV's should use the recommended freight routes. It is pleasing to note therefore that traffic counts taken on the B3130 through Winford and also the A371 south of the Mendips show that for the former, the 'before and after' numbers showed no change and that in the latter there was actually a 25% reduction. CPRE and TMTV are continuing to work on the HGV problem and it is hoped that in due course the experiment will be made permanent and that the scheme will be able to be extended further eastwards along the A368 in the AONB.

Stephen Edwards CPRE & TMTV

****Dates for your diary****

Monday 4th May 2009

North Somerset Show

Visit our stand and talk to the team

Saturday 16th May 2009 at 11.30am

CPRE North Somerset AGM

Flax Bourton Village Hall

Sunday 7th June 2009 at 11am

**Enjoy Open Farm Sunday join us at
Lower Failand Farm, Sandy Lane, Failand**