

Campaign to Protect Rural England | Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Policy Committee held at CPRE 5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ on Tuesday 6th February 2018.

ITEM	ITEMS NOTES	ACTION
1.	ATTENDANCE	
	Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Hamilton • Stan Jones 	
	Members Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Simmons (Chair of Policy Committee) (referred to below as the Chair) • John Hobson QC (Hon Standing Counsel) • Su Sayer (Chair of CPRE) • Anna Hall • John Croxen • Lyndis Cole • Michael Monk • Richard Lloyd (referred to below as Richard) 	
	Staff Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belinda Gordon (Head of Government and Rural Affairs) • Caroline Jenkins (Engagement & Innovation Manager) • Crispin Truman (Chief Executive) • Daniel Carey-Dawes (Senior Infrastructure Campaigner) • Emma Marrington (Senior Rural Policy Campaigner) • Elvira Meucci-Lyons (Director of Development and Marketing) • Lucy Hawthorne (Head of Campaigns) • Matt Thomson (Head of Planning) • Paul Miner (Planning Campaign Manager) • Rebecca Pullinger (Planning Campaigner) • Tom Fyans (Director of Campaigns and Policy) 	
	Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Anderton (Parliamentary and Policy Officer) • Mark Robinson (Campaigns and Policy Assistant) 	
2.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.	
3.	MATTERS ARISING	
a)	<p>Tom Fyans updated PC on the progress of the Raynsford Review as we move towards the NPPF. The Review is set to publish an interim report before the next Policy Committee meeting in April. Michael Monk asked whether the Review was looking at devolution, Tom replied it had a predominately national focus.</p> <p>Matt Thomson raised that Nick Herbert's new think tank is intending to review the planning system. In relation, Richard Lloyd asked about our contribution to</p>	Paul to submit evidence to the Letwin Review.

	the Letwin Review. Paul Miner noted he was attending the meetings, and CPRE would be submitting a paper to the Review.	
b)	Belinda updated PC on the paper Lyndis wrote on multi-purpose landscapes and the future of agricultural funding. Belinda and Graeme met George Eustice, the Minister of State at DEFRA, the previous day to push CPRE's asks. Belinda believed there were positive signs but it would be an uphill struggle, and that conversations with key stakeholders continue. Richard Lloyd noted landscapes were the poor relation in CAP policy.	
c)	Tom Fyans informed PC that the Communities and Local Government Committee, chaired by Clive Betts MP, had launched an inquiry into Land Value Capture and we would be submitting written evidence. The evidence will feed into CPRE's long-term thinking on LVC.	P&Cs to submit written evidence to the CLG Committee by 02/03/18.
d)	Paul Miner updated the Committee on the Housing Design Proposal following the discussion at November's meeting. Paul highlighted that the new Chair has a wealth of previous knowledge, that two potential funders had been identified to support the project, and a Q3/4 start was anticipated. However, intellectual property issues needed to be explored following CABE's work.	
e)	Tom Fyans announced Paul Miner will be seconded to the new Devolution role, and that two years of funding had been secured. Tom explained that Paul's role would be backfilled, and the planning team wouldn't be losing capacity.	
4.	CHAIRS COMMENT	
	<p>Richard Simmons introduced himself as the new Chair and spoke about his motivations for standing. Having read the previous Chair's report, he had noted that the Committee's members saw the need to fill some gaps in policy expertise. The Chair therefore proposed three more candidates join PC, with at least one of those drawn from the Network. Richard asked the Committee what areas of expertise the search for candidates should be looking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crispin Truman Health and Wellbeing • Michael Monk Landscape and Communications - Michael noted The Times journalist Alice Thompson gave a fresh approach and was able to synthesise and communicate clearly during her time on PC. • Belinda Gordon agreed with Michael about appointing new member(s) who have communications skills, and political / policy expertise. 	The Chair to email the Committee about recruitment following the meeting.
5.	REPORT FROM THE TRUSTEE BOARD	
	<p>Su Sayer and Crispin Truman informed PC that the annual plan and budget had been agreed at the Trustee Board on 7th December 2017. In addition, a new senior Volunteering and Partnerships role had been agreed to on a 2 year contract. Su updated the Committee about progress on GDPR, and confirmed that everything would be in place by May.</p> <p>Crispin offered to present his forward looking report from the Trustee Board to the Committee at the next meeting. Crispin summarised the report as having a strong people focus, based on positivity and partnership. As part of that, branches will become the Network and strengthened going forward. Su informed the Committee that proposals to support regions where there is no Chair in place had been formulated and would be presented at the next Board meeting in March.</p>	Crispin to present his forward looking report from the Trustee Board to the Committee on Tuesday 10 th April 2018.

	In closing, Crispin emphasised the importance of collaboration and supporting each other in our local and national work.	
VERBAL UPDATES FOR INFORMATION		
6.	25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN (APP A)	
	<p>Belinda Gordon gave an overview of the 25 Year Environment Plan, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan was long awaited and positive, but with shortcomings. • CPRE sent a congratulatory letter to the Prime Minister following her speech and launch of the Plan. • CPRE were invited to see the Plan the day before it was launched, along with a small number of other organisations. • CPRE’s higher level asks for the Plan had predominantly been met. • It was good to see planning and the use of land in the Plan. • Although the Plan included a number of litter commitments, there was no announcement on a Deposit Return Scheme. • The metrics of the Plan will be developed over the next six months. • The Environmental Audit Committee has launched an inquiry into the Plan, and we will be submitting written evidence in due course. <p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked about cross-government buy-in and the vehicle to ensure the Plan is delivered. Belinda responded that there was less in the published Plan on land use and planning than there had been in the draft prior to Christmas, and that the vehicle for oversight would be the new environmental body we have been campaigning for as part of GreenerUK. Belinda noted the widespread agreement amongst G-UK and LINK members that an Environment Act is needed to deliver it. • Michael Monk and John Hobson both asked about measures in the Plan on Green Belts, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Belinda noted the Plan does not contain any specific measures to create new Green Belt but does commit to a new ‘Hobhouse’ review of NPs and AONBs. • The Chair asked about the environmental net gain proposal, Matt responded it was very unclear and he was meeting with MHCLG the following week to clarify what it actually means in practice. Lyndis noted it would be impossible to achieve net gain on the development site itself, and it would have to take place elsewhere. • Anna asked how CPRE are working with G-UK and Link on the Plan, Belinda replied the coalitions offered high level top lines and then each organisation focuses on its specialist policy area. <p>The Chair spoke about the importance of keeping the Government’s feet to the fire on the Plan, and that PC should be kept up to date.</p>	Belinda to keep the Committee updated as work on the 25 Year Environment Plan progresses.
7.	AONB SEMINAR ON BEAUTY BETRAYED	
	<p>Before updating the Committee on the Seminar Emma Marrington gave an overview of the Beauty Betrayed report and its key findings. Emma then discussed the Seminar, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It took place in Mid-January with key policy stakeholders such as: National Trust, Natural England, DEFRA, TCPA and the Landscape Institute. • CPRE have a follow up meeting with the Chief Planner at MHCLG in mid-March. • AONB management plans are being reviewed next year and the NPPF is being revised this Spring, both will have implications on the next stages of CPRE’s work on AONBs. 	

	<p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Lloyd highlighted the review of the NPPF as a first practical step to implement the report's recommendations. • Tom Fyans noted we had a disappointing response from Sajid Javid that did not recognise the issues the report highlighted. • John Hobson praised the Seminar, and PC agreed with him that the definition of major development in the NPPF is extremely important. • Belinda noted we'd had a set of dismissive responses to Written Parliamentary Questions on the NPPF. • Lyndis reminded the Committee that the original purpose of the major development test was for projects of national importance, and was not meant to be used to justify local housing development. 	
8.	BROWNFIELD UPDATE	
	<p>Rebecca Pullinger gave an overview of CPRE's brownfield work, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Unlocking Potential: Best Practice for Brownfield Land Registers report was launched in December 2017. • The report showed that a large number of small sites has been completely left off the Brownfield Land Registers, and included recommendations on the NPPF, the Open Land Registry, and encouraging Local Authority's on Brownfield Land Registers. • A post-Christmas analysis of Brownfield Land Registers lead to coverage in The Times, and various policy press outlets. • Next week the State of Brownfield 2018 will be published, which shows there is space for 1 million homes and potentially more if small sites were registered. • The report is set to conclude brownfield is available where people want to live and housing need can be met on Brownfield. <p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Lloyd cited the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework as proof of the power of pressure on politicians. • John Croxen highlighted the amount of wasted space in London, pointing to 1 storey buildings as an example. • Michael Monk thought the Government was missing a key opportunity for careful, select redevelopment. 	
9.	VIABILITY REPORT	
	<p>Lucy Hawthorne gave an overview of the current rural viability loophole research with Shelter, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report is set to be launched on March 5th. • It's part of CPRE's build up to the NPPF and towards the Rural Affordable Housing campaign later in the year. • It will form part of our fundraising work in April, and will be telling the human story of CPRE's work. • Crispin and Shelter's CEO will send a joint letter to Sajid Javid setting out the key findings and recommendations. <p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Croxen pointed to the amount of profit made by developers, Lucy stated the media narrative would be about developer profits as there is little public sympathy. • Richard Simmons asked further about the narrative given the complexity of viability, Lucy replied the storyline would be profits over people and the impact that has on the countryside. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Monk raised confidentiality and transparency, Lucy thought it likely they would form the basis of a recommendation. 	
10.	SUBMISSION TO NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION (APP B)	
	<p>Daniel reported on the recent OneCPRE response to the National Infrastructure Commission’s interim consultation on a National Infrastructure Assessment, detailing the background and contributions from the branches. Daniel continued, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We received 18 separate responses from across the CPRE network. There was a wide breadth of policy areas - Brexit, congestion, litter, energy efficiency - but a significant level of detail in each answer. Key points made in the response were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brexit is an opportunity to change the way environmental statements are produced, as they are currently too cumbersome. There will also be a need for a judicial replacement to the European Court of Justice. There were inconsistencies between the consultation proposals and other stances the NIC had taken, with it taking the position that you cannot build your way out of congestion in the consultation but outside it continuing to push for the Oxford-Cambridge corridor expressway. The devolution of transport through Subnational Transport Boards is to be broadly welcomed, but there are concerns over a current accountability deficit, and over the continued urban-rural divide in transport funding. <p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members were happy with the general positivity around the OneCPRE process. Members agreed with the points raised in the consultation response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hobson particularly noted the need to reduce the size of environmental statements. 	
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION		
11.	REVISION TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	
	<p>Matt Thomson led a discussion on the upcoming National Planning Policy Framework campaign. He stated that we are expecting a draft revised NPPF by the end of March, with a six week consultation ensuing. National Office will be bringing out a briefing with asks and analysis soon, and a finalised NPPF will be expected before the summer parliamentary recess. Matt continued by outlining the list of key asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The top line ask is to move the rhetoric from homes at any cost towards a plan-based system on local need. This would involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better defining the need for sustainable development Changing the presumption in favour of sustainable development towards assessments based on local need Local housing targets to take into account brownfield land, identified by communities Clamping down on land banking Green Belt policy maintained ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ defined Change in the approach to affordable housing provision Increased protection of the countryside for its own sake Properly managing fracking Protection of soils Amending the major development test Better flexibilities for councils on their local plans 	<p>The Chair asked that the committee should be involved by email as the draft response is prepared.</p>

	<p>The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt was asked whether we are campaigning on a general approach to the NPPF or through asking for specific provisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was responded that this would be discussed at the next legal panel. ○ John Hobson mentioned that he had heard that the revised draft would be published in the second week of March. He also mentioned that the precise wording of the NPPF will be of critical importance. • Lyndis spoke about how the NPPF doesn't deal with permitted development rights. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was agreed that we are against permitted development rights if they have a negative impact, and when they take away the community's voice. For example, permitted development rights allow agricultural building conversions to residential (usually high end) that impact on local services and do not contribute to funding of facilities for which they generate a need. ○ It was mentioned that, because there are so many permitted development rights, developers could sometimes argue that they have a right to carry out development, even if councils oppose it. • Tom mentioned that the tip of the iceberg will be campaigning for issues such as AONBs and brownfield. Behind the scenes, CPRE will be the lobbying over the detailed wording. We will break down and prioritise key asks. • Richard asked about the legal duty to cooperate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Right Homes Right Places produced the idea of a 'statement of common ground' to prevent closed door decision making - this may come out in the NPPF. ○ It was raised that so far there have been no signals from government about how they will be approaching assessments of local housing need. • Finally, it was also mentioned that the NPPF review may see MHCLG respond to the 25 Year Environment Plan. 	
12.	PURPOSE PROJECT (APP C)	
	<p>Caroline and Elvira led a discussion on the Purpose Project for members of policy committee. They asked for members' opinions on CPRE's purpose and how it is represented. The first question asked members why CPRE was important to them, with the following points made in subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPRE is important for its intellectual rigour, it is well networked, and it punches well above its weight, but more in policy circles than among the general public. • Often more is expected of CPRE than it can actually achieve, but that a lot of activity - particularly at the branch level - is falling through the net. • Local groups are often busy with local campaigns and can miss out on influencing the bigger national picture. • CPRE's three main lasting achievements are 1) Green Belt; 2) National Parks; 3) Town and Country Planning Act. • CPRE reject inappropriate development but also say here are the solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is need to explore the urban solutions more. • CPRE are unique because we look across the piece - most NGOs are sectoral, looking at plants, transport, landscape. • Does CPRE put people first? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People need the countryside and should have more say in it. • The countryside embodies Englishness - this isn't just a bourgeois Englishness: e.g. the people who went on the mass trespasses on Kinder Scout were from all backgrounds, including e.g. mill workers. • There are people worried about local threats and people worried about the bigger picture - we need both long-term participants and people dropping in. • Looking at the founding charter, it calls for a vibrant countryside for people. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the issues is that CPRE continues to deliver this message in ways that appeal to a particular demographic - do we promote the same message across the piece or should we tailor it to different audiences? CPRE needs to broaden its appeal to other groups, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some populations, like the Bangladeshi community in East London, had rural roots but economic circumstances led them initially to live in the UK's inner cities. They might be an audience for CPRE. ○ Young Conservative voters survey found the environment coming out on top. • How do CPRE show they care about climate change? • CPRE's name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do people value in rural England? ○ How do we make our towns and villages more attractive to young people? ○ Rural England is a bit of a mouthful - Kent branch are called Protect Kent. • How do we value the landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call something an asset and it raises the case for it. ○ European Landscape Convention has a very broad definition of landscape which we should consider. ○ Tension between the visitor and the resident, and who we are standing up for - this is the case in some places more than others e.g. Lake District. ○ UN SDGs talk about the right to access Greenspace. ○ People's perceptions of beauty are very varied, e.g. specific researched example of someone walking around a derelict steelworks finding it beautiful. In such cases, does local distinctiveness matter as much as designated areas? <p>The discussion then revolved around a second question - what is disengaging about CPRE? - where the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning terminology - the NPPF is already an off-putting phrase. • CPRE can often be seen as a bunch of NIMBYs. • CPRE needs evidence-based background work and front-facing attractive messaging - could we take lessons here from Greenpeace or 38 Degrees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could we engage more with technology, e.g. tweeting? • CPRE has a very loyal membership, but this can actually put young people off as it seems less welcoming. • We need to focus on 'your' countryside, making it personal. • We should publish our successes more, to show people that this kind of campaigning works - otherwise people keep thinking it's useless. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It needs to be reframed from 'we stopped these houses' to 'we protected your countryside'. • To be more attractive we need shorter narratives and visuals such as infographics which are more effective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Norfolk have a picture of what would have happened if they hadn't protected the countryside. • Perhaps we could look into having a list of countryside ambassadors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could CPRE nominate children for what they've done for the countryside? ○ However, everyone is after children as the face of their organisation right now. Affordable housing is very relevant to 18-25 year olds - this is an important area to campaign on. <p>The discussion concluded with Elvira and Caroline thanking the members for taking part and feeding in their ideas.</p>	
13.	AOB	
	The Chair mentioned that the work plan for Policy Committee was due for renewal. He sought members' views on priority items for inclusion, asking that they should be sent to him after the meeting. Several points were raised:	Policy Committee members to send the Chair

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was asked whether CPRE had seen the recent TV programme ‘the new builds are coming’ and whether they had responded in any way to it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CPRE Oxfordshire representative went and spoke against proposals for one of the housing projects which had been lost. ○ It was raised that some of the things mentioned in the programme were positions CPRE would disagree with. ○ Following on from this discussion, it was suggested that in future there be a discussion about new towns rather than village extensions. It was actioned that this should be added to the work plan. 	<p>thoughts on priority items for the Committee’s future work plan.</p>
<p><i>The meeting concluded at 3:30pm.</i></p>		
<p>Dates for Policy Committee in 2018 are: Tuesday 10th April, Tuesday 5th June, Tuesday 4th September (Open Meeting), Tuesday 6th November.</p>		