



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

CPRE Oxfordshire News Release

Date
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Campaigners save Oxford Green Belt.

The Oxfordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) [1] announced this morning that following their legal challenge to the South East Plan, the Secretary of State has conceded that insufficient consideration had been given to alternatives to the proposed urban extension in the Green Belt south of Grenoble Road. [2]

Although details have still to be hammered out with the Department for Communities and Local Government, this almost certainly means that the current proposal in the South East Plan to grab Green Belt land south of the City for a 4,000 house urban extension is dead.

Michael Tyce, CPRE Chairman for Thame District, said:

“This is not only good news for the Green Belt but for Oxford too. It has always been CPRE’s case that reckless expansion is the wrong track for our unique and historic City to take, and the City Council are misguided to pursue it.

The Green Belt setting, and the beauty of the City itself, are its greatest assets and would not survive the City Council’s endless push for growth and the urban sprawl that would entail.”

He continued:

“CPRE has consistently said, at all stages of the development of the South East Plan that the best strategy for Oxford is to use land within the City to solve its present housing pressures, not to build shops and offices which will pull yet more people into Oxford and make its problems worse. [3]

Following the Secretary of State’s decision to accept the validity of CPRE’s challenge, the strategy for Oxford will now have to be reconsidered. And in the light of the fact that economic times are very different from when the Government’s plan was written three years ago, we are confident that commonsense will now prevail, and all thought of Oxford being allowed to sprawl over the Green Belt will be abandoned.”

Michael Tyce concluded:

“If it should be resurrected we stand ready to fight it again.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. CPRE Oxfordshire promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural Oxfordshire by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We are part of the national CPRE charity. For more information see: www.cpreoxon.org.uk

2. As part of the South East Plan approved in May 2009, the Secretary of State specifically proposed an extension to the City at Grenoble Road in Oxford's Green Belt to accommodate a “mixed use” housing /commercial development, including 4,000 houses.

The South East Plan is a new type of planning document. It sets out a vision for the future of the South East region to 2026, outlining how the Government will respond to challenges facing the region such as housing, the economy, transport and protecting the environment. The South East Plan is a full revision of Regional Planning Guidance 9 (RPG9 - the current Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East).

For more information, see the Government Office for the South East website:
<http://www.go-se.gov.uk/>.

3. CPRE Oxfordshire launched its ‘Hands off Oxford's Green Belt’ campaign in Spring 2009. A copy of the CPRE campaign map, showing those parts of the Green Belt threatened by development, along with other campaign material, can be found at:
http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/campaigns/green_space/green_belt/green_belt.htm

For Further Information

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