



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

Autumn newsletter

Newsletter | October 2020



Proposed changes to the planning system are a major concern – says CPRE Leicestershire

We hope that you have all kept safe and well during this unusual year. Despite everything, CPRE Leicestershire has continued to be active. This newsletter highlights the main focus of our work.

For the last three months, our activities have concentrated on campaigning about the Government's proposed changes to the planning system which were set out in two documents, 'White Paper: Planning for the Future' and 'Changes to the Current Planning System'. They raise major concerns for CPRE Leicestershire as they will seriously reduce local democracy and limit opportunities for local communities to influence planning decisions. In addition, they do not address the need for more affordable housing or the climate and nature emergencies.

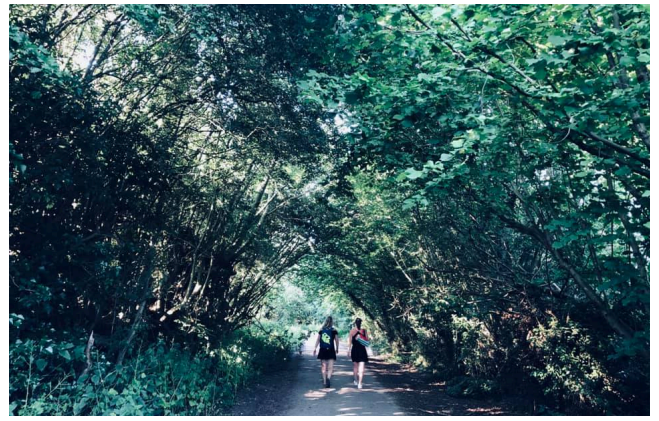
Impact on the countryside is a major concern for us. In the case of Leicester and Leicestershire, a proposal to revise the method of calculating local housing requirements results in a decline of 35% in the City's requirement but an increase of 104% for surrounding districts in the County. Coupled with the fact that Leicestershire countryside lacks the protection afforded by National designations such as Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), this means that large tracts of (attractive) countryside are extremely vulnerable to development. A proposal to designate areas as Growth, Renewal or Protected zones is likely to increase this vulnerability.

Good News – A46 Expressway Plan dropped

CPRE Leicestershire welcomed the report that after three years debate, Midlands Connect have decided against supporting proposals for an 'Expressway' in open countryside to the south and east of the city of Leicester. The 'Expressway' was a key element of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) against which we have campaigned vigorously. (See article in Leicester Mercury on 25.9.2020).

Since 2017, we had challenged strenuously against this ill-conceived, costly and environmentally damaging road plan, calling for it to be cancelled and for the SGP to be revised and subject to public scrutiny. Important elements of our campaign were a response to the 2018 SGP Consultation, submissions to the County Council's Scrutiny Commission and the publication of a report 'Leicester A46 Expressway - The Road to Ruin - a CPRE Perspective' together with lobbying MPs and Councillors, working with other groups and arranging meetings to alert the public.

The future of the SGP is unclear but NOW is the time for the public to scrutinise and influence local planning decisions. The process that surrounded the inclusion of the Expressway as core element of the SGP demonstrates the folly of the Government's current proposals to reduce opportunities for local communities to scrutinise and influence planning decisions.



Setting a Vision for Leicestershire

With the cancellation of the A46 Expressway, the Climate and Nature Emergencies and COVID-19, now is a good time for a new vision for planning in Leicester and Leicestershire. CPRE Leicestershire is to receive funding from national CPRE for a project to develop, with partners, an alternative vision to the current dominant growth and development agenda. The project will run for 12 months starting in November and will result in a vision statement that will form the basis for a campaigning agenda for CPRE Leicestershire and others.

We are looking for CPRE Members and others with an interest or expertise in environment or planning related issues to help with this project. If you are interested and wish to participate please contact us at info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk

Continued from front page – Proposed changes to the planning system.....

We have commissioned a report challenging the proposed new national housing algorithm with specific regard to its adverse impact on Leicester and Leicestershire. The report 'The New Standard Methodology for Calculating Housing Requirement: Implications for Leicester and Leicestershire' can be viewed on our website www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk and has been sent to all local MPs, Council Chairs and leading Councillors with responsibility for planning and environment matters.

CPRE Leicestershire have also contributed substantially to a co-ordinated CPRE National Office critical response to the Government's consultation on the proposed reforms.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- DONATE TO OUR BRANCH
- VOLUNTEER FOR US
- RAISE YOUR CONCERNS WITH YOUR MP AND YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

WE MUST ACT NOW OR WE RISK LOSING THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE