

CHESHIRE

VIEWPOINT

SPRING 2017



HS2: SUBSIDENCE RISK, CHESHIRE SHOWGROUND,
CONGESTION AND OUR WATERWAYS

AGM: "MERSEYSHIRE" AND "MANSHIRE"

LOCAL NEWS ROUND-UP



Cheshire

Campaign to Protect Rural England

CHESHIREVIEWPOINT

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CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND CHESHIRE BRANCH

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Cheshire Viewpoint is the newsletter of the Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, produced twice annually (spring and autumn). CPRE Cheshire is a registered charity. Editor: Becca Nelson. Cover photo: Trent and Mersey Canal, Middlesbrough. All photos Becca Nelson unless otherwise credited.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



In our last edition we reported on an important meeting with Su Sayer, CPRE Chairman. This covered the issue of ‘exceptional’ and ‘very special circumstances’ for Green Belt release. There have been some developments:

William Wragg, MP for Stockport (Hazel Grove constituency), asked in the Commons for an assurance that “the Green Belt is safe with this government”.

The PM replied as follows: “I am very happy to give that commitment to my honourable friend. The Government is very clear that the Green Belt must be protected. We are very clear that boundaries should only be altered when local authorities have fully examined all other reasonable options, and if they do go down that route then they should compensate by improving the quality or accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land so that that can be enjoyed. I know the particular issue my honourable friend has raised. I believe the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework did lead to quite a number of responses. There was a lot of interest in that consultation; it closed last month and I’m sure all views will be taken into account.”

In fact this is a reference to a review of Green Belt boundaries.

I put this comment on the CPRE planning website:

Andrew Needham Cheshire. The PM is referring to the exceptional circumstances for a review of Green Belt boundaries. However, without a review, it is possible for a planning application to succeed under the concept of ‘very special circumstances’.

Here in Cheshire, the Kings School application to build a new school on Green Belt land, financed by building housing on the school’s existing two sites (one of which is in the Green Belt) was not called in by the Secretary of State. This was despite the fact

that a total area of over 80 acres of Green Belt would be impacted, and that no very special circumstances have been demonstrated beyond the school's own business case.

In most cases, the response to whether a case should be called in will be the following wording:

“The Secretary of State has carefully considered this case against the call-in policy. The policy makes it clear that the power to call in a case will only be used very selectively. The Government is committed to give more power to councils and communities to make their own decisions on planning issues, and believes planning decisions should be made at the local level wherever possible. The Secretary of State has decided, having had regard to this policy, not to call in this application. He is content that it should be determined by the local planning authority.”

Jackie Copley, CPRE Lancashire, replied: “The Government is very clever at saying it protects the Green Belt, then requiring the local authorities to plan for excessive numbers and allowing brownfield to be excluded for viability reasons. Local authorities have little option but to release Green Belt. But it isn't a matter for Government but local Councils, says the Government.”

More and Better Use of Brownfield : The Government has already piloted a new set of open data standards for publishing information about brownfield land suitable for housing. Over 70 authorities took part in the pilot and the majority have now published their 'brownfield registers'. Local authorities will be required to prepare and maintain these registers from this spring. This will ensure that nationally consistent information on suitable brownfield sites is kept up to date and made publicly available for communities and developers.

Spatial Frameworks for Greater Manchester & Liverpool City Regions: With CPRE Lancashire, we have responded to the consultation - and engaged with mayoral candidates. They will be elected on May 4th, and there will be a full report on the implications for Cheshire at our AGM on May 17th.

Farming and landscape post Brexit: I attended an important conference organised by CPRE Shropshire - and propose to promote these issues on our stand at the Cheshire Show.

Trustees: We are very sad to lose Roger Parkin, and you can read his obituary on page 15. We would like to appoint a like-minded person to join our Board. Please contact Debbie Janney in the Branch Office in the first instance.

Andrew Needham, Chairman

THE REGIONAL VIEW



CPRE North West Regional Group Chairman Peter Raynes assesses the new Housing White Paper.

This year has seen the launch of a new white paper on Housing setting out the Governments proposals to meet the housing shortage in the Country. I suspect almost all CPRE members would agree we need to build homes where they are really needed, and also that with proper planning this need not result in damage to our landscape and environment.

There is much in this new White paper that the CPRE can be positive about, and indeed support. Unlike previous changes to the planning system there is an understanding that to provide the housing the country needs is a complex problem, and that changing the planning system will not deliver new homes on its own. There are also signs that the Government is beginning to realise the problems created by the recent “reforms” to planning.

Previous initiatives have concentrated on just one issue, reducing planning controls to release more land for development. In theory this should increase land supply and therefore increase house building and reduce the price of houses, but there are other equally important issues. There has to be the capacity to build houses, house building needs to be more attractive than land banking, and planning law needs to be carefully written to avoid its exploitation by land speculators. However, previous reforms have been excessively reliant on advice from the housing lobby and “think tanks” that appear to have little experience in business and a naïve understanding of markets. Inevitably it has not really worked. New house building has increased, from a low of 145,000 in 2009/10 to 190,000 in 2016/17. From long term records this looks like the normal recovery from a very severe house building and would in all likelihood have happened anyway without any change to the planning system.

While these previous changes do not appear to have added much if anything to the level of house-building, the past few years have seen high growth in planning permissions granted on appeal, often in unsuitable locations and won against the decision of local

Councillors and the agreed development plans. It has also seen Council Local Development plans delayed or refused by inspectors, due to a small minority of commercial interests using their lawyers to undermine the plan, motivated by their wish to add sites they own. It is ironic to see Central Government complaining about Councils not having development plans when the blame so clearly lies with their own planning reforms.

It is therefore very welcome to see a new approach that clearly looks in greater detail at the problem. The paper considers how to increase building capacity. Many house builders went out of business in the 2007/8 economic crisis. Currently 60% of all new homes in the UK are built by just 10 major companies. It is not reasonable to expect these companies to expand capacity and take the commercial risk of building out developments faster than they can sell the units. So the white paper will include ideas to encourage new builders to enter or re-enter the market as well as encourage self-build and building by Institutions such as pension funds.

The paper also accepts there are faults in the way housing requirements are calculated and seeks to clarify this. My hope would be that they will also consider that Local Authorities need a system which is manageable with the resources they have, responsible builders need a system which allows plans to be completed in a timely manner, and removes the loopholes that allow land bankers to do so much harm to the county side while preventing new homes actually being built.

I wish the new Housing Minister, Gavin Barwell every success in his difficult new job.

Peter Raynes, March 2017



HS2: BLIGHTED WATERWAYS, SUBSIDENCE & CONGESTION



Mid-Cheshire's settlement history is inextricably linked with its underlying geology, and the distinctive character of our county's landscapes now illustrates how mankind has taken advantage of the land.

The Cheshire salt beds were laid down around 220 million years ago at a time when the climate was rather warmer, and the rock salt subsequently buried under a layer of impermeable marl, but the salt reached the surface in brine springs in places, leading to the Celtic and subsequent Roman settlement in what is now Middleswich, the site of CPRE Cheshire's office, near to the confluence of the Dane and the Croco.

The land was also covered in a thick sheet of ice during the most recent ice age, and as this receded it deposited glacial till, forming the soils which became so highly valued for Cheshire's dairy industry.

Nowadays, rather than evaporating the small quantities of brine collected from the wild springs around the King Street Fault, as the Romans did in Middleswich, controlled brine pumping is practiced at the British Salt works to the south of the town. In the intervening time and



even to the present day, Mid-Cheshire's towns and countryside have been plagued by subsidence issues from poorly constructed mines and uncontrolled brine extraction, and this has led to one of the more attractive features of the local landscape: salt flashes, where the ground has collapsed and filled in with water to create large ponds. The flashes are an obvious indicator of subsidence, but there are also dips and hollows in the local landscape which are not as spectacular, but as they are unstable and still moving, could be hazardous to the infrastructure needed to support high speed rail tracks across the county.

The Cheshire Landscape Character assessment describes the salt flashes, illustrated by one of the Whatcroft Flashes above, as:

- large water-bodies created by brine pumping and rock salt mining.
- Surviving features associated with the salt industry - brine cisterns, lime beds etc and derelict land where industrial structures have been cleared.
- Extremely flat, low-lying topography.
- Calcareous habitats and a diversity of associated species
- Open, expansive views of the surrounding landscape.

The mined out caverns have been put to good use both for hazardous waste and document storage - and the cavities have an alternative use for storage of gas. Concerns over potential impacts on the latter led to a realignment of the route across Cheshire, meaning that the line would not cross above the proposed storage plant to be run by King Street Energy, which received planning permission in 2009 but has yet to be developed because of the potential impact of HS2.

However, the new route appears to be more problematic than that initially proposed. Compass Minerals, the owners of the Winsford Rock Salt Mine, has taken over 40 core samples, a number of which demonstrate the presence of previously undetected voids across the area which are currently geologically stable but which could quickly collapse if disturbed by heavy engineering works. The route crosses more of the

brine field than previously, and a report by TerraConsult (commissioned by Mid-Cheshire Against HS2) states that the route would cost an additional £750 million, as well as creating a 'high risk' of collapsing land.

CPRE's manifesto for the countryside highlights the importance of the beauty and tranquility of the countryside on our doorstep, and a large number of people both from the area use the canals and waterways of the Dane Valley for recreation, be it walking, fishing or canal boating. The Trent and Mersey Canal society has highlighted the blight that will impact a currently tranquil section of the Dane Valley between Middleswich and Northwich by HS2 crossing the canal and Dane flood plain on embankments and viaducts reaching up to 26 metres in height. In addition to the visual impact, carrying the trains elevated far above the land will mean that the consequent noise pollution will have a far greater impact. The 'extremely low-lying, flat topography' which is a feature of the Mid-Cheshire landscape is especially vulnerable to the visual and auditory blight of the proposed concrete viaducts and embankments that will take the train across Mid-Cheshire.

The realigned route if it goes ahead in its current form will cross the Trent and Mersey three times as the canal meanders across the Cheshire Plain, and will require a vastly increased amount of infill material, meaning many more lorry movements during construction. In addition to that, it will require the realignment of major roads in the area, exacerbating traffic issues in an area already plagued by jams and regularly gridlocked whenever there is a serious accident on the M6.

The other detrimental impact of the proposed embankments and viaducts is potentially the most serious as, according to TerraConsult's report, the increased height of the viaduct will put the underlying ground at much greater risk of subsidence.

Once it has passed through the settlements at Whatcroft, the new route requires the A556 to be realigned before going on to cut across the Cheshire Showground in Tabley in the area currently used for the equine classes. As well as the land take, there would be a significant impact through the construction period. Instead of using a cutting to minimise the visual and auditory impact of the development, as was originally proposed, the realigned line would be on an embankment of 3-6 metres in height.

Nationally, CPRE is in general in favour of increasing rail capacity, and has not opposed the development of HS2, preferring to influence the route of the line so as to minimise the impact on the countryside. The consultation on the realigned route closed on March 9th. Although this article focuses mainly on the impact to the realignment in the Mid-Cheshire area, HS2 would have an effect in a number of other parts of the county.

A Cheshire Branch member sent the letter below to Cheshire West and Chester Council, highlighting the concerns of many local residents.

I am fully aware that there are grave concerns from numerous quarters, both political and non political, about the scheme. However I am not convinced that these voices are being adequately heard.

Specifically in Mid Cheshire there remain many unanswered questions as to the viability of the scheme. The latest changes, announced recently, still fail to address what could be quite catastrophic implications of constructing and operating a high speed line in close proximity to under ground gas storage and over geologically fragile land. If a serious incident where to ever occur during construction or operation then the line would essentially be severed north of Crewe with no possibility of reopening or rerouting it.

The construction of this line will devastate the economies of Mid Cheshire towns that are in its path. People operating local businesses, which the towns are dependent on, will find it impossible maintain profits in such a severely disrupted climate. Basically closing and realigning the 556 through Northwich will cut off a major artery into the town with no hope of anything beneficial coming to the town from the line itself. I wonder whether the council have enquired about impact assessments on the Mid Cheshire area as a result of this project or whether they even exist. There seems to be processes in place to compensate individuals but in reality they should be compensating whole towns and villages.

The existence of such a enormously expensive line could lead to a situation where the government would be determined to, and indeed would have to, recoup as much money as possible from the British travelling public. If this where to be the case it could lead to a situation that has not been widely discussed. What is there to prevent those of us who are close, but not conveniently close enough, to a hub station, from being compelled to use the line to get further north or south as the more traditional lines are abandoned in favour of HS2. I fear this could be a realistic outcome if HS2 were to go ahead.

These are many of the serious questions that CWAC should be raising with the exponents of HS2. People in Mid Cheshire have legitimate concerns and deserve to be listened to and not fobbed off, by what an increasing number of people, nationwide, believe to be a vanity project, that is financially out of control, and will devastate those in its path.

CPRE Cheshire Branch has arranged a gentle 2-mile walk in Mid-Cheshire to highlight the parts of the Dane Valley and Trent and Mersey that will be affected if the realigned route is built. For full details please see the enclosed flyer.

JOIN CPRE

We're delighted you want to join CPRE and help us to stand up for the countryside. CPRE membership starts at £3 per month.

CPRE CHESHIRE BRANCH MEMBERSHIP FORM

Title: _____ First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

We would like to write to you to keep you updated on what we are doing to protect the countryside, including our campaigns and fundraising. If you would prefer not to receive certain communications from us, please call our Supporter Services Team on 0800 163680 or email supporterservices@cpre.org.uk.

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Please be assured that we will never sell or share your contact details with anyone outside CPRE.

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Freepost Plus RTCK-UBXX-BBCR, Supporter Services, CPRE,
5 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

CPRE Cheshire branch has submitted a collective response to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, in conjunction with CPRE Lancashire and the Friends of the Peak District.

CPRE believes that amendments are vital before the Spatial Framework proceeds from Draft to the Publication Version, as in its current form it risks promoting short term unsustainable development growth and endangering the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)'s own stated aims and objectives for sustainable development.

CPRE wants to see needed development built in sustainable locations, with adequate supporting infrastructure to make places better in the future. Greenfields should not be needlessly sacrificed due to their immense benefits, not least to health and well-being, and the CPRE response highlights the fact that once countryside is gone, it is gone forever.

Key issues addressed are:

- Too many jobs are being proposed, based on untenable high economic growth assumptions e.g. industrial and warehousing floorspace is forecast to grow at 40%, which fails to observe downward trends, and technological advances.
- CPRE Lancashire commissioned an independent expert demographer who found flaws in the housing calculations, leading to at least 30,000 more houses being planned than are necessary. The Housing Target should be 197,885 homes (9,894 per annum).
- A downward adjustment of the housing target to take account of restricted land is absent. Restricted land includes Green Belt.
- The source of all the new people to fill the 200,000 new jobs and 227,200 homes (11,360 per annum) being planned has not been adequately evidenced.
- The GMSF fails to adequately show that the 'duty to co-operate' with neighbour authorities, causing excessive loss of

- Green Belt, e.g. with Cheshire East.
- Too little quantity of development is focused on brownfield land at only 70% whereas previously 80-90% brownfield targets were successfully achieved.
- In combination the above points to evidence that there are not exceptional circumstances for releasing 4,900 hectares of Green Belt land. If a realistic development quantum is being planned, appropriate densities are applied, and all brownfield land sources are exhausted, this would remove the need to build on Green Belt.
- Any Green Belt release should be via a full Green Belt review with public consultation (in advance of GMSF being progressed). Released land must be subject to master-planning.

Analysis of whether an absolute reduction in carbon emissions is possible is needed.

CPRE included written objections to some 19 greenfield sites proposed for development due to harm outweighing the benefit.

The full version of the CPRE response, with demographic appraisal appended, is available online via the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/CPRE-GMSF>

CHESHIRE BRANCH NEEDS YOUR HELP

CPRE Cheshire Branch has now been standing up for our countryside for almost 90 years.

If you care about Cheshire's countryside, please consider joining our team of volunteers to monitor and respond to planning applications, to help us with fundraising or to represent CPRE Cheshire Branch at events.

We are also keen to identify individuals who would like to take a more active role as a member of our **Trustee Board**. Contact the Branch Office for more details, pop in and see us at the Cheshire Show (cups of tea available!) or join us at our AGM or an event to find out more.

We look forward to hearing from you.



ROGER PARKIN 1936-2016

We are sad to report that Roger Parkin, Cheshire Branch member for over 20 years, Trustee, active volunteer, Vice President and former Branch Chairman, passed away in late December 2016, not

long after his 80th birthday.

Roger and his wife Tessa ended up moving to Mickle Trafford when BICC, Roger's employer for his whole working life, moved its head office to Chester. His work had long involved worldwide travel, and even after moving to Cheshire he continued to travel overseas on a regular basis, especially to destinations in Africa and South America. Although Mickle Trafford was an adopted home, it was no less precious to Roger and Tessa, and after retirement, Roger decided to play a more active part in the local community.

Both in his capacity as Parish Councillor and through his work for CPRE, Roger was heavily involved in promoting and encouraging the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside. Chester District was his main interest, but he also actively supported the work of the charity throughout Cheshire, and regularly represented the Branch, alongside the Chairman, at CPRE's North West Regional Group meetings.

This short article cannot do justice to all that Roger achieved in his work for charities and local government. He was a tireless advocate for the Local Council sector through his work as ChALC Area Meeting Chairman, and chaired Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council for many years. He was also a Trustee of the Cheshire Community Action Board, Treasurer of The Older People's Network group, and a loyal supporter of the Chester Music Society. His work in the borough was formally recognised by Cheshire West and Chester Council in 2015, when Roger was made an Honourary Freeman of Cheshire West and Chester Borough.

Roger will be sorely missed by his colleagues, not just for his contribution, but also his company and friendship. He did a great deal for his local community and his guidance, wisdom and support will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

DISTRICT NEWS

Chester District

A planning application has been submitted for a new primary school on Saighton Playing Fields which is in the Green Belt. This application follows the permission for additional houses to be built on the former large brownfield Saighton Camp instead of including the primary school within the site.

Planning applications for sites in the Green Belt have recently been submitted to demolish farm buildings no longer in farm use and replace them with new build housing.

An application for an apartment building for affordable homes on the Troopers Field would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would lead to the coalescence of Chester and the village of Christleton.

The remaining vacant plots on the Chester Business Park may be taken up by a recently submitted planning application. Local Plan policy to retain the Parkland setting of the Green Belt Chester Business Park must be retained.

Macclesfield District

Macclesfield Rugby Club has recently applied for planning permission to build 76 houses in Green Belt land on the rugby club site. CPRE will monitor this application.

Paul Webster, who has been invaluable in his work for CPRE in the Knutsford area, has now stepped down from the Planning Committee owing to ill health. We would like to record our thanks to Paul for the expertise and enthusiasm he has brought to the committee over the past four years.

Trafford District

Trafford District is very concerned about proposals in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework which, if approved, will see land allocated for 22,720 new homes in Trafford, including large developments on greenfield and Green Belt land. The GM Spatial Framework is a joint plan drawn up by the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities, including Trafford Council, to identify strategic sites for housing and employment up to 2035. The first phase of consultation closed in January, and the final proposals will be published later this year with a view to adoption in 2018.

Of particular concern to Trafford District are plans for the development



in South Trafford of the so-called Timperley Wedge (pictured), which incorporates greenfield and Green Belt land. Here it is proposed to build 3,300 houses and 50,000m² of employment space between Timperley, Manchester Airport and Wythenshawe Hospital. Elsewhere in Trafford substantial building is proposed at Flixton and Carrington.

Trafford District also opposes proposals to remove Green Belt designation of land to the east and west of the A556 near the M56 and the Bowdon roundabout. This is within the Cheshire East boundary but adjacent to Trafford. Tatton Estates have proposed future developments on this land including a warehouse and distribution park, and a science and technology park, which we think are inappropriate for this location.

Campaigns are under way to oppose the loss of Green Belt at the Timperley Wedge and Flixton, and a Greater Manchester-wide demonstration by many concerned groups against the loss of Green Belt land in the county is planned for 1 April in Manchester.

Rosemary Hurley, Trafford District CPRE

Warrington District

Planning Policy: Warrington Borough Council are now processing the responses to last year's Local Plan Review Consultation and Call for Sites. Their Preferred Options are expected to be published in May/June for further consultation. One of the issues raised was the inadequacy of infrastructure for new developments, also a Green Belt Review.

Greenfield sites. Land at Peel Hall had been refused planning permission and one of the three areas of Homes and Communities land has been given planning permission.

HS2 Residents, Councillors and MPs continue to oppose the "Golborne Link". A recent proposal to remove the Golborne Depot is an improvement as trains would no longer be travelling along the line from Manchester late at night. The Northern Chord of the Delta Junction

would be removed as it would not be needed.

There is also an issue of unstable land in the area of that junction because of brine extraction. This is in addition to general concerns about instability due to mossland, historic landfill sites, former coal mines and major pipelines.

Ecological studies on the route start in March, and engineers will be on the ground later in the year

Varied proposals for HS3 continue to appear, it is difficult to keep track.

In Lancashire to our North, there is strong opposition to proposals for logistics developments in the Green Belt along the M6. We liaise with Lancashire CPRE .

The prices for the New and Old Mersey crossings have been publicised thus ensuring the likelihood of vehicles using the Thelwall Viaduct to cross the Mersey instead.

This will add to congestion in our town and on the M6.

Jacqui Johnson, Warrington District

The Wirral Society

The Wirral Society covers the peninsula of The Wirral on behalf of CPRE. This gives us two Council areas to be involved with. There is Wirral Borough to the north and east (WMBC) and Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) covering the south and west, the area formerly covered by Ellesmere Port and Neston.

WMBC decided (without a public vote) to join the emerging Liverpool City Region (LCR). In May those of us in the WMBC area will have the “opportunity” to vote for a Liverpool Metro Mayor. Whilst this is still in the future we do know that the Metro Mayor, when established, is likely to be the final arbiter on Planning matters (amongst many other powers). A significant concentration of power.

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council area

Hoylelake Golf Resort

Despite mounting opposition, the Council, whilst closing Social Services due to lack of funds, has found £600,000 to “spend” researching the proposed site for wildlife, drainage etc ..etc.. This is a cost normally taken on by the developer and we see this as doubt in the success of the “scheme”. The Wirral Society remains totally opposed to this “Vanity” scheme that has rumbled on for some 15 years now at a cost to the taxpayer that can only be guessed at.

Local Plan and SHMA / SHLAA

The Council have been consulting on possible development sites, this

is to meet the supposed “need” for housing. The latest figure appears to be a need for 1,000 new homes per year required by the Conservative government. This is several times the numbers previously considered. This does seem excessively “optimistic”. The Local Plan is still many months away.

Council Leaders’ Support of the Green Belt

Despite promoting the 200 new homes on the Green Belt at Hoylake as “Enabling Development” for the “Vanity” Hoylake Golf Resort, the majority party on the Council is now stating that the Green Belt will be defended. Whilst we welcome this stance we remain confused as the Hoylake Golf Resort (and other plans) are the greatest current threats to the Green Belt on The Wirral!

New Fire Station at Saughall Massie

The Council’s Planning Committee very narrowly rejected the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority’s (MFRA) application to move the Fire Station at Upton a mile down the road to Saughall Massie. This has resulted in some “very upset” comments from the Authority. The latest we have heard is that they will probably raise an Appeal and submit a new Application. North-West Wirral has been served just by the Upton Fire Station for the last two years. It is increasingly difficult to appreciate what ‘Very Special Circumstances’ the MFRA feel they can present. For an Authority claiming to be suffering from excessive “cuts” they seem well enough funded to pursue their Fire Station dream.

Thornton Hough

We have just learned of a new proposal to develop Green Belt land at Thornton Hough for sheltered accommodation for the elderly. The developers are consulting with the local population and as yet no application has been made. We have to wonder what ‘Very Special Circumstances’ they can provide to overturn the Green Belt status of the site, especially now the Council Leader had affirmed his commitment to protecting the Green Belt!

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Local Plans

The CW&C Local plan continues to be developed, without the issues over house numbers “needed” that has arisen in WMBC.

A Neighbourhood Plan is being enacted by the Neston Town group.

New Builds

Redrow builders continue to develop their 2,000 house housing estate on what was top grade farmland. Show houses are up and apparently selling.

T Neil Parry, Green Belt Coordinator, The Wirral Society

AGM: BRAVE NEW CITY REGION WORLD

17th May 2017, 7 - 9.30pm: High Legh Village Hall

Devolution in Manchester and Merseyside might not seem to have much to do with rural Cheshire at first glance, but it is becoming increasingly clear that the crucial decisions made as local government reorganisation unfolds are set to have far-reaching effects across the whole of the North West, including Cheshire. Come to our AGM to find out more about the implications, and what you can do to influence this process.

Jackie Copley, CPRE Lancs Planning Officer, will open the talk with an interesting overview of the changes, focusing on the relevance to CPRE groups.

Subsequently, **Nick Thompson**, Lancashire Branch Chairman (and former North West Regional Group Chair) will talk on Lancashire Branch's pilot scheme to increase CPRE's profile in urban areas, aimed at raising both awareness and membership. The changes have galvanised local groups in more urban areas of Lancashire to get involved with CPRE which can only be positive.

Andrew Needham will bring a Cheshire perspective to the issues.

Please join us for what promises to be a fascinating evening and find out more about how you can stand up for rural issues.

Full details on enclosed slip.

2017 ROYAL CHESHIRE SHOW

CPRE Cheshire Branch will be exhibiting as usual in the Rural Life Marquee at the Royal Cheshire Show. We will be offering cups of tea and coffee to members and are keen to hear your views on any rural or planning issues.

The stand will focus on "Farming and Brexit" as well as all the other issues currently affecting the county such as HS2 (which since realignment has a greater impact on the Cheshire Showground) and the Green Belt.

If you have a couple of hours to spare, why not volunteer on the stand? Volunteers will be briefed on all the relevant issues and get free admission to the show in return for manning the stand for a two-hour shift. Please contact the Branch Office for more details.

We hope to see you there, either as a volunteer or a visitor!