

AIRPORT EXPANSION PLANS

The Government is due to decide in the next few months where to build a new runway – Heathrow or Gatwick. The adverse environmental impact of expanding either Heathrow or Gatwick would be great. CPRE Surrey would be faced with an impossible choice of evils. But fortunately there is a way out of the false dilemma created by the Airports Commission. That is to decide that **there is no need for any new runway, anywhere**. This is the policy currently advocated by CPRE national office and it was the decision reached by previous governments not to go ahead with runway plans promoted by aviation proponents – 1968 (Cublington), 1974 (Maplin), 2003 (Cliffe), 2009 (Stansted) and 2010 (Heathrow). The aviation industry protest that these non-decisions show a failure of will, but in fact we have got on perfectly well: the London airports system is larger than that of any other city in the world.

How has it been done? The answer is: with larger aircraft. Since 2000 the number of UK air passengers has grown by over 30% but the number of flights has only gone up 6%. That is under half of one per cent per year, hardly enough to create alarm and despondency, and certainly not enough to justify more runways.

Brendon Sewill, Chairman, Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

HOUSING NUMBERS

We are currently working on our responses to the revised draft Guildford Local Plan – which proposes significant loss of Green Belt – and to the West Surrey SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) – the document that sets out housing requirement in the three local authority areas of Guildford, Woking and Waverley and therefore provides some of the context for the housebuilding targets in each of these three boroughs. We are challenging the numbers and the methodology for the housing numbers being put forward.

We recently held a Planning Forum at The Institute in Leatherhead which was attended by CPRE campaigners from across the county and at which we had presentations from CPRE Surrey Branch Chairman Tim Murphy (about the current planning situation in Surrey and nationally), from planning consultant Richard Bate (about the West Surrey SHMA), and from Catherine Sayer of the Oxted & Limpsfield Residents' Group (about the draft Tandridge SHMA and draft Local Plan).

Please see our document entitled “CPRE Surrey Planning Forum, Monday 6 June 2016” for the three presentations. Please note that we will soon also have to tackle the North East Surrey SHMA, which covers Mole Valley district, Epsom & Ewell borough and Elmbridge borough, and also the neighbouring London borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

SURREY VOICE

Our recent branch newsletter Surrey Voice details the current situation with the Local Plans in Tandridge and Guildford in particular, and also highlights the joint mapping project which we undertook together with CPRE branches across London and the Home Counties to research, identify and map Green Belt threats throughout the region. If you have not received a copy of this newsletter, or would like to receive additional copies for distribution to friends, family, work colleagues etc, please email cpre.surrey@btconnect.com and give your name, full address and postcode, and specifying how many copies you would like.

ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Just a reminder that this takes place at The Institute, Leatherhead, on Friday 1st July 2016, starting at 7.30pm (Doors open 7pm). Our special guest speaker will be Oliver Hilliam, co-author of “22 ideas that saved the English countryside”. We will be celebrating 90 years of CPRE achievements – and looking at the challenges ahead if we are to continue protecting our precious countryside and Green Belt. There is no charge for admission and all are welcome, whether or not members of CPRE.