



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

CPRE's policy on energy

CPRE's position

Climate change is the most urgent and complex environmental issue we face today. The impact of both energy generation and use on the countryside and the climate is growing. CPRE believes the Government should prioritise measures to curb the growth in energy demand, encourage energy efficiency and promote a wider range of renewable technologies. Because some 40% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions arise from the energy supply industry, ensuring that new energy generation is lower carbon is essential.

Key energy issues

To help avert the worst effects of climate change (in the UK – more extreme weather events, higher temperatures, heavier rainfall and greater flooding), the Government has established a target under the *Climate Change Act 2008* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mainly CO₂) by 80% before 2050. We support this target, and recognise that measures to reduce emissions will need to take a variety of forms. This will include reducing our overall demand for energy, generating more power from renewables, and restricting emissions from conventional power stations through carbon capture and storage. A new international agreement on climate change to replace the Kyoto Protocol, due to be agreed at a summit in Copenhagen before the end of 2009, is likely to increase pressure for action to tackle carbon emissions.

We also support Government aims to generate 15% of our energy from renewable sources by 2020, a measure designed to increase energy security and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable energy accounted for only 4.9 per cent of electricity generation and 1.8 per cent of overall energy demand in the UK in 2007. While energy security is an important consideration, it's wrong to focus the entire debate on the supply side alone.

Stronger measures are needed to curb the growth in energy demand, encourage energy efficiency and promote a wider range of renewable technologies, including through effective use of the planning system. Demand-side measures will help reduce the pressure for both new nuclear or fossil fuel plant, as well as for renewable energy infrastructure.

Key energy issues for the countryside

Energy production affects the countryside through its impacts on landscape, tranquillity, character and capacity to deliver other environmental goods such as food, clean water and functional habitats.

Open cast coal mining, large power stations and overhead power lines spoil the beauty of landscapes and the tranquillity of the countryside. Inappropriately sited windfarms can also damage the landscape. We are concerned that Government policy does not take sufficient account of the negative effects which some renewable energy infrastructure, particularly wind turbines in sensitive landscapes, can have on the countryside. Climate change will also alter the character of the countryside as we know it, although we don't know precisely how.

Energy production affects the ability of the countryside to deliver other environmental goods. An increase in the use of agricultural land for energy crops may impact on food production. Fertiliser and pesticide use for bioenergy crops may also affect water quality and habitats.

What CPRE wants

- Low-carbon development should be a planning objective: all new housing and commercial development should be low-carbon, highly energy efficient and reduce the need to travel.
- Energy efficiency targets to be set for each sector of the economy.
- Small scale, affordable technologies, such as solar

water heating, woodfuel boilers, air and ground source heat pumps, anaerobic digestion and micro-hydro to be encouraged.

- Local transmission of heat and electricity to reduce energy loss and the landscape impacts of overhead transmission lines.
- Better policies to encourage a wider range of appropriately scaled and sited renewable technologies, including greater support for offshore wind.
- More power lines buried underground or under the sea to avoid damaging impacts on the landscape.
- Reform of taxes and road charges for car drivers to promote energy efficient transport and secure more funding for public transport.
- Acceptable, long-term solutions to the safe storage and disposal of nuclear waste before new power stations – which should be restricted to existing developed sites – are built.

What people can do

1. Examine their own energy consumption. Make savings at home, at work and in their choice of travel wherever possible.
2. Press for regional and local planning policies to require low carbon development and support small scale renewable technologies.