



## CPRE Election Manifesto

We call on all parties in this election to recognise the countryside's huge contribution to the economy and our sense of who we are as individuals and communities, and to develop policies that will protect and enhance rural areas. In this way, we can provide for current and future generations so that both can benefit from the nourishment our countryside gives us.

**CPRE** is calling for commitments in the general election from all the political parties . It said:

*We must move away from the opportunist free-for-all that has characterised our approach to rural development, eroding our green belts and precious landscapes. It is possible to tackle the challenges this country faces without destroying one of England's greatest assets [the countryside].*

The six commitments CPRE is seeking are:

**Stronger protection** for green belts, national parks and AONBs. It is essential to shield such valuable areas from inappropriate development. Simply releasing more protected land for development will not solve the housing crisis.

**Brownfield.** Further investment in urban regeneration. Regenerating our towns and cities, especially vacant, derelict or underused brownfield sites, benefits both town and countryside. Regenerating these areas in exciting and ambitious ways will revive local economies, while limiting unnecessary development in neighbouring greenfield and green belt areas.

**Farming.** Continued public funding for farming focused on the benefits beyond food. Farming needs to become more diverse if we are to be a resilient nation in terms of food and environment, reversing the decline in nature, in soils and in landscapes. Public funding is required but it needs a new model that rewards wider public benefit.

**Roads.** Reset roads policy with a smarter travel investment strategy. Rather than seeking to triple road spending, the next government should commit to overhauling transport policy in favour of a better integrated and sustainable approach. This could include investment in existing public transport systems, with restored rail routes and integrated bus services, and a renewed focus on cycling and walking.

**Reduce waste and pollution** by committing to resource efficiency schemes, such as deposit return systems. Building on the success of the carrier bag charge and ban on microbeads, introducing new measures that promote efficient use of our resources, such as a Deposit Return System for capturing single-use containers, would be a significant step in reducing blight on our celebrated landscapes.

**Environment.** Exiting the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance our natural environment – now and in the future. Fully transposing and maintaining existing EU environmental laws and principles through the Great Repeal Bill would provide a solid foundation for post-Brexit environmental policy. An ambitious new Environment Act would build on this by setting strong antipollution rules, resource-efficiency standards, and measurable milestones for environmental restoration for the decades that follow.

## London's Landscapes

**Green belt.** CPRE London has produced a series of leaflets explaining why the green belt is so important and why building on it won't solve the housing crisis . The campaign group has also issued a call for green belt supporters to email their MPs ahead of the general election . A planning inspector has granted consent for an 18-hole golf course on a 70-hectare site within the green belt in Barnet .









### Plans for the Barnet golf course





**Parks.** The government is consulting on proposed legislation to prevent local authorities, including parish councils, charging parkrun or junior parkrun for the use of public parks . Greenspace Information for Greater London has produced a video, narrated by Sir David Attenborough, about the Richmond Park National Nature Reserve .




**Gardens.** Greenwich council has ordered residents to clear the site of the Royal Hill Community Garden ahead of its sale to developers. A petition opposing the move has gained nearly 1,000 signatures .

**Trees.** New World Payphones is replacing ageing phone boxes with touch-screen booths that combine wi-fi, interactive maps and payphone services. For every phone box upgraded, a new tree will be planted. Six trees have already been planted in Bermondsey . The Data Science Campus in collaboration with Office of National Statistics have been investigating the potential to form a nationwide tree database of publicly accessible trees around the urban road network . Hedges are often better than trees at soaking up air pollution among tall buildings, researchers from Surrey University said .

## Garden Bridge Project Collapses

**Sadiq Khan** has withdrawn his support for the controversial bridge after two critical reviews of the project's finances. He has written to the Garden Bridge Trust saying he cannot provide the financial guarantee it needs to proceed before planning permission expires in December. Even if the scheme is halted now, it will have cost taxpayers £46.4m      .







**The Garden Bridge Trust** said it was reviewing its options. "We have had enormous support from our funders and are very confident we can raise the remaining funds required. But sadly, the Mayor of London has taken a different decision to those in place when the project started" . The Guardian reported that the trust was to turn to the DfT for support. Bridge promoter Joanna Lumley said: "All we heard was £60m, £60m, £60m. But... it'll work out at about 32p a person in the UK. It's not as if we're stealing bread from people" . Bridge designer Thomas Heatherwick said "endless political wrangling" had brought the project to a standstill  .

**The Treasury** had earlier said the economic case for the garden bridge is weaker than it was in 2014 when £60m of public money was committed  . The Garden Bridge Trust itself had acknowledged, but not publicised, that costs had risen to £170 million back in December 2013 .

**A review by Dame Margaret Hodge** had found that the finances of the Garden Bridge Trust, "are in a precarious state and many outstanding risks remain unresolved." Reporting to Sadiq Khan, she said "there was not an open, fair and competitive process" during the two Transport for London procurements for the project. She said costs have escalated from an early estimate of £60m to over £200m and the risk to the taxpayer has intensified:



*"I did not seek to ask whether the concept of a garden bridge over the River Thames is a good idea. But my review has found that too many things went wrong in the development and implementation of the Garden Bridge Project."*

*"Value for money for the taxpayer has not been secured. It would be better for the taxpayer to accept the financial loss of cancelling the project than to risk the potential uncertain additional costs to the public purse if the project proceeds."*

**The Charity Commission**, however, found that the Garden Bridge Trust acted properly in awarding contracts with systems that "appear to have been robust". Noting the trust could make improvements to its annual reporting, the commission concluded that it was "satisfied with the systems and procedures for the management of the project"      .



## Air Quality Plan

**UK Air Quality Plan.** The government published its draft plan for reducing NO<sub>2</sub> levels in the UK. The plan is out for consultation until 15 June  . Ministers were forced into issuing the plan after the High Court quashed the previous version last year, ruling that it was legally flawed as it failed to ensure timely compliance with Article 23 of the EU Air Quality Directive and linked air quality standard regulations. The government recently went back to the high court seeking to delay the publication of the draft plan until after the general election, but the court ordered ministers to publish the document immediately after the local elections. The new plan has been met with widespread criticism outside the Conservative party, which claimed it was "common sense".


**Proposals.** Councils will be given clear legal duties to develop and implement Clean Air Zone plans where NO<sub>2</sub> levels are above legal limits. "It will be the responsibility of local authorities to develop innovative proposals for their local area that will bring pollution levels within the legal limits within the shortest time possible." Measures might include retrofitting technologies, alternative fuels and low emission vehicles as well as a targeted scrappage scheme for vans or cars. But the plan falls short of requiring councils to introduce charging zones in polluted areas.

*"The government believes that charging zones should only be used where local authorities fail to identify equally effective alternatives. We expect the implementation of Clean Air Zones will take up to three years, but government will ensure the plans achieve compliance within the shortest time possible."*


**London.** The plan recognises the scale of the problem facing the capital:

*"The Greater London urban area currently has the highest NO<sub>2</sub> exceedance in the UK. The size and complexity of the city means that the task of reducing NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations is the most challenging in the country."*

The lists the mayor's current proposals and actions, but offers no new suggestions for action. Emissions of NO<sub>2</sub> in Greater London are forecast to fall from 103µg/m<sup>3</sup> (micrograms per cubic metre of air) to 41µg/m<sup>3</sup> by 2030. The data do not include emissions from A Roads and motorways. The statutory limit under the **EU Air Quality Directive** is 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**Reaction.** Sadiq Khan described the plan as "toothless" and "woefully inadequate" .

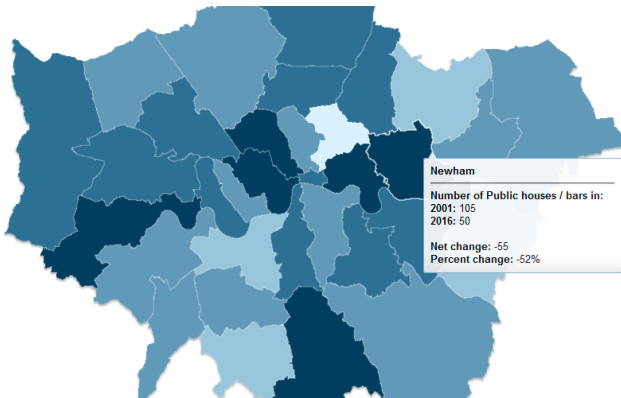
*"The government has missed the opportunity to commit to a 21st-century clean air... We need a legally enforceable right to clean air for everybody and new powers to regulate all emissions sources, including construction and river vessels. We also need changes to vehicle excise duty to encourage people to buy the greenest cars."*

In a press release, the Conservative party said: "Conservatives believe that poor air quality is the largest environmental threat to public health in the UK. But there is a clear choice in terms of policy response – between common sense measures that will improve air quality, and higher taxes under Labour" .

**Air quality reaction...** ClientEarth, which brought the legal action against the initial plan, said: "The UK government has produced a weak and incoherent air quality plan which lacks the ambition and detail to tackle Britain's illegal levels of air pollution" <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Chief executive James Thornton, said: "The more we study this appalling plan, the more unsatisfactory it gets" <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Former Liberal Democrat energy and climate change secretary Ed Davey said: "This is not a plan, it's a cop out. The Conservative government is shamefully failing in its duty to tackle deadly pollution that is claiming thousands of lives a year." Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green party, said: "The government is standing idly by while Britain chokes. This feeble plan won't go anywhere near far enough in tackling this public health emergency" <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Other critics include council highways and environment directors <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

## Planning

**Pubs protected.** Permitted development rights allowing the demolition of buildings used as class A4 "drinking establishments" – pubs and bars – will end on 23 May. The government is also removing rights allowing conversion of pubs to class A1 retail, A2 financial and professional services and class A3 restaurants and cafes. Full planning permission will now be needed for demolition or conversions. There will be a new permitted development right for pubs to be used for a mix of class A3 and A4 uses <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Sadiq Khan has pledged to help halt the decline in the number of pubs in London, where 1,220 pubs have closed since 2001 <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>



**Markets.** Mr Khan has established the London Markets Board "to help preserve and grow London's vibrant markets" <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Westminster council has approved a masterplan to revive a struggling arts and antiques district in Marylebone and turn it into a rival to Portobello Road market <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Night-time economy.** The mayor is consulting on the draft Culture and Night Time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance, which aims to protect London's nightlife and reduce noise complaints <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Thames.** Sadiq Khan is to set up the Thames and London Waterways Forum, a stakeholder body to advise him on policies relating to the River Thames, including its use as a transport route, supporting its status as a tourist destination and tackling pollution. It will replace two separate bodies, the River Concordat and the London Waterways Commission <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Going down.** Central London's mega-basement boom appears to have peaked after the schemes were targeted by tougher planning rules and taxes <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> But even the royal family are getting into the act, with a mega-basement proposed for the grounds of Kensington Palace <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> The high court has ruled against a three-storey basement in Mayfair <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Conversions.** Planning approvals for office to residential conversions in London have fallen by over a third <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Lambeth council has issued an Article 4 Direction to prevent offices being converted into residential units without full planning permission <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Hackney council is to use an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights which allow the conversion of launderettes, industrial premises and storage and distribution units to residential use <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Design.** Sadiq Khan is seeking up to 30 Design Advocates to assist staff at City Hall in ensuring the inclusiveness, quality and sustainability of development across London <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Stripes can remain.** The High Court decided in favour of a woman who painted her Kensington townhouse with red and white stripes. Mr Justice Gilbert ruled: "In my judgment, to allow a local planning authority to use section 215 [of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990] to deal with questions of aesthetics, as opposed to disrepair or dilapidation, falls outside the intention and spirit of the planning code." He said the council "had ample steps available to it under the Planning Code which would have protected amenity, and would have exposed it to minimal cost." He said that section 102 of the act should have been used instead <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Housing.** Housing and planning minister Gavin Barwell announced that local authorities in England will now have to maintain up-to-date registers listing all brownfield sites available for housing <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Completions of new homes in London by private builders will plummet to just 18,000 by 2021, compared to 46,500 this year, as developers adjust to lower rates of sales, property consultancy Savills warned <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

## Transport

**Toxic air.** The most-polluting vehicles will have to pay a daily charge to drive within central London from 8 April 2019 under proposals announced by the mayor to help combat the capital's toxic air crisis. Sadiq Khan is proposing to expand this charge, the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), across Greater London for heavy diesel vehicles, including buses, coaches and lorries, in 2020, and up to the North and South Circular roads for cars and vans in 2021 <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> The consultation closes on 25 June <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> Friends of the Earth welcome the move <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Cycling.** Hampstead campaigners are proposing an alternative design for Superhighway CS11 at the Swiss Cottage Gyrotory. They say that the current plans, due to be implemented at the same time as HS2 is constructed, will force traffic onto residential side streets <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup> After a 6,000-signature petition was raised objecting to mini-Holland schemes, Sadiq Khan has made clear that he continues to back the Walthamstow, Enfield and Kingston schemes <sup>LON DON</sup> <sup>EVERN STAM.</sup>

**Roads.** Black taxis could be banned under plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street. TfL is consulting on the plans which have been met strong objections from taxi drivers [Evening Standard](#) [Vox](#) [City A.M.](#) [E](#). Twenty-three central London bus routes are to be re-routed as part of Sadiq Khan's efforts to cut congestion and boost air quality in and around Oxford Street [BBC](#). The six-month public examination into the proposals the Silvertown Tunnel ended on 11 April [News Shop](#). A recommendation to the secretary of state must be made by 11 July [Nation](#) [Infra](#) [Planner](#).

**Strategy.** The government published its cycling and walking strategy, a £1.2 billion long-term plan to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys in England [BBC](#). The plans include objectives to double cycling, reduce cycling accidents and increase the proportion of 5 to 10 year-olds walking to school to 55% by 2025. Cycling UK welcomed the document [cycling](#).

**Rail.** HS2 Ltd is seeking designers for stations, including Old Oak Common, and a development partner for Euston [II](#) [City A.M.](#) Crossrail will open in stages from 2017 to 2019 [BBC](#). London boroughs and councils across the South East have issue a call for government support for Crossrail 2 [LON](#) [DON](#). Decision making on Crossrail 2 has been held up by the general election. A verdict on the business case may not now be made until next year [bd](#). The House of Commons Library has issued a briefing paper on the Crossrail projects [BBC](#). Overground rail electrification has been delayed [transport](#). TfL has consulted on the extension of the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham [E](#) [West](#) [Point](#).



**Heathrow.** A House of Commons Library briefing gives an overview of the debate about the expansion of Heathrow Airport. It looks at the work of the Airports Commission and the subsequent decision by the government to support a third runway and sixth terminal at the airport; the environmental issues and concerns surrounding the decision; the economic case and how the scheme will be taken forwards [BBC](#).

## Around the Capital

**Barnet.** Sadiq Khan has called in an application for 460 homes on a green belt site in the borough, saying the council is “significantly under-delivering” against its annual housing targets. The brownfield site hosts the [National Institute for Medical Research](#). Barnet councillors rejected the scheme in February claiming: “It is out of character with the Mill Hill Conservation Area and has a negative impact when viewed from the green belt land to the north” [P](#).

**Camden.** The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum has issued a call for architects and designers to masterplan the contentious Royal Mail site in Clerkenwell [P](#).

**City.** Revised plans have been submitted to increase the height of a proposed tower on Bishopsgate and Leadenhall Street from 40 to 50-storeys in response to the “increasing density of the location” [P](#). The Twentieth Century Society is campaigning against plans for redevelopment of Grade II\* listed Wood Street police station [E24](#).

**Croydon** council’s development company, Brick by Brick, has gained planning permission for nearly 100 houses on eight sites [Croydon](#) [News](#).

**Hackney.** Supporters of Dalston Eastern Curve Garden are being urged to object to the proposed Thames House development, which will overshadow the garden [BBC](#) [MAPS](#).



**Hounslow.** The Grove Park Group residents’ association has crowdfunded more than £40,000 towards a new piazza. Three trees have already been planted by Hounslow council [E24](#).






Grove Park piazza







**Lambeth** planners have approved a new library building in the grounds of Lambeth Palace [g](#) [bd](#) [sex](#). Roupell Street residents are opposing plans to extend a language school, which they claim will damage the conservation area’s heritage and the character of the 1830s street [bd](#).



Plans for Roupell Street

**Merton.** Clarion Housing Group, a housing association, has submitted outline plans for the redevelopment of the Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury estates to provide 2,800 new homes .

**Newham.** Aecom has won a contract to build up to 3,000 modular homes as part of the £5 billion regeneration of Silvertown  .

**Old Oak Common.** A consortium has been appointed to masterplan the development of 24,000 new homes and 55,000 jobs   . Allies & Morrison has been given planning permission for over 200 homes in the Old Oak Opportunity Area   .

**Southwark** council has established a team to deliver the regeneration of the Old Kent Road area. It will be headed by Sadiq Khan's strategic planning manager, Colin Wilson . A five-part mural celebrating the history of the Old Kent Road has been Grade II listed following a campaign by the Twentieth Century Society  . The Victorian Society has objected to plans to demolish the Britannia pub . Two new Local Nature Reserves have been designated, Russia Dock Woodland and Stave Hill Ecology Park, both in Rotherhithe . A brownfield site in Peckham, to be redeveloped for 22 residential dwellings, will feature two new communal gardens . Conran & Partners has been appointed to design 10 Clarion regeneration sites across the borough, including the Angel Oak Academy, which will feature a large piazza  .









Angel Oak Academy regeneration, Southwark

**Waltham Forest.** A new public square (pictured below) will be created under plans to redevelop the Mall shopping centre to increase retail units and provide 460 new homes .




## Litter

**Plastic mineral water bottles** make up half of the plastic litter in the Thames. The Assembly environment committee has called on the mayor to address plastic bottle waste in his forthcoming Environment Strategy and develop policies to reduce it. The committee wants more drinking fountains across the capital and for the mayor to investigate a bottle deposit return scheme   . But the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee said a deposit scheme would make council collection schemes “less efficient” and would require a new collection infrastructure  . Earlier in the year, Thames 21 said plastic drink bottles were the third most common item found in their litter surveys .

**Strategy.** The government published its litter strategy. This proposes three approaches to combating litter: educating and informing, improving refuse services and improving enforcement measures. Among the proposals to create an ‘anti-litter culture’ are fines of up to £150 for litterers, outlawing of council charges for disposing of household DIY waste at recycling centres and a national anti-litter campaign  .


## Campaigning


**Crispin Truman**, who has led the Churches Conservation Trust for more than a decade, has been appointed the new chief executive of CPRE . He said: *“To have the chance to lead the premier charity working to protect and enhance rural England is fantastic. I’m looking forward to getting to know the thousands of volunteers, members and professionals who make CPRE what it is: working day in day out to keep our countryside beautiful for all.”*

Crispin takes up his post on 4 September.

**Neil Sinden** is the new director of CPRE London. Neil has extensive experience of environmental campaigning and urban regeneration, including at the CPRE national office. He said:

*“CPRE London performs a vital role and I look forward to working with trustees, staff and members to make London a greener city.”*

**Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?** CPRE London’s AGM will feature the launch of its Green London Map and a discussion on the future for green spaces in London. The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, 25 May at 6pm .

**CPRE London** has launched a fundraising appeal to support its work exposing and responding to threats to green spaces .

## The CPRE London eBulletin

**Editorial.** The CPRE London eBulletin is issued most months. Any views expressed are those of the editor and contributors, not of any part of CPRE. Andy Boddington, Editor, [cpnews@andybodderson.co.uk](mailto:cpnews@andybodderson.co.uk).

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