



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. There are measures the Government can take before pursuing proposals for a new round of nuclear power stations or other options for energy generation. It's wrong to focus the entire debate on the supply side alone. CPRE believes Government should prioritise measures to curb the growth in energy demand, encourage energy efficiency and promote a wide range of renewable technologies.

Key energy issues

To avert the worst effects of climate change (in the UK – more extreme weather events, higher temperatures, heavier rainfall and greater flooding), the Government intends through the Climate Change Bill to set a target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60% before 2050. It is also establishing a Committee on Climate Change which will look at whether the target should be increased to 80%. It has signed up to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% before 2012. The Government aims to generate 15% of our energy from renewable sources by 2020. Renewable energy accounted for only 3.6 per cent of electricity generation in the UK in 2004. Nuclear power plants generate radioactive waste whilst CO₂ and other greenhouse gases look set to continue increasing unless there are major changes in policy across a range of sectors.

Key energy issues for the countryside

Open cast coal mining, large power stations and overhead power lines spoil the beauty of landscapes and the tranquillity of the countryside. Climate change will alter the countryside as we know it. Government does not take sufficient account of the negative effects which some renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind turbines in sensitive landscapes, can have on the countryside. There could be a loss of agricultural land for food crops and increased traffic levels from more energy crops, such as corn grown specifically for fuel.

What CPRE wants

- Low-carbon development to 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 for each sector of the economy: in order to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions.
- Support for 'micro-generation' technologies: generation of low-carbon heat and power, such as solar water heating, PV panels, wood fuel boilers, air and ground source heat pumps, can do a lot to reduce reliance on major energy infrastructure.
- A better planning system: to allow for appropriately scaled development of a wider range of renewable technologies, including offshore wind.
- More power lines going underground 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.
- Policies to tackle CO₂ emissions from air transport and shipping.
- Acceptable, long-term solutions to the safety and disposal of nuclear waste.

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 micro-generation technologies.

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