



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

CPRE's policy on roads and bypasses

CPRE's position

Traffic and congestion are on the increase, bringing demand for new roads and bypasses. New roads may bring short-term relief, but the cost to the countryside can be unacceptably high. They rarely solve underlying problems, and new schemes should only be considered as a last resort. CPRE believes there are better solutions to our transport problems. The Government should pursue policies that reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and promote attractive alternative transport solutions.

Key road and bypass issues

Some road building schemes have freed villages and improved dangerous routes. Over the last decade, however, a consensus has developed in transport policy that new road building does not provide a lasting answer to traffic and congestion problems. Despite this, a major road building programme is still being planned at local, regional and national levels. The Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements contains plans for more than 100 new or widened roads, 78 local schemes are also in the pipeline. Road building on this scale will cause irrevocable damage to the countryside, without solving the underlying problem of transport growth.

Key road and bypass issues for the countryside

New roads carve through the landscape, destroying habitats, rural tranquillity and the ancient patterns of the countryside. Some of the schemes currently under consideration will bring lasting damage to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other protected habitats. The effects of increased road lighting and traffic noise on rural tranquillity go well beyond the immediate route. New road corridors also bring pressure for more development on greenfield sites. Crucially, they also increase reliance on cars and undermine investment in alternative transport options, a particular problem in rural areas.

What CPRE wants

- Transport policies to reduce the demand for car travel and provide attractive alternatives, promoting access to jobs, shops and leisure by walking, cycling and public transport.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Government's road building programme considering the full effect on the countryside, exploring alternative options.
- Road building only as a last resort after other options (lorry routing, speed reduction and investment in public transport) have been fully considered.
- Transport decisions to be consistent with local and national planning policy. New roads should not encourage sprawl or increased development.
- Road building schemes not to deprive other, more worthwhile transport initiatives of scarce resources.
- New roads designed, routed and built to the highest standards using tunnelling, landscaping, reduced lighting, quiet road surfaces and other ways to minimise impact.
- New measures to manage the demand for car use such as re-allocating road space for public transport, cyclists or pedestrians.

What people can do

1. Contact their local authority and ask to see a copy of its Local Transport Plan, which sets out proposals for the next five years, and let them have your views on this.
2. Press their local authority or the Highways Agency to explore all the alternatives to any planned road building schemes.

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