



CPRE's policy on transport

CPRE's position

Cars have opened up opportunities for living and working in rural areas and for visiting the countryside. Previously remote places are now within easy reach of urban areas, and the rural population has grown as a result. These increased opportunities come at a cost, however: speeding traffic, noise, pollution and new roads threaten the landscape and character of rural areas. The environmental impact of transport has become a pressing issue, and a new approach to transport policy is necessary.

Key transport issues

Traffic cuts through communities, breaking up social contact, while speeding vehicles cause accidents and death. Current policy does not reflect the social and environmental cost of different modes of transport. Unfortunately, the Government's Transport White Paper sees traffic growth as inevitable in a growing economy. Despite isolated improvements in public transport, car dependency is still increasing, with rural traffic set to rise by 30% by 2010, meaning more road building and widening. A sustainable transport strategy requires better spatial planning, reducing the need to travel and ensuring new developments are easily accessible by foot, bike or public transport.

Key transport issues for the countryside

New roads have scarred the landscape and 'improvements' to country lanes have stripped them of their rural character. Traffic noise and pollution disturb the tranquillity of the countryside, and rural congestion and traffic jams are becoming a reality in busy commuter areas across the country. Speeding traffic has changed the feel of many villages, and there are more fatal crashes on rural roads. While cars have improved access to the countryside for many, the 18% of rural households without a car have become more isolated, as other transport options have declined in many areas, while local shops and services have closed down.

What CPRE wants

- New development to focus on urban areas, reducing the need for rural travel, and to be supported by high quality public transport services.
- Protection of existing rural services such as schools, shops and post offices.
- Priority for sustainable transport options – walking and cycling routes should be safe and attractive.
- Improvements in the frequency, cost, and quality of rural public transport with complementary measures to control car use (parking and congestion charges, road use levies, reduced Vehicle Excise Duty for environmentally-friendly vehicles).
- Measures to improve road safety and reduce speeding traffic including lower speed limits (e.g. 30mph for all villages and 40mph for country lanes), sensitively designed traffic calming and designated Quiet Lanes.
- Sensitive design of traffic management measures. 'Clutter audits' to remove unnecessary road and street signs which are urbanising the countryside.
- Minimise the environmental impact of moving freight by increasing rail use, improving efficiency and redirecting lorries onto more suitable routes.
- No more major road building in rural areas.

What people can do

1. Scrutinise local plans and planning applications, and challenge proposed developments that will increase rural traffic.
2. Help keep local shops and services running by using them wherever possible.