



POLICY STATEMENT

OUR APPROACH TO ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS

This statement sets out the approach of CPRE Gloucestershire to energy policy and to certain major projects which may affect the county.

CPRE's primary concern is with the impact of energy generation and use on the countryside. While we will assess each proposal for energy development within Gloucestershire, and outside the county but affecting Gloucestershire, for its impact on the landscape and environment, there are a number of principles which will guide our assessment, including addressing the need to reduce CO₂ emissions in response to climate change.

Energy Conservation

The first priority should be to minimise energy use. We believe that the planning system should require high energy efficiency in all new buildings or conversion of existing buildings even if this entails higher building costs. Higher building costs can be recouped over time through lower running costs. We also support initiatives to encourage better insulation of existing buildings and more efficient use of energy.

Renewable energy

The Government has set national targets for electricity generation from renewable sources. The current regional target for the south west is for a minimum of 11-15% of electricity production from renewable sources by 2010, with the share for Gloucestershire of 40 – 50 megawatts of installed capacity. A separate target for heat from renewable sources will be set in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

CPRE supports the sensitive development of renewable energy in Gloucestershire and has published *Renewable energy: a position statement from CPRE Gloucestershire Branch*. Copies are available on request or can be viewed on our website – cpre.org.uk

Major energy projects to generate electricity

There are currently no major electricity generating plants in the county. Any proposals would be considered for their impact on Gloucestershire's countryside and rural communities and we would respond accordingly. Across the UK, further development of gas fired power stations seems likely in the short term to increase security of energy supplies. We are not aware of plans for any of these to be in Gloucestershire.

CPRE is not expressing a view on the economics or safety of nuclear energy as these are matters of national policy. However, were the Government to decide to proceed with nuclear stations in or close to the county, it is our view that it would be best to re-develop the existing site at Berkeley if this is technically feasible and environmentally compatible with a Severn barrage.

We are supporting calls for further feasibility studies into a tidal barrage across the River Severn (Brean Down to Lavernock Point) which it is claimed could generate up to 6% of the nation's electricity needs, together with studies into alternative, more modest, options for harnessing power from the Severn. From the outline information available we consider the landscape impact of a barrage could be acceptable. There are, however, many technically difficult environmental questions to be answered and we would need to be assured that the plans did not have unacceptable environmental impacts. We will monitor progress of the studies and make representations when the issues become clearer, working closely with the other CPRE branches affected.

Biomass production for transport fuels

Biomass crops are being grown increasingly for electricity generation and heat (woodfuel, short rotation coppice, Miscanthus) (covered in our statement on renewable energy) and for transport fuels and industry. Crops such as oil seed rape and wheat can be grown for production of biodiesel and alcohols for industry. We are likely to see an expansion of crops grown for this purpose with the setting of government targets for an increasing proportion of biodiesel in roads fuels. CPRE does not anticipate significant environmental problems associated with the growing of more crops for bio transport fuels which will provide a valuable new income stream to farmers.

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**CPRE Gloucestershire Policy Statements are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.
They should be read as a set**