

A Strategic Vision for Hampshire

A Campaign for a Better Future



The countryside charity
Hampshire

Look beyond the horizon

Our Strategic Vision for Hampshire is a call for us all to join in the debate about how we manage pressure to expand, while protecting our precious and fragile environment. The land we have is a finite supply and all of it serves a purpose. Once it is changed, it cannot be recovered.

How we value the countryside and our historic towns is the key to the future. You can join the debate and help make a difference for the future and the legacy we leave for future generations.

"Hampshire's environment is a unique and precious asset. It contributes to the UK's food supply, supports a major tourism industry, has two National Parks and an incredibly diverse range of wildlife habitats.

"However, today Hampshire is facing many challenges including population growth, climate change and the ending of membership of the European Union. At the same time, there are huge pressures to grow our economy and build more houses. We must plan effectively, fully valuing our countryside and environment.

"We live in one of the world's most advanced and prosperous countries and we must plan growth with responsibility to our communities both urban and rural and our delicate environment.

"More unplanned and uncoordinated sprawl is not an acceptable way ahead: this is your chance to join the debate about how we shape a legacy to be proud of."

Dee Haas, Chairman, CPRE Hampshire

"Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has long promoted our vision for a Living Landscape where declines in wildlife are reversed through the creation of bigger, better and more joined up places for nature which are also good for people and the economy.

"Hampshire is famed for its fantastic countryside and beautiful landscapes but sadly many of our birds, butterflies, wildflowers and natural habitats are becoming rarer, threatened by being confined to small, isolated and fragmented nature reserves.

"Ongoing development pressure and demand for resources is damaging our natural environment and pushing wildlife to the margins. It is no longer enough just to protect what we have left; we need a strategic approach where more space for nature is created and broken ecological networks are repaired. If every development delivered significant net gain for biodiversity and restored ecological quality, this would be a step in the right direction.

"The Trust's vision has much in common with CPRE's vision and we look forward to working together to call for a strategic approach to planning and development that invests in Hampshire's vital natural assets and delivers a sustainable future for nature and people."

Debbie Tann, Chief Executive, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



A Strategic Vision for Hampshire?

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (Hampshire) champions much more than just the protection of the countryside. We believe that protecting all the things that make Hampshire unique will best serve the future of our county, its historic towns and cities, its communities and its economy. As the population of Britain expands, the tranquil, attractive and uncrowded landscapes that Hampshire still offers are becoming increasingly important national assets.

We believe that by planning our future with a strategic vision, taking a balanced approach to growth and the needs of all of us who live and work in Hampshire, we can ensure the protection of our environment as well as our future prosperity.

The demise of structure plans for the county and regional plans for the South East removed the strategic framework for managing the impact of new development pressures. They have been replaced by plans and strategies of a number of organisations including all the local authorities, PUSH, two National Park authorities and two local enterprise partnerships.

None of those plans provides an overview of the economy, housing, infrastructure and the environment over a geographical area of sufficient size to provide real or spatial options for development, improved infrastructure, green infrastructure or communities.

We say we need a strategic vision that brings our Local Authorities together to plan for growth in a better way, respecting the distinctiveness of our towns and cities and the countryside that makes Hampshire special.

Tell us if you agree: hantsvision@cprehamshire.org.uk.





What makes Hampshire worth protecting?

We are lucky in Hampshire to have a stunning range of landscapes, habitats, historic features, villages and small towns. With two National Parks, three Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, chalk streams of international renown, areas designated for nature conservation and stretches of protected coastline, we have a lot to be proud of.

A major part of Hampshire's attraction is our 'ordinary' countryside, outside the nationally designated areas; much of it high quality. It is all too easy to overlook the benefits of this countryside, loved and enjoyed by town and country dwellers alike.

All these landscapes provide vital ecosystem services such as clean water, clean air, production of food, habitats for wildlife including vital pollinators and space for recreation. It is our "natural capital".

None of it is just 'spare' land.

Our future prosperity and well-being lies in these countryside resources. We need to get the message to government that a balance must be reached between growing our economy and preserving our natural environment for future generations. The special character of Hampshire can only be protected if future development is managed to take account of its full environmental impact.





A lack of vision?

We believe that current plans and policies for Hampshire put economic benefit before Hampshire's people and our natural environment. We need a strategic vision to work towards.

The Government has now issued even higher numbers for new housing, which, when added to existing allocations, will see the number of households in Hampshire rise by nearly 10% in less than 10 years: almost equivalent to building another Portsmouth.

These targets are in excess of the demographic projections of Hampshire's own requirements by 18,000 dwellings. This would mean a city larger than Winchester being built over and above our local needs.

At the current rate of building, it will take years to build the housing sites already granted permission. Meanwhile councils are being forced to allocate even more of our countryside for development to satisfy government targets.

We think it makes good sense to integrate our economic and housing growth with protecting our key assets in Hampshire. This needs a strategic vision for Hampshire.

Housing - the big issue

Unrealistic and excessive housing targets totally reliant on a few national house builders are simply not delivering the kind of affordable houses Hampshire's families need. This approach has given rise to developments on greenfield sites, consisting mainly of large houses at low densities, which are not serving the needs of local communities and are damaging our natural environment.

Developing disused sites, converting unused commercial property into housing, regenerating areas of low quality housing, and focusing on providing affordable accommodation would make a substantial difference. Higher density housing in urban areas, such as terraced streets or squares where communities can flourish, are vital in providing housing for all. However, essential infrastructure and facilities such as public transport, health and education services, high-speed broadband, water and waste management are crucial.

We should be aiming to build communities and homes, rather than just building houses.

Do you agree we should:

- stop urban sprawl by prioritising brownfield sites where appropriate?
- link improved infrastructure with housing and jobs to support the needs of local people?
- introduce a new Green Belt to prevent Southampton, Portsmouth and Winchester merging, prompt urban regeneration and prevent sprawl?
- invest in the best design and planning for new and growing communities?
- have direct government investment in affordable and social housing?
- strengthen neighbourhood planning so that local communities can have a real say about the level and location of development?





Growing Hampshire - joined up thinking

A successful Hampshire needs the right infrastructure. We should plan this before anything else, not try to adjust it later in the hope that it will cope with new demands. A strategic vision for the whole of Hampshire, coupled with better investment would allow us to plan better for a sustainable infrastructure.

Our current solution of more roads for more cars is no longer sustainable as evidence shows new roads lead only to more traffic and congestion. Whether travelling by road or rail, using the Internet or mobile network, having local support services such as schools, shops and hospitals, investment in reliability and availability must remain at the top of the list, for every community both urban and rural.

Traditionally, our larger towns and cities such as Aldershot, Andover, Basingstoke, Winchester, and the South Coast Hampshire cities are the hubs of our business activity and support services along with some of the bigger market towns. Growth that keeps these urban areas vibrant is vital, but this must be planned to prevent damaging sprawl and congestion. We must retain their distinctiveness.

Our vision is to create and sustain a well-planned beautiful environment which will support Hampshire's varied successful business sectors.

Do you agree we should:

- develop and invest in an innovative, bold, new transport strategy to ensure we make traffic congestion and deprivation a thing of the past?
- improve the provision of vital infrastructure in new and regenerated developments such as public transport, doctors' surgeries and schools?
- work together to keep a thriving tourism industry and make sure an unspoilt 'green' Hampshire is available to future generations?
- develop and expand our businesses in a sustainable way and always value the natural environment at least equally with economic considerations?
- make the balanced use of water resources a very high priority?
- protect rural tranquillity including our inspiring dark skies and dark landscapes?





Rural businesses and agriculture

Diverse farms, both small and large, must be viable and able to invest in their soils, while protecting and enhancing the rural environment. Farmers need a fair price for their produce, all of which should be used and not wasted.

Our agricultural land must be valued for its contribution to the beauty of our countryside, as well as its practical benefits such as flood alleviation. We must protect the land where we grow our food – and recognise that the differing grades of farmland support different produce, making it all important. We have a real opportunity to set an agricultural agenda that will be a model of best practice.

Do you agree we should:

- protect and stop the loss of our agricultural land of all qualities?
- enable our farmers to have economic viability, investing in their businesses, improving their soils, getting a fair price whilst protecting the rural environment and encouraging wildlife?
- look to diversify rural businesses sympathetically to our natural and historic heritage?
- always value our land and countryside properly, recognising its many roles such as flood alleviation?
- enhance access for leisure and education, increasing appreciation of the value of the land?





Our environment - at the heart of everything

Once an environment is changed, for instance by development, building roads, pollution or water extraction, it is changed forever. When a green field is built on, it cannot be replaced.

National and local conservation, environmental and heritage bodies throughout the country have been established to monitor, advise, lobby and influence everyone from the general public to our key decision makers. Our society is dynamic and changes brought about by issues such as population increase and climate change must be embraced. But we say the views of these bodies need to play more of a key part in all decisions taken in the future.

Our vision says it is common sense to listen to and respect the arguments.



How do we realise this vision for Hampshire?

Our countryside, landscape and historic environment are at the heart of protecting our future prosperity. Our land is not an endless resource that can be squandered. Conserving, maintaining and improving these assets is essential if we are to prosper. This takes collective planning and a strategic approach.

A broad church of our politicians, business leaders, farmers, conservation bodies, academics, service providers and all our key decision makers need to play a full part in all decisions taken in the future, and not be left on the sidelines. But more than that, communities must also be involved with meaningful, well thought through and responsible consultation.

Our young people must have a vital say for this is their future we are dealing with.

All councillors, Members of Parliament, Local Enterprise Partnerships and business leaders must ensure meaningful consultations take place and our collective views are taken into full account. It is a common sense approach to have a shared and agreed long-term strategy.



Sign up to the Strategic Vision for Hampshire

Let's make a better and more prosperous Hampshire a reality.

The Strategic Vision for Hampshire is about bringing our collective common sense and local focus back into planning our future to allow Hampshire to grow with the housing and jobs we need, whilst protecting our natural environment. Our businesses and communities can flourish and we can add value not only to ourselves but to the future of Britain.

It will take a change of approach to implement, but we must demand these challenges are met with well-considered, robust and sustainable long term plans.

You can be a part of the campaign by telling us you agree with The Strategic Vision for Hampshire.

- **Go online at www.cprehampshire.org.uk/hantsvision to register your support.**
- **Write to your MP or Councillor, become a member of CPRE or give a donation to support this campaign.**



The countryside charity Hampshire

A Strategic Vision for Hampshire: A Campaign for a Better Future

This brochure can be read with the more detailed 'Hampshire Strategic Vision' document available on our website: www.cprehampshire.org.uk

01962 841897

@cpre_hampshire