



## CPRE Rutland News Update – April 2021

To all members

Since my previous newsletter, CPRE, both nationally and locally, has continued to operate mainly online, with some notable achievements, as described below. There has also been a significant development in the evolution of the Rutland Local Plan.

### Rutland Local Plan

The draft Rutland Local Plan has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, prior to the Public Inquiry into its soundness and legality. The Inquiry had been expected to take place during the summer, but the decision last month by Rutland County Council (RCC) to reject the offer of a grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) has clearly put a major spanner in the works. We understand that the Council is now exploring alternative ways to make up the funding shortfall and the possibility of modifying or even withdrawing the draft local plan, all of which will be considered by the full Council, possibly in May.

For some four years now, Rutland County Council has been pursuing a strategy supporting a substantial but largely unwelcome development at St George's Barracks. The decision to reject the grant from the HIF, funds which were critical to the plan, demonstrates that the Council's strategy was not only high risk in terms of costs, timescales and its dependence on the soundness of the new Local Plan, but also likely to fail due to the lack of support, not only from the public at large, but also from within the Council itself; we understand that the decision was based to a large extent on the risks inherent in the Council's strategy and this was the main thrust of my deputation to the Council meeting last month (a copy is on our web-site<sup>1</sup>). We sincerely hope that this heralds a new approach, in which an agreed vision for the future of the county is developed first (see below), and a revised local plan is then produced to deliver against that vision; we have recommended this approach to the Chief Executive.

### Vision for Rutland

The Future Rutland Conversation has now begun, with RCC aiming to collect views on a range of relevant issues from around the county during April and May, before launching its vision statement in September. Although we have indicated that we are keen to support this initiative, we have advised the Council that we would like some clarity on the way ahead for the local plan before committing to any particular course of action. It remains our intention, nonetheless, to produce a vision statement for Rutland to reflect CPRE's ambitions for the county, and preferably one aligned with the views of RCC. We would also hope to join this up with the work by CPRE nationally on its visions for planning and for the countryside.

### Rutland Design Guide

Last month, RCC issued for consultation a new Design Guide for building in the county. This was, in fact, a joint effort with South Kesteven District Council, although it was not clear why such a joint approach was necessary. We commented on this and other features of the report and await the next steps.

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1 See: <https://cprerutland.uk/deputation-to-rutland-county-council-meeting-22nd-march-2021/>

## **CPRE Transport Initiatives**

Last year, CPRE issued a report<sup>2</sup> entitled 'Transport deserts', which laid out the significant reductions evident in rural public transport in many areas of the country, together with the impact this is having. This was followed earlier this year by a further report<sup>3</sup> - 'Every village, every hour' -, looking more specifically at the shortage of bus services, and drawing comparisons with the much more useful provisions in some other European countries where many smaller settlements are guaranteed services pretty much all day long every day of the week. The report was formally launched at a public meeting on 23rd March at which Baroness Vere, Minister for Buses, amongst others, spoke. There is widespread support for much better services and growing realisation of the wider benefits this could bring; RCC has expressed keen interest in following up on this.

## **Web-Site**

Copies of the Rutland Round, our book about the circular walk around the footpaths of the county, are now available through our new web-site, at <https://cprerutland.uk/shop/>. We are also planning to make our Housing Needs Survey available this way.

## **Annual General Meeting**

In view of the ongoing restrictions, we have had to move the date for the AGM once again, and it is now planned for Saturday afternoon, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The new national Chairman, Simon Murray, has agreed to attend on this revised date. Further details will be provided in due course. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the meeting.

In the meantime, if you would like any further information on the issues highlighted above, please let me or any other member of the committee know.

Malcolm Touchin  
Chair, CPRE Rutland  
April 2021

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2 See: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CPRE-Transport-Deserts-A-summary-Apr-2020.pdf>

3 See: [https://www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CPRE\\_Every-village-every-hour\\_report.pdf](https://www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CPRE_Every-village-every-hour_report.pdf)