



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
LONDON

Press Release

2 PAGES

For immediate publication

NEW THAMES GATEWAY CHIEF MUST TRANSFORM PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Date

15 August 2006

CPRE[1] has welcomed today's announcement by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that the Government has appointed Judith Armitt as the new Chief Executive of the Thames Gateway [2]. CPRE, however, highlights the major public relations challenge to be faced.

CPRE strongly supports the regeneration of the Thames Gateway because, if successful, it will make available large amounts of currently derelict urban land back into use, helping to relieve pressure for urban sprawl throughout south-eastern England.

Nigel Kersey, CPRE's Thames Gateway Project Leader said:

'We welcomed Ms Armitt to her new role. The ability to transform public opinion will be the key test of the new Chief Executive's success. The area needs to attract middle-class families and senior business executives to get the economy going and to achieve lasting regeneration.'

'A public relations campaign must be backed up by real progress in achieving a high quality urban and rural environment, good quality family housing, efficient transport networks and public investment in local amenities and services

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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Registered charity number 802622

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- [1] CPRE London is the London Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. CPRE exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We promote positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside to ensure change values its natural and built environment. Our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen. We have 59,000 supporters, a branch in every county, nine regional groups, over 200 local groups and a national office in London. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning. Our President is Sir Max Hastings.

Improving the economy of the Thames Gateway is a major pre-requisite for success in order to stimulate the property market and make urban regeneration viable. However, the economy cannot improve until companies can be confident that they have local access to a workforce with the right technical and managerial skills. At present, that is lacking in the Thames Gateway. A recent report by the Institute of Public Policy Research (*Gateway People*, 4 January 2006), for example, showed that individuals living in London who could afford to choose where they might move to where generally very sceptical of moving to the Thames Gateway. That report received extensive media coverage. A report published today by management consultants Hornagold & Hills (*Thames Gateway - Laying the blue line*) endorses those findings

- [2] DCLG News Release 2006/0081: *'New chief executive for Thames Gateway announced'* (14 August 2006) is at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002882&PressNoticeID=2227>