



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
LONDON

Press Release

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For immediate publication

NEW THAMES GATEWAY CHIEF MUST TRANSFORM PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

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CPRE[1] has welcomed today's announcement by planning minister, Yvette Cooper, that the Government will appoint a new 'chief executive figure' to take strategic responsibility for the redevelopment of the Thames Gateway[2], but 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:

'A major public relations campaign is required to attract families with choices and senior business executives to the Thames Gateway. These are the people that are needed if regeneration is to succeed, but they are sceptical of the area's down market reputation. The ability to transform public opinion will be the key test of the new chief executive's success.'

'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] Yvette Cooper is quoted in an article today by Andrew Woodcock, Chief Political Correspondent of the Press Association as saying "*we have plans underway to advertise for a new chief executive figure in February to drive forward the next phase of the [Thames Gateway] programme and co-ordinate the public and private sector investment across the area.*" The statement was made in response to the publication today of a report. by management consultants Hornagold & Hills (*Thames Gateway - Laying the blue line*).