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Planning – a real test for modern public engagement

Rhion Jones
Programme Director
The Consultation Institute

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Our modern planning system

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How to make something look better ...

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The trick is to take better decisions ...

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Build **B**
Absolutely **A**
Nothing **N**
Anywhere **A**
Near **N**
Anyone ! **A**

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Debate is not new...!

The Chronicle October 13, 2004

NEWS

Protesters unite in a show of strength

by Helen Cartwright

COMMUNITY LIFE
Acton Bridge, Weaverham

Campaigners urge residents to sign petition against substation

Let's show the council how village really feels

By RICHARD BABINGTON

Mobile phone masts blamed over the vanishing sparrows

By Daniel Martin
Health Reporter

MOBILE phone masts have been blamed for the disappearance of house sparrows from our gardens.

Experts believe electromagnetic radiation from the masts may disrupt the birds' navigation systems, so they are increasingly avoiding areas with high numbers of the structures.

The sparrow population peaked at about 13 million in the 1970s – but say there are no

could be swamping the earth's magnetic field, which the birds use to find directions.

Phone networks have also been blamed recently for a collapse in the country's bee population.

Earlier this year the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said sparrow numbers have halved since it carried out its first survey of gardens in 1979.

Last chance to air your view

Report by Mark Payne
mark.payne@bedsnews.com

12-week gipsy consultation is coming to end

TIME is running out for residents to have their say on how many extra gipsy and traveller pitches are needed in the district.

A 12-week public consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly comes to an end on July 31 and is recommending up to 91 more pitches be provided across Bedfordshire and Luton.

But whatever the outcome of the exercise, the final decision for how many and where the extra pitches will go will be made by Mid Beds District Council, which has been carrying out its own gipsy review.

EERA has outlined two options for the distribution of new pitches. The first would see them created in local council areas where research shows there is a need for them, while the second urges a more equal wider distribution with a minimum of 15 in each local council area.

Both options, however, would advocate 22 additional pitches in Mid Beds and 39 in South Beds.

Coun John Reynolds, chair of EERA's regional planning panel, said: "This issue affects many people in Bedfordshire and Luton and I would urge both the settled and the travelling communities to make their views known before the deadline.

"The responses will be used to refine the proposals for the number of additional pitches needed in each local authority area, which will be published for further public consultation in early 2008."

and 26 in South Beds.

Mid Beds District Council launched its own gipsy traveller Issues and Options document in April.

A spokesman said: "The current EERA consultation suggests an additional two pitches for Mid Beds above the 20 that we had already identified for our district in the Beds and Luton Gipsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

"Consultation on our Issues and Options document has closed and we will issue our Preferred Options document in February 2008, which will take into account EERA's recommendation of 22 pitches for Mid Beds."

To submit your views to EERA visit *www.eera.gov.uk*, email *planning@eera.gov.uk* or phone 01284 729407.

■ GIPSIES who took up home at derelict units in Biggleswade have been moved.

The six caravans set up camp next to Carpets For Less in London Road two weeks ago. This week police managed to contact the landowner and have them moved on.

But they have not gone far, they are now at Bells Brook and officers are in talks with Mid Beds District

Consultation a sham, claim development campaigners

MSPs 'minded' to drop right of appeal plans

ROB CRILLY and ROBBIE DINWOODIE

MINISTERS have been accused by environmentalists of holding a sham consultation following reports that the Scot-

sultation, like the planning system itself, is yet another unequal, unfair process which is weighted against them.

"The minister desperately needs to make every effort to assure communities this is a

Since then, industry organisations have conducted a fierce lobbying campaign.

Yesterday, Ms Curran denied the plan was to be shelved. "I can categorically state no decision has been made on the

COMMUNITY LIFE

Petition considered against substation

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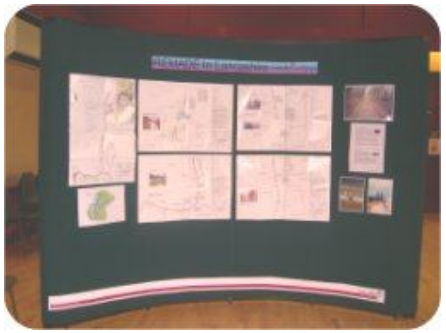

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Major projects are not new ....

....but people are more sensitive to their impact

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1866; the building of St Pancras station

*……**a loud outburst of indignation** was raised by the parishioners, especially those living in the immediate neighbourhood. They considered that a "horrible desecration of the dead" had taken place, and such as ought not to be tolerated, or even justified, by any Act of Parliament. They accordingly decided that the matter should be made as public as possible, and that it should be brought prominently to the notice of the authorities in view **to putting a stop to the proceedings of the Midland Railway.***

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1866; the building of St Pancras station

"However, the desecration of the St. Pancras churchyard was as nothing compared to ***the demolition of the hundreds of houses*** *of the poorer working classes in Agar Town and Somers Town, occasioned by the extension of the Midland Railway. "*

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140 Years later!

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King's Cross protest wins its day in court

MIRA BAR-HILLEL
Property Correspondent

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Page 7

KX bulldozers poised to roll

by RICHARD OSLEY

THE battle for the King's Cross railway lands intensified on Friday when developers said they would press ahead with plans to demolish historic buildings despite a High Court challenge.

Solicitors for Argent sent a legal letter to objectors to the redevelopment saying that the project cannot be delayed further.

The company has asked Camden Council for "enabling" powers that would allow it to knock down the Stanley North building, one of the old industrial blocks that conservationists still hope can be saved through their appeal.

The letter was sent just two days after campaign group King's Cross Think Again (KXTA) launched proceedings in the High Court.

It is demanding a judicial review into the way Camden Council handled Argent's planning applications for land behind King's Cross and St Pancras stations.

Objectors say councillors were misinformed and effectively told there were no grounds to turn down Argent's proposals when they were discussed at the Town Hall in November last year.

Privately, campaigners have long feared Argent will kick off the redevelopment with an "opening flourish" that would involve critical demolition work which all sides are aware could hardly be reversed. Along with the Stanley North building, conservationists want the Culross Building to be protected.

Argent's latest action sparked frantic phone calls and emails between developers, objectors and the council on Friday afternoon. The possibility of a court injunction to stop the bulldozers was even raised with senior officials at the Town Hall.

While it is now accepted Argent cannot begin work before it is given the all-clear from the council, objectors remain concerned that the permission could be granted before any judicial review could be heard in the Royal Courts of Justice.

Michael Edwards, principal spokesman for KXTA, said: "We are obviously concerned that these buildings are not demolished before the court action begins – that would be a disaster."

A council press official said Argent's latest request would be considered in the same way as all planning applications and could be decided by a panel of councillors.

– See Forum on page 24

Argent's ambition: flats in the gash

result of misleading legal advice given
committee.

The committee, they argue, might
wise have voted against the plans
grounds, among others, that they
inadequate affordable homes.

H&H SERIES SEPTEMBER 14 2006
www.hamhigh.co.uk

LONDON THIS WEEK

Rubbish forum meets again

CITY Hall is hosting a talk on old rubbish on September 29.

The eighth North London Recycling Forum will meet at the London

COMMUNITY groups have started their legal fight against Camden Council's decision to approve developer Argent's plans to revamp King's Cross.

In June the Ham&High exclusively revealed several groups had met to discuss the possibility of court action.

And now they have formally vowed to take the council to court unless it amends the plans, approved in March.

The council was served with a letter on Monday from Earth Rights Solicitors in Essex.

It states: "We make clear that should planning permission be granted without further consideration of the issues raised in this letter, our clients intend to challenge that decision in the courts."

Court case threat for King's Cross blueprint

As the Channel Tunnel Rail Link work enters its final phase, residents are joining forces to put the brakes on the King's Cross redevelopment.

Katie Davies reports

Right: Campaigners hoping to halt Argent's plans.
Picture by Jonathan Goldberg

TIMELINE

- **March 8 and 9 2006:** Camden Council grants outline planning permission subject to final approval.
- **April 2006:** Islington Council approves its portion of the development but changes housing allocation to provide more family housing.
- **This week:** Camden councillors are due to meet to discuss implications of Islington's decision.
- **October 5 2006:** Camden is due to give final approval. This will be followed by a series of more detailed planning applications. Community groups have three months to apply for a judicial review hearing.
- **2007:** Channel Tunnel Rail Link is completed and work starts.
- **2019-2023:** Argent expects to finally complete the massive redevelopment.

Evening Standard
Monday 11th September 2006
MIDDAY EDITION
WEST END FINAL

King's Cross group's legal threat over £2bn project

Mira Bar-Hillel
Planning Correspondent

COMMUNITY groups near King's Cross have told Camden Council to reconsider the permission it gave for the controversial £2 billion redevelopment of land north of King's Cross or face a legal challenge.

Lawyers, including one from Cherie Blair's Matrix chambers, are demanding that Camden look again at the provisional decision to grant developer Argent outline planning consents for the areas behind King's Cross and St Pancras stations.

If the council refuses to change its mind, the objectors will go to judicial review in an effort to overturn the decision.

Argent is proposing to build 1,845 flats, 400 student units, offices, shops, a primary school, and health and fitness facilities. More than 20 historic buildings will be refurbished and some of the new homes will be built in four listed gasholders.

The King's Cross Railway Lands Group said the plans, which were approved last outline in spite of 11 serious building issues, amounted to a "titanic shame for the developers" and should have been examined by a professional planning inspector.

They claim the scheme does not contain enough affordable housing, that Camden failed to consider property the implications to listed buildings and conservation areas, and that the "development" environmental study was flawed.

Chairman Michael Edwards, who is leading the legal challenge, said: "Construction cannot begin before late 2007, when the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is finished. This means the scheme, which was pushed through with unnecessary haste, can be changed without undue impact."

Legal threat to King's Cross £2bn project

Mira Bar-Hillel
Planning Correspondent

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The perennial debate

"...the destructive whinge culture

The public is encouraged to object to all applications in any meretricious way it pleases regardless of the facts."

Piers Gough, Architect

"I cannot think of a single part of London which has not had to be defended against over-development by locals pleading the public good and having to spend their own money to do so."

Simon Jenkins, Commentator

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From BD online; The architects website'

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"Developers and petulant architects wanting people to get out of their way are the real problem."

Common sentiments

"It is THEIR coercion that is the steamrollering, snarling and greed-driven problem"…….

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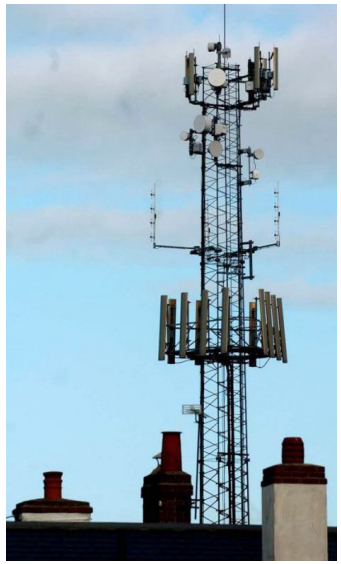
Infrastructure Projects & the new Planning Act



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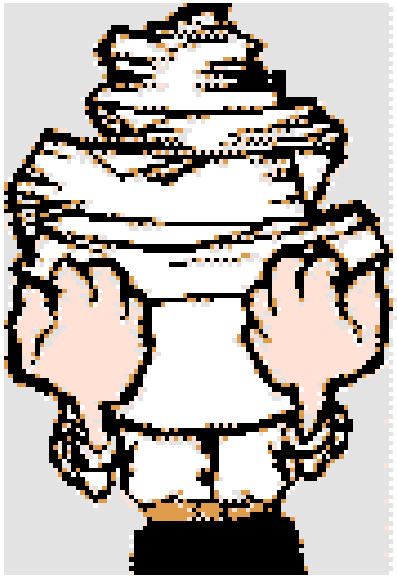
The two key elements of the Planning Act



National Policy Statements (NPS)

Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)

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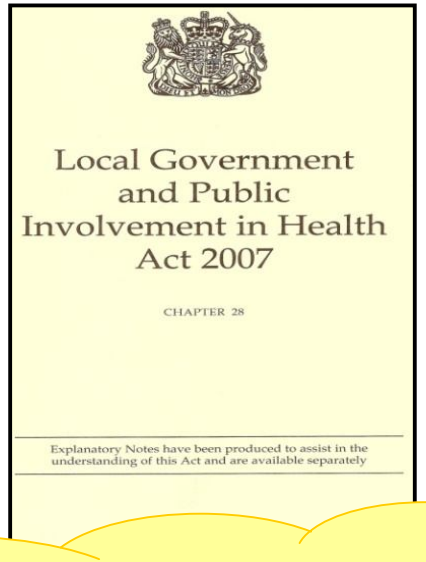
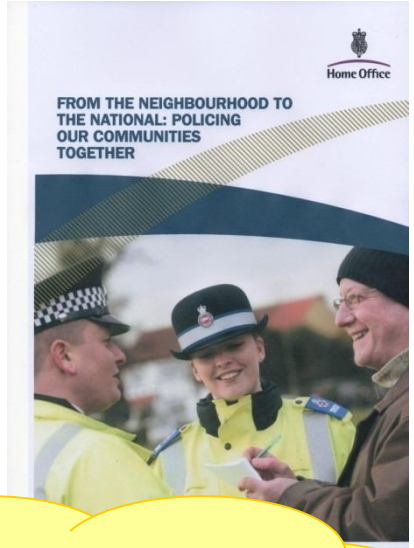
Conflicting messages ....





Democracy should flow around us like oxygen

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.....and comes on top of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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Championing involvement "empowers" people to campaign, and protest

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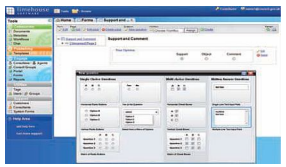
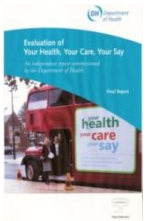
All the engagement methods in the world won't impress a public if it doesn't think it is being heard...





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Summary

- No danger of the public's voice being silenced *on individual cases*
- ...but by then, the die may be cast
- UNLESS we have *extensive and inclusive consultation* on **National Policy Statements**

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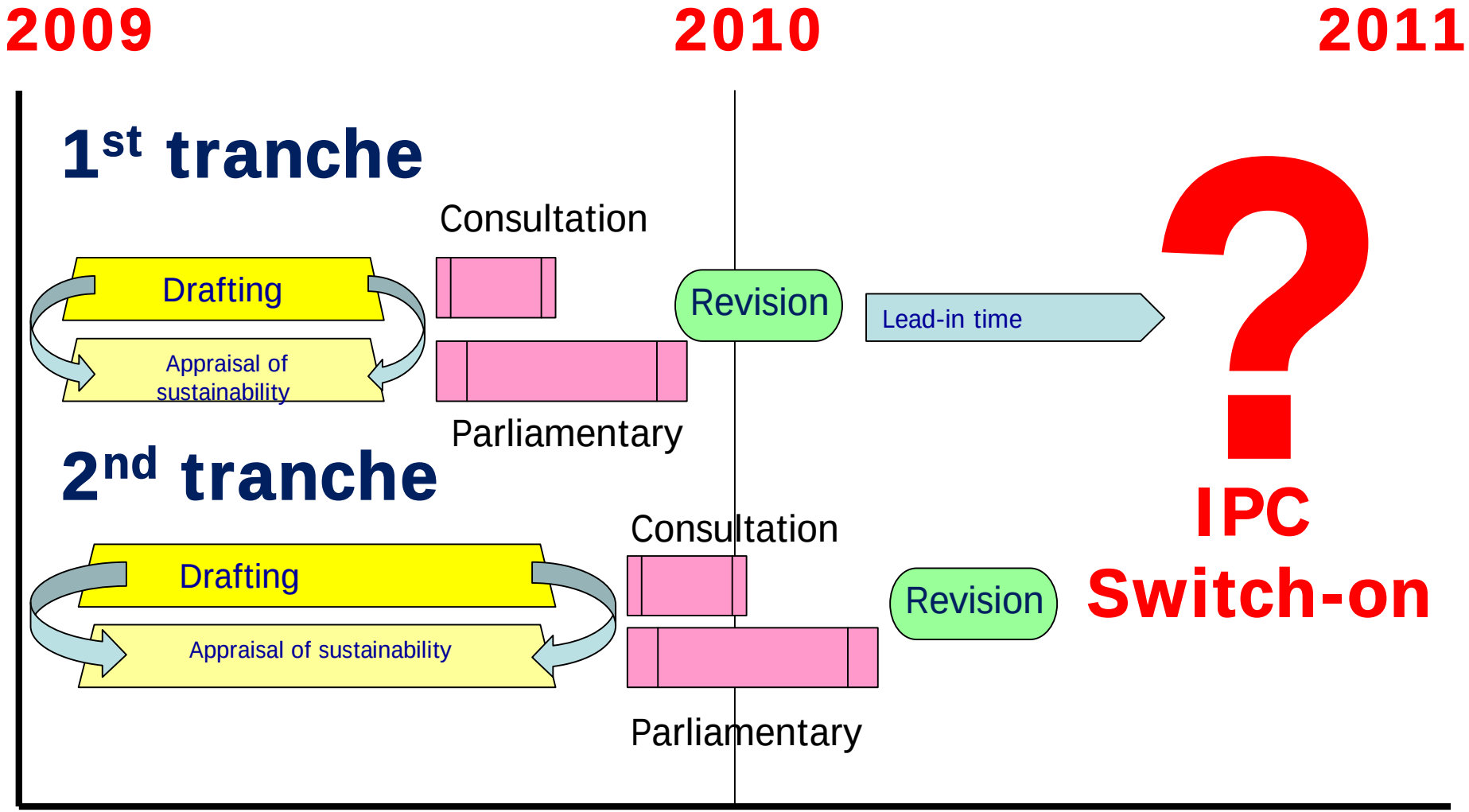
The NPS process



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