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CESHIRE

PRESS RELEASE

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Cheshire CPRE warns of loss of undisturbed countryside

Cheshire's countryside campaigners, CPRE[1], have this week published a series of maps showing an alarming loss of undisturbed countryside between the 1960s and the present day.

The maps show the impact of disturbance throughout Cheshire, including Trafford, Warrington, Wirral, Halton, Stockport and Trafford [2].resulting from road and air traffic, and visual intrusion resulting from creeping urbanisation, illustrating the situation in the 1960s, 1990s and 2007.

'Intrusion from increasing traffic and development affects an area far wider than the actual the sites where these activities are located. If nothing is done to halt the loss of our undisturbed countryside, the future looks very bleak indeed' said Cheshire CPRE's Clare Lewis.

'CPRE's study shows that in the 1960s, around 40% of land in the present Cheshire County area was disturbed by urban intrusion. By the early 1990s, this had crept up to almost 60%. Alarmingly, in 2007, almost 70% of the area now suffers from intrusion.

The picture in the northern areas beyond the Cheshire County border is even bleaker. In Warrington and Trafford, there is now no land that could be described as undisturbed countryside. 99% of the Halton and Stockport areas now suffer from intrusion, and in Wirral, the area affected has increased by 40% since the 1990s alone.

The remaining areas of undisturbed countryside lie east of Macclesfield, and in the south of Cheshire, within Crewe and Nantwich, yet these areas have shrunk dramatically during the decades CPRE has studied.

'It's time for all of us to sit up and take notice,' Mrs Lewis continued. 'At this rate, in a single lifetime[3] there will be nowhere in the Cheshire area to enjoy peace and quiet, and experience truly rural life. Is this really the heritage we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren?'

Cheshire CPRE is calling for stronger policies from all levels of Government to halt the loss of undisturbed countryside, including more ambitious targets for recycling brownfield land, halting the current plans for massive airport expansion, and promoting good public transport as an attractive alternative to car use.

'Most people really do value their countryside, but are just not aware of the threats it faces. We are asking them to take note of this issue, and raise it with their local politicians and planners,

encouraging them to act before it is too late', Mrs Lewis concluded.

The maps can be seen on the charity's website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk. For more information about Cheshire CPRE's intrusion campaign, or any of its work, call their Branch Office on 01606 835046 (Mon – Fri, 9 –12)

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

[1] 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. Its Patron is HM The Queen and its National President is Bill Bryson. For more information and archive of press releases see the CPRE Cheshire website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk and the national CPRE website at www.cpre.org.uk. CPRE's Cheshire Branch was founded in 1928, two years after the National CPRE charity began. While it is a part of the National CPRE organisation, Cheshire CPRE is a registered charity in its own right.

[2] The Cheshire maps are taken from regional maps produced from research by CPRE's National Office and Land Use Consultants.

[3] CPRE's statistics project that today's undisturbed countryside would vanish in as little as 80 years – a single lifetime- at current rates.

Further Information:

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