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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Cheshire CPRE welcomes step towards more tranquil future**

Countryside campaigners in Cheshire have welcomed the Government's recent commitment to reduce noise and create 'quiet areas' in our towns.

Cheshire's Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)[1] has been drawing attention to the loss of our tranquil areas since 2006, when research conducted for the charity named and shamed Cheshire as one of the least tranquil counties in England [2].

"The Cheshire countryside we value so much today has been shaped by human activity for centuries,' said CPRE Chairman Peter Raynes, 'but in recent decades, changes have rapidly taken place that have severely damaged its tranquillity. Both Liverpool and Manchester Airports affect our county, and major roads and motorways run through it, with ever increasing traffic[3]. According to the Government, traffic levels will increase by 31% between 2000 and 2015 if current trends continue[4]. The growth on rural roads is most rapid. Finding the peace and quiet that is so important for our physical and mental well-being is becoming very difficult.

"We are pleased that the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has begun to take noise pollution seriously, publishing maps of noise generated by major roads and airports, and promising action plans for reducing noise and designating quiet areas in our towns [5]."

"However, we are calling for a substantial change in attitude from the Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government, whose pursuit of ever expanding air and road infrastructure conflicts with Defra's imaginative initiatives."

"The practical steps' promised by Environment Minister Jonathan Shaw 'to make people's lives more tranquil' are eagerly awaited by Cheshire CPRE and we will do what we can to help the Government and local authorities achieve them,' Mr Raynes concluded.

For more information on the work of Cheshire CPRE, see the charity's website at [www.cprecheshire.org.uk](http://www.cprecheshire.org.uk). or call their Branch Office on 01606 835046.

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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. For more information and archive of press releases see the CPRE Cheshire website at [www.cprecheshire.org.uk](http://www.cprecheshire.org.uk) and the national CPRE website at [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

[2] In October 2006 CPRE published a revolutionary new tranquillity map (<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/tranquillity>) for the whole of England, which is increasingly being used by public and private bodies in spatial planning and the design and location of new development. Maps for Cheshire, which was rated 32nd out of 34 shire counties, just ahead of Surrey and Hertfordshire, can be seen on Cheshire CPRE's website [www.cprecheshire.org.uk](http://www.cprecheshire.org.uk).

[3] Plans to widen the M6 through Cheshire, which have not been ruled out yet, despite the announcement of hard-shoulder running to manage traffic, is likely to generate unreasonable levels of noise pollution in the future, in both rural and urban areas, unless steps are taken to reduce traffic. The expansion proposed in the Master Plans for both Liverpool and Manchester Airports will also increase noise and disturb tranquillity over Cheshire.

[4] From 1994 to 2004 road traffic in Great Britain, measured in vehicle kilometres, rose by 37% on motorways, 21% on rural A roads and 14% on minor rural roads, according to Department for Transport statistics. The total length of roads rose by 15% between 1980 and 2000. In 2004 the Department projected that road traffic would grow by 31% between 2000 and 2015.

[5] Environment Minister Jonathan Shaw. In a press release issued on Friday 16 May, he committed to Government to draw up action plans 'to reduce unreasonable levels of noise, where practical. In urban areas these will also include measures to protect designated quiet areas'.

The noise maps have been produced by Defra to meet the requirements of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, and are intended to inform the production of noise action plans for large urban areas, major transport sources, and significant industrial sites in England.

In this first round of mapping, maps have been produced for major roads which have more than six million vehicle passages a year, major railways which have more than 60,000 train passages a year, major airports with more than 50,000 movements, excluding training on light aircraft, and transport sources and major industrial sites in first round agglomerations (with a population of more than 250,000 and a certain population density).

For the second round of mapping in 2012, in addition to re-mapping the areas covered in the first round, roads having more than 3 million vehicle passages per year and railways with more than 30,000 train passages per year are to be mapped. All agglomerations with a population of over 100,000 will also be mapped. The actual roads, railways and agglomerations to be mapped in the second round will be subject to confirmation based on the most up to date data available at the time.

The maps are only intended to be used for the strategic assessment of noise exposure in different areas. These maps should not be used to attempt to determine, represent or imply the noise exposure in individual locations (e.g. individual houses, windows).

<http://noisemapping.defra.gov.uk/wps/portal/noise>