

# Curbridge Preservation Society

*Constituted as a Civic Society*  
Working to Protect Our Natural and Built Environment

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City Offices  
Colebrook Street  
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21<sup>st</sup> November 2010

Dear Mr Tilbury,

## **Re: Proposed North of Whiteley MDA**

Thank you for the fresh opportunity for consultation on the future of our communities under Blueprint and the forthcoming Localism Bill and the final abolition of Regional and Spatial Strategies. We will of course be submitting a Blueprint consultation feedback document by the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010, following consultation at our AGM, which will also contain these definitions and be published on our website.

All statements made below about the proposed MDA should be taken to be specific to the MDA "Areas 1 and 2 North of Whiteley" within the WCC boundary.

We would like to make a single, very precise point on the proposed MDA North of Whiteley, which has been specifically designated part of the South Hampshire Urban Area, as on the map, page 4, of WCC's 'Preferred Option 2009' exhibition panels pdf.

The point is:-

**We believe the North of Whiteley MDA is outside of the scope of the South Hampshire Urban Area and its planning strategy, as it is a 'Rural Area'. Rather the rural planning limits of Level 4 as deemed applicable to Curbridge, even under the SE Plan, are appropriate. The proposed development area is clearly rural and the MDA should therefore be abandoned as inappropriate as the rural settlement of Curbridge consists of the whole area including all the surrounding farmland, and the rural settlement should not be sub-divided.**

The reasons for this are:-

The proposed MDA, adjoining the separate Civil Parish of Whiteley is defined (in the Core Strategy Preferred Option, 2009) as an 'Urban Area', this is in an area in WCC's SHLAA ID ref 1969 described as: "*Within Settlement: Countryside...and Other Constraints – Greenfield Land: YES*". The very document itself <sup>1</sup> 'Information on sites outside the defined settlement boundaries' (modified 10 March 2010) is about proposed rural sites. The inclusion within the South Hampshire Urban Area appears therefore wholly arbitrary as it is also classified by WCC as "*Countryside*" and "*Greenfield*".

This we find extraordinary.

Curbridge Preservation Society, c/o 1, Woodview Cottages, Curbridge, Hampshire SO30 2HB

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Curbridge, which is centered around the road and bridge, includes Barn Farm (Area 2), Bury Farm (Area 1) and Buckswood Cottage (right in the middle of the proposed MDA, as shown on the enclosed aerial view). They are in the same SO30 2HB postcode and Curbridge designation, according to Royal Mail. All the properties between and including Fairthorne Grange Farm and Bury Farm House share SO30 2HB postcode and Curbridge designation – demonstrating that they are **all part of the same rural settlement** including the proposed MDA, as per the definition re “*The Urban [...and therefore Rural...] Settlement boundaries can be used in conjunction with any other geographically referenced data, such as postcodes...*”<sup>2</sup>. Whiteley is PO15 and Burridge SO31, with Fairthorne Manor SO30 2HA.

The rural settlement of Curbridge (within the Civil Parish of Curdridge, not Whiteley) has a residential population of about 80 people - some 920 persons short of the defined minimum threshold for an Urban Area; Government guidance “...*Settlement Size Cut-off: The population threshold of urban settlements that are treated as urban areas can be set anywhere from a minimum of 1,000 persons, to meet particular policy purposes.*”<sup>2</sup>; therefore Area 1 and Area 2 of the proposed MDA are not part of an Urban Area. They are defined as a Rural Area, part of a recognised rural settlement and are therefore without the scope of the South Hampshire Urban Area. “*The basis of the definition [Urban Area] is land with an irreversibly urban use...*”<sup>2</sup>

Even on the HCC 2007 (Spatial Strategy Group) map of the South Hampshire Sub-region, the area of the proposed MDA is clearly not classed as an ‘Urban Area’, as currently published on the PUSH website<sup>3</sup>. In fact in April 2010 the HCC ‘Defining Rural Hampshire’<sup>4</sup> report used the 2004 classifications stating that “*The classifications at this level remain unchanged since 2009*” with the figures source being the Department of Communities and Local Government showing the area of the proposed MDA having a ‘Rural and Urban Classification’ of “**Rural: Hamlet and dispersed**”. That is hardly “Urban”, or “Rural Town and Fringe” or even “Rural: Village”; it is the most rural classification possible. Winchester’s ‘Preferred Option’ map is the only one that differs.

The rural settlement of Curbridge, within the ‘Preferred Option 2009’, is outside of the South Hampshire Urban Area and is only suitable for Level 4 development as in the WCC Market Towns and Rural Areas Strategy [*“Development limited to small scale affordable housing schemes with ‘enabling’ market housing permitted where necessary (no more than 20%) to meet demonstrable local needs”*]. A development limit afforded to Curbridge even under the SE Plan. This should be applied to the whole of the Curbridge rural settlement.

The South Hampshire Sub-region is about economic development; Planning Policy Statement 4 (2009): POLICY EC6: Planning for Economic Development in Rural Areas: specifically point EC6.1<sup>5</sup> “*Local planning authorities should ensure that the countryside is protected for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all.*” This PPS 4 EC6.1 protection is even more important when taking into consideration the Listed Buildings, Ancient Woodlands, SSSIs, SINCs, protected species and habitats within the whole of Curbridge and including part of the SPA/SAC/Ramsar site of the upper reaches of the Hamble.

Further evidence of the Rural Area definition applying to the proposed North of Whiteley MDA, importantly dated after the previous consultation, is found in the following WCC document from 9 December 2009 [CAB 1896 - Cabinet Non-Domestic Rates – Rural Settlement List]. Therefore for taxation reasons, and under

statute (Local Government Finance Act 1988 section 42A), the whole of Curbridge and Curridge is still classified as rural.

The idea of the proposed MDA being an 'Urban Area' is purely a future-orientated aspiration.

We therefore consider, due to the obvious contradiction of the above to Areas 1 and 2 being 'urban', that this points to the classification as being completely arbitrary; in breach of Government guidance/definitions and in contradiction of WCC's own assessment (SHLAA ID 1969) and that this evidence invalidates the proposed MDA as being able to be considered part of the South Hampshire Urban Area for development under those particular Spatial Strategies.

As a matter of pure commonsense, and honesty, the site of the proposed North of Whiteley MDA must be removed from the South Hampshire Urban Area forthwith due to reasons of being correctly re-classified as a Rural Area.

The proposed MDA should then be abandoned, due to being a highly inappropriate development for a rural area and the rural settlement of Curbridge of which it is a part, against planning policy 2009 PPS 4 Policy EC6 (point 1)<sup>5</sup> and the draft WCC Market Towns and Rural Areas Strategy, Level 4.

Finally, to continue to keep it designated as urban and within the South Hampshire Urban Area when it is already part of a recognised rural settlement would be so irrational as to be Wednesday Unreasonableness.

We look forward to receiving your earliest reply.

Yours sincerely

Peter Hole  
Acting Chairman

Encs: Images of Curbridge signage and aerial view/postcode locations and HCC's Rural Map.  
Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Page 51: Winchester District Strategic Housing Land Availability, Assessment, Appendix 3: Information on sites outside the defined settlement boundaries – as modified 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/Documents/LDF/SHLAA/SHLAA%20April%202010%20Final/Appendix3b9%20Sites%20outside%20Settlement%20detail%20Map%2009.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2001-2008 report - Urban and rural area definitions: a user guide <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/urbanrural>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.push.gov.uk/south\\_hampshire\\_general\\_location\\_with\\_la\\_boundaries\\_map.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/south_hampshire_general_location_with_la_boundaries_map.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> HCC: The Socio-Economic Profile of Rural Hampshire Report, Defining Rural Hampshire April 2010 [http://www3.hants.gov.uk/1\\_defining\\_rural\\_hampshire.pdf](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/1_defining_rural_hampshire.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> PPS 4 (2009) Policy EC6 Planning for Economic Development in Rural Areas (Specifically point EC6.1)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/planningpolicystatement4.pdf>

## Localism – is the MDA really wanted by Whiteley?

### Whiteley Parish Plan Survey Results 2008

1002 households (out of the 2811 dwellings on the Parish Council's address list that surveys were sent out to) completed surveys that were returned providing an overall response rate of 37% - source Whiteley Parish Council

1. Whiteley residents when asked what they would least like to see happen in Whiteley in the future over half of respondents (59%) said that they do not want to see any more development or 'uncontrolled' development.
2. Further the Whiteley survey asked how supportive respondents were to the provision of affordable housing in Whiteley, only 37% are supportive with the remainder not that supportive or not supportive at all.
3. Over 44% wanted to see improved access (*and bizarrely at the same time*) reduced traffic. Respondents from the Winchester side of Whiteley were much more likely to choose traffic congestion than the Fareham respondents (36% vs. 19%), but less likely to choose access (27% vs. 39%).
4. 90% of all respondents support the opening of Yew Tree Drive or Rookery Avenue or both roads to all traffic. 14% wish to see peak time closures to prevent commuter rat-running.
5. Whiteley survey response when asked what their future priorities in Whiteley were with a possible North of Whiteley Development - primary schools 18%; secondary school 16%; open spaces 10%.
6. 'More development' and the 'removal of woodlands, parks and open spaces' are things that young people do not want to see happen in Whiteley (7-18 yrs age group – Young People's Questionnaire).