

## Curry Rivel Parish Councils policy for the built environment including business development.

### Introduction.

This policy is assembled with regard to the following external factors.

The recognition and declaration of a climate emergency by SSDC and SCC.

The need to reduce carbon emissions in the short and long term (National policy).

The need to protect the natural environment and halt the decline of indigenous flora and fauna (SCC ecological networks policy).

The need to house the increasing population (National policy).

The failure to encourage business development in the Langport and CR area. (Failure of the Local plan to meet its targets for Business development in the area)

Curry Rivels position in the scheme of things described above.

The built environment of CR, a mainly rural parish, has grown considerably in this century by accident rather than design. As proposals for larger scale new development have come forward, they have not been matched by any proposals for development of business or self-employment and have generally been heavily opposed by the existing population. This has been similar for both the Parish and District Councils but on appeal the Inspectorate has, although agreeing with the local point of view, allowed development because of National priorities. Thus, CR has made a reluctant contribution towards housing needs and will have to swallow more development as a result of the Inspectors decision. However, going forward the categorization of CR as a rural settlement seemed a sensible and pragmatic approach allowing for an occasional infill of a single or exceptionally two dwellings.

Why is Curry Rivels categoration changed?

Criteria have been developed to indicate that the village has enough community facilities to allow more extensive development. (possession of a shop, church, school, community hall etc)

Why is this a wrong-headed approach.

The strategy of removing rural settlement status from CR is wrong because of a number of conflating factors.

Principally because of the failure of any significant business development in the Langport /Huish/Curry Rivel area over the last five years the new local plan downgrades the amount of land available for business premises from 4.5 hectares in 2015 to 1.5 between 2019-2026. The amount of new business land developed from 2015 -2019 was at most a hectare and mainly consisted of new classrooms at the Huish School and business units at Great Bow wharf (data from Preferred Options consultation document). A major problem with developing new businesses is the appalling road network. Both Langport and CR have narrow high streets and heavy vehicles are banned unless given special permits from entering the area. Curry Rivel has insufficient off street parking and residents and visitors are increasingly taking to parking on the main A378 with concomitant delays, bottlenecks and frustration. Plans are afoot to prevent some parking on small sections of the A378 Campaigns in CR are continuous to reduce traffic volume and speed through the village. There seems no prospect of getting a rail station back into Langport (there were two stations in the backward 1960s) as Network rail want unreasonable demands to be met. So, the rail network from Taunton to Castle Cary will remain the longest continuous length of track in the Country without a station and commuting long distances to rail stations is thus encouraged. The bus services remain in place but are not frequent and frequency has been reduced and take a very long time to get to Taunton or Yeovil. There are no early morning

or late evening services any more. A continuous direct footpath/cycleway does not exist between CR and Langport.

Because of these constraints there is thus little prospect of new employment in Langport/CR. Thus, new dwellings in CR will lead to increasing numbers of commuters and this is unacceptable because:

2. The speed of climate change is not diminishing and both local Councils have recognised this, the new local plan calls for decreased emissions from vehicles. It cannot be stated more highly how important this is and the Councils must make reducing carbon emissions their top priority. They can only do this by concentrating new dwellings near areas of high employment and providing good public transport from new dwellings to employment or, better still, making it possible to walk or cycle from home to work. It is a complete disaster for the Country to deliberately disperse new dwellings thinly across rural Districts, thereby ensuring increased carbon emissions from rural settlements like CR. The carbon footprint of a rural settlement like CR will be huge in per capita terms and when, as will surely happen, settlements are categorized by their carbon footprint then such settlements will be castigated for their profligacy.

In conclusion.

It is the opinion and ongoing strategy of CRPC that it is morally and ethically irresponsible to encourage development which will increase carbon emissions and we know future generations will be severely let down by our collective inability to deal with an emergency situation which we ourselves say we recognise but seem intellectually unable to deal with. Please do not cause more environmental degradation by continuing with this policy and return CR to its settled status of a rural settlement.

CRPC will continue to support initiatives that encouraging new business development and self-employment which will lead to job opportunities and will press for improvements to infrastructure, roads and public transport but, until those initiatives are successful, it will actively oppose new domestic development.