

PRESS RELEASE

Urgent Action Needed to Protect our Neighbourhood Plans

Embargoed until 10:00am <>

What was the point of communities working hard to produce Neighbourhood Plans only to find that after 2 short years the locally agreed policies can be over-turned by aggressive developers?

Over 30 town and parish councils across Wiltshire have appealed for help from Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire's five MPs to protect the future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire's town and parish councils are suffering because of significant loopholes in planning legislation means our carefully drafted Neighbourhood Plans can be over-ruled, unless Wiltshire Council is able consistently to maintain 5-years' worth of available housing land. At the moment, Wiltshire does not have that critical 5-year supply which means that developers are challenging Neighbourhood Plans as soon as they are 2 years old.

Speaking on behalf of more than 30 town and parish councils, Mayor of Malmesbury Campbell Ritchie said, "There is agreement between ourselves, the leadership of Wiltshire Council and most of our local MPs, that urgent changes are needed to protect Neighbourhood Plans in Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council's planning policies are being smashed by developers seeking to take advantage of this unfortunate situation. The huge effort going into creating the next stage of the Wiltshire Local Plan for housing and development is also being undermined."

"We are calling now for a joint effort to achieve the changes we all want. We have requested an urgent meeting with the leaders of Wiltshire Council and our MPs to develop a shared and public plan to protect Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire. We are looking forward to being able to report a positive outcome."

Ends