

Press Release

Notes to Editors:

1. The letters of the 13th August attached.
2. The latest letter despatched today attached.
3. Public comments by the leaders of Wiltshire Council and MPs following our letters of 13th August 2021:

Wiltshire Conservative MP James Gray sums up the situation as stated in the press in August 2020.

“There is a fundamental flaw in the method of calculating the five-year housing land supply figures. Land on which planning permission has been granted, but on which developers have not yet started building does not count. Developers are thereby incentivised to delay the start of building until the very last minute since by doing so they stand a better chance of getting permission on land which would otherwise not be available to them. That drives a coach and horses through the Neighbourhood Planning process.” Reference:

From Danny Kruger MP
7th November 2020

Dear Mr Ritchie,

Thank you for your email about the planning process. I share your concerns and I am in discussion with my fellow Wiltshire MPs about how we can best support our towns, like Malmesbury, to protect their Neighbourhood Plans. I look forward to working with you and other Town and Parish councils on this vital agenda.

Best wishes,

Danny

Leader of Wiltshire Council:

The Leader of Wiltshire Council, Cllr. Philip Whitehead also recognises this situation and advised that across the country, there is outstanding permission for around 1 million new homes. He said in Cabinet in August 2020 **“I think we’ve got a problem with developers not building out the planning permissions they’ve got.**

4. A selection of planning applications from developers seeking to exploit the current situation and photos of the sites:

4. Changes the Town and Parish councils are asking to be made to national planning rules (The National Planning Policy Framework) following amendments made in 2019 to reduce the influence of Neighbourhood Plans in the planning process in favour of developers.

The specific changes being sought are:

- a. The dropping of the NPPF Section 14 requirement that, to be taken into consideration, Neighbourhood Plans must be less than 2 years old,
- b. Removing the changes to the definition of planning areas that in Wiltshire's case has made the whole unitary authority the planning area in place of the more meaningful North, South, East and West sub divisions, and
- c. Reversing the changes to the methodology for the calculation of land supply for housing which have so tipped the control of the calculation into the hands of developers.

5. Town and Parish Councils signing the joint letter plus contacts: Attached.

The Councils have been meeting together over video conference since July 2020 and have created an informal alliance on this and related matters called the Wiltshire Area Localism and Planning Group (WALPA). Together they are the first level of local government for over 215,000 residents in Wiltshire.

5: Questions and more information: Please contact the Clerk of the Town or Parish Council most relevant to your outlet, or as indicated on the attached contact list. For the purposes of this Press Release, Campbell Ritchie, Mayor of Malmesbury, is also a spokesperson and contact for questions: campbellrmtc@gmail.com. T: 07802638424.