

Malmesbury Town Council

(ENGLAND'S OLDEST BOROUGH - CHARTER GRANTED 880)



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MALMESBURY
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Date insert

Letter to Leader and Chief Executive of Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire MP's

Wiltshire Council:

Cllr Philip Whitehead – Leader Wiltshire Council
Terence Herbert – Chief Executive, Wiltshire Council

Cc Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Investment

Cc Wiltshire Councillors

MPs:

Michelle Donelan – Conservative – Chippenham
John Glen – Conservative – Salisbury
James Gray – Conservative – North Wiltshire
Danny Kruger – Conservative – Devizes
Andrew Murrison – Conservative – South West Wiltshire

CC: Robert Buckland – Conservative – Swindon South
CC: Justin Tomlinson – Conservative – Swindon North

Dear Colleague

The Future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire

On the 13th August 2020 over 30 Parish and Town Councils in Wiltshire representing over 50% of the population of Wiltshire wrote to you asking for your urgent support to protect the future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire. I have attached a copy of our letters.

We have received words of support and agreement from the leadership of Wiltshire Council and our representatives in Parliament but there has not yet been progress by us together in Wiltshire or by government (on the essential amendments to the current NPPF) that will enable Wiltshire's democratically made Neighbourhood Plans to continue to flourish and function.

The current situation is as follows:

1. Wiltshire Council has confirmed (Dec 2020) that it has not achieved a 5 year land supply for housing for planning decision making purposes for a second year running. Made Neighbourhood Plans in Wiltshire that are more than two years old continue to be exposed to unplanned housing developments.

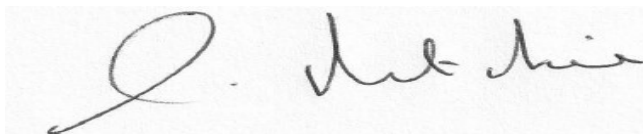
2. The current review period for a made Neighbourhood Plan is a minimum of 15.5 months and requires a huge voluntary effort. The two year rule means that Neighbourhood Plans intended to be valid for 10 years or more have to be in continuous review to stay valid. We all agree this is not sustainable.
3. Wiltshire Council is in the middle of consultation on the Wiltshire Local Plan. We all agree that the aim of this Plan - to create a framework for coherent future development based on Housing Market Areas through to 2035 - is undermined by the continuing absence of a 5 year land supply for housing.
4. We believe you can do so much more to facilitate a shared action plan to tackle the issues preventing Wiltshire having a 5year land supply for housing. The statement by the Leader of Wiltshire Council in August 2020 that **“I think we’ve got a problem with developers not building out the planning permissions they’ve got.”** must be followed up. In particular we would like the opportunity to propose a number of practical steps that will enable us together to more quickly achieve the aim¹ that ‘The views of the local community, particularly those of Town and Parish councils will be important in considering potential benefits and impacts of proposals when planning applications are determined.’

We would re-iterate that there appears to be a broad consensus between the Parish and Town Councils, Wiltshire Council officers, the leadership of Wiltshire Council and our Wiltshire MPs on the results we want to see to protect the Future of Neighbourhood Planning. But we have to take steps together to deliver these results.

We would like to invite you to a meeting on the morning of Friday <> February – perhaps for convenience to coincide with your regular weekly meeting with the leadership of Wiltshire Council - where we can discuss and agree a common approach that can best protect the future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Campbell Ritchie
Mayor, Malmesbury Town Council

For and on behalf of the undersigned Wiltshire Town and Parish Councils:

¹ as written in Wiltshire Council Briefing Note 20-37 on the measures being adopted in view of the shortfall in the 5 year supply of land for housing