



MALMESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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Malmesbury Town Council Press Release

9th August 2022 – For immediate release

Town is heard on planning concern

Malmesbury Town Council and Wiltshire Councillor Gavin Grant have succeeded in sending a major planning application in Malmesbury back to the drawing board. Final Planning permission for a large new site at Filands, which covers detailed layout and design, was refused by Wiltshire Councils Northern Area Planning Committee last week.

Bloor Homes bought the site after Outline Planning permission had been given to build 71 houses at Filands in May 2020. Since then, Bloor also gained planning permission for the adjoining site, which now has permission to build 70 houses and, following earlier efforts by Malmesbury Town Council, includes a site for a children's nursery. Although Malmesbury Town Council and Wiltshire Council wanted Bloor to design a single masterplan for the two sites to create as good a development as possible it refused. Instead, it submitted a plan for 70 houses on a smaller part of the original site with much less open space for residents.

Malmesbury Town Councillor Campbell Ritchie, who led the Town Council's response to the application said. 'Both sites were approved for development only because Wiltshire Council cannot show it will be building enough new houses in the next five years. This was despite neither site being part of the Neighbourhood Plan and all of Malmesbury's planned housing requirements already being met. We were therefore very disappointed when the detailed application was much worse than expected following the original permission and well below the quality that could be achieved if both sites were designed together. We knew Wiltshire Council agreed with us and it didn't make sense that the developer, Bloor Homes, didn't want to do this despite indicating they would before they got permission to build the second site.

Our hearts sank further when we heard Wiltshire Council's planning team were recommending the flawed plan should be approved because it believed this was the right way to address the Council's small 5 Year Housing Land Supply shortfall. This would have meant that in addition to our Neighbourhood Plan being shredded, Wiltshire Council's shortfall was also being used as an excuse to wave through a

proposal that was nothing like as good as promised when the original planning permission was given.

Fortunately, we were able to persuade Wiltshire Councils Northern Area Planning Committee this should not happen and they unanimously rejected the application.'

Wiltshire Councillor for Malmesbury Gavin Grant said 'I was able to have the application 'called in' so it could be decided by elected councillors at the Northern Area Planning Committee. They were as unhappy as I was about how inferior the detailed plans put forward by Bloor were. They were also concerned that if this application was passed it would send a green light to the developers of many other sites where permission has been given against the wishes of local residents to meet Wiltshire Council's small housing shortfall and that standards could be lowered. Following this decision, we would like to ask Bloor Homes to accept the invitation to work with Wiltshire Council and Malmesbury Town Council to produce a high-quality development for both sites.

Mayor of Malmesbury Kim Power said 'Malmesbury Town Councillors yet again spoke out against what we consider to be poorly planned development in the town and Wiltshire Councillors agreed with us. We hope this sends out the message to developers that we will challenge any proposal which we do not believe to be of a high enough standard for our residents'.

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Notes to editors:

- This site was the first to be approved for development by Wiltshire Council to meet its 5 Year Housing Land Supply shortfall when it became publicly known in April 2020. <https://www.wiltsglosstandard.co.uk/news/18475892.council-strongly-opposed-plans-71-houses-malmesbury/>
- The Planning Application is PL/2021/05209
- **Images on attached PowerPoint:** The Outline Proposal and the Reserved Matters proposal on a smaller plot of land.