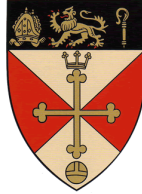


Malmesbury Town Council

(ENGLAND'S OLDEST BOROUGH - CHARTER GRANTED 880)



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20th May 2020

Dear Fellow Mayor

I am writing to advise you about a very serious planning matter which has arisen here in Malmesbury and is set to affect every other community of Wiltshire which already has a Neighbourhood Plan more than two years old. As you may know Malmesbury and our neighbouring parishes were the first communities to create and adopt a Neighbourhood Plan some five years ago.

In summary we have an application for 71 houses – application 19/11569/OUT - being considered by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Planning Committee next Wednesday 27 May 2020.

This application has been rejected before. It is on land not designated in our Neighbourhood Plan and strongly opposed by Malmesbury Town Council.

Our Wiltshire Councillor had informed the planning team that he would require the application to be called before the Planning Committee for full debate and decision if the planning officers were recommending its approval. Consequently, we were expecting this application to be rejected by the Planning Committee.

However, we and our Wiltshire Councillor have just been told that because Wiltshire Council has failed to maintain a five year supply of land for housing development across the county as a whole, officers believe and are reporting that they have no choice but to recommend this application is approved

We have received no indication at any time there were current issues with Wiltshire Council's five year supply of land for housing, although we now understand this confirmed in a planning appeal submission dated 14 February 2020 following the publication of the 2019 Housing Delivery Test results.

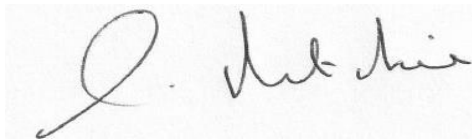
As we have just heard this news, we are pressing that the Strategic Planning Committee hearing of this application scheduled for next week is deferred until there is a proper opportunity to consider this situation.

If the Planning Committee does go ahead and approves the application this will fundamentally undermine, not only our Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan, but every other community's Neighbourhood Plan in Wiltshire, unless that plan is less than two years old. Such an approval destroys the whole point of Neighbourhood Planning.

We hope you will join with us in raising your concerns with your Wiltshire Councillor(s) and the leadership of Wiltshire Council and support us in seeking to have this decision deferred at next week's Strategic Planning meeting.

Please do contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Ritchie', written on a light-colored background.

Councillor Campbell Ritchie
Mayor of Malmesbury