

Agenda Item 10. Report 3: To receive an update on recent announcements by Wiltshire Council on strategic planning matters including residential land supply and the development of the Wiltshire Local Plan. (Report No 3, Mayor Ritchie).

1. Situation:

1.1 Wiltshire Council does not currently have a 5 year land supply for housing and is completing its calculation of its 5 year land supply for housing for 2020/21.

1.2 The final calculation for 2020/21 is not yet complete but it has been confirmed in WC Cabinet and in a briefing by the Strategic Planning Team to Wiltshire town and parish councils on the 8th December 2020 that Wiltshire has not recovered its 5 year land supply for housing.

1.3 This news is hugely disappointing. It will allow developers to use this situation in support of applications that are contrary to made Neighbourhood Plans that are more than 2 years old. This includes Malmesbury's Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4 In its briefing on the 8th December the Strategic Planning Team said that:

(i) Future planning decisions will not be made exclusively on the basis that Wiltshire does not have a 5 year land supply, and

(ii) Decisions in areas where applications have already been passed contrary to made Neighbourhood Plans should be taken into account in future decisions. (In Malmesbury this should mean that the adverse Land South of Filands decision should mean it is not followed by other similar decisions.

1.5 However, we must regard both approaches as aspirational until they are reflected in planning officer reports. They also require formal support by the Council. In the meantime we have two imminent reports – on the two Park Road developments – which will be acid tests of Wiltshire Council resolve to support Neighbourhood Planning in the context of the earlier Land South of Filands decision.

1.6 Wiltshire council has also announced the commencement of consultation on the next iteration of its Local Area Plan to 2036.

1.6.1 This plan suggests that Malmesbury will be required to take approvals for just 24 more houses up to 2036 if Wiltshire Council's overall Plan proposals are accepted.

1.6.2 The Plan is wholly dependent on the operation of Housing Market Area and Neighbourhood plans up to 2036. Both are neutralised while Wiltshire Council does not have a 5 year land supply for housing. This means planning decisions are likely to be taken while the plan is being developed that will undermine this attempt at structured planning and make any outcomes of the consultation redundant.

1.6.3 The Local Area Plan documents released in respect of Malmesbury are attached. While there is a very small requirement for additional houses in Malmesbury a number of sites in and bordering Malmesbury that have been identified by landowners as 'available for development' have been described and must be assessed as part of the consultation process.

2. Proposal

2.1 That this report is noted and Malmesbury Town Council continues its efforts at all levels, (as agreed at Council in November 2020), to ensure planning decisions are taken in accordance with the made Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 For P&E to consider and report the appropriate response by Malmesbury Town Council to the Wiltshire Local Area Plan, including encouraging and supporting community engagement in the consultation process.

Cllr Campbell Ritchie

13th December 2020