

St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council

Report #08.2

WC Local Plan

1. Purpose of the report

1. To provide the council with information on the initial discussions within the Joint Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan Working Party [WP] about a possible submission into the Wiltshire Council Local Plan (WCLP) preparation.

2. Background

- 2.1 A meeting was held on 30th July to bring WP members up to date with the latest thinking within Government and WC about neighbourhood planning. Those in attendance were Cllrs P Exton, Kim Power - MTC, Cllr Gavin. Grant - WC, Cllr Tom Pitman - Brokenborough PC, Cllr Roger Budgen - SPMWPC and Catherine Doody, Cllr Karen Drake was unable to attend.
- 2.2 A discussion took place about the current status of neighbourhood planning, the Government's planning reforms, the significant deficiency in the current WC 5-year housing land supply and the progress of WC's LP preparation. Disappointingly it was noted that the recently adopted Melksham NP did not carry sufficient planning weight to prevent the Snarlton housing development being approved at Appeal on 28th July. It would seem that WC's lack of a Local Plan and a 5-year land supply was a major obstacle in defeating this speculative application.
- 2.3 WC has recently issued Briefing Note 26-10 on 13th July. One of the imponderables in any decision to submit a housing contribution for the neighbourhood plan area into the developing WCLP is the lack of information upon which to base it. It was agreed that the next steps should be to obtain the latest housing need data for the neighbourhood area and information on sites that have been offered for housing to WC. Discussions with local developers to identify their future development plans would be a productive next step, in addition the latest Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment [SHELAA] must be obtained to understand which sites have been put forward to WC.
- 2.4 A meeting took place on 18th August with a representative of Persimmon Homes. Following a general discussion about the likely local impact of the newly revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the company's future plans for Malmesbury were outlined. Only part of these plans were thought suitable for inclusion in a potential future submission to WC - further briefing in confidence
- 2.5 A meeting took place on 19th August with a representative of Bloor Homes. There followed a general discussion about the present difficult market conditions facing developers - reducing margins because of lack of purchaser confidence, a steep increase in construction and material costs and unrealistic landowner expectations - further briefing in confidence
- 2.6 The WP decided (i) to use the information provided at the recent meetings, (ii) to aggregate all the known potential development opportunities, regardless of size, (iii) to identifying sites in the SHELAA that would have the least impact upon the neighbourhood area in order to arrive at a figure that will hopefully closely conform to the housing figure for the neighbourhood area that will emerge in early 2027 from the WCLP preparation. The WP agreed to firmly oppose any sites that aimed to breach the 'barriers' of the A429 and B4040.
- 2.7 The WP will meet again when progress has been made on the actions identified.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 To support the approach adopted by the WP