

**Statement by Cllr John Thomson, Chairman of Malmesbury Community Area Board**  
**15<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

Following the Malmesbury Town Council public meeting last night I would like to make a statement regarding proposed development in Malmesbury.

The Wiltshire 2026 consultation at the end of last year identified a preferred housing option for Malmesbury of 200 dwellings. This preferred option is located to the north of Malmesbury.

Gleeson Strategic Land are promoting this site and are intending to hold a public exhibition at the Town Hall in November. More information on their proposals will be available at that time.

The public response for Malmesbury Community Area to the Wiltshire 2026 consultation at the end of last year showed a mixed response to the level of growth proposed for the town although the majority did oppose growth. A key aspect of the opposition was that infrastructure in the town is currently at capacity. Of particular concern is the current pressure on school places and traffic congestion in the town centre. The Local Education Authority have confirmed that there is very little capacity at the existing primary schools in Malmesbury.

There was a mixed response to the location of the site itself and support was generally offered only if adequate infrastructure and high quality design accompanied the development.

In addition several comments called for housing development in the area to be held for 5 years until an assessment of the town's infrastructure requirements can be made.

The abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the advance of the Localism Bill potentially offer greater flexibility in plan making and offer the opportunity for Malmesbury Community Area to have greater influence on housing development in the town in future.

Without the RSS there is no longer a presumption that new housing land must come forward in the short-term to meet regional housing targets. Wiltshire Council will be seeking to bring forward housing as part of a plan led process in consultation with the local community – including the Town Council and Community Area Board.

Whilst the site itself is well located to accommodate growth for Malmesbury, it is vital that the appropriate infrastructure and high quality design (both requirements of the local community) underpin any development that comes forward.

In response to this, a pragmatic approach would be to carefully phase development in Malmesbury and call for the development to be delayed until later in the planning period for Wiltshire. This would enable a thorough assessment of infrastructure requirements to be made and for the outcomes of this infrastructure assessment to be addressed in consultation with the local community.

Cllr John Thomson