

Proposal from Councillor Killane to Malmesbury Area Board 10 November 2010

The Wiltshire Council Area Board takes a more central role in supporting and identifying the needs of the community regarding future housing development. Neither Malmesbury Town council nor "Trowbridge" Wiltshire Council can adequately address these issues in isolation and a better 'end product' will be achieved by a joint approach which the local community can feel they have had input into.

A working group is created to act as a focal point for analysing and identifying the infrastructural enhancements required to allow the town to adequately absorb potential future large scale development.

This working group would analyse, collate and agree on the infrastructural enhancements necessary to accommodate a range of development options; clearly the needs would be different depending upon the size of the development.

The group could consist of the following membership :

- A representative from Malmesbury Town Council Planning and Environment Committee.
- A representative from Malmesbury and St. Paul Without Residents Association.
- A representative from the local Chamber of Commerce.
- Area Board Councillors, I suggest You and I.
- A key specialist officer from Wiltshire Council to act as a coordinator to provide and convey the necessary information.
- A governor from each of the 2 local primary schools, and perhaps others to be called upon to represent other parish schools.
- Other representatives from Wessex Water, Highways, Conservation groups, PCT, Fire Service and Police to be called upon as and when necessary.

It would be best to keep the group to a maximum of 10 members to ensure agility. The selection of members would have to be agreed by you and the other Area Board Councillors. Each member would be responsible for liaising with their parent organisation.

The group would be the initial focal point for developers to contact with their proposals before launching them onto the wider public. This would prevent the problems that have occurred when developers have launched ill-conceived plans to a suspicious public.

The group would meet as necessary but say once a month, with the primary goal of collating all data about the infrastructural requirements of the Town.

Developers would be strongly advised to consider the findings of the group, and demonstrate how they would address any issues in their development proposals.

Response from Malmesbury Area Board

Wiltshire Council is currently developing guidance to assist Town Councils and other local community stakeholders undertake 'town planning'. The 'town planning process' seeks to enable local communities to:

- Lead the direction of planning for their towns;
- Feel a sense of ownership;
- Contribute directly to decisions affecting their local areas.

Draft guidance is being prepared and a workshop has been planned for 10 December to which representatives of town councils have been invited.

The emerging guidance proposes that a steering group should be set up to oversee the process and makes suggestions for the membership of the group in order to reflect a cross section of the local community. It also suggests that Wiltshire Council officers could be advisory members of the group.

The issue identified by Cllr Killane of taking a co-ordinated approach to the future housing growth and infrastructure needs of the town could fit in well with this process.

The guidance is being prepared during a time of Governmental change, including reforms to the planning system. It is intended that the workshop will help shape the guidance and it will evolve further in response to changes to the planning system so that the documents prepared add value to the decision making process.

It is suggested that Malmesbury Town Council, on behalf of the local community, participates in the workshop and considers taking this proposal forward as part of the town planning process. The Area Board could agree to this approach.

In addition, with regard to considering future development options for the town and scale of growth to be accommodated, Wiltshire Council's Cabinet on 19 October agreed that in light of the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies Wiltshire's housing requirement would be determined through a comprehensive review. The review would involve local communities and respond to the implications of the Localism Bill when it is published.

Following publication of the Bill, a consistent methodology and approach to considering future levels of growth with Wiltshire's communities will be prepared.