

## **Introduction**

The following is a draft letter to the Secretary of State regarding the future of Neighbourhood planning in Wiltshire written on behalf of the Wiltshire Area Localism Planning Alliance. The Parish Council was unable to approve the draft in time to be a signatory but may wish to support the letter.

Dear Secretary of State

## **The Future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire**

We strongly support the concept of Neighbourhood Planning, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, and each of the councils that have signed this letter has fully engaged with the process of creating and maintaining Neighbourhood Plans.

Neighbourhood Planning has worked well in Wiltshire, not least because of community involvement and engagement, and Wiltshire Council can be justly proud of its record in bringing forward Neighbourhood Plans.

However, the future of each of our Neighbourhood Plans and the future of Neighbourhood Planning in Wiltshire is under threat because of recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

We are therefore writing to you, and speaking in public, on this strategic matter because the residents and communities we represent need the government to reverse these changes.

This cannot wait until decisions are taken on the Future of Planning White Paper and the planning framework is changed some years into the future. The damage to Neighbourhood Planning is happening now. An additional effect is that work Wiltshire Council is doing to undertake long term strategic planning through its Wiltshire Local Plan is being undermined by decisions being made on planning applications currently in process.

We believe from public statements by the Leadership of Wiltshire Council and our Wiltshire MPs that there is broad support for our requests. Indeed, we have been told that Wiltshire Council and some of our MPs have already raised similar requests with you directly and we expect they will do so again.

Specifically, we are asking that you take action to:

1. Drop off the NPPF Section 14 requirement that, to be taken into consideration, Neighbourhood Plans must be less than 2 years old;
2. Remove the changes to the definition of planning areas that in Wiltshire's case has made the whole unitary authority the planning area in place of more meaningful sub divisions;
3. Reverse the changes to the methodology for the calculation of land supply for housing which have so tipped the control of the calculation into the hands of developers;

4. Enable local authorities to take reasonable measures against developers who are failing to deliver agreed housing plans across multiple sites so that these delays do not become part of the 5 year land supply shortfall; and

5. Undertake a review of the Standard Method for calculating housing numbers, which is now considerably out of date and further undermines Neighbourhood Plans by setting undeliverable targets that increase the likelihood of failing to meet a 5 year land supply.

We, and the communities we serve, look forward to hearing from you that you and your team will be taking these steps.

Yours sincerely

cc. Other Dept Ministers

Wiltshire Council Leadership, Chief Executive and Wiltshire Councillors

Wiltshire MPs

Leaders of main Parties