

Subject: Planning newsletter February: Next stages of Local Plan examination and more...

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Planning

February 2026



Wiltshire Council LOCAL PLAN

Next stages of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review examination

Following the letter from independent Planning Inspectors on further work required to the Local Plan, we have provided an update on our proposed next steps and have confirmed that we have put in place the resources and governance needed to complete this work as quickly as possible.

A positive and realistic proposed Programme of Work has been submitted to the Inspectors, setting out how we will address the identified actions.

Adoption of the Local Plan is now expected in 2027, but we have emphasised our commitment to completing the remaining work promptly and efficiently.

[Read the letter and find out more](#)



Samantha Howell appointed Corporate Director for Place

Wiltshire Council has appointed Samantha Howell as Corporate Director for Place.

The Place directorate oversees highways and transport, environment, planning, leisure and communities, playing a key role in delivering infrastructure, supporting sustainable growth and shaping services that affect residents and businesses across the county.

Samantha will lead the directorate in driving forward priorities set out in the council's Our Wiltshire Plan, working with members, partners and stakeholders to support strong communities, a thriving economy and a well-connected county.

Spring Park data centre expansion approved

Wiltshire Council's Strategic Planning Committee has approved a planning application to extend the existing Spring Park data centre campus in Neston.

The application, submitted by Ark Estates 4 Ltd, is for a new standalone structure, including new access arrangements, security measures, changes to public rights of way and landscaping.

Permission has been granted subject to a detailed set of conditions, covering drainage, environmental protection, highways, landscaping and the long-term management of the site.

The committee carefully considered the significant number of objections received, alongside technical assessments and planning policy, before reaching its decision.

[More information](#)



Council opposes Lime Down Solar Park

Wiltshire Council's Cabinet has approved the council's Relevant Representation for the proposed Lime Down Solar Park, confirming that it does not support the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

The Lime Down Solar Park, promoted by Green Island Power, is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008 and will be decided by the Secretary of State, not the council. The proposal covers approximately 1,237 hectares of land north of the M4 and includes solar PV arrays, battery storage and a 22km cable route corridor through the county.

Following a detailed review, Cabinet concluded that while the scheme offers long-term renewable energy benefits, significant concerns remain unresolved. These include landscape and visual impact, ecology and biodiversity, carbon and climate considerations, heritage and archaeology, highways and transport, and economic and community impact.

Cabinet agreed with officers that further information, stronger mitigation measures and enforceable commitments are required before a balanced planning judgement can be made. Until these issues are addressed, the council cannot support the proposal.

Wiltshire Council will continue to engage in the DCO examination process to ensure Wiltshire and its residents' interests are protected.



Council wins appeal to enforce planning rules at mobile park

Wiltshire Council has successfully defended an appeal against its enforcement action at Greenacres Mobile Park in Semington.

The council served an enforcement notice on the site's owner on 26 February 2025 to require all non-Travellers to vacate the site within nine months and reduce the number of pitches to comply with the existing planning permission for 28 caravans for Travellers, comprising 14 pitches each with two caravans only. The council had identified up to 77 caravans on the site.

The owners appealed the enforcement notice, but the appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on 26 November.

The site owner must now comply with the enforcement notice. The compliance period for reducing the site to 14 Traveller pitches, each with two caravans only, has been extended to 24 months from 26 November 2025.

Emery Gate redevelopment approved

Plans for the redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre in Chippenham have been approved by the Strategic Planning Committee.

The scheme, which forms part of the Chippenham One Plan, proposes 225 new homes, flexible commercial space and improved public spaces linking the High Street, Island Park and the river corridor. It represents a significant step forward in the town centre's long-term regeneration.

[Read more](#)

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is consulting on a revised National Planning Policy Framework until 10 March. The draft includes significant changes, including the introduction of national development management policies. Wiltshire Council will be submitting detailed comments in response to the consultation.

Spatial Development Strategies (SDS)

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is also progressing proposals for future strategic planning through Spatial Development Strategies. Wiltshire is included within the proposed Wessex SDS area, alongside Somerset, Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The council will consider the implications of these proposals as part of the ongoing consultation process.



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