

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan

Further Evidence to support the Policies for Sections 5 Housing, 6 Economy and amenities, 7 Transport and road use, 9 Countryside and natural environment, and 10 Historic environment (Section 11 Policies have no further evidence)

The further evidence is detailed and is supplied for reference only; the policies and their justification are given in full in the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

NB this document contains a certain amount of duplication, as some of the requirements relevant to individual policies, e.g. the WODC Local Plan and the NPPF, apply to several of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The development formerly referred to as the Charity Farm development, and referred to as such by some respondents to the Village Survey 2023, and within the enquiry on the Cala proposed development 2019, is now known as William Buckland Way. The Neighbourhood Plan uses the current name, William Buckland Way, throughout.

Policies for Section 5 Housing:

Policy SH1 – Meeting the housing needs of Stonesfield

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The specific needs have been determined using the Stonesfield Housing Needs Assessment 2024 in the context of National and Local Planning policies.

The Housing Needs Assessment for Stonesfield (2024) sets out the detailed rationale for this policy. Some key elements are included below in the section Survey Results

WODC Local Plan 2031

POLICY OS2: Locating development in the right places

Main service centres, rural service centres and villages

A significant proportion of new homes, jobs and supporting services will be focused within and on the edge of the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. The distribution of development is set out in Policy H1.

Due to the size of the settlement and its proximity and connections to Oxford City, Eynsham will also make a significant contribution towards meeting the identified housing needs of the District and Oxford City with a strategic urban extension to be provided to the west of the village. A new rural service centre - Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village - will be created to the north of Eynsham to contribute towards Oxford City's needs. This will comprise a self-contained settlement based on 'garden village' principles and will play a complementary role to Eynsham.

Woodstock is suitable for a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre.

Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and Bampton and Long Hanborough have a more restricted range of services and facilities. Consequently, these rural service centres are suitable for a modest level of development to help reinforce their existing roles. Two site allocations are proposed at Long Hanborough.

The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met.

Further allocations may be made through Neighbourhood Plans. Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

Small villages, hamlets and open countryside

Development in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area.

Proposals for residential development will be considered under policy H2. Proposals for non-residential development that is regarded as appropriate will include:

- Re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses;
- Proposals to support the effectiveness of existing businesses and sustainable tourism;
- Development which will make a positive contribution to farm and country estate diversification; and
- Telecommunications development sited and designed to minimise impact upon the environment

General principles

All development should:

- Be of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context having regard to the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality;
- Form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and/or the character of the area;
- Avoid the coalescence and loss of identity of separate settlements;
- Be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants;
- As far as is reasonably possible protect or enhance the local landscape and the setting of the settlement/s;
- Not involve the loss of an area of open space or any other feature that makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
- Be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities;
- Not be at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; • Conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment;
- Safeguard mineral resources;
- In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;
- In the Green Belt, comply with national policies for the Green Belt; and
- Be supported by all necessary infrastructure including that which is needed to enable access to superfast broadband.

POLICY BC1: Burford – Charlbury sub-area strategy

The focus of new development will be Burford and Charlbury. Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and are suitable for a modest level of development in accordance with Policy OS2. Development in these rural service centres will therefore be of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce the existing service centre role.

Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local housing, community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages. Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of about 774 new homes* to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.
- conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets
- protection and enhancement of the Upper Windrush Valley and Wychwood Project Area
- maximising opportunities for enhancements within the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs).
- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- support for additional small-scale employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification
- ensuring development has access to superfast broadband to facilitate home-working
- seeking the retention and development of local services and community facilities throughout the sub-area and ensuring Burford Town Centre remains vibrant through resisting the loss of shops and other town centre uses, and promoting an increase in the availability and efficient use of parking provision in appropriate locations
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for essential supporting infrastructure, including new transport, education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities in accordance with the IDP. The Council will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to consider appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of HGV traffic on Burford.

* Note: In accordance with Policy H1, the figure of 774 homes is not an absolute target or a maximum ceiling to development.

The Local Plan further states:

9.6.7 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case by case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)

Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

POLICY OS4: High quality design

High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:

- demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and
- not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
- demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and
- conserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental significance, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and habitats of biodiversity value; and
- enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.

Housing Delivery

5.39 Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1

WODC Future land Supply 2023-2028

WODC has shown it is in a strong position to deliver sufficient houses to meet its requirements over the five-year period. 77 houses are anticipated in the Charlbury-Burford Sub-area, including the following in Stonesfield:

Units	Site
1	Brook House, Brook Lane
2	Springwell, The Ridings
1	Farm Buildings, Farley Lane
2	19 Combe Road
1	Building Referred to as Asgard, South East Of Valhalla. Church Street
2	16 Combe Road
1	Skyfall, Church Street
10	Total

Source: WODC Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2023 – 2028 (October 2023)

NPPF - Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

84. (e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

COTSWOLD NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2025 (Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

The Cotswold National Landscape Board has produced a useful document, *Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025*, covering development and need within the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) i.e. the AONB.

The relevant policies are included at Appendix 3, but the key points are highlighted below.

Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and should explicitly identify the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan as a material consideration.

Planning legislation and policy affords the highest level of protection to AONBs – the same level of protection as for National Parks. Although some development may be required to meet local housing needs and to ensure that the vitality of National Landscape settlements is maintained and enhanced,

development should not be at such scale that either individually or cumulatively, it erodes the special qualities of the National Landscape

Permission should be refused for major development within the CNL, other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest

- ‘exceptional need’ does not necessarily equate to ‘exceptional circumstances’;
- no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development was needed in the public interest, met a need that could not be addressed elsewhere or in some other way and met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities;

When making decisions on major development proposals, local authorities (and/or other relevant decision makers) should not simply weigh all material considerations in the balance, but should refuse an application unless they meet the exceptional circumstances and public interest criteria.

Housing delivery in the Cotswolds National Landscape, i.e. the AONB, should be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, particularly housing that is affordable in perpetuity such as social rented housing.

Local Plans should give consideration to setting policies for affordable housing provision in the CNL that require:

- at least 50% affordable housing in market housing developments
- 100% affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites, with a lower percentage only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and the absolute minimum being 75%
- on-site affordable housing provision for housing developments of five units or fewer

Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.

It should be recognised that:

- a) The housing need figure derived from the Government’s ‘standard method’ for calculating housing need is an unconstrained assessment of housing need and does not present a target for housing provision.
- b) The decision on how many homes should be planned for (i.e., the ‘housing requirement’ figure in Local Plans) should only be made after consideration of the constraints that the local authority faces, including the AONB designation, and consideration of the land that is actually available for development. When these constraints are factored in, the ‘housing requirement’ could potentially be smaller than the standard method’s ‘housing need’ figure.
- c) The application of national planning policies relating to AONBs may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN) in full in local authority areas that overlap with the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)
- d) The CNL is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining, non-designated areas. In the context of the CNL, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent urban areas and unmet needs arising in local authority areas that do not overlap with the CNL.
- e) Meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to the CNL.

- f) The scale and extent of development in the CNL should be limited.

When the allocation of sites is being considered in the Local Plan process, regard should be given to the evidence of need specific to: (i) the settlement/parish where the allocation is being proposed; and (ii) the CNL 'sub-area' within which the allocation is being proposed.

Within the CNL, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining, or outside of, built up area boundaries (or equivalent) should only be supported where there is robust evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement.

The Management Plan says that meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to the Cotswolds National Landscape. Furthermore, it stipulates that the Cotswolds National Landscape is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining non-designated areas and that in the context of the Cotswolds National Landscape, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent urban areas. Thus, it leans heavily against any justification for development in Stonesfield within the AONB in order to satisfy housing need for example, in Oxford which Oxford itself is unable to meet.

Where choice-based lettings systems, such as Homeseeker Plus, are used as part of the evidence base for affordable housing need:

- the 'local connection' component of the choice-based lettings system should be applied consistently; and
- data from the choice-based lettings systems should not be used explicitly as a measure of affordable housing need unless the data has been verified and there is a clear local connection to – and preference for – the settlement in question.

When local authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies that ensure that new market housing is used as a principal residence rather than as a second home or holiday home.

The lack of a specific housing need figure, or housing requirement figure, for the AONB 'sub-area' within which an allocation is being considered could make the allocation (and the Plan) unsound. This was the case in West Oxfordshire, where the Local Plan inspector concluded that 'in the absence of a housing need figure for the Burford – Charlbury sub-area... the allocation in the plan of housing sites, and the reliance on additional windfall housing development, in the Burford – Charlbury area, over and above existing completions and commitments, would not be sound'.

There is concern that second home ownership, retirement homes and buy to let (including Air BnB) have removed housing from the market that could otherwise be made available to first-home owners. This results in increased demand within a reduced pool of housing stock, which inflates house prices and makes housing less affordable. The Board is particularly concerned that those who care for the landscape of the National Landscape and other key workers have an opportunity to live within it.

2019 Planning Appeal Against Refusal of Planning Permission for a major development by Cala Homes

A site on the Woodstock Road was proposed as an allocation for housing in the draft 2031 WODC Local Plan, but was removed after the community group, Sustainable Stonesfield, and the Stonesfield Parish Council argued against it in the hearings before the Local Plan Inspector. The

allocation therefore did not appear in the final agreed Local Plan. Despite this, Cala Homes put in an application to build 68 houses on half the site that WODC had identified. Sustainable Stonesfield and Stonesfield Parish Council made representations to the local planning authority urging rejection of the application. The application was refused and Cala appealed. The appeal was heard in 2019 by the Secretary of State's Planning Inspector, Stephen Normington, at a planning inquiry, in which much detailed evidence was presented by Cala, WODC and Sustainable Stonesfield on behalf of Stonesfield Parish Council. Mr Normington gave careful consideration to the evidence and dismissed the appeal giving full reasons for doing so in his lengthy written decision.

Some key points of principle as to how relevant planning policy affects Stonesfield, emerged from the decision:

1. Cala was determined on the basis of law and policy.
2. Section 70(2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that in determining a planning application a local planning authority shall have regard inter alia to "the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application," and "any other material considerations."
3. The "development plan" is mainly, though not exclusively, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Probably top of the list of "other material considerations" is the National Planning Policy Framework.
4. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines "major development" when applied to housing as comprising development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.
5. In determining the Cala application by way of refusal, the Planning Inspector, Stephen Normington, very helpfully pointed out the material considerations, i.e. provisions in the NPPF and WOLP, which would govern an application such as the Cala proposal.
6. The following paragraphs provide a summary of how the Inspector, Stephen Normington, applied the relevant material considerations in his decision letter rejecting the Cala appeal against refusal of permission to build 68 houses off the Woodstock Rd, and of how they apply to future proposals
7. Paragraph 182 of the latest edition (December 2023) of the National Planning Policy Framework says:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues."
8. Mr Normington was concerned about the "significant harm to the landscape" of the AONB which would be caused by the proposed Cala major development. He said at paragraph 49 of his decision letter:

"...overall, in considering the landscape impacts of the proposal, the development would be contrary to the guidelines provided in the Cotswolds Area and the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, in particular as an expansion of the settlement it

would not maintain the open, sparsely settled character of the Dip Slope Lowland. It would intrude negatively into the landscape by eroding part of its open character.”

9. He noted the damage which had already been caused by the Charity Farm development, to which proposal, Sustainable Stonesfield and indeed the wider village had not wakened up in time, so that permission had been granted in the absence of significant objection. Charity Farm had ironically been described to Mr Normington in the Cala public inquiry by the WODC’s own professional planning officer witness (i.e. as the witness of the very planning authority which had granted the Charity Farm permission) as the perfect example of a development which should not be granted in the AONB. In his decision letter at paragraph 52 Mr Normington commented on the views towards the village from the East on the approach along the Oxfordshire Way, Akeman Street, footpath:

“...such current views looking towards the village of this approach are dominated by the incongruity of the Charity Farm development which, owing to its urban form and materials appears as a disjointed protrusion into the rural landscape and displays little integration with the rest of the village. This development serves to emphasise my concerns at the sensitivity of the landscape to change and the harm that can be created by a relatively large-scale modern development that fails to integrate into its surrounds.”

10. He was particularly concerned about the adverse effect of the proposed Cala development on views of Stonesfield from the Oxfordshire Way. At his paragraph 53 he said:

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“The cumulative visual impacts of the existing and proposed development when viewed from Oxfordshire Way would fundamentally and unacceptably change the characteristic open character of the Dip Slope Lowland. This change would be visibly and perceptibly experienced at close quarters by users of the public right of way on the approach to the village such that in views looking north-west the village would appear as more of a modern “suburbanization” of a rural settlement within the AONB. This change would be substantial and would adversely affect the enjoyment of the users of the path.”

11. It is clear therefore that the Planning Inspector in Cala considered that major development of the kind then proposed would not contribute to “conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty” in the AONB and indeed would cause it significant harm. He said at paragraph 95 of his decision letter:

“...on close scrutiny of the development before me, I have found that it would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the AONB.”

12. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF says:

When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.”

13. Mr Normington considered in his Cala decision whether the need to provide affordable housing might constitute exceptional circumstances in the public interest. He reviewed much detailed evidence on housing need which had been placed before him by the developer and by the objectors. He found at paragraph 77 of his decision letter:

“I accept that district-wide there may be a need for the delivery of more affordable homes. However, in considering the exceptional circumstance test to justify development within the AONB, I do not consider that the evidence before me provides a convincing case to demonstrate that the development which includes 34 affordable units is necessary to meet an identified local housing need in Stonesfield.”

14. The Cala decision of 2019 provides a precedent against which other “major development” in Stonesfield will be assessed. In particular the decision shows:

- a. It is likely that the local planning authority or the Secretary of State on appeal will consider that any proposal for “major development” in Stonesfield will not be compliant with the requirement of paragraph 182 of the NPPF that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which has the highest status of protection.
- b. on the contrary it is likely that the local planning authority/Secretary of State will consider that any proposal for “major development” in Stonesfield will cause significant harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB;
- c. it is likely that the local planning authority/Secretary of State will not consider that any major development is necessary to meet an identified local housing need in Stonesfield, thereby constituting the “exceptional circumstances” in the public interest which are required by paragraph 183 of the NPPF to justify a grant of planning permission;
- d. “major development” in this context will be construed in accordance with the definition in Annex 2 of the NPPF as including housing development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

15. Mr Normington considered the “limitations in the use of the Affordable Housing Register”, which he did not consider “to be a robust mechanism to constitute clear and convincing evidence of a need for 34 affordable homes in Stonesfield”. He pointed out that “only 2 of the 52 names on the AHR said they wished to live in Stonesfield only.”

Survey results – Household Survey

Reasons people left the village in the last 5 years

Q16 If anyone has left your household in the last five years, why did they leave?	Extrapolation range***		
	Low	Mid	High
Employment	39	51	63
Further or higher education	35	46	56
Lack of affordable housing to rent	7	9	11
Lack of affordable housing to buy	10	13	16
Lack of suitable housing	9	12	15
Family reason	9	12	15
Nobody has left	311	406	501
Other (please specify)	18	24	29

*** See Housing Needs Assessment for extrapolation methodology

Those who responded 'Other' are as follows: Care home (1), Children all left but longer than 5 years ago (1), Death (8), lack of local transport network (1), Moved closure to work (1), Moved to larger house (1), Only lived in the village for 3 months (1), Over-crowded (1), To buy a house in Stonesfield (1), To move to own homes (1), Travel (1).

Looking at why people may have left the village in the last 5 years, the major reasons are for employment and education. However, for the purposes of determining housing needs, it is important to note that Lack of affordable housing to rent (9), Lack of affordable housing to buy (13), Lack of suitable housing (12) are relevant as it particularly suggests a need for more affordable housing that is specifically available to people of the village (i.e. not the wider WODC Housing Register).

Of course, this is only a snap shot and there will be whole households who have left the village in the last 5 years and we have no data for those households as to the reasons for leaving or numbers.

Future Housing Needs

Looking at future housing needs, we asked if people were planning to move and if so, where, why, what type and size of house, and tenure.

Q18 Are you planning to move house in the next 5 years?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Yes, in Stonesfield	29	38	47

Using the data, it is possible to break down the analysis of the 29 households who responded that they are looking to move within Stonesfield in the next five years, the same questions of why, what type and size of house, and tenure they are looking for are analysed:

Q19 Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
To give or receive family support	4	5	6
Current mortgage affordability	3	4	5
Current rent affordability	0	0	0
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8	10
Need a bigger home	13	17	21
Tenancy insecure	0	0	0
To accommodate health needs	1	1	2
Other	4	5	6

Those responding 'Other' were as follows: Neighbour (1), To be mortgage free (1), To buy our first house (1), Bigger garden (1).

Q20 What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

Q22 What type of tenure would you most like to move to?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Buy own home	26	34	42
Rent from Council / Housing Association	3	4	5

Q21 How many bedrooms?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
One	2	3	3
Two	1	1	2
Three	12	16	19
Four	13	17	21
Five or more	1	1	2

Q24 What is preventing you from moving home within Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Unable to afford to buy new home / Price of housing to buy is too high	13	17	21
Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs / Lack of suitable type or size of house to buy	18	24	29
Lack of land to self-build	3	4	5
Lack of homes to rent from Housing Association	0	0	0
Lack of affordable private rented properties	2	3	3
Lack of homes to rent from private landlord	2	3	3
Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people	2	3	3
Other (please specify)	1	1	2

Other: Need to finish current house first.

The number of households looking to move within Stonesfield in the next 5 years is fairly small. The questions arising out of the survey results are:

- can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?
- what allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?
- can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

These questions are considered below.

Can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?

There is a reasonable provision of affordable housing in Stonesfield made available primarily by Cottsway Housing Association, South Oxfordshire Housing Association and Stonesfield Community Trust.

Nominations for the Housing Association are via the WODC Housing Register and allocated according to highest need (see Appendix 4), rather than having a Stonesfield connection, unless the property criteria specify otherwise. As such, it is possible, but improbable given the demand, that they would be allocated to someone with a Stonesfield connection.

The Survey asked about whether households were on a housing register, with the following output:

Q6 Is anyone in your home on the West Oxfordshire, and/or other, Housing Register?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
West Oxfordshire	22	29	35
Other Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Outside Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Don't know	19	25	31
No	408	533	658

The 22 people on the WODC housing register, extrapolated to 29, is a significant number for this tenure, given the level of current provision. When correlated with the question: Do you intend to move in the next 5 years? it gave a useful insight as to where people wanted to move.

Those on WODC Housing Register and Moving Intentions next 5 years:

	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Don't know	1	1	2
No, not intending to move within the next 5 years	13	17	21
Yes, elsewhere	2	3	3
Yes, in Stonesfield	3	4	5
Yes, in West Oxfordshire	1	1	2
No response	2	3	3
	22	29	35

Extrapolated to Mid, only 4 households are on the WODC Housing Register and are looking to move in Stonesfield in the next 5 years. This is a very small number. Further analysis could be undertaken to determine whether it could be met by provision in Stonesfield, which for the reasons given above, could only be via a Rural Exception Site or affordable housing with restrictions on lettings applied.

SCLT properties are for tenants with a Stonesfield connection. Demand for these properties is strong. They house, for example, elderly tenants in small bungalows and younger people small properties typical for single or dual occupancy.

There may be a shortfall in provision. In that case a Rural Exception Site would guarantee occupancy by those with a Stonesfield connection, which would be highly unlikely to be delivered by a typical s106 development on a conventional building plot of >10 houses with a Housing Association as Registered Provider.

What allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?

74 households answered that they didn't know whether they were likely to move in the next 5 years, which can be extrapolated up to 97 households to cover those who didn't respond to the survey. It seems likely that some of these may have a future need to move in Stonesfield, but it would not be prudent to make an assumption about numbers for the purposes of housebuilding; any development being highly speculative.

Can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

This is a key question. 26 households identified a desire to move in the Village and to buy, this can be extrapolated to 34 to cover non-responders. A small allowance could also be added for those households that answered they didn't know if they were likely to move (74 households, 97 extrapolated)

Since December 2018, 100 properties have been sold in Stonesfield.

Of these 100:

- 60 were detached properties
- 27 were semi-detached
- 11 were terraced
- 2 were flats.

The projected demand is:

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

NB: These numbers total higher as households chose multiple property types that they might look for.

If these numbers are scaled back to the number of households that said they were looking to move in Stonesfield in the next five years, the table would re-present as follows

What type of house? Adjusted down to 29 households	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	13	17	21
Semi-detached or terraced house	7	9	11
Detached bungalow	5	7	8
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	2	3	3
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	2	3	3
Total	29	38	47

Comparing future house types with existing house type shows the following:

Existing	Future				
	Detached house	Semi-detached or terraced house	Detached bungalow	Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	Flat, Maisonette or bed sit
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Detached bungalow	√		√		
Detached bungalow	√		√		
Detached house			√		
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house		√	√	√	√
Detached house			√		
Detached house	√	√	√	√	√
Detached house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace bungalow		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√		√		
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
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The table offers no consistent pattern and as a result no obvious conclusions can be drawn from this data as need is spread, with some respondents choosing multiple options.

For completeness, the Survey enabled a comparison between the 29 responders existing beds vs their future requirement. Note, extrapolating this data would not be valid and would have limited usefulness.

It is useful to compare what the past housing market has provided in Stonesfield against future requirements. Using the Mid extrapolation and comparing to Rightmove data of past sales, the results are as follows:

What type of house?	Mid	Past Sales	Capacity
Detached house/bungalow	23	60	-37
Semi-detached or terraced house/bungalow	12	38	-26
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	2	1
Total	38	100	-62

Thus, comparing past market sales with future projection of need gives an excess capacity of 62 houses. This capacity would accommodate around 64% of those who didn't know if they might move in the village, a much larger percentage than those who are likely to actually look to move.

The conclusion is that the market, subject to the next 5 years delivering the same scale of available property for sale, will meet the needs of people in Stonesfield wishing to move with excess capacity. There is no case for further market housing.

Free text comments

The Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly preclude major development in Stonesfield. Such development is already restricted by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan, by virtue of location within the Cotswolds AONB, other than in exceptional circumstances, and there are no conceivable exceptional circumstances which could apply in Stonesfield. Therefore, such a restriction would not be inconsistent with the Local Development Plan or the NPPF.

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Maybe retirement housing/flats - to enable older residents to stay in the village/free up housing stock? At present, development everywhere in UK seems to be primarily developer-led, and profit-driven. It is hoped the application of the Plan will change this balance, to village-led initiatives, emphasising the paramount importance of infrastructure, LOCAL opinion, and local needs. Any thoughts of housing for the elderly.

There needs to be small rural exception sites for housing people local to Stonesfield only, this should be ring fenced and not open to the district. Perhaps an enhanced role for Stonesfield Charitable Trust in managing such properties.

Stonesfield has changed enormously over my lifetime which is why as much of its character as possible should be preserved and maintained. Many dry stone walls, for example, have fallen into disrepair in the rural areas, gates and stiles are broken etc.

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I just want to keep Stonesfield as a nice small village. This village has had enough new housing and it won't be able to cope with even more.

Larger scale housing developments to date have provided houses representing fake Victorian, Georgian, Edwardian themes and use low quality materials such as reconstituted stone, fibre-cement faux lintels, PVC windows and imitation Welsh slate roofs. The designs lack both the quality of material and design detailing of the older styles that they seek to emulate. Higher quality, more contemporary design is achievable and should be required of developers. Obviously greater respect must be shown with sites immediately adjacent to the Conservation Areas but elsewhere there should be requirements for better designs incorporating a mix of materials rather than the unimaginative, repetitive reconstituted stone block buildings that have been lazily and repetitively used. A design standard that encourages/requires better is achievable and should be promoted and supported by WODC to move away from these thoroughly uninspiring concepts that are continually offered.

Development is a very difficult subject to find a solution to. People need places to live and yet all development can impact the environment (biological and human). I'd be wary of cramming more houses into existing developed space, I think it could make Stonesfield very cramped, unless it's definitely sufficient and it must include parking and adequate services such as sewerage. I'd support small scale housing development if needed, sensible sites were considered and the improvement of things like bus transport was factored in - but it's usually not cost effective for constructors. Thanks for taking the time to gather all these responses and good luck!

I feel any new developments should be made to use material sympathetic with the local area. When extending a house here, the materials are quite rightly specified in great detail. The householders often go to great expense to comply with the planning stipulations. However, on larger developments it seems developers are able to use cheaper materials, not in keeping with the local area (i.e. reconstituted stone and cheaper roof tiles.) William Buckland way is an example of this, as are some of the new homes near Farley Lane.

I have carefully studied the Blenheim plan. It's hard changing, but we are relying on cars so much and that just means we grow more car friendly transport systems. I wonder whether houses that are beautiful and in the vernacular need to be pressed more. There is a bunch of red roof houses behind the Combe Road, the pictures were lovely with grey robes. not so much when you actually look at what we got. we need to reserve some genuine meaning for green space if we're going to go out to village. Orchards, streams, ponds. If you're going to build and think about building fences and wildlife friendly, how about only giving permission if the gardens are significant and communal in parts. That's much better for children much better for wildlife and much less offensive. Build down as well, we should be using basements

We have far too many large developments at high cost under the low-cost housing provision threshold, which our councillors are invisible from or don't answer communication. Our utilities infrastructure, especially water and drainage is overstretched with low pressure getting worse with each development, yet planning permission goes ahead. Public transport appalling meaning cars are a necessity, yet parish council (one member in particular) is at war with the car missing the point that we are a village turning into a commuting suburb. Our once beautiful and peaceful walks are overrun with people and Stonesfield is no longer a

pleasant place to live. We will be moving out of the area soon as it no longer is the place we enjoyed living.

Policy SH2 – Size and type of homes

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

9.6.7 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

- William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)
- Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaption. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

In terms of the type of housing available, the District is dominated by a high proportion of detached properties which comprise almost 35% of the total housing stock, followed by semi-detached (32%) and terraced properties (23%). The proportion of flats/maisonettes available at just over 10% is lower than any other Oxfordshire authority. The majority of flats are located in Chipping Norton, Witney and Carterton.

2.18 In terms of house sizes, West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable balance of property sizes as follows:

- 6.8% - 5 or more bedrooms
- 20% - 4 bedrooms
- 40.8% - 3 bedrooms
- 24.9% - 2 bedrooms
- 7.3% - 1 bedroom

CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

5.64 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. The Council will seek, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% to be one- and two-bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
- 35% to be three- and four- bedroom homes.

The size of new homes needed – market housing

5.73 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011 Census identifying that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.

5.74 Previous evidence suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.

5.75 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:

- 4.8% 1-bed properties
- 27.9% 2-bed properties
- 43.4% 3-bed properties
- 23.9% 4+bed properties

5.76 This suggests that the main focus should be 2 and 3-bed properties and to a lesser extent 4 bed and larger. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing

mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

POLICY H4: Type and mix of new homes

All residential developments will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes. Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help create a more balanced housing stock within the District and meet the needs of a range of different groups having regard to specific local needs.

POLICY OS4: High quality design

High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should

Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1

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NPPF - Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

84. (e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Survey results: Relevant Questions – Individual Survey

Reasons people left the village in the last 5 years

Q16 If anyone has left your household in the last five years, why did they leave?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Employment	39	51	63
Further or higher education	35	46	56
Lack of affordable housing to rent	7	9	11
Lack of affordable housing to buy	10	13	16
Lack of suitable housing	9	12	15
Family reason	9	12	15
Nobody has left	311	406	501
Other (please specify)	18	24	29

Those who responded 'Other' are as follows: Care home (1), Children all left but longer than 5 years ago (1), Death (8), lack of local transport network (1), Moved closure to work (1), Moved to larger house (1), Only lived in the village for 3 months (1), Overcrowded (1), To buy a house in Stonesfield (1), To move to own homes (1), Travel (1).

Looking at why people may have left the village in the last 5 years, the major reasons are for employment and education. However, for the purposes of determining housing needs, it is important to note that Lack of affordable housing to rent (9), Lack of affordable housing to buy (13), Lack of suitable housing (12) are relevant as it particularly suggests a need for more affordable housing that is specifically available to people of the village (i.e. not the wider WODC Housing Register).

Of course, this is only a snap shot and there will be whole households who have left the village in the last 5 years and we have no data for those households as to the reasons for leaving or numbers.

Future Housing Needs

Looking at future housing needs, we asked if people were planning to move and if so, where, why, what type and size of house, and tenure.

Are you planning to move house in the next 5 years?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Yes, in Stonesfield	29	38	47

Using the data, it is possible to break down the analysis of the 29 households who responded that they are looking to move within Stonesfield in the next five years, the same questions of why, what type and size of house, and tenure they are looking for are analysed:

Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
To give or receive family support	4	5	6
Current mortgage affordability	3	4	5
Current rent affordability	0	0	0
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8	10
Need a bigger home	13	17	21
Tenancy insecure	0	0	0
To accommodate health needs	1	1	2
Other	4	5	6

Those responding 'Other' were as follows: Neighbour (1), To be mortgage free (1), To buy our first house (1), Bigger garden (1).

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

What type of tenure would you most like to move to?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Buy own home	26	34	42
Rent from Council / Housing Association	3	4	5

How many bedrooms?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
One	2	3	3
Two	1	1	2

Three	12	16	19
Four	13	17	21
Five or more	1	1	2

What is preventing you from moving home within Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Unable to afford to buy new home / Price of housing to buy is too high	13	17	21
Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs / Lack of suitable type or size of house to buy	18	24	29
Lack of land to self-build	3	4	5
Lack of homes to rent from Housing Association	0	0	0
Lack of affordable private rented properties	2	3	3
Lack of homes to rent from private landlord	2	3	3
Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people	2	3	3
Other (please specify)	1	1	2

Other: Need to finish current house first.

The number of households looking to move within Stonesfield in the next 5 years is fairly small. The questions arising out of the survey results are:

- can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?
- what allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?
- can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

These questions are considered below.

Can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?

There is a reasonable provision of affordable housing in Stonesfield made available primarily by Cottsway Housing Association, South Oxfordshire Housing Association and Stonesfield Community Trust.

Nominations for the Housing Association are via the WODC Housing Register and allocated according to highest need (see Appendix 4), rather than having a Stonesfield connection, unless the property criteria specify otherwise. As such, it is possible, but improbable given the demand, that they would be allocated to someone with a Stonesfield connection.

The Survey asked about whether households were on a housing register, with the following output:

Is anyone in your home on the West Oxfordshire, and/or other, Housing Register?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
West Oxfordshire	22	29	35
Other Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Outside Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Don't know	19	25	31
No	408	533	658

The 22 people on the WODC housing register, extrapolated to 29, is a significant number for this tenure, given the level of current provision. When correlated with the question: Do you intend to move in the next 5 years? it gave a useful insight as to where people wanted to move:

On WODC Housing Register and Moving Intentions next 5 years

	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Don't know	1	1	2
No, not intending to move within the next 5 years	13	17	21
Yes, elsewhere	2	3	3
Yes, in Stonefield	3	4	5
Yes, in West Oxfordshire	1	1	2
No response	2	3	3
	22	29	35

Extrapolated to Mid, only 4 households are on the WODC Housing Register and are looking to move in Stonefield in the next 5 years. This is a very small number. Further analysis could be undertaken to determine whether it could be met by provision in Stonefield, which for the reasons given above, could only be via a Rural Exception Site or affordable housing with restrictions on lettings applied.

SCLT properties are for tenants with a Stonefield connection. Demand for these properties is strong: housing, for example, elderly tenants in small bungalows and younger people in small properties typical for single or dual occupancy.

There may be a shortfall in provision which a Rural Exception Site would guarantee occupancy by those with a Stonefield connection, which would be highly unlikely to be delivered by a typical s106 development on a conventional building plot of >10 houses with a Housing Association as Registered Provider.

What allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonefield?

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Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house		√	√	√	√
Detached house			√		
Detached house	√	√	√	√	√
Detached house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace bungalow		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√		√		
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house					√
Semi-detached or terrace house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace house	√				
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I just want to keep Stonesfield as a nice small village. This village has had enough new housing and it won't be able to cope with even more

Larger scale housing developments to date have provided houses representing fake Victorian, Georgian, Edwardian themes and use low quality materials such as reconstituted stone, fibre-cement faux lintels, PVC windows and imitation welsh slate roofs. The designs lack both the quality of material and design detailing of the older styles that they seek to emulate. Higher quality, more contemporary design is achievable and should be required of developers. Obviously greater respect must be shown with sites immediately adjacent to the Conservation Areas but elsewhere there should be requirements for better designs incorporating a mix of materials rather than the unimaginative, repetitive reconstituted stone block buildings that have been lazily and repetitively used. A design standard that encourages/requires better is achievable and should be promoted and supported by WODC to move away from these thoroughly uninspiring concepts that are continually offered.

Development is a very difficult subject to find a solution to. People need places to live and yet all development can impact the environment (biological and human). I'd be wary of cramming more houses into existing developed space, I think it could make Stonesfield very cramped, unless it's definitely sufficient and it must include parking and adequate services such as sewerage. I'd support small scale housing development if needed, sensible sites were considered and the improvement of things like bus transport was factored in - but it's usually not cost effective for constructors. Thanks for taking the time to gather all these responses and good luck!

I feel any new developments should be made to use material sympathetic with the local area. When extending a house here, the materials are quite rightly specified in great detail. The householders often go to great expense to comply with the planning stipulations. However, on larger developments it seems developers are able to use cheaper materials, not in keeping with the local area (i.e. reconstituted stone and cheaper roof tiles.) William Buckland way is an example of this, as are some of the new homes near Farley Lane.

I have carefully studied the Blenheim plan. It's hard changing, but we are relying on cars so much and that just means we grow more car friendly transport systems. I wonder whether houses that are beautiful and in the vernacular need to be pressed more. There is a bunch of red roof houses behind the Combe Road, the pictures were lovely with grey robes. not so much when you actually look at what we got. we need to reserve some genuine meaning for green space if we're going to go out to village. Orchards, streams, ponds. If you're going to build and think about building fences and wildlife friendly, how about only giving permission if the gardens are significant and communal in parts. That's much better for children much better for wildlife and much less offensive. Build down as well, we should be using basements

We have far too many large developments at high cost under the low-cost housing provision threshold, which our councillors are invisible from or don't answer communication. Our utilities infrastructure, especially water and drainage is overstretched with low pressure getting worse with each development, yet planning permission goes ahead. Public transport

appalling meaning cars are a necessity, yet parish council (one member in particular) is at war with the car missing the point that we are a village turning into a commuting suburb. Our once beautiful and peaceful walks are overrun with people and Stonesfield is no longer a pleasant place to live. We will be moving out of the area soon as it no longer is the place we enjoyed living.

Policies SH3 + SH4 – Mix of affordable and rented housing / Affordable homes

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The Housing Needs Assessment for Stonesfield (2024) sets out further rationale for this policy, which includes some of the key points below.

In 2016/17, affordability of housing was published in the Local Insight report, showing a significant gap above the national average when measuring earnings and savings to house prices.

	Stonesfield	England
Lower Quartile House price ('affordable housing') affordability gap	£86,516	£39,328
Savings ratio (months of earnings for a deposit)	12.16	6.54
Total Ratio (years of earnings for a house)	6.11	3.57
Average house price – affordability gap	£167,239	£42,272
Savings ratio (months of earnings for a deposit)	15.6	10.41
Total Ratio (years of earnings for a house)	7.61	5.5

Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

The table above demonstrates the issue of affordability of housing in Stonesfield is much greater than England as a whole. The continued rise in house prices since 2016/17 have made this problem even greater and is a key housing needs issue.

The ONS publish data on House prices versus annual earnings. Over recent years, the data shows that the gap has grown larger, as shown in the graph below:

Age Profile

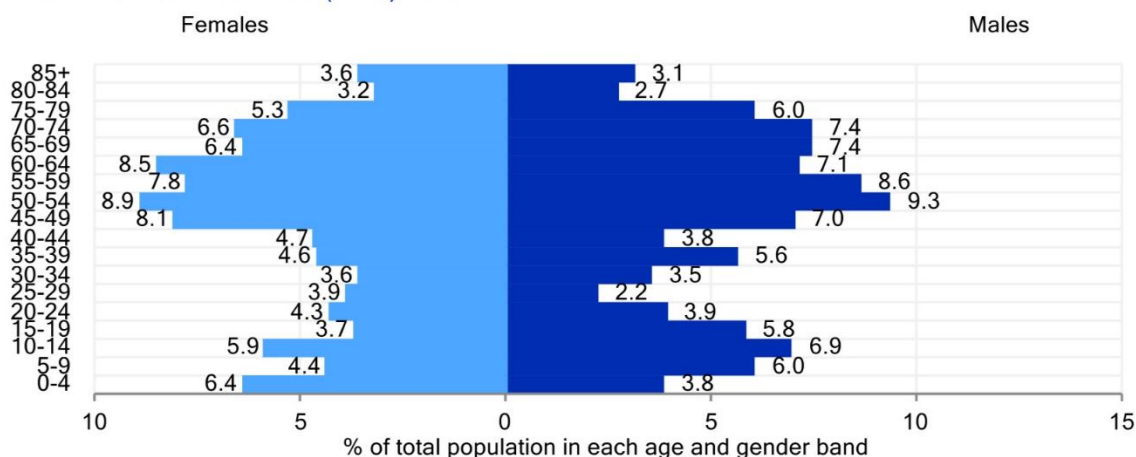
The age breakdown of the Village, as at 2019, is as follows:

	Stonesfield	% Stonesfield	% National

Age 0-15	282	17.4	19.2
Working Age	924	56.9	62.4
Aged 65+	419	25.8	18.4
Total	1625		

Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

Figure: Population estimates by 5-year age band
Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2019



The tables above show a weighting more heavily geared to an older population than the national average. The chart shows that, even for the working age population, it is more heavily geared to the older end of the age distribution.

As at the 2011 census, there were 175 pensioner households, 27.2% of the village compared to 20.7% nationally.

For the village to maintain future vitality, some consideration should be given to ensuring future housing is available and affordable for younger age groups. Affordability is considered later in this report.

Vulnerable Groups

Unemployment

The proportion of people out of work in Stonesfield (Nov. 2020) was low 3.4% (31 people) compared with 6.5% nationally.

Disability

Reflecting the relatively older age of the population, 12.9% (54) of people in Stonesfield (May 2020) claimed attendance allowance against 12.5% nationally.

Only 3.7% (34) of people in Stonesfield (Oct. 2020) claimed Personal Independence Payments against 6.1% nationally.

OCC Population Projections

Oxfordshire County Council have projected the increase in population by District. The following table shows the forecast percentage change in population for West Oxfordshire, year on year.

Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	
TOTAL	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+	Year
				2021
1.6%	1.0%	1.5%	2.4%	2022
1.3%	0.8%	1.1%	2.5%	2023
1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	2.3%	2024
0.9%	0.3%	0.5%	2.4%	2025
1.4%	0.7%	1.0%	2.8%	2026
1.6%	0.9%	1.2%	3.0%	2027
1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	3.0%	2028
1.7%	0.8%	1.3%	3.3%	2029
1.6%	0.7%	1.3%	2.8%	2030
1.1%	0.2%	0.8%	2.5%	2031

Source: OCC – Oxfordshire Insight

Growth is further analysed by settlements and varies significantly. Data specifically for Stonesfield is not available. However, as a proxy, looking at the growth profiles for Charlbury and Wychwoods, being representative of Cotswold settlements in the AONB (albeit Charlbury is a service centre), growth was much lower at 4% between 2020 and 2030. As can be seen, anticipated growth is small and is reflected predominantly in the Age 65+ range, whereas growth in other age ranges for most years is negative.

Wychwoods	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+
2020			
2021	2.3%	1.1%	2.3%
2022	-0.2%	-0.2%	2.7%
2023	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%
2024	-0.8%	-0.1%	1.8%
2025	-2.1%	0.1%	1.5%
2026	-0.9%	-0.4%	2.8%
2027	-1.5%	-0.9%	2.9%
2028	-0.4%	-1.4%	2.1%
2029	-2.2%	-0.8%	2.3%
2030	-1.0%	-0.8%	1.7%

Charlbury	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+
2020			
2021	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%
2022	-0.3%	-1.1%	3.3%
2023	-0.1%	0.0%	3.0%
2024	-1.4%	0.4%	4.5%
2025	-1.8%	-0.8%	2.0%
2026	-2.5%	-0.1%	2.3%
2027	-2.9%	-0.2%	2.1%
2028	-1.2%	-1.7%	2.3%
2029	-2.1%	-1.2%	2.1%
2030	-1.5%	-1.6%	1.8%

Source Oxfordshire County Council 2020 to 2030 housing-led forecasts for districts and MSOAs February 2022

Applying the Wychwood Data to Stonesfield 2019 population would mean the following population change:

Change	2021-23	2024-30	Total
Age 0-15	8	-25	-17
Working Age	13	-40	-27
Age 65+	28	72	100
Total	49	7	56

An increase in population of 56 is anticipated using the methodology above, however, most of that will already have occurred in the period 2021-23, leaving an insignificant net forecast increase for the period 2024-2030. However, there is an anticipated significant shift towards an aging population with the growth of age 65+ at the expense of younger ages.

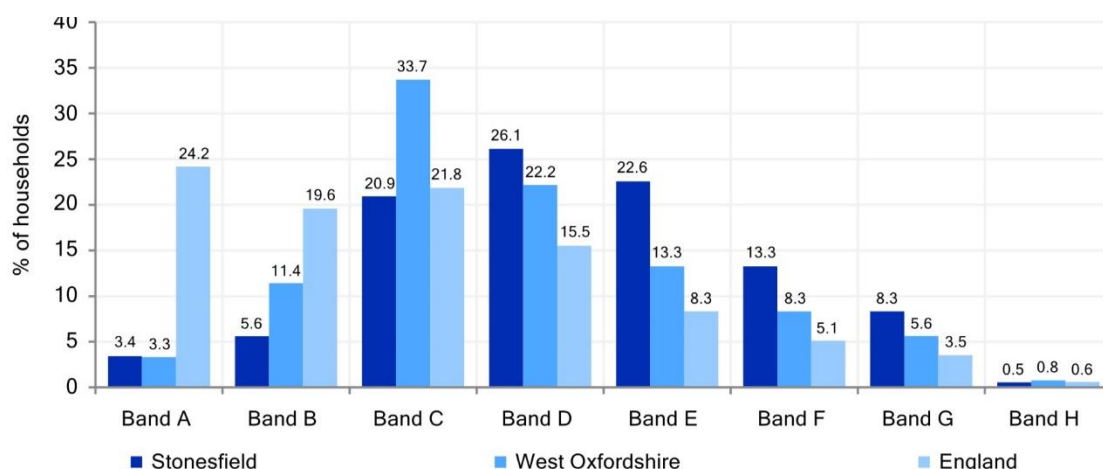
As can be seen above, there is a much higher weighting in Stonesfield of detached properties. Developments since 2011 will not have significantly changed this picture. There are no communal residential facilities in Stonesfield e.g care homes.

As detailed below, in 2011, there was a significantly higher proportion of people in owner occupied houses than the national average of which significantly more were owned outright. The proportion of people in rented homes, either social or private, was much lower than the national average. Development since 2011, will not have changed this disparity significantly.

	Stonesfield	Stonesfield %	National %
Owner occupied	497	77.2	64.1
Owner occupied – owned outright	288	44.7	30.6
Owner occupied – mortgage/loan	206	32.0	32.8
Owner occupied – shared ownership	3	0.5	0.8
Social rented homes	83	12.9	17.7
Rented from Council	6	0.9	9.4
Rented from Housing Assoc or Social Landlord	77	12.0	8.3
Rented from private landlord	50	7.8	15.4
Other rented dwellings	14	2.2	2.8

Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

The chart below shows the relative affordability of property in Stonesfield through comparison of Council Tax bandings based on Valuation Office Agency data at 2020.



Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

The chart shows a significant weighting towards higher Council Tax bands compared to West Oxfordshire and even more than the rest of England. This indicates a very low affordability level for Stonesfield properties. Comparing house prices in Stonesfield between Sept 2019 and August 2020 from Land Registry data, the average in Stonesfield was £469,706 vs £304,430 in England as a whole, almost 55% higher. The chart below shows relative affordability by house type:



Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

Land registry data also shows that prices for terraced properties increased by more than 48% between 2007 and 2017, over 3 times the rate of any other house type; these properties being more affordable, it is suggested that the price rise is an indicator of higher demand pushing up prices.

In 2016/17, affordability of housing was published in the OCSI Local Insight report, showing a significant gap above the national average when measuring earnings and savings to house prices.

	Stonesfield	England
Lower Quartile House price ('affordable housing') affordability gap	£86,516	£39,328
Savings ratio (months of earnings for a deposit)	12.16	6.54
Total Ratio (years of earnings for a house)	6.11	3.57
Average house price – affordability gap	£167,239	£42,272
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Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

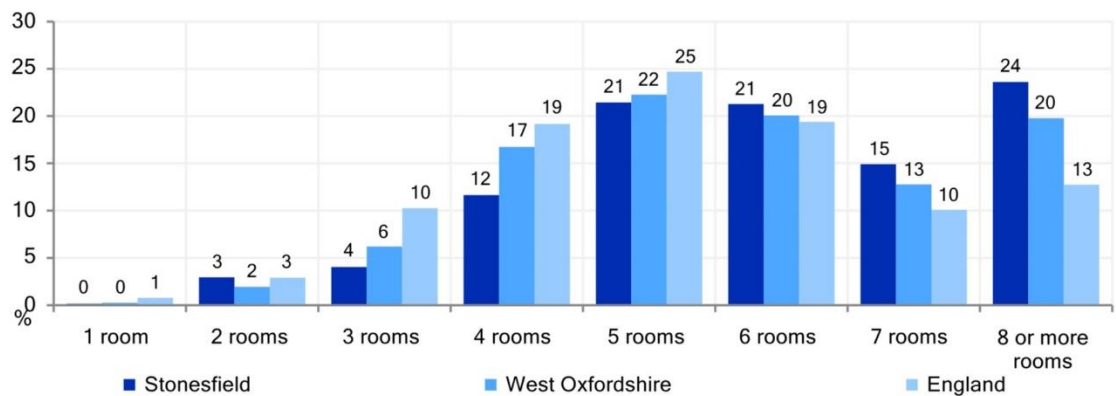
The table above demonstrates the issue of affordability of housing in Stonesfield is much greater than England as a whole. The continued rise in house prices since 2016/17 and the recent rise in the cost of borrowing have made this even more of an issue and is an important factor impacting housing needs.

The ONS publish data on House prices versus annual earnings. Over recent years, the data shows that the gap has grown larger, as shown in the graph below:

OCC estimates for house occupancy

Compared to England, there is no significant pressure arising from over-crowding in Stonesfield, based on the 2011 Census, which showed 32 houses with an issue (5%) compared with 8.7% nationally.

The 2011 Census published data on the number of rooms (excluding bathrooms) per property, which shows a heavy weighting to larger properties. Development since 2011 will not have significantly changed this profile.



Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

Stonesfield Community Trust

The land and buildings owned by the charity are:

Freehold properties:

1 to 4a Friends Close

1 to 5 Rose & Crown

Hillcrest:

1,2,3 and 4, Glovers Yard

Historic data on recent windfall/development/sales in Stonesfield

Affordable/Social Housing

Total new affordable/social houses built in Stonesfield since 1975 is 46. Most recently, this includes newly built affordable housing as part of the William Buckland Way development, 16 houses out of 37 on the development, run by SOHA with nominations from the WODC housing register with a few shared ownership properties.

There are Rural Exception Sites with 8 units on Combe Road operated by Cottsway and 8 on The Ridings operated by Sovereign HA; all on Blenheim land.

In addition, Stonesfield Community Trust manage 15 dwellings (mix of apartments and houses/bungalows on four sites); these have been established for many years.

WODC's Council Housing Stock was transferred to Cottsway HA. In total, Cottsway HA manage 60 properties in Stonesfield including those they have taken on since the WODC stock transfer and net of any right to buy transactions.

Market Housing – Planning Approvals since 2011

There have been 92 new properties/property conversions approved and built: William Buckland Way (37 houses, a mix of market and affordable houses) and various Farley Lane developments (30 houses/flats, all market housing) form the bulk of these, with the rest being individual or very small-scale infill properties. (Source WODC Planning Portal).

Details of house sales, 2013 to date (Rightmove as at 31/10/23)

House prices in Stonesfield

The average sale price in the year to January 2024 for a property in Stonesfield was c£626k and £759k for a detached house*

Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £363k.

Overall, average sold prices in Stonesfield over the last year were 4% down on the previous year and 4% up on the 2018 peak of £602,000.

*Note, the sale of 3 Davis Close (one of the recent properties built off Farley Lane) on 22nd June 2023 for £1.95m has, pushed up the average price for the last year.

Properties sold data

Rightmove “Properties sold” data goes back to 1995. Since 1995, 404 properties sold in Stonesfield. In the last 7 years, since 16th November 2016 (earliest dated entry for “last 7 years”), 142 properties have sold in Stonesfield. The types of houses sold are shown below:

No.	Type
86	Detached
37	Semi-detached
15	Terraced
4	Flats
142	Total

Using the data, it is possible to break down the analysis of the 29 households who responded that they are looking to move within Stonesfield in the next five years, into the same questions of why, what type and size of house, and tenure they are looking for are analysed:

Are you planning to move house in the next 5 years?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Yes, in Stonesfield	29	38	47

Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
To give or receive family support	4	5	6
Current mortgage affordability	3	4	5
Current rent affordability	0	0	0
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8	10
Need a bigger home	13	17	21
Tenancy insecure	0	0	0
To accommodate health needs	1	1	2
Other	4	5	6

Those responding ‘Other’ were as follows: Neighbour (1), To be mortgage free (1), To buy our first house (1), Bigger garden (1).

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

What type of tenure would you most like to move to?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Buy own home	26	34	42
Rent from Council / Housing Association	3	4	5

How many bedrooms?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
One	2	3	3
Two	1	1	2
Three	12	16	19
Four	13	17	21
Five or more	1	1	2

What is preventing you from moving home within Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Unable to afford to buy new home / Price of housing to buy is too high	13	17	21
Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs / Lack of suitable type or size of house to buy	18	24	29
Lack of land to self build	3	4	5
Lack of homes to rent from Housing Association	0	0	0
Lack of affordable private rented properties	2	3	3
Lack of homes to rent from private landlord	2	3	3
Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people	2	3	3
Other (please specify)	1	1	2

Other: Need to finish current house first.

The number of households looking to move within Stonesfield in the next 5 years is fairly small. The questions arising out of the survey results are:

- can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?
- what allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?
- can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

These questions are considered below.

Can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?

There is a reasonable provision of affordable housing in Stonesfield made available primarily by Cottsway Housing Association, South Oxfordshire Housing Association and Stonesfield Community Trust.

Nominations for the Housing Association properties are via the WODC Housing Register and allocated according to highest need (see Appendix 4), rather than having a Stonesfield connection,

unless the property criteria specify otherwise. As such, it is possible, but improbable given the demand, that they would be allocated to someone with a Stonesfield connection.

The Survey asked about whether households were on a housing register, with the following output:

Is anyone in your home on the West Oxfordshire, and/or other, Housing Register?			
	Low	Mid	High
West Oxfordshire	22	29	35
Other Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Outside Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Don't know	19	25	31
No	408	533	658

The 22 people on the WODC housing register, extrapolated to 29, is a significant number for affordable rented tenure, given the level of current provision. When correlated with the question, Do you intend to move in the next 5 years, it gave a useful insight as to where people wanted to move:

On WODC Housing Register and Moving Intentions next 5 years

	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Don't know	1	1	2
No, not intending to move within the next 5 years	13	17	21
Yes, elsewhere	2	3	3
Yes, in Stonefield	3	4	5
Yes, in West Oxfordshire	1	1	2
No response	2	3	3
Total	22	29	35

Extrapolated to Mid, only 4 households are on the WODC Housing Register and are looking to move in Stonesfield in the next 5 years. This is a very small number. Further analysis could be undertaken to determine whether it could be met by provision in Stonesfield, which for the reasons given above, could only be via a Rural Exception Site or affordable housing with restrictions on lettings applied.

SCLT properties are for tenants with a Stonesfield connection. Demand for these properties is strong: housing, for example, elderly tenants in small bungalows and younger people small properties typical for single or dual occupancy.

There may be a shortfall in provision which a Rural Exception Site could satisfy, guaranteeing occupancy by those with a Stonesfield connection, as opposed to a typical s106 development on a conventional building plot where guaranteeing occupancy by those with a Stonesfield connection, which would be more difficult due to some of the reasons explored earlier in this report.

What allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?

74 households answered that they didn't know whether they were likely to move in the next 5 years, which can be extrapolated up to 97 households to cover those who didn't respond to the survey. It seems likely that some of these may have a future need to move in Stonesfield, but it would not be

prudent to make an assumption about numbers for the purposes of housebuilding; any consequent development would be highly speculative.

Can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

This is a key question. 26 households identified a desire to move in the Village and to buy, this can be extrapolated to 34 to cover non-responders. A small allowance could also be added for those households that answered they didn't know if they were likely to move (74 households, 97 extrapolated)

Since December 2018, 100 properties have been sold in Stonesfield. Of these 100:

- 60 were detached properties
- 27 were semi-detached
- 11 were terraced
- 2 were flats.

The projected demand is

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	20	26	32
Semi-detached or terraced house	9	12	15
Detached bungalow	8	10	13
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	3	4	5
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	1	2

NB: The survey enabled multiple options to be chosen, hence the numbers in the table above are inflated by those who chose more than one option. If these numbers are scaled back to the 26 households that said they were looking to move in Stonesfield in the next five years, the table would re-present as follows:

What type of house? Adjusted down to 26 households	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	13	17	20
Semi-detached or terraced house	6	7	9
Detached bungalow	5	7	8
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	2	2	3
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	1	1
Total	26	34	42

It is useful to compare what the past housing market has provided in Stonesfield against future requirements. Using the Mid extrapolation and comparing to Rightmove data of past sales, the results are as follows:

What type of house? Comparison of demand with past sales	Mid	Past Sales	Capacity
Detached house/bungalow	23	60	-37
Semi-detached or terraced house/bungalow	10	38	-28
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	2	-1
Total	34	100	-66

Thus, comparing past market sales with future projection of need gives an excess capacity of 66 houses. This capacity would accommodate around 68% of those who didn't know if they might move in the village, a much larger percentage than those who are likely to actually look to move.

The conclusion is that the market, subject to the next 5 years delivering the same scale of available property for sale, will meet, from existing stock, the needs of people in Stonesfield wishing to move and still have excess capacity. There is no case for further market housing.

WODC Local Plan 2031

9.6.7 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

- William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)
- Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

In terms of the type of housing available, the District is dominated by a high proportion of detached properties which comprise almost 35% of the total housing stock, followed by semi-detached (32%) and terraced properties (23%). The proportion of flats/maisonettes available at just over 10% is lower than any other Oxfordshire authority. The majority of flats are located in Chipping Norton, Witney and Carterton.

2.18 In terms of house sizes, West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable balance of property sizes as follows:

- 6.8% - 5 or more bedrooms
- 20% - 4 bedrooms
- 40.8% - 3 bedrooms
- 24.9% - 2 bedrooms
- 7.3% - 1 bedroom

CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

5.64 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. The Council will seek, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% to be one- and two-bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
- 35% to be three- and four-bedroom homes.

The size of new homes needed – market housing

5.73 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011 Census identifying that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.

5.74 Previous evidence suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.

5.75 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:

- 4.8% 1-bed properties
- 27.9% 2-bed properties
- 43.4% 3-bed properties
- 23.9% 4+bed properties

5.76 This suggests that the main focus should be 2 and 3-bed properties and to a lesser extent 4 bed and larger. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

POLICY OS4:

Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1.

5.39 Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1.

POLICY H3: Affordable housing: In order to address identified affordable housing needs, the Council will require 'qualifying' market housing schemes to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, housing schemes of 6-10 units and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000m² will be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off-site within the District. This commuted sum will be deferred until completion of the development to assist with viability.

Across the District as a whole, housing schemes of 11 or more units or which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m² will be required to provide affordable housing on-site as a proportion of the market homes proposed as follows:

- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

The following levels of affordable housing provision will be applied in relation to sheltered housing and extra-care housing:

Sheltered housing:

- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

Extra-care housing:

- High value zone (45%)
- Medium value zone (35%)
- Low value zone (10%)

In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought would make a scheme unviable, a revised mix and type of housing will be considered before a lower level of affordable housing provision is accepted. Where external funding is available it may be applied to schemes to ensure affordability of rental levels or to increase the number or to change tenure or type of homes to meet priority needs.

Affordable housing mix and tenure will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. A financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing on other sites in West Oxfordshire in lieu of on-site provision may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that:

- It is not physically possible or feasible to provide affordable housing on the application site; or
- There is evidence that a separate site would more satisfactorily meet local housing need and contribute to the creation of mixed communities.

In some instances, a combination of on-site provision and a financial contribution may be appropriate. West Oxfordshire District Council and its partners will work with parish councils, registered providers of affordable housing and local housing, community land and self-build trusts to identify additional suitable rural sites for small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specific local housing needs which cannot be met in any other way. All new homes on these sites will remain affordable in perpetuity to people in housing need who have a local connection with the parish or appropriate adjoining parishes.

Sites will be well-related to the existing built-up areas of towns and villages. Where family homes are proposed priority will be given to locations within a reasonable walking distance of a primary school.

The Council will consider the inclusion of an element of market housing in rural exception sites (RES) provided it is demonstrated to be necessary to delivery (eg. by subsidising the affordable element). In such cases, any market housing would be expected to be a subsidiary element of a predominantly affordable housing scheme

NPPF

63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

64. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- (a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- (b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

65. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.

66. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:

- (a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;
- (b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);
- (c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
- (d) is exclusively for affordable housing, a community-led development exception site or a rural exception site.

Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

84. (e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

2019 Planning Appeal Against Refusal of Planning Permission for a major development by Cala Homes

A site on the Woodstock Road was proposed as an allocation for housing in the draft 2031 WODC Local Plan, but was removed after the community group, Sustainable Stonesfield, and the Stonesfield Parish Council argued against it in the hearings before the Local Plan Inspector. The allocation therefore did not appear in the final agreed Local Plan. Despite this, Cala Homes put in an application to build 68 houses on half the site that WODC had identified. Sustainable Stonesfield and

Stonesfield Parish Council made representations to the local planning authority urging rejection of the application. The application was refused and Cala appealed. The appeal was heard in 2019 by the Secretary of State's Planning Inspector, Stephen Normington, at a planning inquiry, in which much detailed evidence was presented by Cala, WODC and Sustainable Stonesfield on behalf of Stonesfield Parish Council. Mr Normington gave careful consideration to the evidence and dismissed the appeal giving full reasons for doing so in his lengthy written decision.

Some key points of principle as to how relevant planning policy affects Stonesfield, emerged from the decision:

Cala was determined on the basis of law and policy.

Paragraph 177 of the NPPF says:

When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest."

Mr Normington considered in his Cala decision whether the need to provide affordable housing might constitute exceptional circumstances in the public interest. He reviewed much detailed evidence on housing need which had been placed before him by the developer and by the objectors. He found at paragraph 77 of his decision letter:

"I accept that district-wide there may be a need for the delivery of more affordable homes. However, in considering the exceptional circumstance test to justify development within the AONB, I do not consider that the evidence before me provides a convincing case to demonstrate that the development which includes 34 affordable units is necessary to meet an identified local housing need in Stonesfield."

Mr Normington considered the "limitations in the use of the Affordable Housing Register", which he did not consider "to be a robust mechanism to constitute clear and convincing evidence of a need for 34 affordable homes in Stonesfield". He pointed out that "only 2 of the 52 names on the AHR said they wished to live in Stonesfield only."

Further Evidence for the Examiner - NP Survey results

The results of the NP Survey are covered by the Housing Needs Assessment above.

Free text comments

No more large house building projects. Stop on road car parking

Maybe retirement housing/flats - to enable older residents to stay in the village/free up housing stock? At present, development everywhere in UK seems to be primarily developer-led, and profit-driven. It is hoped the application of the Plan will change this balance, to village-led initiatives, emphasising the paramount importance of infrastructure, LOCAL opinion, and local needs. Any thoughts of housing for the elderly

There needs to be small rural exception sites for housing people local to Stonesfield only, this should be ring fenced and not open to the district. Perhaps an enhanced role for Stonesfield Charitable Trust in managing such properties.

I would like to see a stop to developers avoiding the provision of affordable housing by providing land for other uses like sport or burial plots instead.

Manage housing development in a balanced but realistic way. Focus upon building homes for people who most need it and at a price that is really affordable! Increase council tax for second/holiday homes.

Looking at housing to meet multi-generational living i.e. homes with annex for care of elderly parents. Transport for the elderly who may not be able to walk or stand at bus stops.

I just want to keep Stonesfield as a nice small village. This village has had enough new housing and it won't be able to cope with even more.

We have far too many large developments at high cost under the low cost housing provision threshold, which our councillors are invisible from or don't answer communication. Our utilities infrastructure, especially water and drainage is overstretched with low pressure getting worse with each development, yet planning permission goes ahead. Public transport appalling meaning cars are a necessity, yet parish council (one member in particular) is at war with the car missing the point that we are a village turning into a commuting suburb. Our once beautiful and peaceful walks are overrun with people and Stonesfield is no longer a pleasant place to live. We will be moving out of the area soon as it no longer is the place we enjoyed living.

Policy SH5 – Needs of older people and those with disabilities

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The Housing Needs Assessment 2024 identified that there is no exceptional circumstance justifying further major development in Stonesfield. However, the only exceptional circumstance, which is not presently impacting the vitality of the village, is the projected continued trend to an increasingly older population with a corresponding decline in working age population and children. Current projections for the settlement do not indicate much demand and this presents the Parish Council with a dilemma in needing to weigh the benefits of building social/affordable housing against attracting a younger occupancy from outside the settlement, when there is little in the way of employment or facilities available to families and young people moving to Stonesfield. There is no need to address this in the next five years, hence this policy is pointed towards the direct needs within the settlement as required by the NPPF (para 63), but the Parish Council should review, in the future, the continued vitality of the village and whether there is benefit to such development as an exceptional circumstance. Smaller properties are more likely to be affordable to these age groups given that Stonesfield has a much larger affordability gap than the England average.

The Housing Needs Assessment for Stonesfield (2024) sets out further rationale for this policy, which includes some of the key points below.

Age Profile

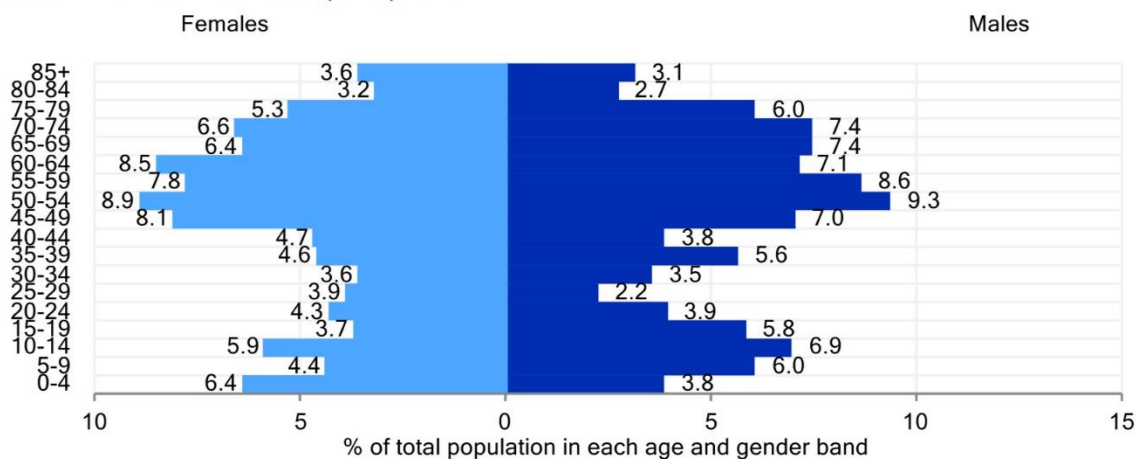
The age breakdown of the Village, as at 2019, is as follows:

	Stonesfield	% Stonesfield	% National
Age 0-15	282	17.4	19.2
Working Age	924	56.9	62.4
Aged 65+	419	25.8	18.4
Total	1625		

Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

Figure: Population estimates by 5-year age band

Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2019



The tables above show a weighting more heavily geared to an older population than the national average. The chart shows that, even for the working age population, it is more heavily geared to the older end of the age distribution.

As at the 2011 census, there were 175 pensioner households, 27.2% of the village compared to 20.7% nationally.

For the village to maintain future vitality, some consideration should be given to ensuring future housing is available and affordable for younger age groups. Affordability is considered later in this report.

Vulnerable Groups

The Neighbourhood Plan Survey asked about supported housing needs, see below,

Q6 Does anyone in your household have a supported housing need#? If so, how many?#	Responses	
One	5.13%	23
Two	0.67%	3

#Accommodation alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community including the elderly, those with a learning disability, and those with a physical disability.

Q7 If you answered Yes to Q6, please indicate type	Responses	
Independent housing with care support	11.11%	8
Independent housing with live-in carer	8.33%	6
Supported living for adults with learning disabilities who want to live independently	8.33%	6

The numbers responding that they had such needs were low, as can be seen from the tables above.

Disability

Reflecting the relatively older age of the population, 12.9% (54) of people in Stonesfield (May 2020) claimed attendance allowance against 12.5% nationally.

Only 3.7% (34) of people in Stonesfield (Oct. 2020) claimed Personal Independence Payments against 6.1% nationally.

OCC Population Projections

Oxfordshire County Council have projected the increase in population by District. The following table shows the forecast percentage change in population for West Oxfordshire, year on year.

Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	
TOTAL	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+	Year
				2021
1.6%	1.0%	1.5%	2.4%	2022
1.3%	0.8%	1.1%	2.5%	2023
1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	2.3%	2024
0.9%	0.3%	0.5%	2.4%	2025
1.4%	0.7%	1.0%	2.8%	2026
1.6%	0.9%	1.2%	3.0%	2027
1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	3.0%	2028
1.7%	0.8%	1.3%	3.3%	2029
1.6%	0.7%	1.3%	2.8%	2030
1.1%	0.2%	0.8%	2.5%	2031

Source: OCC – Oxfordshire Insight

Growth is further analysed by settlements and varies significantly. Data specifically for Stonesfield is not available. However, as a proxy, looking at the growth profiles for Charlbury and Wychwoods, being representative of Cotswold settlements in the AONB (albeit Charlbury is a service centre), growth was much lower at 4% between 2020 and 2030. As can be seen, anticipated growth is small and is reflected predominantly in the Age 65+ range, whereas growth in other age ranges for most years is negative.

Wychwoods	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+
2020			
2021	2.3%	1.1%	2.3%
2022	-0.2%	-0.2%	2.7%
2023	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%
2024	-0.8%	-0.1%	1.8%
2025	-2.1%	0.1%	1.5%
2026	-0.9%	-0.4%	2.8%
2027	-1.5%	-0.9%	2.9%
2028	-0.4%	-1.4%	2.1%
2029	-2.2%	-0.8%	2.3%
2030	-1.0%	-0.8%	1.7%

Charlbury	age 0-17	age 18-64	age 65+
2020			
2021	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%
2022	-0.3%	-1.1%	3.3%
2023	-0.1%	0.0%	3.0%
2024	-1.4%	0.4%	4.5%
2025	-1.8%	-0.8%	2.0%
2026	-2.5%	-0.1%	2.3%
2027	-2.9%	-0.2%	2.1%
2028	-1.2%	-1.7%	2.3%
2029	-2.1%	-1.2%	2.1%
2030	-1.5%	-1.6%	1.8%

Source Oxfordshire County Council 2020 to 2030 housing-led forecasts for districts and MSOAs February 2022

Applying the Wychwood Data to Stonesfield 2019 population would mean the following population change:

Change	2021-23	2024-30	Total
Age 0-15	8	-25	-17
Working Age	13	-40	-27
Age 65+	28	72	100
Total	48	7	56

An increase in population of 56 is anticipated using the methodology above, however, most of that will already have occurred in the period 2021-23, leaving an insignificant net forecast increase for the period 2024-2030. However, there is an anticipated significant shift towards an aging population with the growth of age 65+ at the expense of younger ages.

Stonesfield Community Trust

A Community Land Trust is normally a democratic body owned by and operating for a community. CLTs have a certain amount of flexibility to deal quickly and appropriately to local changes. CLTs are able to prioritise the everyday practice of improving lives for a community. The very first CLT in the UK was established in Stonesfield on 31 October 1983, a Charity set up as a trust. It is governed by a declaration of trust originally dated 1983, and amended in April 2007. It does not, however, operate on 'democratic' principles as more recent CLTs do..

The Charity's objects as per its governing document are the relief of poverty, the advancement of education and the provision of charitable recreational facilities with the object of improving the conditions of life of the inhabitants of Stonesfield, Oxfordshire. To achieve these objectives, the charity has aimed to continue to provide affordable housing to local residents in the properties that it currently holds. It has also aimed to continue to identify worthy local causes for financial support

The land and buildings owned by the charity are:

Freehold properties:

1 to 4a Friends Close,

1 to 5 Rose & Crown,
Hillcrest,

1,2,3 and 4, Glovers Yard

The Trust is not a registered provider of social housing (RP) and as such, does not operate under the rent regime that applies to RPs and can charge a ‘social’ rent for properties which will be lower than an ‘affordable rent’ normally charged by RPs.

According to WODC’s Community Land Trust Scoping Report June 2020, Stonesfield Community Trust was “Founded with the donation of a pub car park, and with a local business owner paying £3,000 towards the cost of registering the trust as a Company Limited by Guarantee, SCT have since developed three discrete sites in the village. Stonesfield now have a sustainable annual income and have gone on to invest time and money in the establishment of Oxfordshire CLT, a county-wide umbrella-CLT, in 2006. Surpluses from the trust have been used to fund a local youth service for the education and physical welfare of disadvantaged children and support of sporting facilities. Two properties have since been bequeathed to the trust and current trustees are exploring opportunities for a fourth new-build development.”

The Trust has not developed any new rental properties for some time, but provides a good option for future housing to meet the needs of the community e.g. a small site, conversion or rural exception site.

Historic data on recent windfall/development/sales in Stonesfield

Properties sold data

Rightmove “Properties sold” data goes back to 1995. Since 1995, 404 properties sold in Stonesfield. In the last 7 years, since 16th November 2016 (earliest dated entry for “last 7 years”), 142 properties have sold in Stonesfield. The types of houses sold are shown below:

No.	Type
86	Detached
37	Semi-detached
15	Terraced
4	Flats
142	Total

Using the data, it is possible to break down the analysis of the 29 households who responded that they are looking to move within Stonesfield in the next five years, into the same questions of why, what type and size of house, and tenure they are looking for are analysed:

Are you planning to move house in the next 5 years?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Yes, in Stonesfield	29	38	47

Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
To give or receive family support	4	5	6
Current mortgage affordability	3	4	5
Current rent affordability	0	0	0
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8	10
Need a bigger home	13	17	21
Tenancy insecure	0	0	0
To accommodate health needs	1	1	2
Other	4	5	6

Those responding 'Other' were as follows: Neighbour (1), To be mortgage free (1), To buy our first house (1), Bigger garden (1).

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

What type of tenure would you most like to move to?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Buy own home	26	34	42
Rent from Council / Housing Association	3	4	5

How many bedrooms?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
One	2	3	3
Two	1	1	2
Three	12	16	19
Four	13	17	21
Five or more	1	1	2

What is preventing you from moving home within Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Unable to afford to buy new home / Price of housing to buy is too high	13	17	21
Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs / Lack of suitable type or size of house to buy	18	24	29
Lack of land to self-build	3	4	5
Lack of homes to rent from Housing Association	0	0	0
Lack of affordable private rented properties	2	3	3
Lack of homes to rent from private landlord	2	3	3
Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people	2	3	3
Other (please specify)	1	1	2

Other: Need to finish current house first.

The number of households looking to move within Stonesfield in the next 5 years is fairly small. In relation to this policy, the need for elderly accommodation or accommodation which is disability friendly is very small, namely:

Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range	
	Low	Mid
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8
To accommodate health needs	1	1

Can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

This is a key question. 26 households identified a desire to move in the Village and to buy, this can be extrapolated to 34 to cover non-responders. A small allowance could also be added for those households that answered they didn't know if they were likely to move (74 households, 97 extrapolated)

Since December 2018, 100 properties have been sold in Stonesfield. Of these 100:

- 60 were detached properties
- 27 were semi-detached
- 11 were terraced
- 2 were flats.

The projected demand is:

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	20	26	32
Semi-detached or terraced house	9	12	15
Detached bungalow	8	10	13
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	3	4	5
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	1	2

NB: The survey enabled multiple options to be chosen, hence the numbers in the table above are inflated by those who chose more than one option. If these numbers are scaled back to the 26 households that said they were looking to move in Stonesfield in the next five years, the table would re-present as follows:

What type of house? Adjusted down to 26 households	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	13	17	20
Semi-detached or terraced house	6	7	9
Detached bungalow	5	7	8
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	2	2	3
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	1	1
Total	26	34	42

It is useful to compare what the past housing market has provided in Stonesfield against future requirements. Using the Mid extrapolation and comparing to Rightmove data of past sales, the results are as follows:

What type of house? Comparison of demand with past sales	Mid	Past Sales	Capacity
Detached house/bungalow	23	60	-37
Semi-detached or terraced house/bungalow	10	38	-28
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	1	2	-1
Total	34	100	-66

Thus, comparing past market sales with future projection of need gives an excess capacity of 66 houses. This capacity would accommodate around 68% of those who didn't know if they might move in the village, a much larger percentage than those who are likely to actually look to move.

The conclusion is that the market, subject to the next 5 years delivering the same scale of available property for sale, will meet, from existing stock, the needs of people in Stonesfield wishing to move and still have excess capacity. There is no case for further market housing.

Policy Context

WODC Local Plan 2031

WODC housing related objectives include:

- CO4 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel.
- CO5 Plan for the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those

wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities

Older persons

5.81 West Oxfordshire has a relatively old demographic profile reflecting the fact that it is an attractive District that people wish to remain living in or retire to. Between 1981 and 2011 the proportion of residents aged 60+ increased by 82% (11,900 people) and 18% of people are currently aged 65 and over (compared with 16% nationally).

5.82 Importantly, future projections suggest that the number of older people in West Oxfordshire will continue to increase. In the period 2011- 2031, the proportion aged 55+ is projected to increase by 54% with a particularly high increase in people aged 85+ (160%). This will be coupled with a significant increase in the number of people suffering from dementia and mobility problems. By 2040, older people aged over 60 are expected to make up a third of the population. An assessment by Oxfordshire County Council of older people's needs shows that while life expectancy is rising, more people are living into older age with disabilities - so for men in West Oxfordshire, disability free life expectancy at age 65 is 11.6 years, while for women it is 11.7 years.

5.83 However, not all older people will require specialist homes or provision for their needs; most of the rising number of older people will prefer to stay in the same home that they have lived in for many years. Indeed, many older people will not need, or necessarily seek, accommodation specifically for older people at any time in their lives. Generally, moves are made to a smaller home in order to reduce the costs associated with a larger family home or to move to a more accessible location closer to shops or services. Alternatively older people move to a house that is on one level or capable of a degree of adaption for mobility or health reasons, or simply to move to be closer to family members.

5.84 The Local Plan therefore has a key role to play in ensuring that suitable housing (and health care) is provided for older people. This is likely to be through a combination of specialist housing provision (e.g. retirement and extra-care housing) as well as ensuring that new homes are adaptable and allow people to stay in their own homes longer (eg. provision of wider doorways, lower windows etc).

5.85 In terms of specialist housing provision for older people there are a number of different types including:

- Sheltered/age exclusive housing;
- Extra-care housing (also known as very sheltered housing);
- Close care or assisted living housing;
- Care homes; and
- Care homes with nursing (previously known as nursing homes).

5.86 There are currently around 614 older persons housing units in West Oxfordshire the majority of which (523) are in private market schemes with the remainder (91) provided in the affordable sector.¹⁸ Relative to the District's population this represents 66 units per 1,000 persons aged 75 and over, well below the county average (133 units per 1,000) and significantly below the national average (170 units per 1,000).

5.89 Whilst these figures are indicative only and should be treated with some caution, they clearly demonstrate that there will be an increasing need for specialist older persons housing in the District

over the period of the Local Plan. The Council will therefore in line with Government practice guidance, count the provision of C2 uses (residential institutions) against the overall housing requirement and will seek to increase the supply of such housing by encouraging specific schemes in suitable, sustainable locations and seeking to ensure that older persons' housing is provided including as part of the overall mix of development on larger developments.

5.90 We will also seek to ensure that new homes built in the District are able to be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants as they get older and support people who require aids and adaptations in order to be able to stay in their own home. This will be achieved through the application of the optional building regulation standard M4 (2): Accessible and Adaptable dwellings on qualifying schemes as set out in Policy H4. Viability testing has shown this to be viable and therefore all housing developments of over 50 dwellings will be required to provide 25% of new dwellings as accessible and adaptable homes.

5.91 We will also:

- Support in principle the redevelopment of existing older persons accommodation that may be unsuitable and/or fails to comply with current legislative requirements;
- Seek to effectively utilise the existing affordable housing stock and will support and encourage those in affordable housing who wish to down-size in order to help release larger affordable homes for younger households;
- Seek to ensure enough subsidised or low cost housing of a decent quality is provided for those who cannot afford market prices;
- Seek to facilitate the requirements of older owner-occupiers wishing to 'downsize' into non-specialist accommodation (e.g. bungalows); and
- Work with the County Council, other local authorities and stakeholders in relation to the delivery of specialist housing for older people. People with disabilities

5.92 The SHMA suggests that across Oxfordshire as a whole, demographic trends are expected to lead to a significant growth in the population and number of households with disabilities over the period to 2031. The most recent information from Oxfordshire County Council shows that in West Oxfordshire over 20% of people over aged 65 were affected by a long-term health problem that was either related to old age, or had lasted for at least 12 months. A higher number, 25% are affected a little.

5.93 PANSI (Projecting Adults Needs & Service Information System) data estimates there will be 40,537 people with a serious and moderate physical disability aged between 18 and 64 in Oxfordshire by 2015. In West Oxfordshire, there will be 6,698 residents (17%) with a serious and moderate physical disability

5.94 Oxfordshire County Council is aiming to deliver 390 homes for working age adults with various disabilities across Oxfordshire by 2020. Their strategy identifies¹⁹ that West Oxfordshire should be seeking to provide 63 of the overall 390 homes target with a particular focus on Witney.

5.95 The strategy envisages 3 main 'models' of delivery:

- Specially adapted, purpose-built accommodation for groups of residents either in shared or self-contained homes;
- Purpose built wheelchair accessible homes, provided as part of the overall mix of housing on new developments;

- Conventional homes with limited adaptations and communal facilities but for groups of adults with a learning disability or mental health need to live in as a group.

5.96 In light of the identified needs outlined above, the Council will seek to increase the supply of housing for those with disabilities through a number of measures. This will range from encouraging the provision of specific purpose-built properties to ensuring that a proportion of the homes provided as part of larger housing developments are built to high accessibility standards. This will be achieved through the application of the optional building regulation standard M4 (3): Wheelchair user dwellings, specifically a requirement to provide 5% of wheelchair adaptable dwellings on sites of over 50 dwellings. Where provided, these will be counted as contributing towards the 25% accessible and adaptable homes referred to in paragraph 5.77 above. The need for specialist housing on qualifying sites will be determined through a local register managed by the District / County Council. There may be some sites or types of development where provision may not be appropriate, for example non lift served flats. Our proposed approach is set out in Policy H4.

POLICY H4: Type and mix of new homes

All residential developments will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes. Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help create a more balanced housing stock within the District and meet the needs of a range of different groups having regard to specific local needs.

Particular support will be given to proposals for specialist housing for older people including but not restricted to, extra-care housing. Opportunities for extra care will be sought in the main and rural service centres and other locations with good access to services and facilities for older people.

In recognition of the ageing population the Council will also require larger housing developments of 50 or more units to provide a percentage of new homes as accessible and adaptable housing designed to meet Building Regulations Requirement M4(2). This will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 25% of market and affordable homes to this standard.

To support the anticipated increase in the number of people with disabilities (linked to the ageing population) the Council will require larger housing developments of 50 or more homes to provide a percentage of market and affordable homes as wheelchair adaptable dwellings designed to meet Building Regulation Requirement M4(3). This will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 5% of homes to this standard. Where wheelchair adaptable homes are provided, they will be counted as contributing towards the 25% accessible and adaptable homes requirement.

The provision of specialist housing for those with a disability will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to other policies in this plan. The District Council will work with the County Council and other relevant partners to identify suitable sites and opportunities.

In recognition of the needs of households from the travelling communities who are no longer travelling, the Council will seek to ensure the provision of up to 24 additional pitches for non-travelling Gypsies and Travellers and up to 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople in the period to 2031. This will include consideration of all opportunities including within the strategic location for growth (SLG) and strategic development areas (SDAs) identified in the Local Plan.

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in

the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)

Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the villages, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaption. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

In terms of the type of housing available, the District is dominated by a high proportion of detached properties which comprise almost 35% of the total housing stock, followed by semi-detached (32%) and terraced properties (23%). The proportion of flats/maisonettes available at just over 10% is lower than any other Oxfordshire authority. The majority of flats are located in Chipping Norton, Witney and Carterton.

2.18 In terms of house sizes, West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable balance of property sizes as follows:

- 6.8% - 5 or more bedrooms
- 20% - 4 bedrooms
- 40.8% - 3 bedrooms
- 24.9% - 2 bedrooms
- 7.3% - 1 bedroom.

CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well

as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

5.64 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. The Council will seek, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% to be one- and two-bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
- 35% to be three- and four-bedroom homes.

The size of new homes needed – market housing

5.73 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011 Census identifying that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.

5.74 Previous evidence suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.

5.75 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:

- 4.8% 1-bed properties
- 27.9% 2-bed properties
- 43.4% 3-bed properties
- 23.9% 4+bed properties.

5.76 This suggests that the main focus should be 2 and 3-bed properties and to a lesser extent 4 bed and larger. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

NPPF

63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

64. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- (a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified;
- and

(b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

65. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.

66. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:

- (a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;
- (b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);
- (c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
- (d) is exclusively for affordable housing, a community-led development exception site or a rural exception site.

Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

84. (e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Survey results

The results of the NP Survey are covered by the Housing Needs Assessment above.

Free text comments

Maybe retirement housing/flats - to enable older residents to stay in the village/free up housing stock? At present, development everywhere in UK seems to be primarily developer-led, and profit-driven. It is hoped the application of the Plan will change this balance, to village-led initiatives, emphasising the paramount importance of infrastructure, LOCAL opinion, and local needs. Any thoughts of housing for the elderly

There needs to be small rural exception sites for housing people local to Stonesfield only, this should be ring fenced and not open to the district. Perhaps an enhanced role for Stonesfield Charitable Trust in managing such properties.

Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people

Manage housing development in a balanced but realistic way. Focus upon building homes for people who most need it and at a price that is really affordable! Increase council tax for second/holiday homes.

Looking at housing to meet multi-generational living i.e. homes with annex for care of elderly parents. Transport for the elderly who may not be able to walk or stand at bus stops.

Policy SH6 – Infill housing

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

9.6.7 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

- William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)
- Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

5.127 In some instances, existing dwellings may come under pressure for redevelopment to alternative uses. In such cases the loss of a dwelling will only be supported where there is an overriding community benefit and/or the existing living accommodation is unsatisfactory. 5.128 Given the attraction of a rural home within commuting distance of London and more restrictive planning policies on new housing in small villages, hamlets and open countryside in particular, existing modest properties are invariably the subject of proposals for substantial extension or rebuild.

5.129 A large country house is a traditional feature of our countryside. However it is essential that the addition of substantial new buildings and associated activity creates a positive addition to the landscape and meets sustainability objectives in order to outweigh the loss of existing smaller homes. Replacement dwellings in small villages, hamlets or open countryside should be on a one for one basis only.

5.130 Consideration also needs to be given to the issue of 'empty homes' in particular properties that remain vacant for more than 6-months. Whilst this is not a significant issue for West Oxfordshire with less than 1% of the existing housing stock being classified as a long-term empty home, the District Council, in appropriate circumstances works with relevant organisations and property owners to seek to bring properties back into occupation.

5.131 Our approach is set out in Policy H6.

POLICY H6: Existing housing Changes to existing housing will be managed to maintain sustainable communities and a high-quality environment in accordance with the following principles:

- the loss of existing dwellings to other uses will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they are in an unsuitable location for housing, do not provide satisfactory living accommodation, are not needed to meet an identified local housing need, or the proposed use will make a positive contribution to local services and facilities;
- alterations, extensions or sub-division of existing dwellings will respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment of people living in or visiting that area. Sub-division of existing dwellings in the open countryside and small villages will be limited to large properties where continued residential use cannot be secured in any other way;
- proposals to replace an existing permanent dwelling which is not of historical or architectural value will be permitted on a one-for-one basis, provided the character and appearance of the surrounding area is not eroded, there would be no harmful impact on ecology or protected species and the replacement dwelling is of a reasonable scale relative to the original building.

The District Council, in appropriate circumstances, will work with relevant organisations and property owners to ensure the number of empty homes is kept to a minimum. Proposals to bring empty residential properties back into occupation will be favourably supported in principle

POLICY OS4: High quality design: High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should

With the exception of the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, an allowance has been made for future ‘windfall’ sites yet to come forward, excluding ‘garden land’ development in line with the NPPF. Within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, to take account of the more restrictive approach to development that applies to the Cotswolds AONB, no reliance is placed on future windfall development and the amount and distribution of housing identified in Policy H1 is based on past completions and commitments only (as of 1 April 2017) – 774 homes. 5.21 This does not mean that new housing cannot come forward in the Burford – Charlbury sub-area. Indeed, the 774 homes figure should not be treated as a ‘cap’ or ‘ceiling’ to development and planning permission may be granted for additional housing within the sub-area where the proposed development is shown to accord with national and local policy including Policies H1, H2, OS2 and EH1 (where relevant) of this Local Plan. Further explanation is set out in Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1

5.39 Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1

NPPF

the requirements in the NPPF (version updated 20 December 2023), in particular that:

- (1) Neighbourhood planning groups should... give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites (no larger than 1 ha) suitable for housing in their area (paragraph 71 & 70a) and
- (2) where an allowance is to be made for windfall) part of anticipated supply, plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area (paragraph 72) and
- (3) Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into accountthe desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens” (Paragraph 128 (d)).

Survey results: Individual Survey

Q 30

See following table for results, which does not show a definitive view within the village for or against.

To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should generally support the following? Tick one answer per line.				
	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree	Total
infill housing on any available plot within the current built up area.	244	124	205	573
	42.6%	21.6%	35.8%	

Q 26

Shows the strength of feeling from the survey towards protecting Stonesfield's heritage, natural resources, wildlife and biodiversity:

How important are the following:	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	Less Important/ Not Important
Protecting the Parish's traditional buildings and other heritage assets	540	35	9
Protecting trees, woodland, hedges, and countryside	578	7	0
Protecting wildlife and biodiversity	573	10	0

Free text comments.

...We need housing that is really affordable plus social housing to keep young people in the village. The sewage problem in the village and in the river needs addressing. We do not need to become a tourist area. We had problems with this when many people turned up at Brook Lane and in the woods, cars all over the place and rubbish left behind. If we are over-developed we will lose our charm and Stonesfield will be spoiled for ever.

I appreciate all the hard work that has gone into the survey, however the survey and questions feel very weighted towards the need for profit seeking property developers to build more and more houses, and to concrete over more and more land, almost as if it is 'fait accompli', even the word 'nimby' and an explanation is printed in the survey! I take exception to the Q28 regarding potential green space for housing developments. For example it is cynical in my view to include the village playing field, that is simply scaremongering and 100% will not be built on. By including the playing field in the survey it is designed to make other spaces more palatable. It is simply manipulative. Q31 I object to the three questions, again manipulative, by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has

taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

Larger scale housing developments to date have provided houses representing fake Victorian, Georgian, Edwardian themes and use low quality materials such as reconstituted stone, fibre-cement faux lintels, PVC windows and imitation welsh slate roofs. The designs lack both the quality of material and design detailing of the older styles that they seek to emulate. Higher quality, more contemporary design is achievable and should be required of developers. Obviously greater respect must be shown with sites immediately adjacent to the Conservation Areas but elsewhere there should be requirements for better designs incorporating a mix of materials rather than the unimaginative, repetitive reconstituted stone block buildings that have been lazily and repetitively used. A design standard that encourages/requires better is achievable and should be promoted and supported by WODC to move away from these thoroughly uninspiring concepts that are continually offered.

Some people that have off-street parking do not use it and should be asked to use it Newbuild should only be allowed services can cope or builders will pay for upgrades require adequate off-road parking is essential Do not let the village spread willy-nilly

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

Policy SH7 – Subdivision of dwellings to create smaller units

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaption. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

5.127 In some instances, existing dwellings may come under pressure for redevelopment to alternative uses. In such cases the loss of a dwelling will only be supported where there is an overriding community benefit and/or the existing living accommodation is unsatisfactory. 5.128 Given the attraction of a rural home within commuting distance of London and more restrictive planning policies on new housing in small villages, hamlets and open countryside in particular, existing modest properties are invariably the subject of proposals for substantial extension or rebuild.

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The District Council, in appropriate circumstances, will work with relevant organisations and property owners to ensure the number of empty homes is kept to a minimum. Proposals to bring empty residential properties back into occupation will be favourably supported in principle

POLICY OS4: High quality design High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings.

Survey results: - Individual Survey

Question 30

The results do not show a definitive view within the village for or against.

Q30 To what extent should the Neighbourhood Plan support:	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree	Total
Proposals to convert existing domestic dwellings in to smaller units	229	216	129	574
	39.9%	37.6%	22.5%	

There were no free text comments.

Analysis on occupation data from the survey

Number of bedrooms	Number of properties	Median occupancy	Average occupancy	Number 50% occupied	Number <50% occupied
1	9	100%	133%	-	-
2	75	100%	95%	29	-
3	180	67%	77%	-	32

4	137	50%	68%	63	14
5	50	50%	63%	-	25
Total	451			92	71

Policy SH8 – Development in residential gardens

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

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9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

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Evidence for Examiner – Survey results

Individual Survey Q 30

See following for results, which does not show a definitive view within the village for or against.

To what extent should the Neighbourhood Plan support:	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Total responses
Development within the gardens of existing residential buildings	37	123	140	134	140	574

Alternatively...

	For	Neutral	Against
Development within the gardens of existing residential buildings	160	140	274

There were no free text comments.

Policy SH9 – Parking (Residential)

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

7.84 In this regard we will determine the level of provision in accordance with the residential, non-residential and cycle parking standards adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority. The residential parking standards are based on the provision of an ‘optimum’ number of spaces rather than a ‘maximum’ or ‘minimum’ and are based on the provision of a mix of allocated and unallocated spaces.

7.85 We can also influence parking through our approach towards the provision of off-street parking. National planning policy suggests that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. In addition to the quality and cost of parking provision, we can influence the amount of parking available.

7.86 With regard to off-street public car parking, there are 16 car parks in West Oxfordshire and the Council’s long-standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of local centres. Car parking is managed through time restrictions, the effectiveness of which is kept

under review. Sufficient and convenient parking provision can make a significant contribution to the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas.

7.89 We will continue to monitor car parking requirements and parking management whilst promoting alternative means of travel. We will also seek improvements and capacity increases to public parking as appropriate including through new development.

POLICY T4: Parking provision The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality. Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership. Proposals for new off street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential. Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.

OCC Vehicular and Cycle Parking Standards

1. Introduction

1.1 The availability of parking, at both source and destination, has a significant influence on the type of transport people choose for their journeys. Striking the right balance by providing an appropriate level and type of parking, whilst also protecting highway safety for all users, and promoting active and sustainable transport modes is essential. This revised document

1.2 New development sites will need to work collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to help achieve these targets. One key component to support this approach is to revise the existing parking standards for new developments, ensuring they will accord with the council's objective to reduce 25% of car trips by 2030, and a further 33% by 2040. In essence, the approach being taken for development proposals is that if on-site parking is restricted at both the origin of a journey and its destination location, this will influence people's travel behaviour and encourage alternative modes of travel to be used rather than that of the private car.

1.3 Due to the diverse nature of development that is promoted in Oxfordshire a wide range of social and economic circumstances means OCC must have a flexible approach to identifying appropriate levels of parking provision. Such an approach is expected to provide a level of accessibility by private car that is consistent with the overall balance of the transport system at local levels as well the County Council's nine priorities as set out in OCC's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025.

1.4 OCC, in its role as the local highway authority, is a statutory consultee in respect of planning considerations that affect the public highway and responds to planning application proposals when consulted by all local planning authorities. OCC provides advice to local planning authorities on the transport implications, such as parking levels of development proposals to assist in their decision-making process. OCC is also consulted during the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and may provide advice on the soundness of policies that relate to parking in new developments.

1.5 Concerns relating to deficiencies in car parking leads to a desire amongst local communities for more car parking spaces. On these occasions OCC may express concerns about accommodating for car parking demand in areas that might already have congestion and air quality issues.

1.6 Oxfordshire, particularly Oxford City and the towns within the county continue to benefit from the popularity of cycling both for commuting and leisure purposes. This means that the inclusion of high-quality cycle parking is essential in all new developments to complement the infrastructure that is being delivered by development sites; and schemes that are identified in the emerging LTCP Area Strategies and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. In addition, all electric vehicles are to be catered for with electrical charging points being integral to all new development.

1.7 This parking standards document has been prepared to outline OCC's revised approach to parking at new developments. It is to be used to help determine the level of parking at all new developments and provide the basis for the County Council's advice to the local planning authorities on development proposals and the soundness of policies related to parking for new developments.

1.8 This document replaces OCC's previous parking guidance "Transport for New Developments Parking Standards for New Residential Developments" dated December 2011; the 2015 Second Edition of the County Council's Residential Road Design Guide and paragraph 2.4.1 of the Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards document dated 2017

2.1 The car and cycle parking standards that OCC has been using when assessing development proposals were prepared some time ago and had fallen behind national and local policies. This document is intended to update these standards while incorporating the guidance provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated July 2021. Paragraph 107, confirms that when setting local parking standards for both residential and non-residential development, policies should consider:

- a. the accessibility of the development
- b. the type, mix and use of development
- c. the availability of and opportunities for public transport
- d. local car ownership levels; and
- e. the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

2.2 The NPPF (paragraph 108) also confirms that 'Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe, and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.'

2.3 The NPPF also describes the plan-making system which includes local and neighbourhood plans that guide local communities to develop and shape their own surroundings. These plans often contain policies on car and cycle parking.

7.3 It is recognised that for development proposals that are located in rural areas of Oxfordshire, such as villages and hamlets, access to frequent public transport services and high standards of direct pedestrian and cycle connections is not always available (unless it is provided by a new development). This tends to mean that the range of facilities and services expected to accommodate a reduced level of car parking provision is not always possible without causing indiscriminate carriageway parking and highway safety issues. On this basis, the parking standards in Table 4(b) are

appropriate to use. When such standards are used a justification will be required within a transport submission.

Table 4(b): Car Parking Standards for the rest of Oxfordshire (Villages & Hamlets)

Rural Oxfordshire Parking Provision

- 1-bedroom dwelling: Up to 1 space per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 2-bedroom dwelling: Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 3 – 4-bedroom dwellings: Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 5+ bedroom dwelling: Up to 3 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site.

7.4 Flats and apartments will be treated as a standard dwelling for sites in located towns and the rest of Oxfordshire. However, when using land efficiently to provide residential dwellings, the parking arrangement for flats / apartments tend to be designed within a parking court / communal style arrangement. In such cases it is strongly recommended that they are controlled by a third-party organisation i.e. a management company on behalf of those who will use the spaces. This approach allows flexibility in specific spaces being allocated to a property, assigning them to a particular group or promoting such spaces as unallocated in appropriate locations

7.7 Developers are expected to take an approach that is consistent with national research which suggests, “that no special provision should be made for visitors where at least half of the parking provision associated with the development is unallocated. In other circumstances it may be appropriate to allow for additional demand for visitor parking of 0.2 spaces per dwelling” (DCL, 2007, Residential Car Parking Research).

7.8 For some residential developments this approach may not necessary be feasible. If this is the case, a maximum visitor parking level of 1 car parking space per every 5 residential units will be considered. Any such proposal will require a justification to be provided as part of a transport submission.

7.9 If a development proposal is larger than 10 or more dwellings, visitor parking should be arranged in clusters and / or evenly spread throughout the site and relate to the development types in that area. In some circumstances for large / strategic housing sites that may include mobility / transport hubs being considered as part of a site wide masterplan. All such spaces are to be unallocated.

7.10 As part of a planning submission, an applicant will be required to provide a schedule of parking provision, detailing the number of allocated and, unallocated parking spaces, including those in garages, as well as details on carpools or other shared vehicles, and electrical charging facilities (both active and passive). Such planning submissions will be expected to explain how the proposed parking provision for the site meets the standards set out in this document and the needs of the development, including how these needs are expected to change in the future.

Survey results: Individual Survey Questions

Q30

Residents overwhelmingly supported a minimum specification for off-street parking for new developments of conversions based on the size of the property and also for all new developments.

To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following?	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree	Total responses
A specification for a minimum provision of off-street parking for all new developments or conversions based on the size of property	495	59	14	568
	87.1%	10.4%	2.5%	
A requirement that all new developments have off-street parking	383	51	15	449
	85.3%	11.4%	3.4%	

Q16 shows where respondents work. Of the 60% who work outside of the village, only Oxford, Woodstock and Charlbury are easily accessed by public transport. Other destinations will invariably require car use.

Q16 If you answered Q14 or Q15 that you were in full-time or part-time employment, self-employed or involved in voluntary work, please answer.... Where do you work? You can tick more than one box if you work in more than one place.

Where do you work?	Responses	
In Stonesfield, from home	30.21%	200
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	15.26%	101
Oxford	10.73%	71
In Stonesfield, not from home	10.27%	68
Out of Oxfordshire	8.91%	59
Witney	6.04%	40
Woodstock	5.59%	37
Kidlington	3.63%	24
Chipping Norton	2.72%	18
Long Hanborough	2.27%	15
Bicester	2.27%	15
Charlbury	2.11%	14

Q17 analyses where those who work elsewhere in or out of Oxfordshire travel to.

Q17 If you answered ‘Elsewhere in Oxfordshire’ or ‘Out of Oxfordshire’ to the previous question, please specify where you work. Most common responses are shown below.

London	21
Anywhere	16
Oxford	12
Eynsham	9
Abingdon	8
Yarnton	7
Banbury	5
Didcot	5
Brize Norton	4

Q18 provides analysis on students attending further or higher education. None of these places are easily accessible by public transport.

Q18 Where do you attend your further or higher education? Please specify where	Responses	
Online from home in Stonesfield (e.g. Open University)	21.1%	8
In West Oxfordshire	21.1%	8
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	26.3%	10
Outside of Oxfordshire	57.9%	22

Q19 shows the high volume of car use. As the bus only travels between Charlbury, Woodstock and Oxford, the volume of car use is hardly surprising.

Q19 If you travel to work or education, what means of transport do you frequently use? Tick as many as apply.	Responses	
Private car	86.9%	285
Van	4.6%	15
Taxi	2.1%	7
Public bus	17.1%	56
Train	12.2%	40
Motorbike / Moped	0.9%	3
Cycle	8.2%	27
Walk	11.0%	36

Q21 shows the Witney as the main place for weekly shopping. Invariably this will require car use as the Villager bus service to Witney is only three times a week with a short turn around to return. Witney is also important for other shopping needs. Q22 demonstrates the use of the car to undertake most activities.

Q21 Where do you most often travel to for the following reasons, excluding for work? Indicate if online. Tick the most frequent, one per line.

Weekly Shopping		
Witney	277	49%
On line	133	23%
Chipping Norton	62	11%
Kidlington	41	7%
Woodstock	13	2%
Long Hanborough	11	2%

Top-up shopping		
Stonesfield	220	39%
Woodstock	101	18%
Long Hanborough	66	12%
Charlbury	55	10%
Witney	50	9%
Kidlington	24	4%
On line	14	3%

Other Shopping		
Witney	169	30%
Oxford	97	17%
On line	95	17%
Stonesfield	57	10%
Woodstock	39	7%

Doctor / GP / health centre	
Woodstock	54%
Charlbury	26%
Long Hanborough	13%

Hospital	
Oxford	80%
Witney	10%
Banbury	5%

Chemist / Pharmacist	
Woodstock	52%
Charlbury	21%
Long Hanborough	11%
Witney	6%
On line	3%

Dentist	
Long Hanborough	20%
Witney	16%
Charlbury	13%
Woodstock	12%
Oxford	11%
Other	11%
Chipping Norton	8%
Kidlington	7%

Education		
Woodstock	46	19.01%
Oxford	35	14.46%
Stonesfield	30	12.40%
Witney	11	4.55%

Q22 What means of transport do you most often use to travel to the locations you specified in Q21, excluding for work? Tick the most frequently used, one per line.

	Private car	Public bus	Cycle	Walk	Total
Stonesfield	165	7	9	355	538
Charbury	426	23	18	8	479
Long Hanborough	391	3	5	2	406
Witney	537	22	2	0	564
Chipping Norton	385	17	2	0	408
Oxford	310	201	0	0	534
Woodstock	448	79	5	2	539
Kidlington	372	14	3	0	393
Banbury	324	4	0	0	334
Bicester	304	5	0	1	315

Q23. How often do you use the two local bus services? Tick one answer only per line. Note, Villager only runs on Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

	S3 Stagecoach	The Villager
More than once a week	5.42%	0.57%
	32	3
Weekly	8.14%	1.33%
	48	7

Monthly	21.36%	2.66%
	126	14
Less often	40.85%	7.02%
	241	37
Never	24.24%	88.43%
	143	466
Total	590	527

Q32 shows there is pent-up demand to use more sustainable forms of transport. Over 75% of responders want to use buses more. 40% would like to cycle more. Q33 shows the demand for better cycle paths, which again shows significant demand.

Q32 Are there forms of sustainable transport (those that reduce congestion and/or cause less pollution) that you would like to use more? Tick all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Bus services	75.70%	380
Train	36.25%	182
Car Share / Club	14.14%	71
Walking	32.87%	165
Cycling	40.04%	201
Other (please specify)	5.38%	27
	total	502

Q33 If there were dedicated enhanced cycle paths (separate from the road) to the following destinations, how often would you use them? Tick one answer per line.

	Charlbury (including the station)	Woodstock via Combe & Blenheim	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	5.1%	9.7%	5.4%
	28	55	30
Weekly	9.2%	16.8%	5.6%
	51	95	31
Monthly	18.9%	20.6%	12.5%
	105	117	69
Less often	24.5%	18.5%	27.1%
	136	105	150
Never	42.3%	34.4%	49.5%
	235	195	274
Total	555	567	554

Q34 shows the demand for buses to connect to railway stations, which shows a reasonable level of demand.

Q34 If there were a bus service to either of the following stations, how often would you use it? Tick one answer per line.

	Charlbury station	Oxford Parkway station	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	4.6%	6.2%	4.9%
	25	35	27
Weekly	4.4%	6.6%	7.1%
	24	37	39
Monthly	15.2%	24.5%	14.0%
	83	138	77
Less often	45.3%	43.8%	40.7%
	248	247	224
Never	30.5%	19.0%	33.4%
	167	107	184
Total	547	564	551

Survey results: Household survey

Q11 in the household survey shows the very significant importance of the car to those living in the village. It shows the scope for more sustainable transport to replace petrol and diesel cars.

Q11 Household How many motor vehicles (i.e. licensed road vehicles) are registered to your Stonesfield address? Specify numbers for each type.

Answer Choices	Total number	Average number per household
Car (petrol or diesel)	720	1.61
Car (hybrid or electric)	65	0.15
Van	43	0.10
Motorcycle / moped	43	0.10
Households	447	

Q13 shows how primary age children get to school, with 60% walking, but for secondary school children, school bus or car is the most common means of getting to school.

Q13 Household How do your primary age children usually get to pre-school and/or primary school? Tick all boxes that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Walk	59.3%	35
Cycle / scooter	20.3%	12
Car /taxi	27.1%	16
School bus	17.0%	10
Public bus	3.4%	2
	Answered	59

Q14 Household How do your secondary age children usually get to secondary school? Tick all boxes that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Walk	4.4%	3
Cycle / scooter	2.9%	2
Car /taxi	31.9%	22
School bus	65.2%	45
Public bus	14.5%	10
	Answered	69

Free text comments

The subject of buses was a very frequent free text comment and was also identified by some 44 residents as one of the three things they would like to see improved. Cycle paths and parking were also frequently raised in free text. Below are some of the comments made:

A bus service to Witney so that our young people can get to the town for leisure, education, etc. Witney has great education/further training opportunities, but they are useless to our young people who cannot yet drive.

Buses are very important to a number of people who cannot drive due to health issues. Also to reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Like to see more frequent bus service from Stonesfield to Whitney and return. Dismayed to see empty double-decker S3. More cost effective option - run 'nipper buses' to link with S3 in Woodstock.

My partner relies on the bus service to get to work at the JR. The commuting time, cost, and lack of service provision are making us consider moving out of the village, which is a shame. We don't want to have to buy a second car just because there aren't enough busses, plus we have nowhere to park the one car we do have as a household.

Our S3 bus service is vital and I would hate to see it go, especially as it's the only form of transport for some people

Particularly if we lose the S3 I think it would be a better service to have a bus link to Long Hanborough station. This would significantly improve travel to Oxford or London. That should have a good support from the County Council and also Oxford Council as they wanted you reduce cars in Oxford. Currently the S3 is prohibitively long to get to Oxford to commute. A link via Long Hanborough should reduce this to under 30 minutes providing the timetable is linked correctly.

Existing S3 bus route supports the west and centre of village well, but the eastern side of village and Longore - where there are many elderly residents - are served less well. Perhaps bus should re-route via Longore into Woodstock Road, rather than through the narrow centre would be safer and support more people as there could still be a stop near the memorial.

The less frequent the bus services are the less we rely on them and use them. The more frequently the bus services are the more we are likely to use them. The older we become the more we are likely to be depended upon them.

The S3 bus service - I realise I may be one of the few people in the village to rely on it so heavily for work at the JR in Oxford, but I really am put out by the recent service cuts to the village. I spend 3 - 4 hours a day on a 28 mile round commute even though I have changed my hours to try and accommodate the recent changes. I would get a car but there is limited parking as we all know, and I'd would generally like to use public transport to help take one more car off already congested roads. As it stands, I am now looking to move out of the village primarily due to my commute.

The s3 bus service is vital for teenagers to still want to live in Stonesfield because it's the only way to be completely independent without driving.

We need to ensure we don't lose the S3 bus service. Due to the recent changes the night bus no longer serves Combe, Stonesfield, Fawler and Charlbury. We also need to get the pub back up and running - I realise this is easier said than done! We certainly do not need any further housing development in the village / outskirts.

Q31 in survey monkey did not allow for me to state I would support the NP promoting initiatives to work locally. I add also that my stance re the NP insisting on off-street parking (Q31) is based on a belief that the NP should be pushing for better public transport thereby negating the need for off street parking.

Parking restrictions along the Ridings

Parking restrictions on narrow roads

Parking provision so people don't park on pavements, in front of school etc.

Long term planning should try to reduce car ownership within the village to allow for more multi-modal transport to take precedent. Naturally this will be much easier once dedicated cycle routes are implemented however this cannot happen fast enough! Please also ensure that the routes that are made are suitably wide enough for comfortable use with a Velomobile.

More cycle paths connecting Blenheim to other villages / Woodstock

A path down the ridings. From riding close to the tap. To increase safety on the school run

Cycle lane/path up the Straight to Woodstock Road

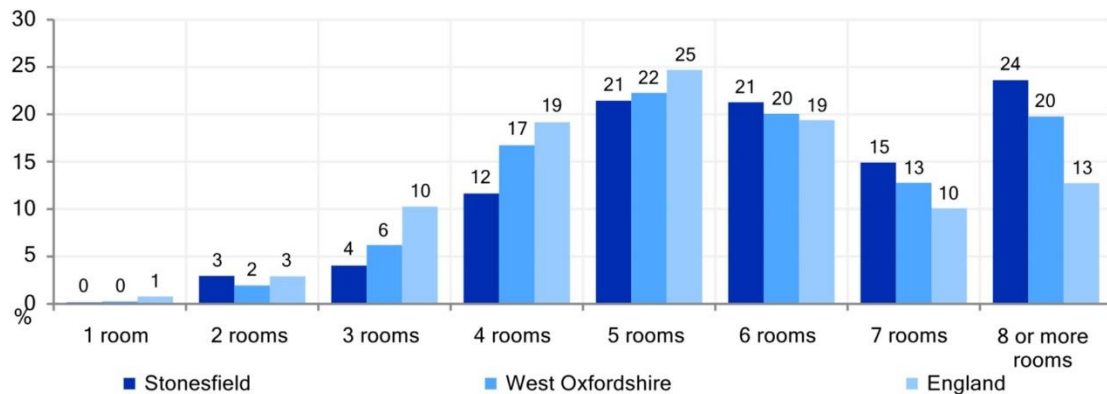
Policy SH10 – Lower-cost housing

Further Evidence for the Examiner

In 2011, house types were as follows:

	Stonesfield	Stonesfield %	National %
Detached	339	50.6	22.3
Semi-detached	196	29.3	30.7
Terraced	90	13.4	24.5
Purpose built flat	33	4.9	16.7
Flat in converted house	9	1.3	4.3
Flat in commercial property	3	0.4	1.1
Second homes	3	0.5	0.6

The 2011 Census published data on the number of rooms (excluding bathrooms) per property, which shows a disproportionate weighting towards larger properties.



Source: OCSI – Parish Profile Report

While there has been little problem in selling recently built large properties, there is no evidence that they have satisfied a housing need for people with a local (Stonesfield) connection. This policy aims to redress the balance over future years and justifies a heavier emphasis on smaller properties than WODC’s Local Plan 2031.

The Housing Needs Assessment identified a future risk associated with the increasing aging of the village. Any development needs to be geared towards younger people and families in order to maintain the vitality of the village. Smaller properties are more likely to be affordable to these age groups given that Stonesfield has a much larger affordability gap than the England average.

The Housing Needs Assessment for Stonesfield (2024) sets out further rationale for this policy, which includes some of the key points below.

The ONS publish data on House prices versus annual earnings. Over recent years, the data shows that the gap has grown larger, as shown in the graph below:

Affordable/Social Housing

Total new affordable/social houses built in Stonesfield since 1975 is 46. Most recently, this includes newly built affordable housing as part of the William Buckland Way development, 16 houses out of 37 on the development, run by SOHA with nominations from the WODC housing register with a few shared ownership properties.

There are Rural Exception Sites with 8 units on Combe Road operated by Cottsway and 8 on The Ridings operated by Sovereign HA; all on Blenheim land.

In addition, Stonesfield Community Trust manage 15 dwellings (mix of apartments and houses/bungalows on four sites) although these have been established for many years.

WODC’s Council Housing Stock was transferred to Cottsway HA. In total, Cottsway HA manage 60 properties in Stonesfield including those they have taken on since the WODC stock transfer and net of any right to buy transactions.

WODC Local Plan 2031

9.6.7 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

9.6.28 In recognition of the fact that the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is covered largely by the Cotswolds AONB, a more restrictive approach to new housing development will be applied than in the other four sub-areas. As set out in Policy H1, the amount of housing proposed for this sub-area in the plan period to 2031 (774 homes) is based on past completions and existing commitments only. No allowance is made for future speculative 'windfall' development (an allowance for which has been made in the other sub-areas).

9.6.29 This does not mean that no further housing development will be permitted within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area but proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that a scheme would give rise to benefits to the specific settlement or the sub-area (e.g. meeting identified local housing needs) and which would clearly outweigh any likely harms (e.g. heritage, landscape, impact on local services). Proposals will also need to accord with other relevant plan policies, in particular OS2, H1, H2 and EH1. Housing proposals which constitute 'major development' will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, housing development is likely to be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres.

9.6.31 The anticipated housing delivery for this subarea is 774 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed and existing commitments as summarised in the table.

William Buckland Way, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield (27)

Land east of Farley Corner, Farley Lane, Stonesfield (13)

In the AONB, great weight is given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development.

Existing housing

5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and subdivision of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

In terms of the type of housing available, the District is dominated by a high proportion of detached properties which comprise almost 35% of the total housing stock, followed by semi-detached (32%) and terraced properties (23%). The proportion of flats/maisonettes available at just over 10% is lower than any other Oxfordshire authority. The majority of flats are located in Chipping Norton, Witney and Carterton.

2.18 In terms of house sizes, West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable balance of property sizes as follows:

- 6.8% - 5 or more bedrooms
- 20% - 4 bedrooms
- 40.8% - 3 bedrooms
- 24.9% - 2 bedrooms
- 7.3% - 1 bedroom

CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

5.64 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. The Council will seek, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% to be one- and two-bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
- 35% to be three- and four-bedroom homes.

The size of new homes needed – Market housing

5.73 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011 Census identifying

that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.

5.74 Previous evidence suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.

5.75 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:

- 4.8% 1-bed properties
- 27.9% 2-bed properties
- 43.4% 3-bed properties
- 23.9% 4+bed properties

5.76 This suggests that the main focus should be 2- and 3-bed properties, and to a lesser extent 4-bed and larger. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

POLICY H4: Type and mix of new homes

All residential developments will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes. Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help create a more balanced housing stock within the District and meet the needs of a range of different groups having regard to specific local needs.

POLICY OS4: High quality design High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should

5.39 Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1

POLICY H3: Affordable housing In order to address identified affordable housing needs, the Council will require 'qualifying' market housing schemes to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, housing schemes of 6-10 units and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000m² will be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off-site within the District. This commuted sum will be deferred until completion of the development to assist with viability.

Across the District as a whole, housing schemes of 11 or more units or which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m² will be required to provide affordable housing on-site as a proportion of the market homes proposed as follows:

- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

The following levels of affordable housing provision will be applied in relation to sheltered housing and extra-care housing:

- Sheltered housing
- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

Extra-care housing

- High value zone (45%)
- Medium value zone (35%)
- Low value zone (10%)

In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought would make a scheme unviable, a revised mix and type of housing will be considered before a lower level of affordable housing provision is accepted. Where external funding is available it may be applied to schemes to ensure affordability of rental levels or to increase the number or to change tenure or type of homes to meet priority needs.

Affordable housing mix and tenure will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. A financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing on other sites in West Oxfordshire in lieu of on-site provision may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that:

- It is not physically possible or feasible to provide affordable housing on the application site; or
- There is evidence that a separate site would more satisfactorily meet local housing need and contribute to the creation of mixed communities.

In some instances, a combination of on-site provision and a financial contribution may be appropriate. West Oxfordshire District Council and its partners will work with parish councils, registered providers of affordable housing and local housing, community land and self-build trusts to identify additional suitable rural sites for small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specific local housing needs which cannot be met in any other way. All new homes on these sites will remain affordable in perpetuity to people in housing need who have a local connection with the parish or appropriate adjoining parishes.

Sites will be well-related to the existing built-up areas of towns and villages. Where family homes are proposed priority will be given to locations within a reasonable walking distance of a primary school.

The Council will consider the inclusion of an element of market housing in rural exception sites (RES) provided it is demonstrated to be necessary to delivery (eg. by subsidising the affordable element). In such cases, any market housing would be expected to be a subsidiary element of a predominantly affordable housing scheme

NPPF

63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes), students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

64. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- (a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- (b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

65. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.

66. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:

- (a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;
- (b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);
- (c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
- (d) is exclusively for affordable housing, a community-led development exception site or a rural exception site.

Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

84. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Evidence for Examiner – Individual Survey

Future Housing Needs

Looking at future housing needs, we asked if people were planning to move and if so, where, why, to what type and size of house, and tenure.

Are you planning to move house in the next 5 years?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Yes, in Stonesfield	29	38	47

Using the data, it is possible to break down the analysis of the 29 households who responded that they are looking to move within Stonesfield in the next five years, the same questions of why, what type and size of house, and tenure they are looking for are analysed:

Why do you want to move in Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
To give or receive family support	4	5	6
Current mortgage affordability	3	4	5
Current rent affordability	0	0	0
Need smaller home / downsizing	6	8	10
Need a bigger home	13	17	21
Tenancy insecure	0	0	0
To accommodate health needs	1	1	2
Other	4	5	6

Those responding 'Other' were as follows: Neighbour (1), To be mortgage free (1), To buy our first house (1), Bigger garden (1).

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

What type of tenure would you most like to move to?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Buy own home	26	34	42
Rent from Council / Housing Association	3	4	5

How many bedrooms?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
One	2	3	3
Two	1	1	2
Three	12	16	19
Four	13	17	21
Five or more	1	1	2

What is preventing you from moving home within Stonesfield?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Unable to afford to buy new home / Price of housing to buy is too high	13	17	21
Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs / Lack of suitable type or size of house to buy	18	24	29
Lack of land to self-build	3	4	5
Lack of homes to rent from Housing Association	0	0	0
Lack of affordable private rented properties	2	3	3
Lack of homes to rent from private landlord	2	3	3
Lack of housing available for elderly or disabled people	2	3	3
Other (please specify)	1	1	2

Other specified as: Need to finish current house first.

The number of households looking to move within Stonesfield in the next 5 years is fairly small. The questions arising out of the survey results are:

- can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?
- what allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?
- can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

These questions are considered below.

Can the existing provision of affordable housing deliver the houses needed?

There is a reasonable provision of affordable housing in Stonesfield, made available primarily by Cottsway Housing Association, South Oxfordshire Housing Association and Stonesfield Community Trust.

Nominations for the Housing Association are via the WODC Housing Register and allocated according to highest need (see Appendix 4), rather than having a Stonesfield connection, unless the property criteria specify otherwise. As such, it is possible, but improbable given the demand, that they would be allocated to someone with a Stonesfield connection.

The Survey asked about whether households were on a housing register, with the following output:

Is anyone in your home on the West Oxfordshire, and/or other, Housing Register?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
West Oxfordshire	22	29	35
Other Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Outside Oxfordshire	0	0	0
Don't know	19	25	31
No	408	533	658

The 22 people on the WODC housing register, extrapolated to 29, is a significant number for this tenure, given the level of current provision. When correlated with the question: Do you intend to move in the next 5 years? it gave a useful insight as to where people wanted to move:

On WODC Housing Register and Moving Intentions next 5 years

	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Don't know	1	1	2
No, not intending to move within the next 5 years	13	17	21
Yes, elsewhere	2	3	3
Yes, in Stonefield	3	4	5
Yes, in West Oxfordshire	1	1	2
No response	2	3	3
	22	29	35

Extrapolated to Mid, only 4 households are on the WODC Housing Register and are looking to move in Stonesfield in the next 5 years. This is a very small number. Further analysis could be undertaken to determine whether it could be met by provision in Stonesfield, which for the reasons given above, could only be via a Rural Exception Site or affordable housing with restrictions on lettings applied.

SCLT properties are for tenants with a Stonesfield connection. Demand for these properties is strong, housing for example elderly tenants in small bungalows and younger people in small properties typical for single or dual occupancy.

There may be a shortfall in provision which a Rural Exception Site would guarantee occupancy by those with a Stonesfield connection, which would be highly unlikely to be delivered by a typical s106

development on a conventional building plot of >10 houses with a Housing Association as Registered Provider.

What allowance should be made for those who answered that they didn't know if they would want to move within Stonesfield?

74 households answered that they didn't know whether they were likely to move in the next 5 years, which can be extrapolated up to 97 households to cover those who didn't respond to the survey. It seems likely that some of these may have a future need to move in Stonesfield, but it would not be prudent to make an assumption about numbers for the purposes of housebuilding; any development being highly speculative.

Can the housing market deliver the numbers of houses for those wishing to buy?

This is a key question. 26 households identified a desire to move in the village and to buy, this can be extrapolated to 34 to cover non-responders. A small allowance could also be added for those households that answered they didn't know if they were likely to move (74 households, 97 extrapolated)

Since December 2018, 100 properties have been sold in Stonesfield.

Of these 100:

- 60 were detached properties
- 27 were semi-detached
- 11 were terraced
- 2 were flats.

The projected demand is:

What type of house?	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	21	27	34
Semi-detached or terraced house	11	14	18
Detached bungalow	9	12	15
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	4	5	6
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	4	5

NB These numbers total higher, as households chose multiple property types that they might look for.

If these numbers are scaled back to the number of households that said they were looking to move in Stonesfield in the next five years, the table would re-present as follows:

What type of house? Adjusted down to 29 households:	Extrapolation range		
	Low	Mid	High
Detached house	13	17	21
Semi-detached or terraced house	7	9	11
Detached bungalow	5	7	8
Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	2	3	3
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	2	3	3
Total	29	38	47

Comparing future house types with existing house type shows the following:

Existing	Future				
	Detached house	Semi-detached or terraced house	Detached bungalow	Semi-detached or terraced bungalow	Flat, Maisonette or bed sit
Detached bungalow	√				
Detached bungalow	√				
Detached bungalow	√		√		
Detached bungalow	√		√		
Detached house			√		
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house	√				
Detached house		√	√	√	√
Detached house			√		
Detached house	√	√	√	√	√
Detached house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace bungalow		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√		√		
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√	√	√	
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house					√
Semi-detached or terrace house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace house	√				
Semi-detached or terrace house	√	√			
Semi-detached or terrace house		√			
Semi-detached or terrace house		√			

The table offers no consistent pattern, and as a result no obvious conclusions can be drawn from this data, as the need is spread, with some respondents choosing multiple options.

For completeness, the Survey enabled a comparison between the 29 responders' existing beds vs their future requirement. Note, extrapolating this data would not be valid and would have limited usefulness.

It is useful to compare what the past housing market has provided in Stonesfield against future requirements. Using the Mid extrapolation and comparing to Rightmove data of past sales, the results are as follows:

What type of house?			
Comparison of demand with past sales	Mid	Past Sales	Capacity
Detached house/bungalow	23	60	-37
Semi-detached or terraced house/bungalow	12	38	-26
Flat, Maisonette or bed sit	3	2	1
Total	38	100	-62

Thus, comparing past market sales with future projection of need gives an excess capacity of 62 houses. This capacity would accommodate around 64% of those who didn't know if they might move in the village, a much larger percentage than those who are likely to actually look to move.

The conclusion is that the market, subject to the next 5 years delivering the same scale of available property for sale, will meet the needs of people in Stonesfield wishing to move, with excess capacity. There is no case for further market housing.

Free text comments

No more large house building projects. Stop on-road car parking

Maybe retirement housing/flats - to enable older residents to stay in the village/free up housing stock? At present, development everywhere in UK seems to be primarily developer-led, and profit-driven. It is hoped the application of the Plan will change this balance, to village-led initiatives, emphasising the paramount importance of infrastructure, LOCAL opinion, and local needs. Any thoughts of housing for the elderly

There need to be small rural exception sites for housing people local to Stonesfield only, this should be ring fenced and not open to the district. Perhaps an enhanced role for Stonesfield Charitable Trust in managing such properties.

I would like to see a stop to developers avoiding the provision of affordable housing by providing land for other uses like sport or burial plots instead.

Manage housing development in a balanced but realistic way. Focus upon building homes for people who most need it and at a price that is really affordable! Increase council tax for second/holiday homes.

Looking at housing to meet multigenerational living i.e homes with annex for care of elderly parents. Transport for the elderly who may not be able to walk or stand at bus stops.

I just want to keep Stonesfield as a nice small village. This village has had enough new housing and it won't be able to cope with even more.

Larger scale housing developments to date have provided houses representing fake Victorian, Georgian, Edwardian themes and use low quality materials such as reconstituted stone, fibre-cement faux lintels, PVC windows and imitation welsh slate roofs. The designs lack both the quality of material and design detailing of the older styles that they seek to emulate. Higher quality, more contemporary design is achievable and should be required of developers. Obviously greater respect must be shown with sites immediately adjacent to the Conservation Areas but elsewhere there should be requirements for better designs incorporating a mix of materials rather than the unimaginative, repetitive reconstituted stone block buildings that have been lazily and repetitively used. A design standard that encourages/requires better is achievable and should be promoted and supported by WODC to move away from these thoroughly uninspiring concepts that are continually offered.

Development is a very difficult subject to find a solution to. People need places to live and yet all development can impact the environment (biological and human). I'd be wary of cramming more houses into existing developed space, I think it could make Stonesfield very cramped, unless it's definitely sufficient and it must include parking and adequate services such as sewerage. I'd support small scale housing development if needed, sensible sites were considered and the improvement of things like bus transport was factored in - but it's usually not cost effective for constructors. Thanks for taking the time to gather all these responses and good luck!

I feel any new developments should be made to use material sympathetic with the local area. When extending a house here, the materials are quite rightly specified in great detail. The householders often go to great expense to comply with the planning stipulations. However,

on larger developments it seems developers are able to use cheaper materials, not in keeping with the local area (i.e. reconstituted stone and cheaper roof tiles.) William Buckland way is an example of this, as are some of the new homes near Farley Lane.

I have carefully studied the Bleinheim plan. It's hard changing, but we are relying on cars so much and that just means we grow more car friendly transport systems. I wonder whether houses that are beautiful and in the vernacular need to be pressed more. There is a bunch of red roof houses behind the Combe Road, the pictures were lovely with grey robes. not so much when you actually look at what we got. we need to reserve some genuine meaning for green space if we're going to go out to village. Orchards, streams, ponds. If you're going to build and think about building fences and wildlife friendly, how about only giving permission if the gardens are significant and communal in parts. That's much better for children much better for wildlife and much less offensive. Build down as well, we should be using basements

We have far too many large developments at high cost under the low-cost housing provision threshold, which our councillors are invisible from or don't answer communication. Our utilities infrastructure, especially water and drainage is overstretched with low pressure getting worse with each development, yet planning permission goes ahead. Public transport appalling meaning cars are a necessity, yet parish council (one member in particular) is at war with the car missing the point that we are a village turning into a commuting suburb. Our once beautiful and peaceful walks are overrun with people and Stonesfield is no longer a pleasant place to live. We will be moving out of the area soon as it no longer is the place we enjoyed living.

Policy SH11 – Location of new affordable homes

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The Housing Needs Assessment provides the detail behind the drafting of this policy and includes the relevant provisions in the NPPF, WODC Local Plan 2031 and Cotswold Management Board Plan. The HNA also has population projections, the detailed results of the survey, market assessment, affordable housing provision and projections of future need.

Survey results

These are included in detail in the HNA.

Free text comments

Over 25 people identified the need for affordable housing as one of their top three things that they would like to see improved in the village.

With regard to building there are too many executive houses, built at the expense of fields. We need to think of fauna and flora. We need housing that is really affordable plus social housing to keep young people in the village.

I don't think access to affordable housing development needs to be restricted to people with local connection. I would like to see community led housing included in the Neighbourhood plan. I would like to see a proposal to redevelop the whole site around and including the village hall, sports and social club and garage areas with a new fit for purpose hall with bar and affordable housing and market housing to cross subsidise.

I think any housing developments are at the request of the Parish Council initially and not just an opportunity to make money from developers with no interest in the village. There has been a lot of development in the village recently but only a small proportion affordable. Smaller units for first time buyers and elderly people who wish to downsize but stay in the village would be ideal.

I would like to see a stop to developers avoiding the provision of affordable housing by providing land for other uses like sport or burial plots instead.

In general, the structure of the village and the difficulty of upgrading essential infrastructure (e.g. sewage, access, and transport) means that development in and around the village must be very limited and genuinely affordable housing should be the absolute priority when any development is considered.

Manage housing development in a balanced but realistic way. Focus upon building homes for people who most need it and at a price that is really affordable! Increase council tax for second/holiday homes.

Also, 'do I support further development of housing which has good infrastructure considerations' - I would prefer that the village feel continues and that we don't have a lot of building in and around, but I also understand we need to have our quota so yes, I do want it to be done sympathetically and with careful consideration, but not to spoil the village feel. I think it is vital that though we may not wish to see the village change, we have to take ownership that to some extent it will and we shall see building of new homes. Therefore we should put proposals forward about e.g. affordable housing, homes for the elderly that allow them to stay in the village etc. Are there other villages that are very proactive on this, e.g. Steeple Aston that have similar issues with some good advice or suggestions? Many thanks for the opportunity to do this survey.

Development is a very difficult subject to find a solution to. People need places to live and yet all development can impact the environment (biological and human). I'd be wary of cramming more houses into existing developed space, I think it could make Stonesfield very cramped, unless it's definitely sufficient and it must include parking and adequate services such as sewerage. I'd support small scale housing development if needed, sensible sites were considered and the improvement of things like bus transport was factored in - but it's usually not cost effective for constructors.

I appreciate all the hard work that has gone into the survey, however the survey and questions feel very weighted towards the need for profit seeking property developers to build more and more houses, and to concrete over more and more land, almost as if it is 'fait accompli', even the word 'nimby' and an explanation is printed in the survey! I take exception to the Q28 regarding potential green space for housing developments. For example it is cynical in my view to include the village playing field, that is simply scaremongering and 100% will not be built on. By including the playing field in the survey it is designed to make other spaces more palatable. It is simply manipulative. Q31 I object to the three questions, again manipulative, by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has

taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

I feel that there should be a greater number of small businesses in and around the village providing local employment opportunities cutting car journeys and make in the village more vibrant diverse community as villages used to be. When we moved here more than 20 years ago there are quite a few local businesses some of which have been squeezed out to provide expensive housing for people who want an urban lifestyle in a rural setting. We are losing the continuity of families have lived here for generations because of the high cost of housing. We need young families to live here to keep preschool open. A village without these facilities is a dead village. I'm concerned the village is becoming ever more gentrified and that the connection to the land is being lost, rural life is not just a picture postcard and can be noisy and muddy.

I think any housing developments are at the request of the Parish Council initially and not just an opportunity to make money from developers with no interest in the village. There has been a lot of development in the village recently but only a small proportion affordable. Smaller units for first time buyers and elderly people who wish to downsize but stay in the village would be ideal.

Maybe retirement housing/flats - to enable older residents to stay in the village/free up housing stock? At present, development everywhere in UK seems to be primarily developer-led, and profit-driven. It is hoped the application of the Plan will change this balance, to village-led initiatives, emphasising the paramount importance of infrastructure, LOCAL opinion, and local needs. Any thoughts of housing for the elderly

There needs to be small rural exception sites for housing people local to Stonesfield only, this should be ring fenced and not open to the district. Perhaps an enhanced role for Stonesfield Charitable Trust in managing such properties.

We have far too many large developments at high cost under the low cost housing provision threshold, which our councillors are invisible from or don't answer communication. Our utilities infrastructure, especially water and drainage is overstretched with low pressure getting worse with each development, yet planning permission goes ahead. Public transport appalling meaning cars are a necessity, yet parish council (one member in particular) is at war with the car missing the point that we are a village turning into a commuting suburb. Our once beautiful and peaceful walks are overrun with people and Stonesfield is no longer a pleasant place to live. We will be moving out of the area soon as it no longer is the place we enjoyed living.

We must continue to protect the size, shape and feel of our village. the infrastructure cannot sustain a large-scale new housing development. Stonesfield is a village and must remain a village and a village that has a post office, shop and pub. all three are essential components of a successful community.

Policies for Section 6 Economy and amenities:

Policy SEA1 – Protecting and enhancing retail, employment and services

Further Evidence for the Examiner

West Oxfordshire Local Plan

POLICY BC1: Burford – Charlbury sub-area strategy

The focus of new development will be Burford and Charlbury. Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and are suitable for a modest level of development in accordance with Policy OS2. Development in these rural service centres will therefore be of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce the existing service centre role. Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local housing, community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages. Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of about 774 new homes* to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.
- conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets
- protection and enhancement of the Upper Windrush Valley and Wychwood Project Area
- maximising opportunities for enhancements within the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs).
- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- support for additional small-scale employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification
- ensuring development has access to superfast broadband to facilitate home-working
- seeking the retention and development of local services and community facilities throughout the sub-area and ensuring Burford Town Centre remains vibrant through resisting the loss of shops and other town centre uses, and promoting an increase in the availability and efficient use of parking provision in appropriate locations
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for essential supporting infrastructure, including new transport, education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities in accordance with the IDP. The Council will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to consider appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of HGV traffic on Burford.

* Note: In accordance with Policy H1, the figure of 774 homes is not an absolute target or a maximum ceiling to development.

6.42 All proposals should be consistent in scale with a rural location and not result in the loss of amenity to other local businesses or residents, or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside.

POLICY E2: Supporting the Rural Economy

New small employment sites in or adjacent to Service Centres and the Villages as listed in Table 4b will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale of the settlement and the character

of the area. Elsewhere new and replacement buildings will be allowed where required for diversification proposals which are fully integrated with an existing farm business or where they meet a specific business need which cannot otherwise be met in a more sustainable location. Development proposals which are necessary for agricultural production or which make a positive contribution to farm or country estate diversification will be supported where they:

- are supported by or operate as part of and will continue to add value to a viable core farm/estate business; and
- remain compatible and consistent in scale with the farm/estate operation and a countryside location; and
- re-use existing buildings where feasible in accordance with Policy E3.

Any new building(s) must be suitably located for the scale and type of the proposed use and have regard to the level of accessibility to settlements, facilities and services and impact on the character and amenity of the area. Farm shops will be permitted where they form part of a diversification scheme to sell produce from the farm or farms in the immediate vicinity and do not demonstrably undermine the viability and vitality of shopping provision in existing villages.

Conditions will be imposed to limit the proportion of goods from other sources. Development proposals for new or replacement buildings may be subject to a condition to safeguard their use in the interests of the local economy.

The Council will seek to secure access to superfast broadband and improved mobile telecommunications in rural areas and subject to compliance with other relevant policies, will adopt a positive approach to well-designed proposals to facilitate homeworking and flexible working practices (such as live-work units) which maintain the amenity of existing residents.

All new development will be required to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to enable access to superfast broadband.

POLICY E3: Re-use of non-residential buildings

The Council supports the re-use of traditional buildings for employment, tourism and community uses to support the rural economy where the following criteria are met:

- the existing form and design of the building(s) positively contribute to the character of the area; and
- the building(s) are capable of conversion to the proposed use without necessitating alteration(s) or extension(s) which would harm the form of the original building and without removing features of historic, architectural or nature conservation interest; and
- the building(s) are suitably located for the scale and type of the proposed use, having regard to the level of accessibility to settlements, facilities and services and impact on the character and amenity of the area.

The re-use of non-traditional buildings, including modern farm buildings, for employment, tourism and community uses will be supported within or adjoining Service Centres or Villages, or where it forms part of an agricultural holding and the proposal is part of a farm diversification scheme under Policy E2 or where re-use would address a specific local need which cannot be met in an alternative way. This is provided that the following criteria are met:

- the general character and form of the building(s) are not harmful to the surroundings; and

- the scale and type of use is suitable to its location and will not result in excessive alteration(s) or extension(s) to the host building.

POLICY E5: Local services and community facilities

The Council will support the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, interaction and healthy inclusive communities. Development proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities and services will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that:

- appropriate alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, will remain, and;
- in the case of pubs, shops and other commercially run services and facilities, the existing use is no longer viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted to retain a viable service or facility including as a community run enterprise. A robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate that the use or premises is unviable in accordance with separate guidance published by the Council. In considering development proposals for the loss of local services and community facilities, the Council will have regard to whether a site or facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan for the AONB 2023-25

Policy CE12: Development priorities and evidence of need

CE12.3. Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.

With regard to paragraphs 1 to 3 of Policy CE12, Government guidance recognises that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing. Instead, ‘the expectation is that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services’.

Survey results – Individual Survey

Q8

Q8 If you answered anything under 5 years in Q7, why did you move to Stonesfield? Tick the top 3 reasons only	Responses	
Proximity to employment	22.49%	38
Facilities	8.88%	15

Q9

Q9 If you have lived here longer than 5 years, which top 3 factors are most important to your decision to stay in Stonesfield? Tick a maximum of 3 reasons	Responses	
Employment	10.26%	51
Facilities	18.31%	91

Q13

Q13 How important to you are each of the following amenities in our village? One tick per line.	Very important or important	Out of	%
Village Shop	591	609	97%
Post Office	576	610	94%
Village pub	521	604	86%
Village Hall	487	593	82%
Playing field	452	588	77%
Garage	398	590	67%
St James' Centre	368	587	63%
Library	361	591	61%
Sports and Social Club	347	587	59%
Primary School	330	581	57%
Scout hut	315	585	54%
Pre-school	287	573	50%
Allotments	292	584	50%
Churches	278	591	47%
Hairdressers	126	580	22%

Q14

Q14 What best describes your current work status? Tick one only	Responses	
In full-time employment	30.05%	180
In part-time employment	13.02%	78
Self-employed	11.52%	69
Permanently sick / disabled (unable to work)	1.34%	8
Unemployed and available for work	0.33%	2
Retired	39.90%	239
Student (full or part time)	3.84%	23

Q20

Q20 Are any of the following barriers to you working in Stonesfield? Tick all that apply	Responses
Lack of flexible office space to rent	16
Lack of suitable business premises	24
Poor IT connectivity	38
Poor mobile phone connectivity	69

Q27

Q27 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following? Tick one answer per line.	Strongly/ slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly/ slightly disagree	
Initiatives to enable residents to work locally	427	144	11	582
	73.4%	24.7%	1.9%	
Re-use of former non-residential buildings only for a community need or specific employment purpose, i.e. should oppose planning permission for change of use to residential	427	114	43	584
	73.1%	19.5%	7.4%	
Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy	404	137	34	575
	70.3%	23.8%	5.9%	
Development and retention of local services and community facilities	551	28	6	585
	94.2%	4.8%	1.0%	

This was supported by many free text comments (see below).

Free text comments

Thank you for all your efforts!! Recognising people working at home could also be good. There used to be a community meet up at the pub. With more people working at home, this might be a great thing to kick-start.

We must continue to protect the size, shape and feel of our village. the infrastructure cannot sustain a large-scale new housing development. Stonesfield is a village and must remain a village and a village that has a post office, shop and pub. all three are essential components of a successful community.

We must protect business spaces. We cannot have another situation like the absurd fiasco when someone moved into the village and immediately complained and drove out Witney Welding. Villages need businesses which keep people in work who in turn support local services.

I feel that there should be a greater number of small businesses in and around the village providing local employment opportunities cutting car journeys and make in the village more vibrant diverse community as villages used to be. When we moved here more than 20 years ago there were quite a few local businesses, some of which have been squeezed out to provide expensive housing for people who want an urban lifestyle in a rural setting. We are losing the continuity of families have lived here for generations because of the high cost of housing. We need young families to live here to keep preschool open. A village without these facilities is a dead village. I'm concerned the village is becoming ever more gentrified and that the connection to the land is being lost, rural life is not just a picture postcard and can be noisy and muddy.

It is very important to maintain the village rural life. Road furniture is a disgrace. Housing needs to be truly affordable for young people who will stay in the village with young families. No more £1 million houses should be allowed. I do not know how this can be achieved but if we lose school, village will fail as research shows on studies done on rural areas. Light industry should be encouraged so people can live and work in the village.

It would be appropriate to allow development of small workshops possibly with living accommodation, to encourage work within the community, rather than even more expensive housing for commuters

I would support the NP promoting initiatives to work locally.

Policy SEA2 – Protecting community facilities

Further Evidence for the Examiner

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

POLICY E3: Re-use of non-residential buildings

The Council supports the re-use of traditional buildings for employment, tourism and community uses to support the rural economy where the following criteria are met:

- the existing form and design of the building(s) positively contribute to the character of the area; and
- the building(s) are capable of conversion to the proposed use without necessitating alteration(s) or extension(s) which would harm the form of the original building and without removing features of historic, architectural or nature conservation interest; and
- the building(s) are suitably located for the scale and type of the proposed use, having regard to the level of accessibility to settlements, facilities and services and impact on the character and amenity of the area.

The re-use of non-traditional buildings, including modern farm buildings, for employment, tourism and community uses will be supported within or adjoining Service Centres or Villages, or where it forms part of an agricultural holding and the proposal is part of a farm diversification scheme under Policy E2 or where re-use would address a specific local need which cannot be met in an alternative way. This is provided that the following criteria are met:

- the general character and form of the building(s) are not harmful to the surroundings; and
- the scale and type of use is suitable to its location and will not result in excessive alteration(s) or extension(s) to the host building

POLICY E5: Local services and community facilities

The Council will support the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, interaction and healthy inclusive communities. Development proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities and services will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that:

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- in the case of pubs, shops and other commercially run services and facilities, the existing use is no longer viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted to retain a viable service or facility including as a community run enterprise. A robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate that the use or premises is unviable in accordance with separate guidance published by the Council. In considering development proposals for the loss of local services and community facilities, the Council will have regard to whether a site or facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Policy CC1: Climate change – mitigation

Reducing energy demand through transport and travel:

- Reducing car use for example, through increasing green and active travel including public transport and increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes
- Reducing the need to travel for example by encouraging home working and affordable housing provision close to sources of employment, services and facilities
- Improving the sustainability of travel through for example; public transport hub promotion/integration and information, and prioritising the provision of walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking
- Providing sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes.

Policy CE12: Development priorities and evidence of need

CE12.3. Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.

Evidence for Examiner

Survey results – Individual Survey

Q2

Q2 Stonesfield is a great place to live with a strong community and lots of activities. To what extent do you agree with this statement?	Responses	
Strongly agree	36.39%	222
Agree	52.62%	321
No opinion	6.72%	41
Disagree	4.10%	25
Strongly disagree	0.16%	1
		610

Q8

Q8 If you answered anything under 5 years in Q7, why did you move to Stonesfield? Tick the top 3 reasons only	Responses	
Facilities	8.88%	15

Q9

Q9 If you have lived here longer than 5 years, which top 3 factors are most important to your decision to stay in Stonesfield? Tick a maximum of 3 reasons	Responses	
	Facilities	18.31%

Q13

Q13 How important to you are each of the following amenities in our village? One tick per line.	No. of respondents	Out of	%
Village Shop	591	609	97%
Post Office	576	610	94%
Village pub	521	604	86%
Village Hall	487	593	82%
Playing field	452	588	77%
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Churches	278	591	47%
Hairdressers	126	580	22%

Q27

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Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy	404	137	34	575
	70.3%	23.8%	5.9%	
Development and retention of local services and community facilities	551	28	6	585
	94.2%	4.8%	1.0%	

This was supported by many free text comments.

Free text comments

We must continue to protect the size, shape and feel of our village. The infrastructure cannot sustain a large-scale new housing development. Stonesfield is a village and must remain a village and a village that has a post office, shop and pub. All three are essential components of a successful community.

I feel that there should be a greater number of small businesses in and around the village providing local employment opportunities, cutting car journeys, and make in the village more vibrant diverse community as villages used to be. When we moved here more than 20 years ago there were quite a few local businesses, some of which have been squeezed out to provide expensive housing for people who want an urban lifestyle in a rural setting. We are losing the continuity of families have lived here for generations because of the high cost of housing. We need young families to live here to keep preschool open. A village without these facilities is a dead village. I'm concerned the village is becoming ever more gentrified and that the connection to the land is being lost, rural life is not just a picture postcard and can be noisy and muddy.

Currently there is no 'heart' to this lovely village. Reopening The White Horse pub would go a long way to providing this. The village store is adequate but could be much improved in what it stocks. It is in desperate need of an exterior 'facelift' more in keeping with the local surroundings.

We still need better provision for teenagers to safely 'hang out' in the village

My partner relies on the bus service to get to work at the JR. The commuting time, cost, and lack of service provision are making us consider moving out of the village, which is a shame. We don't want to have to buy a second car just because there aren't enough buses, plus we have nowhere to park the one car we do have as a household.

I feel very strongly that there is not much for teenagers to do. They hang around in the kids' playpark, which isn't great for them or the kids. There is a bit of land next to the tennis courts where we could build a skatepark which would benefit kids of all ages. It would get them out, socialising, exercising. They would be far enough away from houses to not disturb people. If they had a shelter it would be a good meeting place. When I have been to skateparks in other villages, often the big kids are teaching the little kids and there is usually a nice atmosphere. I don't have a teenager yet but I do wonder what my young child will do in the village as they get older.

Retain social space including keeping the pub as a pub and the pub garden as a pub garden.

We must continue to protect the size, shape and feel of our village. the infrastructure cannot sustain a large-scale new housing development. Stonesfield is a village and must remain a village and a village that has a post office, shop and pub. all three are essential components of a successful community.

There seems very little provision for teenagers in the village - evidence of boredom in the incidences of vandalism to cars and anti-social behaviour in the woods?

Please do everything possible to facilitate the reopening of the White Horse. The survey didn't prompt much on sustainability solutions for the village, perhaps a missed opportunity? E.g. opportunity for local community renewable energy solutions or waste treatment. Perhaps to ask if increased allotment space or facilities would be welcomed too?

Poor fabric / appearance of village hall. Get money from developers or raise funds.

Beautify area round shop - benches & greenery.

Policies for Section 7 Transport and road use:

Policy ST1 – Sustainable transport

Further Evidence for the Examiner

OLTCP 22-50 policy 18 inter alia evinces an intention that the County Council will

- a. 'ensure that all new strategic development is designed for bus access and provide suitable funding for high quality services and infrastructure'
- b. 'ensure bus services are accessible and support community transport to address unmet local transport needs'
- c. 'work to improve bus services in rural areas including consideration of flexible services where relevant.'

OLTCP 22-50 policy 19 says the County Council will:

- a. Work with local communities in the development of any new community transport schemes (including expanding existing schemes).
- b. Work with transport operators (public buses, community transport and rail) to encourage co-ordinated transport solutions.
- c. Work with community transport operators (bus and car schemes) to ensure vehicles used contribute to the Council's aims for carbon reduction.

Under the heading 'Funding and implementation' OLTCP 22-50 at page 141 states that:

- a. 'Developers either contribute towards improvements to mitigate their transport impacts either through direct legal agreements or carry out works themselves under section 278 Agreements (*Highways Act 1980*) with the Council' and
- b. 'In some situations, a Community Infrastructure Levy is also payable to the district ... council and the County Council may be able to agree with the relevant authority to use some of those funds for transport schemes.'

It pledges that by means of these provisions the County Council will 'continue to work with developers to secure contributions which help to deliver the LTCP.'

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

The Plan identifies a number of provisions on transport.

7.76 Alongside improvements to public transport, enabling more active forms of travel including walking and cycling is essential to reducing car use. It also has the added benefit of encouraging more healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health concerns including rising rates of obesity.

7.77 The provision of high quality, well-designed and maintained pedestrian and cycle facilities as well as the provision of information such as clear signage is critical to encouraging more walking and

cycling. The planning system has a key role to play in this regard by ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate levels of investment in new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. LTP4 includes an active and healthy travel strategy focusing on cycling and walking as well as door to door integrated multi-modal journeys.

7.78 At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities, although most of these linkages are focused on the main towns of Witney and Carterton including in particular routes installed as part of the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments. Cross-town cycle routes can however suffer from poor signage as well as having some gaps in provision.

7.79 Outside the main towns and rural service centres although there are a number of national cycle network routes running through the District, most pedestrian and cycle opportunities involve the use of 'quiet roads' rather than dedicated pedestrian and cycle links. Increased traffic levels on these quiet roads may prevent vulnerable road users from accessing these routes safely.

7.80 In discussion with Oxfordshire County Council, we have identified a number of improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth in the District. These include the provision of additional footways and cycle paths and improvements to existing routes, with a particular focus on improving accessibility to key locations. Greater use of public transport can be encouraged (through provision of walking and cycling routes to bus stops and cycle parking at bus stops).

7.81 The County Council have also identified the potential provision of a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney, as well as a number of specific improvements in Witney and the need for improved cycle parking at key destinations and employment sites in Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.

7.82 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver attractive, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District.

9.6.13 The availability and frequency of bus services is variable. Services through Charlbury are good, with hourly direct services to Woodstock, Oxford, Witney and Chipping Norton.

9.6.14 There are many opportunities for active travel in the sub area with an extensive network of paths, bridleways and quiet roads providing routes for walking, cycling and riding. There are however, safety issues on fast and busy roads which could be addressed through improved infrastructure.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Policy CC1: Climate change – mitigation

Reducing energy demand through transport and travel:

- Reducing car use for example, through increasing green and active travel including public transport and increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes;
- Reducing the need to travel for example by encouraging home working and affordable housing provision close to sources of employment, services and facilities;
- Improving the sustainability of travel through for example; public transport hub promotion/integration and information, and prioritising the provision of walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking

- Providing sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes;

Outcome 11 – Development and transport: Development and transport schemes positively contribute to the purposes of protected landscape designation and also play a key role in facilitating the economic and social wellbeing of local and rural communities.

The percentage of households in the Cotswolds National Landscape having no car is 3%, and many people do not have access to a car during the day. This means they are heavily dependent on the frequency and quality of public and/or community transport to access local services. It also exacerbates issues of rural isolation. The introduction and use of technology to help address transport issues and offer increased alternatives such as car sharing and call-up public transport systems could provide viable options for residents and visitors alike whilst simultaneously helping to mitigate climate change. The provision of affordable housing within the National Landscape would help reduce the climate impact of travel to work journeys for those living and working in the area. Any consideration of the carbon footprint of Cotswolds residents must include the impact of flying which is estimated to be two and a half times higher than the UK average.

Survey results – Individual Survey

Q16 shows where respondents work. Of the 60% who work outside of the village, only Oxford, Woodstock and Charlbury are easily accessed by public transport. Other destinations will invariably require car use.

Q16 If you answered Q14 or Q15 that you were in full-time or part-time employment, self-employed or involved in voluntary work, please answer.... Where do you work? You can tick more than one box if you work in more than one place.	Responses	
In Stonesfield, from home	30.21%	200
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	15.26%	101
Oxford	10.73%	71
In Stonesfield, not from home	10.27%	68
Out of Oxfordshire	8.91%	59
Witney	6.04%	40
Woodstock	5.59%	37
Kidlington	3.63%	24
Chipping Norton	2.72%	18
Long Hanborough	2.27%	15
Bicester	2.27%	15
Charlbury	2.11%	14

Q17 analyses where those who work elsewhere in or out of Oxfordshire travel.

Q17 If you answered ‘Elsewhere in Oxfordshire’ or ‘Out of Oxfordshire’ to the previous question, please specify where you work. The most common responses are shown below:

London	21
Anywhere	16
Oxford	12
Eynsham	9

Abingdon	8
Yarnton	7
Banbury	5
Didcot	5
Brize Norton	4

Q18 provides analysis on students attending further or higher education. None of these places are easily accessible by public transport.

Q18 Where do you attend your further or higher education? Please specify where.	Responses	
Online from home in Stonesfield (e.g. Open University)	21.1%	8
In West Oxfordshire	21.1%	8
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	26.3%	10
Outside of Oxfordshire	57.9%	22

Q19 shows the high volume of car use. As the bus only travels between Charlbury, Woodstock and Oxford, this level of car use is hardly surprising.

Q19 If you travel to work or education, what means of transport do you frequently use? Tick as many as apply.	Responses	
Private car	86.9%	285
Van	4.6%	15
Taxi	2.1%	7
Public bus	17.1%	56
Train	12.2%	40
Motorbike / Moped	0.9%	3
Cycle	8.2%	27
Walk	11.0%	36

Q21 shows the Witney as the main place for weekly shopping. Invariably this will require car use as the Villager V26 bus service to Witney is only three times a week with a short turn around to return. Witney is also important for other shopping needs. Q22 demonstrates the use of the car to undertake most activities.

Q21 Where do you most often travel to for the following reasons, excluding for work? Indicate if online. Tick the most frequent, one per line.

Weekly shopping		
Witney	277	49%
On line	133	23%
Chipping Norton	62	11%
Kidlington	41	7%
Woodstock	13	2%
Long Hanborough	11	2%

Top up shopping		
Stonesfield	220	39%
Woodstock	101	18%
Long Hanborough	66	12%
Charlbury	55	10%
Witney	50	9%
Kidlington	24	4%
On line	14	3%

Other shopping		
Witney	169	30%
Oxford	97	17%
On line	95	17%
Stonesfield	57	10%
Woodstock	39	7%

Doctor / GP / health centre	
Woodstock	54%
Charlbury	26%
Long Hanborough	13%

Hospital	
Oxford	80%
Witney	10%
Banbury	5%

Chemist / Pharmacist	
Woodstock	52%
Charlbury	21%
Long Hanborough	11%
Witney	6%
On line	3%

Dentist	
Long Hanborough	20%
Witney	16%
Charlbury	13%
Woodstock	12%
Oxford	11%
Other	11%
Chipping Norton	8%
Kidlington	7%

Education		
Woodstock	46	19.01%
Oxford	35	14.46%
Stonesfield	30	12.40%
Witney	11	4.55%

Q22 What means of transport do you most often use to travel to the locations you specified in Q21, excluding for work? Tick the most frequently used, one per line.

Q22	Private car	Public bus	Cycle	Walk	Total
Stonesfield	165	7	9	355	538
Charbury	426	23	18	8	479
Long Hanborough	391	3	5	2	406
Witney	537	22	2	0	564
Chipping Norton	385	17	2	0	408
Oxford	310	201	0	0	534
Woodstock	448	79	5	2	539
Kidlington	372	14	3	0	393
Banbury	324	4	0	0	334
Bicester	304	5	0	1	315

Note: Villager V26 only runs on Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Q23

Q23 How often do you use the two local bus services? Tick one answer only per line.	S3 Stagecoach	Villager V26
More than once a week	5.42%	0.57%
	32	3
Weekly	8.14%	1.33%
	48	7
Monthly	21.36%	2.66%
	126	14
Less often	40.85%	7.02%
	241	37
Never	24.24%	88.43%
	143	466
Total	590	527

Q32 shows there is pent up demand to use more sustainable forms of transport. Over 75% of responders want to use buses more. 40% would like to cycle more. Q33 shows the significant demand for better cycle paths.

Q32

Q32 Are there forms of sustainable transport (those that reduce congestion and/or cause less pollution) that you would like to use more?	Responses	
Bus services	75.70%	380
Train	36.25%	182
Car Share / Club	14.14%	71
Walking	32.87%	165
Cycling	40.04%	201
Other (please specify)	5.38%	27
	Answered	502

Q33

Q33 If there were dedicated enhanced cycle paths (separate from the road) to the following destinations, how often would you use them? Tick one answer per line.	Charlbury (including the station)	Woodstock via Combe & Blenheim	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	5.1%	9.7%	5.4%
	28	55	30
Weekly	9.2%	16.8%	5.6%
	51	95	31
Monthly	18.9%	20.6%	12.5%
	105	117	69
Less often	24.5%	18.5%	27.1%
	136	105	150
Never	42.3%	34.4%	49.5%
	235	195	274
Total	555	567	554

Q34 shows a reasonable level of demand for buses to connect to railway stations.

Q34 If there were a bus service to either of the following stations, how often would you use it? Tick one answer per line.	Charlbury station	Oxford Parkway station	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	4.6%	6.2%	4.9%
	25	35	27
Weekly	4.4%	6.6%	7.1%
	24	37	39
Monthly	15.2%	24.5%	14.0%
	83	138	77
Less often	45.3%	43.8%	40.7%
	248	247	224
Never	30.5%	19.0%	33.4%
	167	107	184
Total	547	564	551

Q11 in the household survey shows the importance of the car to those living in the village and is very significant. It shows the scope for more sustainable transport to replace petrol and diesel cars.

Q11 How many motor vehicles (i.e. licensed road vehicles) are registered to your Stonesfield address? Specify numbers for each type	Total number	Average number per household
Car (petrol or diesel)	720	1.61
Car (hybrid or electric)	65	0.15
Van	43	0.10
Motorcycle / moped	43	0.10
Households	447	

Q13 shows how primary age children get to school, with 60% walking, but for secondary school children, school bus or car is the most common means of getting to school.

Q13 Household

Q13 How do your primary age children usually get to pre-school and/or primary school? Tick all boxes that apply.	Responses	
Walk	59.3%	35
Cycle / scooter	20.3%	12
Car /taxi	27.1%	16
School bus	17.0%	10
Public bus	3.4%	2
	Answered	59

Q14 Household

Q14 How do your secondary age children usually get to secondary school? Tick all boxes that apply.	Responses	
Walk	4.4%	3
Cycle / scooter	2.9%	2
Car /taxi	31.9%	22
School bus	65.2%	45
Public bus	14.5%	10
	Answered	69

Free text comments

The subject of buses was very frequent in the free text comments and was also identified by many people as one of the three things they would like to see improved. Cycle paths and parking were also frequently raised in free text. Below are some of the comments:

A bus service to Witney so that our young people can get to the town for leisure, education, etc. Witney has great education/further training opportunities, but they are useless to our young people who cannot yet drive.

Buses are very important to a number of people who cannot drive due to health issues. Also to reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Like to see more frequent bus service from Stonesfield to Witney and return. Dismayed to see empty double-decker S3. More cost-effective option - run 'nipper buses' to link with S3 in Woodstock.

My partner relies on the bus service to get to work at the JR. The commuting time, cost, and lack of service provision are making us consider moving out of the village, which is a shame. We don't want to have to buy a second car just because there aren't enough buses, plus we have nowhere to park the one car we do have as a household.

Our S3 bus service is vital and I would hate to see it go, especially as it's the only form of transport for some people

Particularly if we lose the S3 I think it would be a better service to have a bus link to Long Hanborough station. This would significantly improve travel to Oxford or London. That should have a good support from the County Council and also Oxford Council as they wanted you reduce cars in Oxford. Currently the S3 is prohibitively long to get to Oxford to commute. A link via Long Hanborough should reduce this to under 30 minutes providing the timetable is linked correctly

Existing S3 bus route supports the west and centre of village well, but the eastern side of village and Longore - where there are many elderly residents - are served less well. Perhaps bus should re-route via Longore into Woodstock Road, rather than through the narrow centre - would be safer and support more people as there could still be a stop near the memorial.

The less frequent the bus services are the less we rely on them and use them. The more frequently the bus services are the more we are likely to use them. The older we become, the more we are likely to be dependent upon them.

The S3 bus service - I realise I may be one of the few people in the village to rely on it so heavily for work at the JR in Oxford, but I really am put out by the recent service cuts to the village. I spend 3 - 4 hours a day on a 28-mile round commute even though I have changed my hours to try and accommodate the recent changes. I would get a car but there is limited parking as we all know, and I'd would generally like to use public transport to help take one more car off already congested roads. As it stands, I am now looking to move out of the village primarily due to my commute.

The S3 bus service is vital for teenagers to still want to live in Stonesfield because it's the only way to be completely independent without driving

We need to ensure we don't lose the S3 bus service. Due to the recent changes the night bus no longer serves Combe, Stonesfield, Fawler and Charlbury. We also need to get the pub back up and running - I realise this is easier said than done! We certainly do not need any further housing development in the village / outskirts.

Q31 in Survey Monkey did not allow for me to state I would support the NP promoting initiatives to work locally. I add also that my stance re the NP insisting on off street parking (Q31) is based on a belief that the NP should be pushing for better public transport, thereby negating the need for off-street parking.

Parking restrictions along the Ridings

Parking restrictions on narrow roads

Parking provision so people don't park on pavements, in front of school etc.

Long term planning should try to reduce car ownership within the village to allow for more multi-modal transport to take precedent. Naturally this will be much easier once dedicated cycle routes are implemented however this cannot happen fast enough! Please also ensure that the routes that are made are suitably wide enough for comfortable use with a Velomobile.

More cycle paths connecting Blenheim to other villages / Woodstock

A path down the ridings. From riding close to the tap. To increase safety on the school run

Cycle lane/path up the Straight to Woodstock Road.

Policy ST2 – Road safety

Further Evidence for the Examiner

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

POLICY

General principles: all developments should be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities

POLICY T3: Public transport, walking and cycling

All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g.

measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school. Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils, bus and rail operators and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to:

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan (Connecting Oxfordshire) and IDP; and
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP

POLICY BC1: Burford – Charlbury sub-area strategy

- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Increasing traffic volume and vehicle sizes on the National Landscape’s roads can lead to congestion, noise and air pollution, damage to roadside verges (with consequent drainage and soil erosion issues), reduced safety for non-motorised road users and traffic ‘ratrunning’ along minor roads and through villages. Measures to address these issues should be integral considerations in new developments and can include lowering speed limits, the provision of suitably designed speed reduction schemes, the provision of off-road routes for non-motorised users and the provision of appropriate signage.

Appendix 3 of the Position Statement specifically addresses landscape-led principles for major development.

Survey results

Individual Survey Questions

Q21

Q21 Where do you most often travel to for the following reasons, excluding for work? Indicate if online. Tick the most frequent, one per line								
Weekly shopping			Top-up shopping			Other shopping		
Witney	277	49%	Stonesfield	220	39%	Witney	169	30%
On line	133	23%	Woodstock	101	18%	Oxford	97	17%
Chipping Norton	62	11%	Long Hanborough	66	12%	On line	95	17%

Kidlington	41	7%	Charlbury	55	10%	Stonesfield	57	10%
Woodstock	13	2%	Witney	50	9%	Woodstock	39	7%
Long Hanborough	11	2%	Kidlington	24	4%	Long Hanborough	23	4%
Oxford	8	1%	On line	14	3%	Charlbury	18	3%
Other	8	1%	Other	10	2%	Other	18	3%
Bicester	5	1%	Chipping Norton	8	1%	Chipping Norton	14	3%
Stonesfield	4	1%	Oxford	7	1%	Kidlington	13	2%
Charlbury	4	1%	Bicester	3	1%	Banbury	12	2%
Banbury	1	0%	Banbury	1	0%	Bicester	5	1%
Total	567			559		Total	560	30%

The table indicates a number of things. Residents generally use their cars (a small number may be bus) for their weekly shop (76%), but increasingly have it delivered (23%), which both mean car and van traffic on the village roads. Top-up shopping is commonly done by visiting the village shop (39%) or travelling outside the village (58%). Other Shopping sees 17% online, 10% in the Village and 73% elsewhere. These statistics indicate the reliance on the village shop, accessed by foot, cycle or car, the large volume of journeys out of the village (mainly by car) and an increasing volume of vans delivering online purchases. All have implications for road safety.

Q22

Q22 What means of transport do you most often use to travel to the locations you specified in Q21, excluding for work? Tick the most frequently used, one per line.		
	Private car	
Stonesfield	30.67%	165
Charbury	88.94%	426
Long Hanborough	96.31%	391
Witney	95.21%	537
Chipping Norton	94.36%	385
Oxford	58.05%	310
Woodstock	83.12%	448
Kidlington	94.66%	372
Banbury	97.01%	324
Bicester	96.51%	304

Percentages are of the total responses received.

This highlights the reliance on the car for journeys out of the village, but also that 31% used their cars within the village.

Q22 ctd.	Bus	
Stonesfield	1.30%	7
Charbury	4.80%	23
Long Hanborough	0.74%	3
Witney	3.90%	22
Chipping Norton	4.17%	17
Oxford	37.64%	201
Woodstock	14.66%	79
Kidlington	3.56%	14
Banbury	1.20%	4
Bicester	1.59%	5

Q22 ctd.	Walk	
Stonesfield	65.99%	355

This highlights the pedestrian traffic within the village.

Q22 ctd.	Cycle	
Stonesfield	1.67%	9
Charlbury	3.76%	18
Long Hanborough	1.23%	5
Witney	0.35%	2
Chipping Norton	0.49%	2
Woodstock	0.93%	5
Kidlington	0.76%	3

Cycle use is low.

Q24 and 25 cover the use of footpaths and further highlight the high volume of regular (largely) pedestrian traffic and need for road safety.

Q24 How frequently do you use these footpaths?	More than once a week	Weekly	Monthly	Less often	Never
Either of the Bagg's Bottom paths, from the Combe dip to the river	105	109	118	177	79
Brook Lane to the bridge	153	130	127	126	51
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	146	119	100	154	68
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	142	114	109	149	69
Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	165	126	110	126	58
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	107	130	118	166	62
Oxon Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	102	85	133	172	96

Q25 How frequently do you use these footpaths?	More than once a week	Weekly	Monthly	Less often	Never
The ridge path	81	106	131	159	106
Path from Newbarn Farm to the Ridings near Callow Farm	77	109	137	169	91
Path from the B4437 down to, and along Kingswood Bottom	29	30	118	222	182
Path from the Ridings past Kings Wood to the Woodstock Road	28	45	91	244	174
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	41	59	121	236	125
Farley Lane to the Woodstock Road	46	45	95	242	155

Q26 How important are the following to you? Tick one answer per line	Strongly/slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly/slightly disagree	Total
Reducing / slowing traffic through the village	423	107	54	584
Reducing / slowing traffic through the village	72.4%	18.3%	9.2%	

Over 72% of responders agreed that reducing or slowing traffic through the village is important.

Q32

Q32 Are there forms of sustainable transport (those that reduce congestion and/or cause less pollution) that you would like to use more? Tick all that apply.	Responses	
Bus services	75.70%	380
Train	36.25%	182
Car Share / Club	14.14%	71
Walking	32.87%	165
Cycling	40.04%	201
Other (please specify)	5.38%	27
	Answered	502

The responses indicate that there is a demand to use more sustainable forms of transport. This was supported by many free text comments (see below).

Free text comments

The many free text comments on this subject, included the following:

Q4 What in Stonesfield would you like to see improved?

Pond Hill road is dangerous for walking pupils- ideally needs pavement up the hill and cutting the hedges for better visibility

Speed ramps - cars are driving too fast

Sort the Stonesfield Straight¹ out, cycle/walk path

Proper village car park to stop awkward street parking

Amount of traffic using Stonesfield Riding and often at excessive speed

Cycle path/footpath along Stonesfield Straight

Footpath demarcations on narrow roads

¹ Stonesfield Straight is the local name for the B4437 from Woodstock Road, Stonesfield northwards toward the junction with the A44

Parking restrictions on narrow roads

Safe cycle routes to Woodstock and Charlbury

Road safety awareness - there are still too many people speeding, especially on High Street / Boot Street

Parking provision so people don't park on pavements, in front of school etc.

Pond Hill safety improvement for pedestrians

The narrow bit in Pond Hill, it's dangerous

Bus service, not everyone drives

Stop people parking badly on Churchfields corner

A 'school street' enabled on High Street to reduce cars during school drop off and pick up times to make it safer and to reduce pollution in proximity to school

A significant reduction in pavement parking as it is damaging pavements and making it very difficult for people with buggies or mobility aids to get past and they have to walk in the road instead

Pedestrian safety improvements to Pond Hill

Less cars parked on narrow roads

Considerate parking (people not parking on narrow roads, blocking pavements etc)

Mirrors on blind bends.

General comments

Ensure safety of pedestrians by keeping pavements clear of parked vehicles (especially by the school), overgrown hedges and dogs. Despite new traffic measures, parking on Laughton Hill (from Lower Farm to the Tap) still makes driving into the village difficult.

I forgot to add I wish people would stop parking/blocking pavements, makes it unsafe to walk the Woodstock Road at times

I think the absolute top priority should be the safety of residents, and to that end I strongly believe that there should be a pavement on at least one side of the main road through Stonesfield. In effect, this means Laughton Hill, The Ridings, The Green and Pond Hill through to where the pavement begins near to the shop. This needs to be done asap before someone is seriously injured or killed.

I would only like to further highlight the need for speed awareness in the village - most are sticking to the 20 mph MAX, but on roads like High Street or Boot Street, 10-15 mph is much

safer considering the road width. Some drivers are still travelling at 30mph down these roads where pets and children are nearby.

Mirror should be installed on the corner of church street to pond hill so that bend is less dangerous

More cycle paths connecting Blenheim to other villages / Woodstock

Please consider the need for a lollipop lady or similar to support village school children crossing the road near the tight bend past the shop. So many children daily attempt to cross this road and [it] is incredibly unsafe. I would love to be able to encourage my daughter to walk semi-independently to school but due to this blind junction I don't think I'll ever be able to do this. I've seen so many near misses here. Equally, the narrow road at Pond Hill is lethal when a coach, bus, or more than one car travels through. It's not going to be long before there's a serious incident.

*Some people that have off-street parking do not use it and should be asked to use it
Newbuilds should only be allowed [if] services can cope or [if] builders will pay for upgrades
[To] require adequate off-road parking is essential. Do not let the village spread willy-nilly*

Special parking areas to stop cars parking across gateways especially in High Street and Boot Street.

The pedestrian 'pavement' down Pond Hill is incredibly dangerous. People drive fast and over the line, on a number of occasions I have had to dive into the hedge or wall to avoid being knocked over. Is there a way of using bollards to stop people crossing the painted line to keep pedestrians, dogs and children safe?

Why is the speed limit of Callows Farm lane² national speed limit for such a minor road?

Policy ST3 – Walking and cycling

Further Evidence for the Examiner

POLICY

General principles: all development should be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities

POLICY T3: Public transport, walking and cycling

All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school. Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

² Stonesfield Ridings, north of the village

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils, bus and rail operators and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to:

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan (Connecting Oxfordshire) and IDP; and
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP

Active travel (walking and cycling)

7.76 Alongside improvements to public transport, enabling more active forms of travel including walking and cycling is essential to reducing car use. It also has the added benefit of encouraging more healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health concerns including rising rates of obesity.

7.77 The provision of high quality, well-designed and maintained pedestrian and cycle facilities as well as the provision of information such as clear signage is critical to encouraging more walking and cycling. The planning system has a key role to play in this regard by ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate levels of investment in new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. LTP4 includes an active and healthy travel strategy focusing on cycling and walking as well as door to door integrated multi-modal journeys.

7.78 At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities, although most of these linkages are focused on the main towns of Witney and Carterton including in particular routes installed as part of the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments. Cross-town cycle routes can however suffer from poor signage as well as having some gaps in provision.

7.79 Outside the main towns and rural service centres although there are a number of national cycle network routes running through the District, most pedestrian and cycle opportunities involve the use of 'quiet roads' rather than dedicated pedestrian and cycle links. Increased traffic levels on these quiet roads may prevent vulnerable road users from accessing these routes safely.

7.80 In discussion with Oxfordshire County Council, we have identified a number of improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth in the District. These include the provision of additional footways and cycle paths and improvements to existing routes, with a particular focus on improving accessibility to key locations. Greater use of public transport can be encouraged (through provision of walking and cycling routes to bus stops and cycle parking at bus stops).

7.81 The County Council have also identified the potential provision of a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney, as well as a number of specific improvements in Witney and the need for improved cycle parking at key destinations and employment sites in Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.

7.82 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver attractive, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District including through new development

POLICY BC1: Burford – Charlbury sub-area strategy

- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys

Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050.

Appendix 5 of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050 (LTCP 22-50) stipulates the following:

‘We expect local district councils to set out appropriate levels of cycle parking provision for all residential and non-residential developments, in line with cycling targets and the need to encourage more cycling. To ensure these considerations are made and that suitable cycle parking is provided, we are setting out the following requirements which will need to be met by any new cycle parking, be it new developments or retrofitting schemes. In line with our transport user hierarchy, cycle parking should be considered first and should be:

- Convenient – placed as close to main entry/exit points as possible and generally nearer than non-disabled car parking
- Visible
- Easy to access, so that one can easily ride all the way to the cycle parking
- Secure and safe, in terms of both the user and cycles, including lighting and surveillance
- Protected from weather – long stay parking should always be covered
- Fit for purpose
- Well managed and maintained
- Suitable for all users – including consideration of age, physical ability and type of bicycle.’

The Introduction to the Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Supporting Strategy, entitled ‘Active Travel Strategy’, begins:

‘Walking, wheeling and cycling will be central to delivering the vision for travel that is set out in our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).’

At page 20 the document sets out steps to achieve this:

Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN)

Oxfordshire is a rural county with many villages. These settlements are currently mainly dependent on car travel to get to facilities such as shopping, nearby town centres and access to work or train stations. Unlike many intra-urban journeys, distances can sometimes be at the longer end of what may be comfortably cycled. The increasing availability of e-bikes makes such journeys more practical and appealing to a wider audience.

As set out in the LTCP, our aim is to identify and then improve an Oxfordshire-wide Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). This will primarily be for utility cycle journeys, linking villages to towns, other centres of employment and public transport connections. The SATN will also act as a recreational network, providing urban and rural residents with ways of going for cycle rides to visit nature and other areas of recreation. This will also support the rural economy by encouraging economic tourism.

The SATN improvements will prioritise the following links:

- To rural train stations, particularly from towns not served by a train station, such as Witney and Abingdon
- Between urban areas and employment and nearby villages identified in LCWIP³s
- To larger settlements where there are more potential cyclists
- To and from the National Cycle Network routes.

The SATN will consist of the following types of routes:

- routes alongside rural main roads by off-road cycle tracks

³ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

- routes (mostly on road) along rural minor roads made attractive by low traffic volumes and low traffic speeds
- routes along upgraded public rights of way and other permissive paths.

Implementing the SATN will require significant funding and resources (such as land acquisition). Routes along rural minor roads in most cases will need significant improvement to make them attractive to cyclists. This may include modal filtering or junction changes to remove unsuitable rat-running traffic, lower speed limits, speed enforcement, traffic calming measures, lighting, converting roads into Quiet Lanes and other measures. Schemes will be designed to be sensitive to the rural and village environment.

Later, at page 21 the Active Travel Strategy sets out how cycling provision will be maintained. Good quality surfaces are essential for safe and comfortable walking and cycling. Road maintenance is an important element in ensuring that road or path surfaces on the network are smooth, well drained and attractive. In addition, regular pruning of vegetation overlooking cycle paths and footways is important to create a safe and welcoming environment for active travel.

Road improvements, especially routine resurfacing, also present a low-cost opportunity to make significant improvements to cycle routes, particularly those which are reliant on just line-marking and especially on main roads where traffic management is a substantial element of scheme cost. Longer term road closures, such as bridge closures due to weight restrictions, will be seen as opportunities to exempt active travel and thereby encourage active travel.

We will improve our maintenance regime to ensure that the footways and cycle route surfaces are smooth, well-drained and safe, especially taking into account the extra vulnerability of cyclists to potholes and rough and deformed surfaces, and the impact of uneven footways on pedestrians and wheelers with reduced or impaired mobility. This will include following up re-instatement works, which often deteriorate into surface un-evenness and hazards. A maintenance programme of cutting back vegetation overlooking cycle paths will also be established, working with local communities to identify problem areas.

Where there are road closures or restrictions, every opportunity will be taken to see whether active travel can be exempted and thereby encouraged.

At page 27 the Active Travel Strategy deals with children cycling to school and elsewhere.

A child cyclist is more likely to become an adult cyclist. Providing opportunities for children to learn to cycle and then to be able to cycle comfortably with parents and afterwards to gain independence by cycling alone to visit friends, go to school or visit places, is a fundamental element of a civilised transport system.

The number of children cycling is a good indicator of the cycle-friendliness of an urban area and evidence of a cycling culture. Higher levels of cycling are most associated with higher levels of everyone cycling, where there is a cycling culture. For instance, Cambridge has the highest levels of children cycling of any local authority.

Over the last 50 years, children's right to travel independently in UK has been eroded, mostly through increased motorisation and parental restrictions. The UK has some of the lowest levels of children cycling throughout Europe. For instance, 50% of children's trips to education in Netherlands are by cycle, compared to around 2% in the UK. Another study (Bly, 2005) found that children on average cycled 18 minutes a day in Netherlands compared to 2 minutes a day in the UK. Forty-one per cent of children in Oxfordshire currently do not meet physical activity guidelines.

However, around 90% of children own a cycle and many children use their cycles at least weekly. This represents a significant potential to increase cycling among children. Cherwell School in Oxford represents best practice in Oxford, with 58% of children regularly cycling to school.

In line with our LTCP policies, we will encourage active travel to schools by

- encouraging schools to provide adequate cycle parking
- reviewing and improving cycle routes to school
- implementing LTNs and School Streets around schools wherever feasible
- providing Bikeability opportunities for all children
- ensuring there are safe places for young children to learn to cycle
- ensuring new school locations are designed to school street standards
- providing family cycle training so that parents feel confident cycling with their children
- increasing the number of bike libraries in schools so that low-income families are able to access equipment.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Increasing traffic volume and vehicle sizes on the National Landscape’s roads can lead to congestion, noise and air pollution, damage to roadside verges (with consequent drainage and soil erosion issues), reduced safety for non-motorised road users and traffic ‘ratrunning’ along minor roads and through villages. Measures to address these issues should be integral considerations in new developments and can include lowering speed limits, the provision of suitably designed speed reduction schemes, the provision of off-road routes for non-motorised users and the provision of appropriate signage.

Survey results

Individual Survey Questions

Q19 If you travel to work or education, what means of transport do you frequently use? Tick as many as apply.

	Responses
Private car	285
Van	15
Taxi	7
Public bus	56
Train	40
Motorbike / Moped	3
Cycle	27
Walk	36
Answered	328
Skipped	284

Q21

Q21 Where do you most often travel to for the following reasons, excluding for work? Indicate if online. Tick the most frequent, one per line.								
	Weekly Shopping			Top up shopping			Other Shopping	
Witney	277	49%	Stonesfield	220	39%	Witney	169	30%
On line	133	23%	Woodstock	101	18%	Oxford	97	17%
Chipping Norton	62	11%	Long Hanborough	66	12%	On line	95	17%
Kidlington	41	7%	Charlbury	55	10%	Stonesfield	57	10%
Woodstock	13	2%	Witney	50	9%	Woodstock	39	7%
Long Hanborough	11	2%	Kidlington	24	4%	Long Hanborough	23	4%
Oxford	8	1%	On line	14	3%	Charlbury	18	3%
Other	8	1%	Other	10	2%	Other	18	3%
Bicester	5	1%	Chipping Norton	8	1%	Chipping Norton	14	3%
Stonesfield	4	1%	Oxford	7	1%	Kidlington	13	2%
Charlbury	4	1%	Bicester	3	1%	Banbury	12	2%
Banbury	1	0%	Banbury	1	0%	Bicester	5	1%
Total	567			559		Total	560	30%

The table indicates a number of things. Residents generally use their cars (a small number may be bus) for their weekly shop (76%), but increasingly have it delivered (23%), which both mean car and van traffic on the village roads. Top-up shopping is commonly done by visiting the village shop (39%) or travelling outside the village (58%). Other Shopping sees 17% online, 10% in the village and 73% elsewhere. These statistics indicate the reliance on the village shop, accessed by foot, cycle or car, the large volume of journeys out of the village (mainly by car) and an increasing volume of vans delivering online purchases. All have implications for road safety.

Q22 What means of transport do you most often use to travel to the locations you specified in Q21, excluding for work? Tick the most frequently used, one per line. In all sections of the responses, percentages are of the total responses received.

Q22	Private car	
Stonesfield	30.67%	165
Charlbury	88.94%	426
Long Hanborough	96.31%	391
Witney	95.21%	537
Chipping Norton	94.36%	385
Oxford	58.05%	310
Woodstock	83.12%	448
Kidlington	94.66%	372

Banbury	97.01%	324
Bicester	96.51%	304

This highlights the reliance on the car for journeys out of the village, but also that 31% used their cars within the village.

Q22 ctd	Bus	
Stonesfield	1.30%	7
Charlbury	4.80%	23
Long Hanborough	0.74%	3
Witney	3.90%	22
Chipping Norton	4.17%	17
Oxford	37.64%	201
Woodstock	14.66%	79
Kidlington	3.56%	14
Banbury	1.20%	4
Bicester	1.59%	5

Q22 ctd	Walk	
Stonesfield	65.99%	355

This highlights the pedestrian traffic within the village.

Q22 ctd	Cycle	
Stonesfield	1.67%	9
Charlbury	3.76%	18
Long Hanborough	1.23%	5
Witney	0.35%	2
Chipping Norton	0.49%	2
Woodstock	0.93%	5
Kidlington	0.76%	3

Cycle use is low.

Q24 and 25 cover the use of footpaths and further highlight the high volume of regular (largely pedestrian) traffic and the need for road safety on adjacent roads.

Q24 How frequently do you use these footpaths?	More than once a week	Weekly	Monthly	Less often	Never
Either of Bagg's Bottom paths, from the Combe dip to the river	105	109	118	177	79
Brook Lane to the bridge	153	130	127	126	51
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	146	119	100	154	68
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	142	114	109	149	69

Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	165	126	110	126	58
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	107	130	118	166	62
Oxfordshire Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	102	85	133	172	96

Q25 How frequently do you use these footpaths?	More than once a week	Weekly	Monthly	Less often	Never
The ridge path	81	106	131	159	106
Path from Newbarn Farm to the Ridings near Callow Farm	77	109	137	169	91
Path from the B4437 down to, and along Kingswood Bottom	29	30	118	222	182
Path from the Ridings past Kings Wood to the Woodstock Road	28	45	91	244	174
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	41	59	121	236	125
Farley Lane to the Woodstock Road	46	45	95	242	155

Q26

Q26 How important are the following to you? Tick one answer per line.	Strongly/ slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly/ slightly disagree	Total
Reducing / slowing traffic through the village	423	107	54	584
Reducing / slowing traffic through the village	72.4%	18.3%	9.2%	

Over 72% of responders agreed that reducing or slowing traffic through the village is important.

Q32

Q32 Are there forms of sustainable transport (those that reduce congestion and/or cause less pollution) that you would like to use more? Tick all that apply.	Responses	
Bus services	75.70%	380
Train	36.25%	182
Car Share / Club	14.14%	71
Walking	32.87%	165
Cycling	40.04%	201
Other (please specify)	5.38%	27
	Answered	502

The responses indicate that there is a demand to use more sustainable forms of transport.

Q33

Q33 If there were dedicated enhanced cycle paths (separate from the road) to the following destinations, how often would you use them? Tick one answer per line.	Charlbury (including the station)	Woodstock via Combe & Blenheim	Long Hanborough station
	5.1%	9.7%	5.4%
More than once a week	28	55	30
	9.2%	16.8%	5.6%
Weekly	51	95	31
	18.9%	20.6%	12.5%
Monthly	105	117	69
	24.5%	18.5%	27.1%
Less often	136	105	150
	42.3%	34.4%	49.5%
Never	235	195	274
Total	555	567	554

The responses indicate that there is a demand to use more sustainable forms of transport. (See Aspiration A6 Encouraging sustainable forms of transport.) This was supported by many free text comments.

Free text comments

Responses to Q4 What could be improved in the village?

Pond Hill road is dangerous for walking pupils - ideally needs pavement up the hill and cutting the hedges for better visibility

Speed ramps - cars are driving too fast

Sort the Stonesfield Straight out, cycle/walk path

Proper village car park to stop awkward street parking

Amount of traffic using Stonesfield Riding and often at excessive speed

Cycle path/footpath along Stonesfield Straight

Footpath demarcations on narrow roads

Parking restrictions on narrow roads

Safe Cycle routes to Woodstock and Charlbury

Road safety awareness - there are still too many people speeding, especially on High Street/Boot Street

Parking provision so people don't park on pavements, in front of school etc.

Pond hill safety improvement for pedestrians

The narrow bit in pond hill, it's dangerous

Stop people parking badly on church fields corner

A significant reduction in pavement parking as it is damaging pavements and making it very difficult for people with buggies or mobility aids to get past and have to walk in the road instead

Pedestrian safety improvements to Pond Hill

Less cars parked on narrow roads

Considerate parking (people not parking on narrow roads, blocking pavements etc)

General comments

Ensure safety of pedestrians by keeping pavements clear of parked vehicles (especially by the school), overgrown hedges and dogs. Despite new traffic measures, parking on Laughton Hill (from Lower farm to the Tap) still makes driving into the village difficult.

I forgot to add I wish people would stop parking/blocking pavements, makes it unsafe to walk the Woodstock Road at times

I think the absolute top priority should be the safety of residents, and to that end I strongly believe that there should be a pavement on at least one side of the main road through Stonesfield. In effect, this means Laughton Hill, The Ridings, The Green and Pond Hill through to where the pavement begins near to the shop. This needs to be done asap before someone is seriously injured or killed.

Mirror should be installed on the corner of church street to pond hill so that bend is less dangerous

More cycle paths connecting Blenheim to other villages / Woodstock

Please consider the need for a lollipop lady or similar to support village school children crossing the road near the tight bend past the shop. So many children daily attempt to cross this road and is incredibly unsafe. I would love to be able to encourage my daughter to walk semi-independently to school but due to this blind junction I don't think I'll ever be able to do this. I've seen so many near misses here. Equally, the narrow road at Pond Hill is lethal when a coach, bus, or more than one car travels through. It's not going to be long before there's a serious incident.

The pedestrian 'pavement' down Pond Hill is incredibly dangerous. People drive fast and over the line, on a number of occasions I have had to dive into the hedge or wall to avoid being knocked over. Is there a way of using bollards to stop people crossing the painted line to keep pedestrians, dogs and children safe?

Policy ST4 – Parking (General)

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

7.84 In this regard we will determine the level of provision in accordance with the residential, non-residential and cycle parking standards adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority. The residential parking standards are based on the provision of an ‘optimum’ number of spaces rather than a ‘maximum’ or minimum’ and are based on the provision of a mix of allocated and unallocated spaces.

7.85 We can also influence parking through our approach towards the provision of off-street parking. National planning policy suggests that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. In addition to the quality and cost of parking provision, we can influence the amount of parking available.

7.86 With regard to off-street public car parking, there are 16 car parks in West Oxfordshire and the Council’s long-standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of local centres. Car parking is managed through time restrictions, the effectiveness of which is kept under review. Sufficient and convenient parking provision can make a significant contribution to the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas.

7.89 We will continue to monitor car parking requirements and parking management whilst promoting alternative means of travel. We will also seek improvements and capacity increases to public parking as appropriate including through new development.

POLICY T4*: Parking provision. The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality. Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council’s adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership. Proposals for new off-street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential. Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.

*Note subsequent policy changes as a result of OCC Local Transport & Connectivity Plan July 2022.

OCC Vehicular and Cycle Parking Standards

1. Introduction 1.1 The availability of parking, at both source and destination, has a significant influence on the type of transport people choose for their journeys. Striking the right balance by providing an appropriate level and type of parking, whilst also protecting highway safety for all users, and promoting active and sustainable transport modes is essential. This revised document

1.2 New development sites will need to work collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to help achieve these targets. One key component to support this approach is to revise the existing parking standards for new developments, ensuring they will accord with the council’s objective to reduce 25% of car trips by 2030, and a further 33% by 2040. In essence, the approach being taken for

development proposals is that if on-site parking is restricted at both the origin of a journey and its destination location, this will influence people's travel behaviour and encourage alternative modes of travel to be used rather than that of the private car.

1.3 Due to the diverse nature of development that is promoted in Oxfordshire a wide range of social and economic circumstances means OCC must have a flexible approach to identifying appropriate levels of parking provision. Such an approach is expected to provide a level of accessibility by private car that is consistent with the overall balance of the transport system at local levels as well the County Council's nine priorities as set out in OCC's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025.

1.4 OCC, in its role as the local highway authority, is a statutory consultee in respect of planning considerations that affect the public highway and responds to planning application proposals when consulted by all local planning authorities. OCC provides advice to local planning authorities on the transport implications, such as parking levels of development proposals to assist in their decision-making process. OCC is also consulted during the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and may provide advice on the soundness of policies that relate to parking in new developments.

1.5 Concerns relating to deficiencies in car parking lead to a desire amongst local communities for more car parking spaces. On these occasions OCC may express concerns about accommodating for car parking demand in areas that might already have congestion and air quality issues.

1.6 Oxfordshire, particularly Oxford City and the towns within the county continue to benefit from the popularity of cycling both for commuting and leisure purposes. This means that the inclusion of high-quality cycle parking is essential in all new developments to complement the infrastructure that is being delivered by development sites; and schemes that are identified in the emerging LTCP Area Strategies and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. In addition, all electric vehicles are to be catered for with electrical charging points being integral to all new development.

1.7 This parking standards document has been prepared to outline OCC's revised approach to parking at new developments. It is to be used to help determine the level of parking at all new developments and provide the basis for the County Council's advice to the local planning authorities on development proposals and the soundness of policies related to parking for new developments.

1.8 This document replaces OCC's previous parking guidance 'Transport for New Developments Parking Standards for New Residential Developments' dated December 2011; the 2015 Second Edition of the County Council's Residential Road Design Guide and paragraph 2.4.1 of the Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards document dated 2017

2.1 The car and cycle parking standards that OCC has been using when assessing development proposals were prepared some time ago and had fallen behind national and local policies. This document is intended to update these standards while incorporating the guidance provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated July 2021. Paragraph 107, confirms that when setting local parking standards for both residential and non-residential development, policies should consider:

- a. the accessibility of the development.
- b. the type, mix and use of development.
- c. the availability of and opportunities for public transport.
- d. local car ownership levels; and
- e. the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

2.2 The NPPF (paragraph 108) also confirms that ‘Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe, and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.’

2.3 The NPPF also describes the plan-making system which includes local and neighbourhood plans that guide local communities to develop and shape their own surroundings. These plans often contain policies on car and cycle parking.

7.3 It is recognised that for development proposals that are located in rural areas of Oxfordshire, such as villages and hamlets, access to frequent public transport services and high standards of direct pedestrian and cycle connections is not always available (unless it is provided by a new development). This tends to mean that the range of facilities and services expected to accommodate a reduced level of car parking provision is not always possible without causing indiscriminate carriageway parking and highway safety issues. On this basis, the parking standards in Table 4(b) are appropriate to use. When such standards are used a justification will be required within a transport submission.

Table 4(b): Car Parking Standards for the rest of Oxfordshire (Villages & Hamlets) Rural Oxfordshire Parking Provision

- 1-bedroom dwelling: Up to 1 space per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 2-bedroom dwelling: Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 3 – 4-bedroom dwelling: Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
- 5+ bedroom dwelling: Up to 3 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site.

7.4 Flats and apartments will be treated as a standard dwelling for sites in located towns and the rest of Oxfordshire. However, when using land efficiently to provide residential dwellings, the parking arrangement for flats / apartments tend to be designed within a parking court / communal style arrangement. In such cases it is strongly recommended that they are controlled by a third-party organisation i.e. a management company on behalf of those who will use the spaces. This approach allows flexibility in specific spaces being allocated to a property, assigning them to a particular group or promoting such spaces as unallocated in appropriate locations

7.7 Developers are expected to take an approach that is consistent with national research which suggests, ‘that no special provision should be made for visitors where at least half of the parking provision associated with the development is unallocated. In other circumstances it may be appropriate to allow for additional demand for visitor parking of 0.2 spaces per dwelling’ⁱ.

7.8 For some residential developments this approach may not necessary be feasible. If this is the case, a maximum visitor parking level of 1 car parking space per every 5 residential units will be considered. Any such proposal will require a justification to be provided as part of a transport submission.

7.9 If a development proposal is larger than 10 or more dwellings, visitor parking should be arranged in clusters and / or evenly spread throughout the site and relate to the development types in that area. In some circumstances for large / strategic housing sites that may include mobility / transport hubs being considered as part of a site wide masterplan. All such spaces are to be unallocated.

7.10 As part of a planning submission, an applicant will be required to provide a schedule of parking provision, detailing the number of allocated and, unallocated parking spaces, including those in garages, as well as details on carpools or other shared vehicles, and electrical charging facilities (both active and passive). Such planning submissions will be expected to explain how the proposed parking provision for the site meets the standards set out in this document and the needs of the development, including how these needs are expected to change in the future.

Survey results – Individual Survey Question

Q30 Residents overwhelmingly supported a minimum specification for off-street parking for new developments of conversions based on the size of the property and also for all new developments.

Q30 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following?	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree	Total no.
A specification for a minimum provision of off-street parking for all new developments or conversions based on the size of property.	495	59	14	568
	87.1%	10.4%	2.5%	
A requirement that all new developments have off street parking.	383	51	15	449
	85.3%	11.4%	3.4%	

Q16 shows where respondents work. Of the 60% who work outside of the village, only Oxford, Woodstock and Charlbury are easily accessed by public transport. Other destinations will invariably require car use.

Q16 If you answered Q14 or Q15 that you were in full-time or part-time employment, self-employed or involved in voluntary work, please answer.... Where do you work? You can tick more than one box if you work in more than one place.	No.	% of respondents
In Stonesfield, from home	200	30.21%
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	101	15.26%
Oxford	71	10.73%
In Stonesfield, not from home	68	10.27%
Out of Oxfordshire	59	8.91%
Witney	40	6.04%
Woodstock	37	5.59%
Kidlington	24	3.63%
Chipping Norton	18	2.72%
Long Hanborough	15	2.27%
Bicester	15	2.27%
Charlbury	14	2.11%

Q17 analyses where those who work elsewhere in or outside Oxfordshire travel.

Q17 If you answered 'Elsewhere in Oxfordshire' or 'Out of Oxfordshire' to the previous question, please specify where you work. The most common responses are shown below

London	21
Anywhere	16
Oxford	12
Eynsham	9
Abingdon	8
Yarnton	7
Banbury	5
Didcot	5
Brize Norton	4

Q18 provides analysis on students attending further or higher education. None of these destinations are easily accessible by public transport.

Q18

Q18 Where do you attend your further or higher education? Please specify	Responses	
Online from home in Stonesfield (e.g. Open University)	21.1%	8
In West Oxfordshire	21.1%	8
Elsewhere in Oxfordshire	26.3%	10
Outside of Oxfordshire	57.9%	22

Q19 shows the high volume of car use. As the bus only travels between Charlbury, Woodstock and Oxford, high level of car use is hardly surprising.

Q19

Q19 If you travel to work or education, what means of transport do you frequently use? Tick as many as apply	Responses	
Private car	86.9%	285
Van	4.6%	15
Taxi	2.1%	7
Public bus	17.1%	56
Train	12.2%	40
Motorbike / Moped	0.9%	3
Cycle	8.2%	27
Walk	11.0%	36

Q21 shows Witney as the main place for weekly shopping. Invariably this will require car use as the Villager bus service to Witney is only three times a week with a short turn around to return. Witney is also important for other shopping needs. Q22 demonstrates the use of the car to undertake most activities.

Q21 Where do you most often travel to for the following reasons, excluding for work? Indicate if online. Tick the most frequent, one per line.

Q21 Weekly shopping		
Witney	277	49%
On line	133	23%
Chipping Norton	62	11%
Kidlington	41	7%
Woodstock	13	2%
Long Hanborough	11	2%

Top up shopping		
Stonesfield	220	39%
Woodstock	101	18%
Long Hanborough	66	12%
Charlbury	55	10%
Witney	50	9%
Kidlington	24	4%
On line	14	3%

Other shopping		
Witney	169	30%
Oxford	97	17%
On line	95	17%
Stonesfield	57	10%
Woodstock	39	7%

Doctor / GP / health centre	
Woodstock	54%
Charlbury	26%
Long Hanborough	13%

Hospital	
Oxford	80%
Witney	10%
Banbury	5%

Chemist / Pharmacist	
Woodstock	52%
Charlbury	21%
Long Hanborough	11%
Witney	6%
On line	3%

Dentist	
Long Hanborough	20%
Witney	16%
Charlbury	13%
Woodstock	12%
Oxford	11%
Other	11%
Chipping Norton	8%
Kidlington	7%

Education		
Woodstock	46	19.01%
Oxford	35	14.46%
Stonesfield	30	12.40%
Witney	11	4.55%

Q22 What means of transport do you most often use to travel to the locations you specified in Q21, excluding for work? Tick the most frequently used, one per line.

Q22	Private car	Public bus	Cycle	Walk	Total
Stonesfield	165	7	9	355	538
Charlbury	426	23	18	8	479
Long Hanborough	391	3	5	2	406
Witney	537	22	2	0	564
Chipping Norton	385	17	2	0	408
Oxford	310	201	0	0	534
Woodstock	448	79	5	2	539
Kidlington	372	14	3	0	393
Banbury	324	4	0	0	334
Bicester	304	5	0	1	315

Q23. Note: Villager V26 bus only runs on Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Q23 How often do you use the two local bus services? Tick one answer only per line.	S3 Stagecoach	Villager V26
More than once a week	5.42%	0.57%
	32	3
Weekly	8.14%	1.33%
	48	7
Monthly	21.36%	2.66%
	126	14
Less often	40.85%	7.02%
	241	37
Never	24.24%	88.43%
	143	466
Total	590	527

Q32 shows there is pent-up demand to use more sustainable forms of transport. Over 75% of responders want to use buses more. 40% would like to cycle more.

Q32 Are there forms of sustainable transport (those that reduce congestion and/or cause less pollution) that you would like to use more? Tick all that apply.	Responses	
Bus services	75.70%	380
Train	36.25%	182
Car Share / Club	14.14%	71
Walking	32.87%	165
Cycling	40.04%	201
Other (please specify)	5.38%	27
	Total answers	502

Q33 shows the significant demand for better cycle paths.

Q33 If there were dedicated enhanced cycle paths (separate from the road) to the following destinations, how often would you use them? Tick one answer per line.	Charlbury (including the station)	Woodstock via Combe & Blenheim	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	5.1%	9.7%	5.4%
	28	55	30
Weekly	9.2%	16.8%	5.6%
	51	95	31
Monthly	18.9%	20.6%	12.5%
	105	117	69
Less often	24.5%	18.5%	27.1%
	136	105	150
Never	42.3%	34.4%	49.5%

	235	195	274
Total	555	567	554

Q34 shows a reasonable level of demand for buses to connect to railway stations.

Q34 If there were a bus service to either of the following stations, how often would you use it? Tick one answer per line.	Charlbury station	Oxford Parkway station	Long Hanborough station
More than once a week	4.6%	6.2%	4.9%
	25	35	27
Weekly	4.4%	6.6%	7.1%
	24	37	39
Monthly	15.2%	24.5%	14.0%
	83	138	77
Less often	45.3%	43.8%	40.7%
	248	247	224
Never	30.5%	19.0%	33.4%
	167	107	184
Total	547	564	551

Q11 in the household survey shows the importance of the car to those living in the village, and is very significant. It shows the scope for more sustainable transport to replace petrol and diesel cars.

Q11 Household

Q11 How many motor vehicles (i.e. licensed road vehicles) are registered to your Stonesfield address? Specify numbers for each type.	Total number	Average number per household
Car (petrol or diesel)	720	1.61
Car (hybrid or electric)	65	0.15
Van	43	0.10
Motorcycle / moped	43	0.10
Households	447	

Q13 shows how primary age children get to school, with 60% walking, but for secondary school children, school bus or car is the most common means of getting to school.

Q13 Household

Q13 How do your primary age children usually get to pre-school and / or primary school? Tick all boxes that apply.	Responses	
Walk	59.3%	35
Cycle / scooter	20.3%	12
Car /taxi	27.1%	16
School bus	17.0%	10
Public bus	3.4%	2
	Answered	59

Q14 Household

Q14 How do your secondary age children usually get to secondary school? Tick all boxes that apply.	Responses	
Walk	4.4%	3
Cycle / scooter	2.9%	2
Car /taxi	31.9%	22
School bus	65.2%	45
Public bus	14.5%	10
	Answered	69

Free text comments

The subject of parking was frequently raised in free text comments. Forty-four residents identified parking as one of their 3 top improvements that could be made in the village. Below are some of the individual comments:

My partner relies on the bus service to get to work at the JR. The commuting time, cost, and lack of service provision are making us consider moving out of the village, which is a shame. We don't want to have to buy a second car just because there aren't enough busses, plus we have nowhere to park the one car we do have as a household.

Q31 in Survey Monkey did not allow for me to state I would support the NP promoting initiatives to work locally. I add also that my stance re the NP insisting on off-street parking (Q31) is based on a belief that the NP should be pushing for better public transport, thereby negating the need for off-street parking.

Parking restrictions along the Ridings

Parking restrictions on narrow roads

Parking provision so people don't park on pavements, in front of school etc.

A path down the Ridings. From Riding Close to the Tap. To increase safety on the school run

Ensure safety of pedestrians by keeping pavements clear of parked vehicles (especially by the school), overgrown hedges and dogs. Despite new traffic measures, parking on Laughton Hill (from Lower farm to the Tap) still makes driving into the village difficult...

I forgot to add I wish people would stop parking/blocking pavements, makes it unsafe to walk the Woodstock Road at times

No more large house building projects. Stop on road car parking

Reduce parking at junctions which cause a safety hazard.

Some people that have off-street parking do not use it and should be asked to use it Newbuild[s] should only be allowed [if] services can cope or [if] builders will pay for

upgrades. Requiring adequate off-road parking is essential. Do not let the village spread willy-nilly

Special parking areas to stop cars parking across gateways especially in High Street and Boot Street.

Policies for Section 9 Countryside and natural environment:

Policy SEL1 – Protecting the Cotswolds AONB

Further Evidence for the Examiner

Individual Survey Questions

See following tables for results, which highlights the strong reason for living in Stonesfield being the countryside and rural community. This view is strengthened the longer residents live in the village. The survey also showed the overwhelming support for the importance of protecting green spaces, footpaths, wildlife and the natural environment. Finally, the survey showed residents strongly in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan supporting tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Q8

Q8 If you moved to Stonesfield under 5 years, why did you move here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	Responses
Countryside	106
Rural community	70
Other (please specify)	44
House prices	40
Proximity to employment	38
Family connections	35
Village schooling	17
Catchment area for schooling	15
Facilities	15
No particular reason	7
	387

Q9

Q9 If you have lived in Stonesfield over 5 years, why do you stay here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	Responses
Countryside	405
Rural community	302
Grew up here / family connections	163
Other (please specify)	106
Facilities	91
Village schooling	61
Employment	51
House prices	42
No particular reason	31
Catchment area for schooling	27
	1279

Q24

Q24 Frequency of footpath use	At least weekly	Monthly	Never or less than monthly
Either Baggs Bottom path, from the Combe dip to the river	214	118	293
Brook Lane to the bridge	283	127	334
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	265	100	333
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	256	109	325
Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	291	110	349
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	237	118	299
Oxon Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	187	133	283

Q25

Q25 Frequency of footpath use	At least weekly	Monthly	Never or less than monthly
The ridge path	187	131	265
Path from Newbarn Farm to the Ridings near Callow Farm	186	137	260
Path from the B4437 down to, and along Kingswood Bottom	59	118	404
Path from the Ridings past Kings Wood to the Woodstock Road	73	91	418
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	100	121	361
Farley Lane to the Woodstock Road	91	95	397

Q26

Q26 How important are the following:	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	Less Important/Not Important
Protecting green spaces	573	11	0
Protecting local rural footpaths and views	575	10	0
Protecting the Parish's traditional buildings and other heritage assets	540	35	9
Protecting trees, woodland, hedges, and countryside	578	7	0
Protecting wildlife and biodiversity	573	10	0

Q27

Q27 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following:	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree
Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.	427	137	34

Free text comments

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield.

- Around 310 respondents identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being either the countryside, walks, quietness, rural setting, dark skies
- Over 220 respondents gave the same reasons as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield
- Over 155 gave these reasons as the third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.

There were a few free text comments at the end of the Survey that were relevant:

Management of sewage and cleaning up of Evenlode

Better planning to help enhance the natural areas we have. Planned seating and greener areas in the village.

Q31 I object to the three questions by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

There is potential for renewable energy generation without necessarily compromising the character of the village and surrounds. The need to think a bit differently about renewable energy has indeed been the subject of debate within the Cotswold National Landscape strategy process, where it is accepted that the Cotswolds has continually changed over many centuries and must continue to do so, with major challenges such as climate change demanding a response. Although I strongly support the protection of the natural environment I also believe the future will not look like the past. The village should consider being part of the trend to the 'democratisation of energy production'.

The Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly preclude major development in Stonesfield. Such development is already restricted by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan, by virtue of location within the Cotswolds AONB, other than in exceptional circumstances, and there are no conceivable exceptional circumstances which could apply in Stonesfield. Therefore such a restriction would not be inconsistent with the Local Development Plan or the NPPF.

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

Policy SEL2 – Protecting important views

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The whole of the parish of Stonesfield is located within the Cotswolds AONB, which is a prime consideration in any development. The above policy is consistent with Local Plan 2031 policy EH1 which places great weight on conservation of the AONB, and EH2 which seeks to conserve and enhance the character and features of the landscape, including its tranquillity and dark skies. It is also consistent with the Cotswolds Management Plan and with the National Planning Policy Framework policy on protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield, as the NP Survey 2023 revealed.

- Around 310 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being either the countryside, walks, quietness, rural setting, dark skies.
- Over 220 responders gave the same reasons as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.
- Over 155 gave these reasons as the third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.

Within an AONB, the NPPF further requires that the scale and extent of development should be limited (Paragraph 172). In the Burford-Charlbury Sub Area, the Local Plan 2031 states that any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty (para 9.6.47 and policy BC1).

Policy NE1 sets out to add local value to the policy approach already established nationally (in the NPPF) and locally (in Policy EH1 of the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan) and the Cotswolds Landscape Board Management Plan.

Stonesfield is identified in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998) as a key settlement in Character Area 6, the Lower Evenlode Valley.

Key sensitivities include a number of perceptual qualities as identified in the Stonesfield Landscape Assessment (2024) commissioned by the Parish Council. At page 17 the Assessment says “One of the most striking qualities of Stonesfield’s landscape are the perceptual contrasts within such a small parish area. These include the contrast between the intimate wooded dry valley at Stocky Bottom, the sloping Stonesfield Common with views across the Evenlode’s floodplain, the views across the Ruddywell from the ridgeline on the west of the parish, and the views across the open expansive landscape of the arable plateau north of the village.”

At page 18 the Assessment says of the landscape to the north and east sides of the village: “The agrarian character of the landscape remains dominant, therefore the landscape is perceived as part of the village’s rural setting.”

It continues on page 18 as to “Views” and “landscape” generally: –

“The experiential nature of the views will be different depending on the nature of the receptor – for example walkers on a footpath will have a longer exposure to viewpoints and likely a more focused interest in the landscape than occupants of cars who will be moving through the landscape at speed and will experience views more fleetingly. However, it is clear from the locations identified that the landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character.”

The Assessment (at page 30) makes use of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, adopted in June 2016, which identified 19 landscape character types and notes that the Parish of Stonesfield is contained within LCT 11, Dip Slope Lowland, and LCT 16, Broad Floodplain, the characteristics of which are detailed at pages 26 and 27. Five Local Landscape Character Areas are identified within Stonesfield Parish (page 31).

The Assessment analyses, section by section, the qualities of the five local landscape areas and concludes each section with a table of “valued qualities” and the “threats and issues” related to each. It also, section by section, sets out guidance as to steps which should be taken to protect these valued qualities. The tables and guidance are set out below for ease of reference and the full analysis can be found in the Assessment from page 33 onwards:

Local Landscape Character Area A – Ruddywell Dry Valley Farmland

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Remaining traditional pastoral fields east of Lower Farm.	This LLCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character; the village edge setting; attractive views across the valley towards the settlement, all views north across the remaining pastoral fields east of Lower Farm. Sensitivity to development that would introduce tall vertical elements such as pylons or masts. Further expansion along Stonesfield Riding will disproportionately elongate the village’s urban edge by extending it into the countryside. Unsuitable conversion, extension or development of traditional farm buildings can negatively affect Stonesfield’s historic landscape setting
Strong rural character that contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswold National Landscape.	
Landscape setting for Stonesfield in views east from Stonesfield Road, Bridleway 208/3/10 and the Oxfordshire Way long-distance footpath.	
Open views and inter-visibility with adjacent Limbeck to Callow Farm Plateau Farmland LLCA and views across farmland in the Charlbury parish within the broader Evenlode Valley to the west from Bridleway 208/3/10.	
Traditional stone-bill farm buildings are considered undesignated heritage assets that historically link to the landscape’s agrarian character.	

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this rural and predominantly undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale or visually-prominent development.
- Ensure that the recent village expansion north of Farley Lane or at No's 1-8 The Ridings Close does not extend further north along Stonesfield Riding to ensure the urban edge is not increased, particularly in views from the west on Bridleway 208/3/10.
- Protect the remaining pockets of sensitive pastoral landscape on the village edge from development, particularly to the east of Lower Farm.
- Retain the low density and unobtrusive character of existing residential development at the peripheries of the LLCA.

Local Landscape Character Area B – Stockey Bottom and Banks, and Stonesfield Common

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Significant and important habitats supported by natural environment designations including SSSI.	<p>This MLC a is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character and the importance of its natural environment designations; the village edge setting; open views across the landscape from the minor road, or across the broad floodplain beyond the parish.</p> <p>Invasive Blackthorn and Tor Grass threaten the integrity of the open grassland requiring constant control from a group of volunteers. Currently the Common is a graded “Favourable Condition” with no adverse conditions.</p> <p>The upper section of Footpath 370/19/10 is occasionally subject to a winterbourne in prolonged wet weather.</p> <p>Inappropriate development within the highly sensitive pastoral fields to the north and south of Witney Lane, which lie outside the protection of the SSSI and the Village Conservation Area, would severely impact landscape character and the village’s historic landscape setting.</p> <p>Unsensitive conversion, extension or development of traditional buildings can negatively affect Stonesfield’s historic landscape setting and settlement character.</p>
Strong rural character that contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	
Informal recreation/amenity value of the landscape and varied viewing experience offered by footpaths.	
Pastoral landscape to the north of the LLCA and along the valley floor and eastern side.	
Some open views and inter-visibility with the attractive broad floodplain landscape to the south.	
Some of the traditional stone-built buildings may be considered undesignated heritage assets that reinforce the local vernacular and village character.	

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this rural and predominantly undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale or visually-prominent development.
- Ensure that domestic properties maintain appropriate boundary treatments to contain the potential impact of domestic paraphernalia around these properties and to protect landscape/village character and the public realm.

- Protect the sensitive pastoral land on the edge of the village between Stonesfield Road and Witney Lane from development, as this forms part of the “soft” approach into the village and the transition into its built environment.
- Protect the alignment and character of the historic paths from alteration or damage.

Local Landscape Character Area C – Stonesfield Inner Fields and Baggs Bottom

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Remaining traditional pastoral fields east/south-east of Stonesfield Manor.	<p>This LLCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character; the village edge setting; open views across the landscape towards the settlement, or “outward” views across the remaining pastoral fields south-east of Stonesfield Manor.</p> <p>Sensitivity to development that would introduce tall vertical elements such as pylons or masts. Development within the remaining smaller-scale pastoral fields to the south and south-east of the village will result in the loss of part of Stonesfield’s historic landscape setting.</p>
Strong rural character that contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	
Landscape setting for Stonesfield in views from the Oxfordshire Way long-distance footpath.	
Open views and inter-visibility with adjacent Limbeck to Callow Farm Plateau Farmland LLCA, and long-distance views to south west beyond the parish boundary.	
Time depth of landscape where visible links to Stonesfield’s extraction of “Pendle” for the production of roof slates arrives in the spoil heaps that have remained to the south of the village.	

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this visually-rural and predominantly undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale or visually-prominent development.
- Ensure the visual impact of the recent prominent urban edge created at William Buckland Way is not increased, particularly in views from the Oxfordshire Way long-distance footpath.
- Protect the remaining pockets of sensitive pastoral landscape on the village edge from development, particularly to the north south and south-east of Stonesfield Manor which is enjoyed by locals in “outward” views from the village.
- Retain the low density and unobtrusive character of existing residential development at the peripheries of the LLC a.
- Protect the alignment and character of the historic paths from alteration or damage (e.g. rerouting or removal of earth banks).

Local Landscape Character Area D – Limbeck to Callow Farm Plateau Farmland

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Open character that allows long-ranging open views across the rural landscape – notably from the Shakespeare’s Way long-distance path.	<p>This LCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character, the wider village setting and open views across the landscape.</p> <p>Sensitivity to development that would introduce tall vertical elements such as pylons or masts.</p> <p>Further development on the northern edge of Stonesfield could potentially be harmful to LLCA D’s rural landscape character.</p> <p>Development that would compromise or diminish the function of mature field boundary vegetation to the south of the LLCA which “softens” the edge of the village.</p>
Strong rural character that contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape – particularly that of the dip-slope lowland.	
Wider landscape setting for Stonesfield on approach from the north/north-east.	
Mature field boundary vegetation on the southern edge of the LLCA and south-east of Callow Farm that break up views towards the modern settlement edge	

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this rural and undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale or visually prominent development.
- Ensure the visual impact of recent housing built adjacent to Farley Lane is not increased by the construction of further visually prominent development.
- Ensure future development is appropriate in scale and external finishes and sensitively sited so as to minimise its visual impact on rural character of the LLCA

Local Landscape Character Area E – Kings Wood to Kingswood Bottom Wooded Farmland

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Strong unspoiled rural character that contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape and Stonesfield’s wider landscape setting.	<p>This LCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its strong rural character, views across farmland from the B4437, and framed views across the landscape from the PR oh WS.</p> <p>Further loss of replanted woodland to felling may reduce this density of Kingswood.</p> <p>Further development could have a cumulative effect with existing development which has already had an adverse impact on landscape character.</p> <p>The introduction of new light sources has the potential to impact on the integrity of the area’s dark skies, for example floodlights and security lights on the outside of buildings.</p>
Heavily treed with adjacent woodland and well-stocked hedgerows giving the LLCA its wooded character.	
Undeveloped with only one property of note.	
“Framed” views between woodland across open fields, including from the Shakespeare’s Way long-distance path.	
Quiet landscape, despite presence of B4437.	
Dark skies with very little light spill or pollution.	

Guidance

Protect

- Protect the strong rural character of this undeveloped landscape from inappropriate, large-scale or visually-prominent development.
- Protect against the introduction of lighting sources that will impact the appreciation of dark skies.
- Protect the alignment and character of the historic paths from alteration or damage e.g. re-routing or removal of earth banks.
- Protect the edges of woodland from clearance.

The Parish Council has carried out its own survey of key public viewing locations where the landscape forms part of the setting for the village. These include views from public footpaths and bridleways within the Parish, as well as from each of the public roads on approach into the village. It is clear from the locations identified that the landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village, and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character.

These findings were endorsed by the Stonesfield Character Assessment (Date) which placed particular emphasis on the importance of views to the character of the town and the wider parish. The following were identified as important views:

Though fixed points are marked on this figure, these are not the only views that may provide a positive experience of the village's character. Wider views of greater relevance to the landscape character around the village are covered in the Landscape Character Appraisal, where views from beyond the village core are mentioned here it is in relation to the way that the village's built character can be experienced and understood.

- From The Cross panoramic village centre view taking in traditional buildings, focal building of the church with the village lockup, distinctive stone wall boundaries and variety of outward framed views along the streets leading away. Marred slightly by non-descript surfacing and prevalence of car parking.
- From High Street over the former school to St James. Focal building, the church, clearly visible over the 19th century school building.
- Pond Hill towards the White Horse. Kinetic. Accentuated by the topography a pleasant view as one walks down towards the Green and the public house.
- Brook Lane over the Evenlode. Wide vista. An exceptionally well walked and much appreciated local view from the village edge. A public bench by local artists encourages dwelling here on the edge of the village looking over the valley.
- From Churchfields over the allotments and glimpsed between buildings. An open green view where the rural edge of the village is clearly appreciable particularly clear over the allotments with glimpsed views of a similar nature all along Church Fields enabling an experience of village's rural setting.
- Views in all directions at the bottom of Laughton Hill, along the valley, Witney Lane, Oxfordshire Way. Though on a busy road the conjunction of multiple routes combined with the topography makes this a highly attractive entry point to the village.
- Kinetic views moving along the narrow winding route of Boot Street and High Street, topography and narrow width renders this experience intimate, varied and positive. Glimpses over Well Lane to the surrounding countryside, focal building of the Methodist Chapel, traditional materials and buildings abound.
- Approaching view from the Oxfordshire way by Highfield Farm. A striking view of the village wrapped along the valley edge where buildings set on the hill present a varied and interesting roofscape characteristic of Stonesfield (see front cover).

- Village edge views from Brook Lane and Witney Lane down the dry valley and over the Evenlode.
- Strongly linear outward views from The Ridings and Woodstock Road leading from the village out over the flat plain to the north and north east accentuated by straight routes and wide skies.

Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) envisages a sequential test where major development would have a significant adverse impact on an AONB, and paragraph 195 applies a public benefit test to developments that would harm a designated historic asset. Given the great local significance of the AONB in the landscape setting of Stonesfield and its vulnerability to even small-scale developments to the south and west, similar forms of test are appropriate here.

Extracts from Cala decision, relevant paragraphs (relates particularly to LLCA Areas C &D):

33 – within Landscape Character Type 11 – Dip Slope Lowland.

35 Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (June 2016) – new development should "maintain the open, sparsely settled character of the Dip Slope Lowland by limiting new development to existing settlements and avoid development that will intrude negatively into the landscape and cannot be successfully mitigated, for example, extensions to settlements on areas of open landscape."

40. "Whatever 'value' is attached to the appeal site itself, it still forms part of the overall high-value protected landscape of the AONB and is a localised component of the landscape setting of Stonesfield within the sensitive Lower Evenlode Valley Landscape Area. The site cannot be developed without total change to the baseline situation."

41 "I consider that this translates to a site landscape sensitivity of high/medium."

47 "the site is part and parcel of the landscape described in the various character assessments and contributes positively to the landscape of the AONB as a whole."

49 "overall in considering the landscape impacts of the proposal, the development would be contrary to the guidelines provided in the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. In particular as an expansion of the settlement, it would not maintain the open, sparsely settled character of the Dip Slope Lowland. It would intrude negatively into the landscape by eroding part of its open character."

52 views of the appeal site from Akeman Street: "as the footpath approaches the village travelling south west. Such current views looking towards the village on this approach are dominated by the incongruity of the Charity Farm development which, owing to its urban form and materials appears as a disjointed protrusion into the rural landscape and displays little integration with the rest of the village. This development serves to emphasise my concerns at the sensitivity of the landscape change and the harm that can be created by a relatively large-scale model development that fails to integrate into its surrounds."

Evidence for Examiner

Survey results – Individual Survey

See following tables for results, which shows the extensive use of the network of footpaths around the village, particularly to the south and south west aspects.

Q24 & Q25

Q24, Q25 Frequency of footpath use	At least weekly	Monthly	Never or less than monthly
Either Bagg's Bottom path, from the Combe dip to the river	214	118	293
Brook Lane to the bridge	283	127	334
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	265	100	333
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	256	109	325
Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	291	110	349
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	237	118	299
Oxon Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	187	133	283
The ridge path	187	131	265
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	100	121	361

Q27

Q27 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following:	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree
Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.	427	137	34

Free text comments

There were a few free text comments at the end of the Survey that were relevant:

Management of sewage and cleaning up of Evenlode

Better planning to help enhance the natural areas we have. Planned seating and greener areas in the village.

Q31 I object to the three questions by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

There is potential for renewable energy generation without necessarily compromising the character of the village and surrounds. The need to think a bit differently about renewable

energy has indeed been the subject of debate within the Cotswold National Landscape strategy process, where it is accepted that the Cotswolds has continually changed over many centuries and must continue to do so, with major challenges such as climate change demanding a response. Although I strongly support the protection of the natural environment I also believe the future will not look like the past. The village should consider being part of the trend to the 'democratisation of energy production'.

The Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly preclude major development in Stonesfield. Such development is already restricted by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan, by virtue of location within the Cotswolds AONB, other than in exceptional circumstances, and there are no conceivable exceptional circumstances which could apply in Stonesfield. Therefore such a restriction would not be inconsistent with the Local Development Plan or the NPPF.

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

Policy SEL3 – Protecting the Evenlode valley

Further Evidence for the Examiner

Survey results – Individual Survey

See following tables for results, which shows the extensive use of the network of footpaths around the village, particularly to the south and south-west aspects.

Q24 & Q25

Frequency of footpath use	At least weekly	Monthly	Never or less than monthly
Either Bagg's Bottom path, from the Combe dip to the river	214	118	293
Brook Lane to the bridge	283	127	334
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	265	100	333
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	256	109	325
Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	291	110	349
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	237	118	299
Oxon Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	187	133	283
The ridge path	187	131	265
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	100	121	361

Q27

To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following:	Strongly or alightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree
Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.	427	137	34

Free text comments

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield.

- Around 310 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being either the countryside, walks, quietness, rural setting, dark skies.
- Over 220 responders gave the same reasons as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.
- Over 155 gave these reasons as the third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.

There were a few free text comments at the end of the Survey that were relevant:

Management of sewage and cleaning up of Evenlode

Better planning to help enhance the natural areas we have. Planned seating and greener areas in the village.

Q31 I object to the three questions by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

There is potential for renewable energy generation without necessarily compromising the character of the village and surrounds. The need to think a bit differently about renewable energy has indeed been the subject of debate within the Cotswold National Landscape strategy process, where it is accepted that the Cotswolds has continually changed over many centuries and must continue to do so, with major challenges such as climate change demanding a response. Although I strongly support the protection of the natural environment I also believe the future will not look like the past. The village should consider being part of the trend to the 'democratisation of energy production'.

The Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly preclude major development in Stonesfield. Such development is already restricted by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan, by virtue of location within the Cotswolds AONB, other than in exceptional circumstances, and there are no conceivable exceptional circumstances which could apply in Stonesfield. Therefore such a restriction would not be inconsistent with the Local Development Plan or the NPPF.

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

Policy SEL4 – Protecting local green spaces

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that ‘Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.’ Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields should not be built on unless strict conditions are fulfilled. It also advocates the designation of land as “Local Green Space” through local and neighbourhood plans, allowing communities to identify and protect green areas of importance to them. Such designation is required to be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and to complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period and designation should only be used where the green space is: –

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

‘Particular local significance’ is in each case shown by factors including, though not only, as follows; by reference to the numbering of sites within the policy: –

1. This land, south-west of the William Buckland Way estate: –
 - a. forms part of land the sensitivity of which so seriously concerned the planning inspector, Stephen Normington, in the Cala Case when he considered the harmful effect of development of the adjacent Charity Farm estate upon the views looking towards the village from the Oxfordshire Way, Akeman Street (paragraph 52 Appeal Decision dated 21 June 2019 APP/D 3125/W/18/3209551);
 - b. was similarly the subject of the concern identified in the Stonesfield Parish Landscape Character Assessment February 2024 (“the Landscape Assessment”) prepared for the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan, which said the adjoining “Recent housing development at Charity Farm has created a hard edge to the village in these views, and additional development will further threaten the integrity of its valued rural character” (page 48, paragraph 3, Landscape Assessment);
 - c. is land in relation to which the Landscape Assessment, having noted the “strong rural character” of the landscape on this side of Stonesfield i.e. “the Stonesfield Inner Fields”, points out that it “forms part of a rural landscape setting when approaching Stonesfield from two of the four roads that converge in the village,” one of which is the Combe Road which borders the land (page 49 para 6 Landscape Assessment);
 - d. is part of the “rural landscape setting for the settlement” which the Landscape Assessment says “contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape” and is one of the “Remaining pockets of pastoral land on the southern edge of the village” which “add to the settlement’s sense of time depth and survive as remnants of historic field enclosures” and “are valued for the “outward” views they provide from the edge of the village” (page 50, bullet points 2, 3 & 4 Landscape Assessment) ;

- e. includes the site of the Stonesfield Roman villa, a designated scheduled monument discovered in 1712, when it had four elaborate and well-preserved tessellated pavements, baths and a hypocaust, sadly now destroyed but nonetheless still of historic significance (page 49, bullet point 6, Landscape Assessment);
 - f. achieved 73.7% support for designation in the Village Survey.
2. This land, the paddock between the Manor House and Combe Road:
- a) Is also within the area which concerned Mr Normington in considering the harmful effect of development upon the views from Akeman Street (paragraph 52 Appeal Decision dated 21 June 2019 APP/D 3125/W/18/3209551);
 - b) is within the Conservation Area and therefore section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in the exercise of functions under or by virtue of the planning Acts and Part 1 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 and certain other enactments “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance” of the area;
 - c) forms a major part of the setting of the Stonesfield Manor House, a central feature of the village, when viewed from the south-east and particularly from Akeman Street;
 - d) was considered by the Landscape Assessment which stated “the enclosures immediately on the edge of the village – to the east and south-east of Stonesfield Manor/Church Street – have retained much of the hedgerow vegetation and therefore their historic field patterns have been preserved. These much smaller fields have a more pastoral character that is distinctive and contrasts with the rest of the LLCA and they provide valued “outward” public views from the settlement edge” ((page 47, final paragraph and page 48, first paragraph, Landscape Assessment));
 - e) is free from the mechanical intervention of arable farming and adjacent to 3 woodland copses and therefore richly fosters wildlife and a range of vegetation;
 - f) forms part of the “rural landscape setting” of the approach to Stonesfield and of this side of the village remarked upon in the Landscape Assessment (see 1b, c and d above) which warns that this is “highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character; the village edge setting; open views across the landscape towards the settlement, or “outward” views across the remaining pastoral fields south-east of Stonesfield Manor... Development within the remaining smaller-scale pastoral fields to the south and south-east of the village will result in the loss of part of Stonesfield’s historic landscape setting” (page 51 “Threats and Issues” Landscape Assessment);
 - g) accommodates, as is observed in the Landscape Assessment, a number of clumps of trees on the spoil heaps which are relics of the “chipping banks” integral to the process of production of Stonesfield roofing slates and thus are of particular local historical significance (page 50, fifth bullet point Landscape Assessment);
 - h) falls within the statutorily designated Upper Thames Tributaries environmentally sensitive area (“the ESA” – see the Landscape Assessment);
 - i) achieved 75.9% support for designation in the Village Survey.
3. This land, the paddocks behind Church Street and Brook Lane:
- a. is also within the area which concerned Mr Normington and forms part of the village setting (see above) and in particular the setting of the Manor House when viewed from Akeman Street;

- b. is part of the land described in the Landscape Assessment, i.e. “the enclosures immediately on the edge of the village – to the east and south-east of Stonesfield Manor/Church Street” which have “retained much of the hedgerow vegetation, and therefore their historic field patterns have been preserved” and “These much smaller fields have a more pastoral character that is distinctive and contrasts with the rest of the LLCA, and they provide valued “outward” public views from the settlement edge” (page 47 final paragraph and 48 first paragraph Landscape Assessment and see 1b,c & d and 2d & e above);
 - c. is within the ESA;
 - d. achieved 80.5% support for designation in the Village Survey.
- 4. This land, the field on the left at the top of Brook Lane as one faces southward towards the Evenlode, (although clear on the map in the Survey was perhaps misleadingly described in the Village Survey as “Field on the right at the top of Brook Lane”):
 - a. also is crucial to the views of the village from Akeman Street;
 - b. is part of “the enclosures immediately on the edge of the village” the value of which was noted by the author of the Landscape Assessment (see 3b above);
 - c. is land the maintenance of which as open green space protects the views from the village and from the Brook Lane footpath down to the Evenlode and of Bagg’s Bottom, through which Akeman Street passes, again confirmed by the author of the Landscape Assessment (See 1b,c & d and 2d & e) above);
 - d. It is within the ESA;
 - e. achieved 86.1% support for designation in the Village Survey.
- 5. This land, the Glebe land between Brook Lane and the Scout Hut: –
 - a. is immediately adjacent to the Village Green, Stockey Woods, described by the Landscape Assessment (page 41, first paragraph) as “enjoyed generally for its informal recreational value.”
 - b. is part of the wider Local Landscape Character Area described by the Landscape Assessment (page 40, first paragraph) as having “a small network of public footpaths that provide direct and easy access from Stonesfield and is particularly valued by villagers for its informal amenity value and for its importance for nature conservation;”
 - c. is crossed within it by public footpaths 370/16/20 and 370/17/18, which link with the footpaths of the Village Green and the Stonesfield Common and also, via Brook Lane (footpath 370/4/20), with the Oxfordshire Way, Akeman Street;
 - d. affords what the Landscape Assessment (page 45 Valued Quality) describes as “some open views and intervisibility with the attractive broad floodplain landscape to the south.”
 - e. is immediately adjacent to the SSSI;
 - f. is within the Upper Thames Tributaries environmentally sensitive area;
 - g. achieved 88.6% support for designation in the Village Survey.
- 6. This land, the Churchfields Allotments: –
 - a. is the only allotment site within Stonesfield village;
 - b. is significant but not extensive in size, i.e. 4176 m²;
 - c. at the date of drafting comprises 27 allotments, accommodating 44 members of the Allotment Association;
 - d. is therefore over-subscribed, i.e. demand exceeds available plots: as of March 2024 there was a waiting list and it was not unusual to wait a year;

- e. is special to the local community as demonstrated e.g. by the raising of over £3000 in February 2019, enabling the allotment holders to install the infrastructure necessary for 4 new water troughs to supply the allotments with fresh water from the Thames Water network (one of a limited number of examples of fresh Thames Water!);
 - f. includes a small stall which was at that time constructed at the entrance to the allotments where produce from the allotments is deposited for villagers to take at will, free of charge, with allotment members aiming to give at least 10% of their crops to the stall;
 - g. of whose members a survey of important aspects of being an allotment-holder was conducted at short notice for the purposes of this policy and 88.9% of allotment were represented in the response, accounting for 88.4% of members -- the detailed results of the survey are available for inspection indicating the reasons why the allotment holders valued the availability of the allotments including fresh food/zero miles, physical well-being, mental health, closer to nature/support wildlife, share knowledge and resources, support and connect to community, organic food, support and friendship, "no dig;"
 - h. comprises well-tended allotments, peat-free, one third chemical-free and steadily progressing towards all-organic and "no dig" i.e. exhibits evidence of high recreational value;
 - i. is adjacent to the SSSI;
 - j. forms part of the Stonesfield Conservation Area and is therefore subject to the restrictions applying to conservation areas (see 2b above);
 - k. provides a green lung linking the historic centre of the village, which includes the Church and the Conservation Area, with Stockey Woods, the Village Green, providing views from that centre over the Woods and towards the Stonesfield Common and the Evenlode Valley;
 - l. is a haven of tranquillity, rich in wildlife with: –
 - i. a substantial population of slow worms, grass snakes and Roman snails;
 - ii. soil full of the worms and fungi essential for plant growth;
 - iii. a store of carbon;
 - iv. a long ivy hedge which is an autumn nectar and pollen source for a vast range of insects, has attracted specialist interest and provides a nesting resource for birds;
 - v. a wide range of birdlife including the yearly nesting of blackbirds, robins, dunnock, blue tits, greenfinch, great tits, red-legged partridge and pheasants
 - vi. wild animals including foxes, stoats, weasels, (less wanted) muntjac deer and rabbits;
 - vii. as recorded by the "allotments entomologist" in April 2024, now accommodates asiraca clavicornis, a Nationally Notable B species invertebrate which is in decline and in the UK now restricted to areas of the south-east i.e. is its most westerly location recorded in the last 10 years;
 - m. achieved 87.6% support for designation in the Village Survey.
7. This land, the paddocks to the right on walking down the lane adjacent to Timber Yard towards the Scout Hut:
- a. is also adjacent to the Village Green, Stockey Woods as 5a above;
 - b. is immediately adjacent to the SSSI;

- c. is one of “the enclosures immediately on the edge of the village” described by the Landscape Assessment as having “retained much of the hedgerow vegetation” so that “their historic field patterns have been preserved” and “These much smaller fields have a more pastoral character that is distinctive and contrasts with the rest of the LLCA and they provide valued “outward” public views from the settlement edge” (page 47 final paragraph and 48 first paragraph Landscape Assessment and see 1b,c & d and 2d & e above);
 - d. has a hedge backdrop of glistening white blackthorn, then red hawthorn, blossom to greet the footpath passers-by in spring;
 - e. has recently been enhanced by the planting of additional trees in its centre by the village tree-planting organiser and expert;
 - f. is part of the wider Local Landscape Character Area described by the Landscape Assessment as having “a small network of public footpaths that provide direct and easy access from Stonesfield and is particularly valued by villagers for its informal amenity value and for its importance for nature conservation (page 40, para 1 Landscape Assessment);
 - g. is free from the mechanical intervention of arable farming and therefore richly fosters wildlife, including rabbits, hares, muntjac deer, squirrels, foxes, pheasants, grouse, kites, swallows, martins and a range of vegetation,
 - h. is distant from heavily trafficked vehicular highways and therefore protects the tranquillity of the recreational walker of the adjacent footpath 370/5/10;
 - i. is immediately adjacent to and is open space viewed from footpath 370/5/10, affording further views through it across Stockey Woods, the Village Green;
 - j. is linked by that footpath with the network of footpaths in the Village Green, Stockey Woods and through that to the Evenlode Valley and Stonesfield Common and with Akeman Street which passes through both of those;
 - k. is a viewpoint enriched by a wealth of black-berries at its border adjacent to the footpath in autumn, attracting villagers who pick fruit, savour the view along with the blackberries and are generally at one with nature;
 - l. is adjacent to the village Scout Hut (being rebuilt) and the open aspect it provides to surround the Scout Hut contributes significantly to the beauty, recreational value, and tranquillity of the environment of the Scout Hut;
 - m. achieved 83.9% support for designation in the Village Survey.
8. This land, the paddocks to the left of Witney Lane on walking south-west towards Spratt’s Farm: –
- a. is within the ESA;
 - b. is immediately adjacent to the SSSI
 - c. was selected in the Landscape Assessment (page 40) as a photograph illustration to demonstrate “a typical view across grazing paddocks on the south-western edge of Stonesfield... looking towards the Stockey Plantation;”
 - d. forms part of what the Landscape Assessment (page 41, para 1) describes as “a patchwork of pastoral fields, enclosed by mature hedgerows and trees..... flanked to the west by a woodland on the other valley side;”
 - e. is, the Landscape Assessment (page 42, 6th bullet point) says, part of “a series of steep sided dry valleys and banks with unimproved limestone grassland and scrub habitats” and “is one of the largest remnants of this grassland type in the county;”
 - f. is immediately alongside and viewed from Witney Lane, which is heavily trafficked by footpath walkers (rarely by vehicular traffic, which is limited to the few residents of

dwelling of Witney Lane) who use it as a link between the village/Oxfordshire Way and the network of footpaths within the Village Green, Stockey Woods, and thence to the Evenlode Valley and Akeman Street;

- g. is: –
 - i. of high recreational value in affording exceptional views to walkers;
 - ii. part of one of the few “pastoral” enclaves in a parish, the landscape of which is predominantly arable fields, and this enclave is home to what the Landscape Assessment (page 42, paragraph 2) describes as “the “hidden” nature of parts of the valley which “strongly reinforces the parish’s rural character”;
 - iii. free from the mechanical intervention of arable farming and therefore richly fosters wildlife and a range of vegetation,
 - iv. distant from heavily trafficked vehicular highways and therefore affords tranquillity to the recreational walker;
 - h. achieved 84.1% support for designation in the Village Survey.
9. This land, known as the Dene, at the foot of Laughton Hill on the right (when facing towards Fawler) by its junction with the Oxfordshire Way: –
- a. is part of the floor of a steep-sided dry valley formed as a tributary of the Evenlode, which is described in the Landscape Assessment (page 33, paras 2 & 3) as having a “strong rural character” and “more pastoral in character” than the predominant arable agricultural land in most of the parish;
 - b. is specifically described by the Landscape Assessment (page 33, final para) as “The narrow hay meadow to the east of Lower Farm on the edge of Stonesfield ... included in the Village Conservation Area” and “allows pleasant framed views to the north between the farmhouse and the settlement edge from Laughton Hill;”
 - c. can also be viewed (as noted by the Landscape Assessment page 44, para 3) from Bridleway 208/3/10 which links into the Oxfordshire Way and from the Oxfordshire Way as it descends from the ridgeline along which the Bridleway passes, affording, as noted by the Landscape Assessment “a particularly attractive view of the village which rises up on the far side of the valley” and comprising one of the “key views within the parish” which are “a significant component of the settlement’s rural landscape setting;”
 - d. is within 50 m of the junction of the Oxfordshire Way and the Wychwood Way, which briefly coincide in the village, and is at the village end of Witney Lane which links the Oxfordshire Way and the Wychwood Way to the network of footpaths within the Village Green, Stockey Woods, Stonesfield Common and Akeman Street and is therefore a focus of attention for many walkers, villagers and from further afield, and is of particular local significance because of its beauty, recreational value and tranquillity;
 - e. forms part of the Stonesfield Conservation Area and is therefore subject to the restrictions applying to conservation areas (see 2b above);
 - f. achieved 81.2% support for designation in the Village Survey.
10. This land, the fields behind and to the west of the Stonesfield Garage and the White Horse Inn: –
- a. is the continuation beyond the Dene of the steep-sided dry valley formed as an Evenlode tributary;

- b. can also be viewed from Bridleway 208/3/10 and the Oxfordshire Way and forms part of the “particularly attractive view of the village which rises up on the far side of the valley” referred to in 9c above;
 - c. Is an integral part of that view which is of particular local significance because of its beauty, recreational value and tranquillity and because it is seen daily by the many users, villagers and from further afield, of the Bridleway and the Oxfordshire Way;
 - d. achieved 75.7% support for designation in the Village Survey.
11. This land, the Stonesfield Primary School playing field: –
- a. is one of the few (perhaps three comprising this, the Churchfields Allotments and the corner of Pond Hill and Long Gore) remaining open spaces within the built-up envelope of the village, most others having been developed for estate housing in recent decades;
 - b. affords a tranquil resort to pass for the many villagers, especially the elderly unable to venture further afield, who take a short walk for exercise within the village including within their route Peak’s Lane, which passes alongside it;
 - c. is central to the Conservation Area and is therefore subject to the restrictions applying to conservation areas (see 2b above);
 - d. has for decades been the main facility for recreation for the pupils of the thriving school;
 - e. incorporates tree-planting and nature-friendly garden areas and a playground as well as sports facilities;
 - f. is regularly used for village-wide events, e.g. fêtes;
 - g. has a recreational value, tranquillity (when not in use by schoolchildren!) and wildlife value of undeniable local significance;
 - h. achieved 91.4% support for designation in the Village Survey.
12. This land, at the corner of Pond Hill and Long Gore: –
- a. is one of the few (perhaps three comprising this, the Churchfields Allotments and the Primary School playing field) remaining open spaces within the built-up envelope of the village, most others having been developed for estate housing in recent decades;
 - b. affords a pleasant green space on which to sit on one of the benches and watch the world go by;
 - c. affords a welcome relief to the non-stop built-up tedium of this part of the village centre;
 - d. would, if built upon, obstruct visibility for traffic at what amounts to a three-way junction which is already difficult to negotiate;
 - e. achieved 81.1% support for designation in the Village Survey.
13. This land, the village playing field: –
- a. is the venue for almost all sporting activity in the village;
 - b. accommodates the activities of several village football teams, 2 village cricket teams, and a thriving village tennis club, with 3 tennis courts;
 - c. accommodates a well-used children’s playground;
 - d. has a symbiotic recreational relationship with the thriving village Sports and Social Club, which is housed on land forming part of the endowment of the charity which is the Playing Fields Charity;
 - e. is situated on land surrounded on three of four sides by open countryside achieving the combination of beauty, tranquillity (when not disturbed by the invigorating sound accompanying energetic sport) and intense recreational value;

- f. demonstrated its “particular local significance” when the sports clubs combined successfully over 30 years ago to raise money and build the Sports and Social Club;
 - g. achieved 93.3 % support for designation in the Village Survey.
14. This land, the field north of Woodstock Road: –
- a. immediately adjoins the village playing field and by being preserved as open space enhances the beauty, tranquillity and recreational value of the playing field;
 - b. forms a major part of the landscape setting on the most heavily trafficked approach to the village i.e. the Woodstock Road, described by the Landscape Assessment (page 18 final para) as “fundamental” i.e. “the landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character;”
 - c. contributes substantially to the “lack of visible development” which the Landscape Assessment says “reinforces rural character on approaching the village from the north-east and adds to the significance of this LLCA as part of a rural “buffer” between Stonesfield and the World Heritage Site at Blenheim Palace” (page 54, para 6);
 - d. contributes substantially to what the Landscape Assessment (page 54, final para) observes to be, for those using the “important recreational route” which is the footpath using the line of the former Roman Road, Akeman Street, “clear views towards Stonesfield across the open farmland putting the Stonesfield Inner Fields firmly in the settlement’s rural landscape setting;
 - e. is within and is essential to the openness of that setting, which the Landscape Assessment (page 54 final para, page 55 first para) judges to be at risk because “Recent housing development at Charity Farm has created a hard edge to the village in these views, and additional development will further threaten the integrity of its valued rural character;”
 - f. encompasses the site, development of which was rejected so robustly in his Cala Homes planning appeal decision by the planning inspector, Stephen Normington, in June 2019 (paragraph 52 Appeal Decision dated 21 June 2019 APP/D 3125/W/18/3209551) which is consistent with the Landscape Assessment stating: –
 - i. from the Akeman Street footpath “current views looking towards the village on this approach are dominated by the incongruity of the Charity Farm development, which, owing to its urban form and materials, appears as a disjointed protrusion into the rural landscape and displays little integration with the rest of the village” and
 - ii. “The proposed development would add to this incongruity. The cumulative visual impact of the existing and proposed development when viewed from Oxfordshire Way would fundamentally and unacceptably change the characteristic open character of the dip slope lowland. This change would be visibly and perceptibly experienced at close quarters by users of the public right of way on the approach to the village such that in views looking north-west the village would appear as more of a modern “suburbanisation” of a rural settlement within the AONB. This change would adversely affect the enjoyment of the users of the path” and
 - iii. speaking of the Woodstock Road approach to the village “The appearance and rural character of this part of the AONB would be unacceptably changed and a more suburban character would prevail. This would unacceptably harm the rural setting of Stonesfield within the context of the settled landscape articulated in the various character assessments.”

- g. achieved 78.2% support for designation in the Village Survey.
15. This land, the Woodstock Road allotments site, –
- a. forms part of the landscape setting on the most heavily trafficked approach to the village, i.e. the Woodstock Road, described by the Landscape Assessment as “fundamental” i.e. “the landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character;”
 - b. is the second of only two allotment sites serving the population of Stonesfield and is demonstrated by what follows without doubt to be special to the local community and to hold particular local significance because of its beauty, recreational value, tranquillity and richness of wildlife;
 - c. whilst it is situated outside the village envelope is in reasonably close proximity to the community, being within easy walking distance along the Farley Lane track;
 - d. it is necessary to the recreational value derived by members of the community from allotment cultivation, because
 - i. there is no availability of allotments on the only “in village” allotment site at Churchfields, which is oversubscribed;
 - ii. it is more accessible to many would-be allotment cultivators living in the northern areas of the village than are the Churchfields allotments;
 - e. is significant but not extensive in size, i.e. 3725 square metres;
 - f. at the date of drafting comprises 26 allotments, accommodating 25 allotment holders;
 - g. whilst there is no formal “waiting list” when a plot holder leaves, the vacant plot is immediately taken on by a new plot-holder so that plots are always being worked;
 - h. comprises well-tended allotments, some “chemical-free” and some part “chemical-free, some “no-dig” and all benefit from a regular delivery of horse manure and availability from time to time of mulch;”
 - i. plot-holders supply their own water, mostly by collecting rainwater;
 - j. is a fertile home for wildlife including: –
 - i. birds including red kites, sparrowhawks, skylarks, grouse, pheasants, partridge, blue tits, great spotted and green woodpeckers and owls (in the early evening);
 - ii. insects, notably butterflies, moths and cockchafer beetles;
 - iii. frogs, toads and common lizards;
 - iv. foxes and mice and (less welcome) muntjac deer, rabbits, hares and rats;
 - k. includes in particular a tree-lined back perimeter which encourages all of the above wildlife and more;
 - l. achieved 83.9% support for designation in the Village Survey.

Further evidence for Examiner

Survey results – Individual Survey

Q26 See following page for results, which shows a definitive view within the village for protecting local green spaces.

Q26

Q26 How important are the following:	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	Less Important/Not Important
Protecting green spaces	573	11	0

Survey Question 28 Specific support for each green spaces was recorded in the survey as follows:

National Planning Policy allows communities to "identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them" by designating them in their neighbourhood plans as Local Green Spaces. This designation must not simply be "NIMBY" but must be "consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services." The designation should only be used where the green space (a) is in reasonably close proximity to the community (b) is demonstrably special to the community (c) holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or the richness of its wildlife and (d) is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Taking into account requirements (a) to (d), to what extent do you agree that any one or more of the areas numbered on the map should be protected in this way?

Q28 Green spaces	Strongly or slightly agree	Strongly or slightly disagree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly agree	Strongly or slightly disagree	Neutral
13. The village playing field	93.3%	1.8%	4.9%	10	533	571
11. Primary School playing field	91.4%	2.4%	6.1%	14	523	572
5. The glebe land between Brook Lane and the Scout hut	88.6%	2.1%	9.3%	12	507	572
6. Churchfields Allotments	87.6%	3.0%	9.5%	17	500	571
4. Field on the right at the top of Brook Lane	86.1%	3.0%	10.9%	17	490	569
8. The paddock to the left of Witney Lane	84.1%	3.0%	12.9%	17	477	567
7. The paddocks on the right as you walk down Timber Yard Lane towards Scout hut	83.9%	2.5%	13.7%	14	478	570
15. Woodstock Road Allotments	83.9%	3.5%	12.6%	20	478	570
9. The Dene	81.2%	3.9%	15.0%	22	461	568
12. Corner of Pond Hill and Greenfields	81.1%	3.9%	15.0%	22	454	560
3. Land between Church Street and Brook Lane	80.5%	3.9%	15.6%	22	459	570

14. Field north of Woodstock Road	78.2%	5.9%	16.0%	33	441	564
2. Paddock between Manor House and Combe Road.	75.9%	6.3%	17.8%	36	435	573
10. Fields behind the garage and the White Horse	75.7%	5.3%	19.0%	30	431	569
1. Land south west of William Buckland Way (Charity Farm) estate	73.7%	5.6%	20.7%	32	420	570

Alternatively:

Email from John Sampson, Churchfields Allotments Convener on 30.4.24 commenting on/approving draft:

I can attempt to get a quick survey of members ... What they value the allotments for, for evidence.

6. This land:

a. is the only allotment site within Stonesfield;

b. is substantial in size, i.e. 4176 m²;

c. at the date of drafting comprises 27 allotments, accommodating 44 members of the Allotment Association; as of March 2024 there are three people on the waiting list and it is not unusual to wait more than a year.

d. is therefore over-subscribed, i.e. demand exceeds available plots;

e. is special to the local community as demonstrated e.g. by the raising of over £3000 in February 2019, enabling the allotment holders to install the infrastructure necessary for 4 new water troughs to supply the allotments with fresh water from the Thames Water network (one of a limited number of examples of fresh Thames Water!);

this development included the building of a produce stall at the entrance to the allotments. Members aim to give at least 10% of crops to the stall that is then available to the village.

e. comprises well-tended allotments, i.e. exhibits evidence of high recreational value;

f. is adjacent to the SSI;

g. provides a green lung linking the historic centre of the village, which includes the Church and the Conservation Area, with Stockey Woods, the Village Green, providing views from that centre for allotment holders and all other villagers alike over the Woods and towards the Stonesfield Common and the Evenlode Valley.

g. is a haven of tranquillity, rich in wildlife, e.g. birds, foxes, stoats, weasels, (unwanted) muntjac deer and rabbits. There is a substantial population of slow worms and roman snails. The soil is full of worms and the fungi that are essential for plant growth. The soil is an important carbon store.

Of particular note is the long ivy hedge that is an autumn nectar and pollen source for a vast range of insects and has had specialist interest.

H. The members have gone peat free and are steadily going organic 1/3rd are chemical free and have developed a move to no dig.

Email from John Sampson, Churchfields Allotments Convener on 7.4.24:

Dear Jim,

Here is the latest results (I think we should assume this is it)

Our entomologist has recorded :

Asiraca clavicornis, a Nationally Notable B species invertebrate that is in decline and now restricted to areas of the South East - it was recorded here last week in its most westerly location for the past 10 years.

Churchfields allotment survey of members, April 2024

What are the most important aspects of being an allotment holder for you?

Please indicate your top five and any others.

88.9% of allotments responded, representing 88.4% of members

Responses were variable and not all indicated a top five; the order of the response made has been taken as the preference.

	Total votes	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Fourth choice	Fifth choice	Other
Fresh food/ zero miles	22	4	3	6	4	1	4
Physical wellbeing	21	9	4	3	3	2	0
Mental health	19	6	7	4	1	1	0
Closer to nature/support wildlife	20	2	5	5	5	1	2
Share knowledge and resources	18	0	0	7	4	7	0
Support and connect to community	19	0	1	3	5	5	5
Organic food	15	4	5	2	2	0	2
Support and friendship	12	1	1	2	5	2	1
No dig	5	0	3	1	0	0	1

“Growing our own organic and chemical-free produce is a sustainable source of food for the family over the summer and autumn months. It has introduced my children to the joy of growing your own food, which they take forward into their adult lives.”



Asiraca clavicornis

Email from Louise John, Convener of the Woodstock Road Allotments on 7.4.24:

Dear Jim

Hope you are well. I hope my observation of the Woodstock Rd allotment site is helpful.

1. Woodstock Road allotment site has 19 plots which are the equivalent to half a traditional allotment plot size (27 x 45 feet).
2. 18 plots are currently being maintained.
3. There is no waiting list. Plot holders leave and straightaway plots are taken on by a new plot holder, so these plots are always being worked.
4. Some plot holders are using the no dig method and some are part and chemical free.
5. There is a regular delivery of horse manure, and mulch is sometimes available.
6. The back perimeter is tree lined encouraging wildlife.
 - a. Bird life includes red kites, sparrow hawks, skylarks, crows, pheasants, partridge, blue tits, great spotted and green woodpeckers, and in the early evenings owls have been spotted.
 - b. Wildlife includes, butterflies and moths, Cockchafer Beetles (may beetle), frogs and toads and common lizards. Not so welcome are muntjacs, rabbits, hares, foxes and mice and rats!

7. Some plot holders have created small ponds and hung bird boxes and bird feeders to encourage wildlife.

8. We have no mains water supply, most plot holders collect their own rain water.

9. The site the allotments are situated looks out across open farm land towards Combe.

Also on the Woodstock Road are additional plots that have been there for many years before the new site was created.

I think there are seven full size plots. These have been maintained by the same plot holders since I can remember.

I hope this information is useful.

Good luck with the neighbourhood plan.

Kind regards

Louise

Q29 Are there any other parcels of land that you think should be protected in this way? Specify in the space below. NOTE: The steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey Woods, the lower part of Baggs Bottom and the Common are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are therefore already protected.

Answered: 84

Skipped: 528

All areas in boundary. Too much large scale development.

All fields round Stonesfield

All land along the river

*All land on either side of Oxfordshire Way going north (ie above Lower Farm, to Waterloo Barn and ***** farm). This track to be kept as a footpath/rough track (i.e. vehicles discouraged).*

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

All should now be protected

Along the Woodstock Road

Burial ground along Stonesfield Riding.

Church burial grounds

Combe Road fields

Ditchley gate area of Blenheim before they turn it into another housing estate destroying the woodland

Everywhere. Stonesfield has already been over developed and spoilt.

Farley Lane - too much development, The Ridings too much development

field behind the paddocks ox298gg

Fields along the ridgeway,

Fields belonging to Spratts Farm above Witney Lane

Fields between the road to Fawler and footpath towards Oxfordshire Way (between 8 and 9)

Fields either side of the Oxfordshire Way off Laughton's Hill.

Fields eitherside of The Ridings towards Callow Farm

Fields on both sides of Combe Road

Fields to north of Witney Lane

Fields to right of Witney Lane. Opposite 8

Fields to the right and left at the end of Farley lane. Also all land from village boundary to Callows Farm

Grounds of the Manor

If it is green belt it should be protected

Land adjacent to Oxfordshire Way enroute to Charlbury

land alongside the oxford way towards Charlbury

Land below nos 3 and 4 down to the river.

Land between areas designated 9 (the Dene) and 10 (land behind garage and white horse), and land immediately North of area 10.

Land between Ridings Close and Callows Farm, both sides of the road.

land both sides of the long straight out of the village must remain agricultural. no housing developments should be allowed.

Land either side of the Oxfordshire way past the farmers barn etc.

Land either side of Oxfordshire Way near Lower Farm

Land north of Farley Lane to Callows Farm along the Ridings

Land on Combe Road adjacent to the social housing

Land on the right as you drive up the hill out of the village from the bottom of Laughton Hill

Land Opposite Blenheim (Velocity nonsense)

Land opposite North Farm along Farley lane track

Land that can be seen whilst on the common, and views from the Evenlode valley

Lane between Farley lane and Callow Farm and also ruddy lane

No more houses anywhere - not enough infrastructure

No more infill. Stonesfield to densely populated

No more. Stonesfield is big enough

Number 12 is Pond hill and Longore

Pub garden

Steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey woods, lower part of Bagg's Bottom

Stockey woods, Stockey bottom

The area NW of Lower farm (9) along the Salt way should be protected

The areas that surround the protected areas, otherwise we will slowly isolate & suffocate the wildlife that flourishes there

The Blenheim fields to the right and left of the Oxfordshire Way, leading out from Laughton Hill.

The common

The Dene

The field behind The close at the bottom of Combe Road near Tudor's field

The field north east of Charity Farm, on the right as leaving the village by the Woodstock Road

The fields around Hill Barn Farm and to the south of the footpath between Srtonesfield and Charlbury

The fields either side of Farley Lane

The fields on the left all the way up the hill from Waterloo Barn to the ridge.

The land going north and west from 9 up to the ridge

The land heading out of the village on The Ridings passed the speed demarcation sign

The land north of the Ridings up to the Charlbury Road

The land on either side of The Ridings

The play area at the end of Pumbro

The Ridings towards Callows Farm

The triangle between Witney Lane, the Fawler road and the North Leigh road.

the triangular green outside the pub. the fields either side of Witney Lane (Johnnie's Lane).

The fields beyond and beside the ridge above Lower Farm, heading either west towards Charlbury or turning right and heading north. The fields beyond Callows Farm.

There is no need to build more anywhere as Blenheim are taking care of that!!

those running radially westwards from the foot of Laughton Hill between 8&9

To build in any of the open land surrounding Stonesfield would change the character of the village & its rurality. It would be detrimental to nature & wildlife.

Triangle at junction of pond hill and the ridings in front of the pub

There were no relevant text comments at the end of the survey.

Policy SEL5 – Blue/green corridors

Further Evidence for the Examiner

WODC Local Plan 2031

WODC Public realm and green infrastructure

8.25 Green infrastructure consists of green areas in both rural and urban settings and fulfils a wide variety of environmental, social and economic functions. Green infrastructure can include nature reserves, designated sites, recreation grounds, parks and open spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and many other green areas. Good quality, accessible space is highly valued by the public.

The condition of the public realm (which includes areas as diverse as Burford High Street, Woodstock's Market Square and Langel Common in Witney) has a significant impact on the street scene and quality of life and is an important component of the visual, spatial and historic qualities that make an area special and bring neighbourhoods together, contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of an area.

Often no single authority, agency or owner has control over – or responsibility for – the management of such areas. Their provision, maintenance and enhancement forms a fundamental aspect of good design (see also Policy OS4). Such areas can be further enhanced by the provision of public art projects (usually created by visual artists and craftspeople for a specific site).

8.26 Protecting and securing improvements to the public realm is an important component to achieving sustainable communities. The NPPF emphasises that development should promote a network of public places and green spaces which are attractive, accessible, safe, uncluttered, work effectively for all users and provide a high-quality landscape/townscape. (The design section of PPG provides useful additional guidance.³¹) Further benefits come from these areas being integrated through walkways, cycleways, rights of way, open spaces and natural and green corridors. ³¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

8.27 Many areas within the public realm perform a wide variety of functions. This multifunctionality of space occurs especially with green space: for example by providing a wide range of ecosystem services, helping to enhance biodiversity through improved connectivity, linking urban areas to their rural hinterlands, contributing to water management, creating a sense of place, providing opportunities for exercise, active recreation and healthy living, enhancing image, and creating places where people want to invest, generating jobs and businesses. It therefore has economic and social benefits and mitigates the impact of climate change.

8.28 As a predominantly rural district, it is not surprising that West Oxfordshire has a wide variety of green space, albeit not all publicly accessible or only accessible along public rights of way. In order to

achieve the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits, green infrastructure networks need to be planned and managed – More, Bigger, Better Managed and Joined. This will be particularly important for those areas of greatest potential change, e.g. the main towns and villages (where an accessible, green infrastructure network, close to where people live, needs to be treated as integral to the design and planning of new development) and where existing projects are already underway or emerging, e.g. the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Cotswolds Save Our Magnificent Meadows Campaign, BBOWT’s Upper Thames Living Landscape Project, RSPB’s Futurescapes Initiatives, the River Windrush and Evenlode Catchment Partnership Projects and Conservation Target Areas. A Green Infrastructure Study (2011) has been undertaken for West Oxfordshire and further guidance on green infrastructure will be published, including identifying opportunities for partnership working, strengthening and reinforcing networks, enhancing connectivity (for example through the creation, restoration and enhancement of linking habitats and ‘stepping stones’ through the landscape) and achieving long term management. The role street trees, gardens, waterways, public parks and open space can play as part of urban green infrastructure needs to be recognised

POLICY EH3: Biodiversity and geodiversity The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity, including by:

- giving sites and species of international nature conservation importance and nationally important sites of special scientific interest the highest level of protection from any development that will have an adverse impact;
- requiring a Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect, either alone or in combination, on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen oxide emissions and deposition;
- protecting and mitigating for impacts on priority habitats, protected species and priority species, both for their importance individually and as part of a wider network;
- avoiding loss, deterioration or harm to locally important wildlife and geological sites and sites supporting irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and aged or veteran trees), UK priority habitats and priority species, except in exceptional circumstances where the importance of the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and the harm can be mitigated through appropriate measures and a net gain in biodiversity is secured;
- ensuring development works towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs);
- promoting the conservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, particularly within the CTAs and NIAs; • taking all opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially where this will help deliver networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure and UK priority habitats and species targets and meet the aims of CTAs;
- ensuring that all applications that might adversely affect biodiversity are accompanied by adequate ecological survey information in accordance with BS 42020:2013 unless alternative approaches are agreed as being appropriate with the District Council’s ecologist;
- all major and minor applications demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity where possible. For major applications this should be demonstrated in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC) based on that described in the DEFRA

Biodiversity Offsetting guidance or a suitably amended version. For minor applications a BIAC will not usually be required but might be requested at the Council's discretion;

- all development incorporating biodiversity enhancement features.

All developments will be expected to provide towards the provision of necessary enhancements in areas of biodiversity importance

POLICY EH4: Public realm and green infrastructure

The existing areas of public space and green infrastructure of West Oxfordshire will be protected and enhanced for their multi-functional role, including their biodiversity, recreational, accessibility, health and landscape value and for the contribution they make towards combating climate change. Public realm and publicly accessible green infrastructure network considerations should be integral to the planning of new development. New development should:

- avoid the loss, fragmentation loss of functionality of the existing green infrastructure network, including within the built environment, such as access to waterways, unless it can be demonstrated that replacement provision can be provided which will improve the green infrastructure network in terms of its quantity, quality, accessibility and management arrangements
- provide opportunities for walking and cycling within the built-up areas and connecting settlements to the countryside through a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes
- maximise opportunities for urban greening such as through appropriate landscaping schemes and the planting of street trees
- provide opportunities for improvements to the District's multi-functional network of green infrastructure (including Conservation Target Areas) and open space, (through for example extending spaces and connections and/or better management), particularly in areas of new development and/or where stakeholder/partnership projects already exist or are emerging, in accordance with the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan, its Open Spaces Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy, Living Landscape Schemes, locally identified Nature Improvement Areas and any future relevant plans (such as Neighbourhood Plans) and programmes as appropriate
- consider the integration of green infrastructure into proposals as an alternative or to complement 'grey infrastructure' (such as manmade ditches and detention ponds and new roads)
- demonstrate how lighting will not adversely impact on green infrastructure that functions as nocturnal wildlife movement and foraging corridors. Contributions towards local green infrastructure projects will be sought where appropriate. If providing green infrastructure as part of a development, applicants should demonstrate how it will be maintained in the long term.

POLICY EH5: Sport, recreation and children's play New development should not result in the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless up to date assessment shows the asset is surplus to requirements or the need for and benefits of the alternative land use clearly outweigh the loss and equivalent replacement provision is made.

Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to open space, sports and recreational buildings and land*.

* Regard will be had to the Open Space Study (2013) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2014) for West Oxfordshire.

Environment and heritage

9.6.18 This area is particularly environmentally sensitive being covered almost entirely by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Burford falls within the Upper Windrush Valley Landscape character area which has been described as an area that is highly attractive, remarkably unspoilt and with a rural character. The Upper Windrush is rich in biodiversity and is designated a Conservation Target Area. Wychwood Forest (part National Nature Reserve) is the basis of an extensive project⁶⁰ to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with this former royal hunting forest

9.6.19 Charlbury has a very strong landscape and environmental setting, lying as it does in the Cotswolds AONB and the Wychwood Project Area. With Charlbury lying in the catchment area for the River Evenlode, and with a number of spring-fed tributaries of the Evenlode flowing through or close to the town, the exceptional rainfall experienced during summer 2007 resulted in flooding within the area.

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west. The village of Shipton under Wychwood sits within a sensitive valley side context within an extensive conservation area and within the Cotswolds AONB. The northern part of the village is subject to significant flooding constraints.

9.6.21 The area is also significant in terms of the historic environment. Much of Burford is covered by a Conservation Area and is home to a number of listed buildings. There is evidence of settlement in the Charlbury area since Neolithic and Bronze ages and an extensive Conservation Area covers the built-up area of the town, plus its immediate setting. Many of the Cotswold stone buildings are listed for their architectural or historic interest.

Cotswold Management Plan

Policy CE7: Biodiversity and nature recovery

CE7.1. Biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the Cotswolds National Landscape and in its setting. This should be achieved in accordance with the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and focus on the priority species and habitats listed in Appendix 7.

CE7.2. Policy and strategic documents that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following: i. Local Plans. ii. Neighbourhood Development Plans. iii. Green Infrastructure Strategies. iv. Tree and Woodland Strategies. v. Ecological Emergency and Climate Change Strategies. vi. Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

CE7.3. Proposals that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following delivery mechanisms: i. Environmental Land Management and other grant schemes and rural development support mechanisms; ii. Biodiversity Net Gain; iii. Payment for Ecosystem Services including but not limited to carbon sequestration and storage, flood management, water supply and water quality improvements.

CE7.4. A mitigation hierarchy should be applied to development proposals whereby adverse impacts on biodiversity are: (i) avoided; (ii) mitigated; and (iii) compensated for. Development proposals

should provide a net gain in biodiversity of at least 20% particularly with regard to the species and habitats listed in Appendix 7.

CE7.5. Damage or loss of irreplaceable habitat should be avoided. Irreplaceable habitat includes but is not limited to: I. Ancient and veteran trees II. Ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600); III. Ancient unimproved grassland (surviving since 1945); IV. Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840).

CE7.6. Measures to conserve and restore biodiversity including the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan should be delivered in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Policy CE7: Biodiversity and nature recovery (continued) The story of our loss of wildlife is well documented and understood. Climate change is a well-recognised driver combining with habitat destruction to threaten the loss of our already diminished wildlife at an even greater scale and pace. The need for action is urgent if we are to avoid a mass extinction event. We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats.

The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan 32 was adopted as Cotswolds National Landscape guidance in October 2021. It represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change. The current extent of wildlife rich habitats within the Cotswolds is 48,000 Ha which is 23% of the area of the National Landscape. The extent of these habitats needed to form a robust nature recovery network that will enable wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change is 82,000 Ha, 40% of the area. The rationale for these figures is outlined in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and summarised in Appendix 8.

In the wider countryside agri-environmental programmes are the most important single mechanism for developing a nature recovery network and Environmental Land Management schemes will play a critically important role. It is essential that they include the measures recommended in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.

Additional funding mechanisms are starting to play an increasingly significant role in supporting the recovery of nature particularly Biodiversity Net Gain as mitigation from development and Payments for Ecosystem Services. Water and carbon collection and storage are becoming increasingly valued as ecosystem services and their importance will continue to grow. Although the national statutory requirement for net gain in biodiversity arising from development proposals will be 10%, the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan states that it should be 20% within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The justification for this enhanced net gain in biodiversity is outlined in appendix 8. This justification includes:

- The Landscapes Review stating that National Landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks
- The Governments response to the Landscapes Review:
- Linking improvements to the way these areas are protected and managed for nature recovery to the commitment to protect 30% of UK land for nature by 2030.
- Stating that they; “will put our protected landscapes at the heart of delivering our nature recovery”.

The inclusion of species within the biodiversity net gain policy is aspirational and would take place outside of the formal development plan related biodiversity net gain process. The priority habitats

and species list in Appendix 7 is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

The habitats and species in appendix 7 are considered to be: (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and/or (ii) those for which the Cotswolds National Landscape is considered to a stronghold. There are other priority habitats and species within the National Landscape, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above.

Habitats and species not on the NERC Act list but which have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape are also included. The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan defines ancient and veteran trees (based on a list of characteristics), ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600) and ancient grasslands (“unimproved” and predating modern agricultural practices) as irreplaceable habitat.

A wildflower grassland present in 1945 at the end of the Second World War is likely to be ancient. This should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them. Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840) are included as irreplaceable habitat and this should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them because:

- Hedgerows are a priority habitat.
- Hedgerows are a key characteristic/feature of many of the landscape character types within the
- National Landscapes’ Landscape Character Assessment.
- Ancient hedgerows are an important component of the historic environment and the cultural heritage of the area.

Although Policy CE7 focuses on the National Landscape and its setting, consideration will also need to be given to ecological networks in the wider environment, for example, river corridor ecological networks where the rivers start in the National Landscape but extend well beyond its boundaries.

One of the ways wildlife adapts to climate change is to move northwards to a new ‘climate space’. This means that we need to think about the National Landscape’s future wildlife in addition to that currently present, particularly that currently found to the south of the Cotswolds. Big Chalk is a partnership programme aiming to improve ecological connectivity across and between the calcareous landscapes of southern England from the south coast to the midlands.

Evidence for Examiner – Survey results

Individual Survey Questions

See follow page for results, which shows very strong support for conserving the countryside and rural community. This support strengthens with the length of time living in the village.

See following tables for results, which highlights the strong reason for living in Stonesfield being the countryside and rural community. This view is strengthened the longer residents live in the village. The survey also showed the overwhelming support for the importance of protecting green spaces, footpaths, wildlife and the natural environment. Finally, the survey showed residents strongly in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan supporting tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Q8

Q8 If you moved to Stonesfield under 5 years, why did you move here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	
Countryside	106
Rural community	70
Other (please specify)	44
House prices	40
Proximity to employment	38
Family connections	35
Village schooling	17
Catchment area for schooling	15
Facilities	15
No particular reason	7
Total responses	387

Q9

Q9 If you have lived in Stonesfield over 5 years, why do you stay here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	
Countryside	405
Rural community	302
Grew up here / family connections	163
Other (please specify)	106
Facilities	91
Village schooling	61
Employment	51
House prices	42

No particular reason	31
Catchment area for schooling	27
Total responses	1279

Q24

Q24 Frequency of footpath use	At least Weekly	Monthly	Never or less than monthly
Either Bagg's Bottom path, from the Combe dip to the river	214	118	293
Brook Lane to the bridge	283	127	334
Paths from top of Brook Lane to the Scout hut	265	100	333
Path from Churchfields down sledging hill to Stockey Woods	256	109	325
Any of the paths in Stockey Woods	291	110	349
Any of the paths across Stonesfield Common	237	118	299
Oxon Way past Lower Farm towards Charlbury	187	133	283

Q25

Frequency of footpath use	At Least Weekly	Monthly	Never or Less than Monthly
The ridge path	187	131	265
Path from Newbarn Farm to the Ridings near Callow Farm	186	137	260
Path from the B4437 down to, and along Kingswood Bottom	59	118	404
Path from the Ridings past Kings Wood to the Woodstock Road	73	91	418
Akeman Street path from the Stonesfield steps to the Combe dip	100	121	361
Farley Lane to the Woodstock Road	91	95	397

Q26

Q26 How important are the following:	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	Less Important/Not Important
Protecting green spaces	573	11	0
Protecting local rural footpaths and views	575	10	0
Protecting the Parish's traditional buildings and other heritage assets	540	35	9
Protecting trees, woodland, hedges, and countryside	578	7	0
Protecting wildlife and biodiversity	573	10	0

Q27

Q27 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following:	Strongly or Slightly Agree	Neutral	Strongly or Slightly Disagree
Tourism and leisure development that meets the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.	427	137	34

Survey Question 28, Specific support for each green spaces was recorded in the survey as follows:

National Planning Policy allows communities to "identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them" by designating them in their neighbourhood plans as Local Green Spaces. This designation must not simply be "NIMBY" but must be "consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services." The designation should only be used where the green space (a) is in reasonably close proximity to the community (b) is demonstrably special to the community (c) holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or the richness of its wildlife and (d) is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Taking into account requirements (a) to (d), to what extent do you agree that any one or more of the areas numbered on the map should be protected in this way?

Q28 Green spaces	Strongly or slightly agree	Strongly or slightly disagree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly agree	Strongly or slightly disagree	Neutral
13. The village playing field	93.3%	1.8%	4.9%	10	533	571
11. Primary School playing field	91.4%	2.4%	6.1%	14	523	572
5. The glebe land between Brook Lane and the Scout hut	88.6%	2.1%	9.3%	12	507	572
6. Churchfield Allotments	87.6%	3.0%	9.5%	17	500	571
4. Field on the right at the top of Brook Lane	86.1%	3.0%	10.9%	17	490	569
8. The paddock to the left of Witney Lane	84.1%	3.0%	12.9%	17	477	567
7. The paddocks on the right as you walk down Timber Yard Lane towards Scout hut	83.9%	2.5%	13.7%	14	478	570
15. Woodstock Road Allotments	83.9%	3.5%	12.6%	20	478	570
9. The Dene	81.2%	3.9%	15.0%	22	461	568
12. Corner of Pond Hill and Greenfields	81.1%	3.9%	15.0%	22	454	560
3. Land between Church Street and Brook Lane	80.5%	3.9%	15.6%	22	459	570
14. Field north of Woodstock Road	78.2%	5.9%	16.0%	33	441	564
2. Paddock between Manor House and Combe Road.	75.9%	6.3%	17.8%	36	435	573
10. Fields behind the garage and the White Horse	75.7%	5.3%	19.0%	30	431	569
1. Land south west of Charity Farm estate	73.7%	5.6%	20.7%	32	420	570

Survey Question Q29 Are there any other parcels of land that you think should be protected in this way? Specify in the space below NOTE: The steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey Woods, the lower part of Baggs Bottom and the Common are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are therefore already protected.

Answered 84

Skipped 528

All areas in boundary. Too much large-scale development.

All fields round Stonesfield

All land along the river

*All land on either side of Oxfordshire Way going north (ie above Lower Farm, to Waterloo Barn and***** farm). This track to be kept as a footpath/rough track (i.e. vehicles discouraged).*

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

All should now be protected

Along the Woodstock Road

Burial ground along Stonesfield Riding.

Church burial grounds

Combe Road fields

Ditchley gate area of Blenheim before they turn it into another housing estate destroying the woodland

Everywhere. Stonesfield has already been over developed and spoilt.

Farley Lane - too much development, The Ridings too much development

field behind the paddocks ox298gg

Fields along the ridgeway,

Fields belonging to Spratts Farm above Witney Lane

Fields between the road to Fawler and footpath towards Oxfordshire Way (between 8 and 9)

Fields either side of the Oxfordshire Way off Laughton's Hill.

Fields either side of The Ridings towards Callow Farm

Fields on both sides of Combe Road

Fields to north of Witney Lane

Fields to right of Witney Lane. Opposite 8

Fields to the right and left at the end of Farley lane. Also all land from village boundary to Callows farm

Grounds of the Manor

If it is green belt it should be protected

Land adjacent to Oxfordshire Way enroute to Charlbury

land alongside the oxford way towards Charlbury

Land below nos 3 and 4 down to the river.

Land between areas designated 9 (the Dene) and 10 (land behind garage and white horse), and land immediately North of area 10.

Land between Ridings Close and Callows Farm, both sides of the road.

land both sides of the long straight out of the village must remain agricultural. no housing developments should be allowed.

Land either side of the Oxfordshire way past the farmers barn etc.

Land either side of Oxfordshire Way near Lower Farm

Land north of Farley Lane to Callows Farm along the Ridings

Land on Combe Road adjacent to the social housing

Land on the right as you drive up the hill out of the village from the bottom of Laughton Hill

Land Opposite Blenheim (Velocity nonsense)

Land opposite North Farm along Farley lane track

Land that can be seen whilst on the common, and views from the Evenlode valley

Lane between Farley lane and Callow Farm and also ruddy lane

No more houses anywhere - not enough infrastructure

No more infill. Stonesfield to densely populated

No more. Stonesfield is big enough

Number 12 is Pond hill and Longore

Pub garden

Steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey woods, lower part of Bagg's Bottom

Stockey woods, Stockey bottom

The area NW of Lower farm (9) along the Salt way should be protected

The areas that surround the protected areas, otherwise we will slowly isolate & suffocate the wildlife that flourishes there

The Blenheim fields to the right and left of the Oxfordshire Way, leading out from Laughton Hill.

The common

The Dene

The field behind The close at the bottom of Combe Road near Tudors field

The field north east of Charity Farm, on the right as leaving the village by the Woodstock Road

The fields around Hill Barn Farm and to the south of the footpath between Stonesfield and Charlbury

The fields either side of Farley Lane

The fields on the left all the way up the hill from Waterloo Barn to the ridge.

The land going north and west from 9 up to the ridge

The land heading out of the village on The Ridings passed the speed demarcation sign

The land north of the Ridings up to the Charlbury Road

The land on either side of The Ridings

The play area at the end of Pumbro

The Ridings towards Callows Farm

The triangle between Witney Lane, the Fawler road and the North Leigh road.

the triangular green outside the pub. the fields either side of Witney Lane (Johnnie's Lane).

The fields beyond and beside the ridge above Lower Farm, heading either west towards Charlbury or turning right and heading north. The fields beyond Callows Farm.

There is no need to build more anywhere as Blenheim are taking care of that!!

those running radially westwards from the foot of Laughton Hill between 8&9

To build in any of the open land surrounding Stonesfield would change the character of the village & its rurality. It would be detrimental to nature & wildlife.

Triangle at junction of pond hill and the ridings in front of the pub.

Free text comments

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield.

- Around 310 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being either the countryside, walks, quietness, rural setting, dark skies.
- Over 220 responders gave the same reasons as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.
- Over 155 gave these reasons as the third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.

Also:

- Around 156 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.
- Around 99 responders gave, as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.
- Around 46 responders gave, as their third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.

There were a few free text comments at the end of the Survey that were relevant:

Management of sewage and cleaning up of Evenlode

Better planning to help enhance the natural areas we have. Planned seating and greener areas in the village.

Q31 I object to the three questions by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

There is potential for renewable energy generation without necessarily compromising the character of the village and surrounds. The need to think a bit differently about renewable energy has indeed been the subject of debate within the Cotswold National Landscape strategy process, where it is accepted that the Cotswolds has continually changed over many centuries and must continue to do so, with major challenges such as climate change demanding a response. Although I strongly support the protection of the natural environment I also believe the future will not look like the past. The village should consider being part of the trend to the 'democratisation of energy production'.

The Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly preclude major development in Stonesfield. Such development is already restricted by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan, by virtue of location within the Cotswolds AONB, other than in exceptional circumstances, and there are no conceivable exceptional circumstances which could apply in Stonesfield. Therefore such a restriction would not be inconsistent with the Local Development Plan or the NPPF.

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

More allotment space

A suggestion for a tree shelter belt outside the access to North Farm and continuing along Farley Lane to the west linking with the future burial ground or otherwise along the track to the allotments.

Policy SEL6 – Biodiversity and trees

Further Evidence for the Examiner

NPPF

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and clear diversity by plans which should: –

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

2. WODC Local Plan 2031

Policy EH3 deals with biodiversity and geo-diversity.

Following the 1992 “Earth Summit” in Rio De Janeiro the UK and 150 other countries signed the Convention on Biodiversity and pursuant to this in 1994 the UK produced the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and in 1998 Oxfordshire produced its first Biodiversity Action Plan. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 at para 8.17 acknowledges that “A partnership of conservation bodies in Oxfordshire (formerly the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum and now Wild Oxfordshire) has assessed the county’s strategic habitats and species and devised Conservation Target Areas” which “are the most important areas for wildlife conservation where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit.” Thus The West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy EH3 stipulates that “The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geo-diversity...” inter alia by “ensuring development works towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Conservation Target Areas ...”

Significant parts of the Parish of Stonesfield are within the Northern Evenlode Valleys CTA, including the SSSI and the narrow Dry Valley extending to the relatively flat grasslands at Newbarn Farm at the valley head.

POLICY EH3: Biodiversity and geodiversity

The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity, including by:

- giving sites and species of international nature conservation importance and nationally important sites of special scientific interest the highest level of protection from any development that will have an adverse impact;
- requiring a Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect, either alone or in combination, on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen oxide emissions and deposition;
- protecting and mitigating for impacts on priority habitats, protected species and priority species, both for their importance individually and as part of a wider network;

- avoiding loss, deterioration or harm to locally important wildlife and geological sites and sites supporting irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and aged or veteran trees), UK priority habitats and priority species, except in exceptional circumstances where the importance of the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and the harm can be mitigated through appropriate measures and a net gain in biodiversity is secured;
- ensuring development works towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs);
- promoting the conservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, particularly within the CTAs and NIAs;
- taking all opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially where this will help deliver networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure and UK priority habitats and species targets and meet the aims of CTAs;
- ensuring that all applications that might adversely affect biodiversity are accompanied by adequate ecological survey information in accordance with BS 42020:2013 unless alternative approaches are agreed as being appropriate with the District Council's ecologist;
- all major and minor applications demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity where possible. For major applications this should be demonstrated in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC) based on that described in the DEFRA Biodiversity Offsetting guidance or a suitably amended version. For minor applications a BIAC will not usually be required but might be requested at the Council's discretion;
- all development incorporating biodiversity enhancement features.

All developments will be expected to provide towards the provision of necessary enhancements in areas of biodiversity importance.

The supporting text includes:

8.14 Biodiversity protection and enhancement provides clear benefits to nature but the benefits are far wider than this alone. Nature's services – using the ecosystem services approach advocated by the Government through the Natural Environment White Paper – include: cultural services to people and the economy (such as the role fulfilled by the Wychwood National Nature Reserve in terms of sense of place, recreation, tourism and education); regulating services (e.g. the water meadows along the River Thames and its tributaries providing natural flood relief and water purification and improving water quality); and provisioning services (ranging from wine and cider to food and timber production from our countryside).

8.15 In recognition of their wide-ranging benefits, the protection of West Oxfordshire's wildlife and the conservation, enhancement and restoration of its biodiversity and geodiversity are promoted. A strategic approach is advocated, giving recognition to the contributions made by sites, areas and features, individually (following the national hierarchical approach to site and species protection²⁹) and in combination to wider ecological networks. Within the NPPF, Section 11 and Paragraph 109 and 118 are of particular relevance, along with the accompanying PPG.

8.16 Networks of natural habitats provide a particularly valuable resource and need protection and, where possible, reinforcement, integration and expansion, creating links between fragmented habitats to create greater coherence and resilience, not least because this will increase the opportunity for species and habitats to adapt to climate change and other pressures. Landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, rivers, meadows, ponds and floodplains can be invaluable

components of these networks, providing wildlife corridors and stepping-stones in both urban and rural areas. The early identification of features of value is needed in any development proposal to Section 11 of the NPPF is also of particular relevance. ensure adequate measures are taken for their incorporation, enhancement and protection. In order to identify how such features within a development site form part of a wider ecological network, the landscape context of the site and the habitat connectivity beyond its boundaries should be taken into account.

8.17 A partnership of conservation bodies in Oxfordshire (formerly the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum and now Wild Oxfordshire) has assessed the county's key strategic habitats and species and devised Conservation Target Areas (CTA) - see Figure 8c. These are the most important areas for wildlife conservation where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit. The main aim within CTAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through maintenance, restoration and creation of UK priority habitats and areas for priority species.

8.18 In planning terms, CTAs can be considered as potential areas of ecological constraint and, more positively, as areas of ecological opportunity. Development proposed within or close to a CTA should identify the biodiversity constraints and opportunities and show how the proposal will help to achieve the aims of the CTA. West Oxfordshire CTAs include the Upper Windrush and Wychwood Forest.

8.19 The creation of coherent and resilient large scale ecological networks is being encouraged by the Government through the establishment of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs), where the aim is to achieve significant and demonstrable enhancement through partnership working. It is intended that during the Plan period, new, locally determined, NIAs will be identified and established in the county. The CTAs, Strategic Green Infrastructure and Natural Character Areas are likely to form the core of these NIAs. The Cotswolds Ecological Networks Partnership has already identified two Cotswolds NIAs; extensive parts of West Oxfordshire are covered by the Cotswolds Valleys NIA

(Circular 06/2005 provides guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biological conservation and their impact within the planning system.)

WODC LP 2031 also notes:

9.6.20 This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west

New development brings a risk of causing further damage to local wildlife but it would also afford an opportunity to enhance and create habitats and to restore key ecological functions. This is of particular importance when considering any developments which adjoin Conservation Target Areas or Blue/Green corridors.

7.3.6 Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) identify some of the most important areas for wildlife conservation in Oxfordshire, where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit. Particular emphasis must be given to meeting the aims of the CTAs within Stonesfield parish as defined in the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. These aims are to achieve net gains for each of the following:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – management, restoration and creation;
- Wood pasture – management and restoration;
- Limestone (lowland calcareous) grassland – management, restoration and creation;
- Hedgerows – management and creation;
- Arable fields – management and creation (particularly for arable wildflowers);

- Ponds – management and creation.

7.3.7 All new developments in areas adjacent to the CTAs will provide an enhanced wildlife friendly environment by installing such things as swift boxes, bat roosts and hedgehog gates where they are appropriate. Developments with boundaries to green space will augment and enrich wildlife corridors by suitable planting of indigenous trees (see paragraph 7.3.12), shrubs and locally appropriate wildflower mixes, with measures in place for appropriate management to ensure on-going, habitat-rich wildlife areas which deliver net gains in biodiversity.

7.3.8 Given the emphasis on the creation of woodland as part of the CTAs, all opportunities for new woodland planting will be encouraged and supported.

7.3.9 Development should retain existing trees, hedgerows and habitats which are important for their historic, visual or biodiversity value unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh any loss. In particular, development proposals must take account of, and retain and include, individual trees or groups of trees of local importance and significance or of high biodiversity value. Sufficient space will be retained around trees to ensure their longevity.

7.3.10 Where it is necessary for new trees, shrubs and hedgerows to be planted, either to replace those lost in the process of development or to provide landscaping and screening for new development, native species which are in keeping with local woodland species and which are of high value to wildlife, including pollinators, should be selected wherever possible. See paragraph 7.3.12 for a list of suggested local species. Where non-native or ornamental trees are lost, they should be replaced where their visual or historic context makes this appropriate.

7.3.11 Strong support will be given to the retention of natural boundary treatments and the provision of new areas of natural planting and habitat creation as part of new developments. This will help to promote wildlife corridors which may include managed road verges and hedgerows and, where appropriate, provide natural screening to help integrate new development with existing built-up areas.

7.3.12 Trees, hedgerows and other habitat features are important to both the character of the village and its biodiversity. Where development involves new planting, it is important that species are selected which will support the existing network of wildlife and which fit in with the character of the area. Suitable local species which could be used are; Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Willow (*Salix caprea*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) Birch (*Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*), Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Field maple (*Acer campestre*), and for larger trees, Lime (*Tilia*) and in wetter areas, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). For smaller trees and hedgerow trees planting should include Hawthorn, (*Crataegus* spp), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and Guelder Rose (*Viburnum*).

Species and features currently in evidence include:

in the Stockey Bottom/Stockey Plantation part of the SSSI Beech-Wych Elm; ground flora which includes several species of plants associated with ancient woodland including Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, as well as Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, Spurge Laurel *Daphne laureola*, and Yellow Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*; patches of protected Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis*– a rare, clump-forming, woody based perennial that is only native to a few sites in southern England.

To the south and south-west of Stonesfield, at Stockey Bottom and Bagg's Bottom, there are some areas of Priority Habitat Inventory Lowland Calcareous Grassland. These areas form part of the

Stonesfield Common, Bottoms and Banks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a series of steep-sided dry valleys and banks with unimproved limestone grassland and scrub habitats. Grassland such as this was once widespread on the oolitic limestone of western Oxfordshire, and the importance of this SSSI therefore lies in its survival as one of the largest remnants of this grassland type in the county.

Stonesfield Common has a sward that has been dominated by upright Brome *Bromus erectus* and with a herb flora including Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*. On the steeper slopes of Stonesfield Common a shorter sward is present. This has a flora which includes rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, wild mignonette *Reseda lutea*, common toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*, bee orchid *Ophrys apifera* and the nationally uncommon bastard toadflax *Thesium humifusum*.

Semi-natural habitats including hay meadow, grassland and mature hedges within the narrow pastoral enclosures east of Lower Farm.

Traditional woodland trees adjacent to Stonesfield Riding near Callow Farm are included in the Priority Habitat Inventory

Although there is little hedgerow cover in the majority of the Limbeck to Callow Farm Plateau Farmland LLCA, to the south east of Callow Farm (partly on the boundary with LLVA C) there are some surviving older hedgerows with some fine hedgerow trees that partially break up views to the south east when approaching Stonesfield from the north on Stonesfield Riding. Also in this LLCA a small triangle of traditional orchard on the eastern edge of Callow Farm is identified as Priority Habitat. The land provides a habitat for typical arable assemblage farmland birds, including Linnet, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer and Skylark.

In the King's Wood to Kingswood Bottom Wooded Farmland LLCA a dense line of mature trees flanks Stonesfield Riding west of King's Wood, continues along a sinuous boundary north of the B4437 to the west of Kingswood Farm (that is flanked by the Shakespeare's Way), and presents a wooded backdrop to the west of the LLCA that is visually enclosing. This sense of enclosure is reinforced by woodland at Sheer's Copse to the west of Stonefield Riding, outside of the parish. To the east of the LLCA dense mature vegetation on field boundaries either side of the site of a Roman Villa, and to the north of this at Ditchley Dell, combine with the generally wooded context of the surrounding area beyond the parish boundary (e.g. woodland at Glympton Wood, Callowhill Brake and Wootton Wood). This creates a distinct sense of enclosure to the east of Kingswood Farm, and provides much of the wooded context that characterises the LLCA.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory for England shows that King's Wood contains both ancient and semi-natural woodland, which includes Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland, and Ancient Replanted Woodland (which includes coniferous plantations). Although there is no public access into this woodland, Shakespeare's Way runs along its southern boundary from which there are occasional views into the woodland. Parts of the replanted woodland have been cleared for timber, and these areas have mostly been left to be naturally re-colonised. A Bugslife 'B-line' crosses the northern part of the LLCA, to the north of the B4437. B-lines are 'insect pathways' that run through England's countryside and towns where they link existing wildlife areas together. By restoring and creating a series of wildflower-rich habitats they provide a solution to the problem of the loss of flowers and pollinators, benefiting bees, butterflies and a host of other wildlife

Evidence for Examiner

Individual Survey Questions

Q26

Q26 How important are the following:	Very important/important	Neutral	Less important/not important
Protecting green spaces	573	11	0
Protecting trees, woodland, hedges, and countryside	578	7	0
Protecting wildlife and biodiversity	573	10	0
Addressing pollution of River Evenlode	575	8	1

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield.

- Around 156 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.
- Around 99 responders gave, as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.
- Around 46 responders gave, as their third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the woods/trees/nature and the natural environment and countryside.

Q29

This was a free text question: Are there any other parcels of land that you think should be protected in this way? Specify in the space below. NOTE: The steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey Woods, the lower part of Baggs Bottom and the Common are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are therefore already protected.

Free text comments

Answered: 84

Skipped: 528

All areas in boundary. Too much large scale development.

All fields round Stonesfield

All land along the river

*All land on either side of Oxfordshire Way going north (i.e. above Lower Farm, to Waterloo Barn and ***** farm). This track to be kept as a footpath/rough track (i.e. vehicles discouraged).*

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

ALL RURAL LAND IN THE AREA MUST BE PROTECTED

All should now be protected

Along the Woodstock Road

Burial ground along Stonesfield Riding.

Church burial grounds

Combe Road fields

Ditchley gate area of Blenheim before they turn it into another housing estate destroying the woodland

Everywhere. Stonesfield has already been over developed and spoilt.

Farley Lane - too much development, The Ridings too much development

field behind the paddocks ox298gg

Fields along the ridgeway,

Fields belonging to Spratts Farm above Witney Lane

Fields between the road to Fawler and footpath towards Oxfordshire Way (between 8 and 9)

Fields either side of the Oxfordshire Way off Laughton's Hill.

Fields either side of The Ridings towards Callow Farm

Fields on both sides of Combe Road

Fields to north of Witney Lane

Fields to right of Witney Lane. Opposite 8

Fields to the right and left at the end of Farley lane. Also all land from village boundary to Callows Farm

Grounds of the Manor

If it is green belt it should be protected

Land adjacent to Oxfordshire Way enroute to Charlbury

land alongside the oxford way towards Charlbury

Land below nos 3 and 4 down to the river.

Land between areas designated 9 (the Dene) and 10 (land behind garage and white horse), and land immediately North of area 10.

Land between Ridings Close and Callows Farm, both sides of the road.

land both sides of the long straight out of the village must remain agricultural. no housing developments should be allowed.

Land either side of the Oxfordshire way past the farmers barn etc.

Land either side of Oxfordshire Way near Lower Farm

Land north of Farley Lane to Callows Farm along the Ridings

Land on Combe Road adjacent to the social housing

Land on the right as you drive up the hill out of the village from the bottom of Laughton Hill

Land Opposite Blenheim (Velocity nonsense)

Land opposite North Farm along Farley lane track

Land that can be seen whilst on the common, and views from the Evenlode valley

Lane between Farley lane and Callow Farm and also ruddy lane

No more houses anywhere - not enough infrastructure

No more infill. Stonesfield to densely populated

No more. Stonesfield is big enough

Number 12 is Pond hill and Longore

Pub garden

Steep fields of Stockey Bottom, Stockey woods, lower part of Bagg's Bottom

Stockey woods, Stockey bottom

The area NW of Lower farm (9) along the Salt way should be protected

The areas that surround the protected areas, otherwise we will slowly isolate & suffocate the wildlife that flourishes there

The Blenheim fields to the right and left of the Oxfordshire Way, leading out from Laughton Hill.

The common

The Dene

The field behind The close at the bottom of Combe Road near Tudor's field

The field north east of Charity Farm, on the right as leaving the village by the Woodstock Road

The fields around Hill Barn Farm and to the south of the footpath between Stonesfield and Charlbury

The fields either side of Farley Lane

The fields on the left all the way up the hill from Waterloo Barn to the ridge.

The land going north and west from 9 up to the ridge

The land heading out of the village on The Ridings passed the speed demarcation sign

The land north of the Ridings up to the Charlbury Road

The land on either side of The Ridings

The play area at the end of Pumbro

The Ridings towards Callows Farm

The triangle between Witney Lane, the Fawler road and the North Leigh road.

the triangular green outside the pub. the fields either side of Witney Lane (Johnnie's Lane).

The fields beyond and beside the ridge above Lower Farm, heading either west towards Charlbury or turning right and heading north. The fields beyond Callows Farm.

There is no need to build more anywhere as Blenheim are taking care of that!!

those running radially westwards from the foot of Laughton Hill between 8&9

To build in any of the open land surrounding Stonesfield would change the character of the village & its rurality. It would be detrimental to nature & wildlife.

Triangle at junction of pond hill and the ridings in front of the pub

There were a few free text comments at the end of the survey:

Better planning to help enhance the natural areas we have. Planned seating and greener areas in the village.

Stonesfield is within an AONB and any future development should be resisted to preserve the green spaces and countryside, national food security and wildlife.

Policy SEL7 – Protecting footpaths

Further Evidence for the Examiner

Promotion of walking within this Plan acknowledges and supports the priorities of the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2023)⁴ and Policy SEL7 sets out the Plan's approach, given Stonesfield's rural setting. Implementation will help protect the sustainability, vibrancy and safety of the neighbourhood and is complementary to the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP5).

NPPF Section 8

Promoting healthy and safe communities:

-- para 96: Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which.... enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example.... that encourage walking....

⁴ Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2023) was produced by the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, a partnership between local government, the NHS and the people of Oxfordshire.

-- para 102: Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change...;

-- para 104: Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.....

WODC Local Plan 2031

Core Objective 11: Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Para 2.36: The rural nature of the District lends itself to walking, cycling and other leisurely pursuits.

Para 2.42: Priorities in West Oxfordshire are to reduce obesity in children and adults, increase physical activity...

Burford and Charlbury Sub-area:

Key issues para 9.6.26:

- There are good opportunities for active travel with a network of rural footpaths and bridleways including the Oxfordshire Way.

Transport Para 9.6.42:

..... we will seek to maintain enhance the extensive network of paths, bridleways and quiet roads which currently provide routes for walking...

Policy BC 1: enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure...

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Policy UE1:

- Opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces or water within easy reach of communities; walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for disabled people; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities.

Policy UE2.1:

- A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected Public Rights of Way network should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Policy UE2.2:

- Improvements to rights of way must be undertaken in a way that minimises any adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape and on its special qualities.....

Policy SEL8 – Flood risk and water quality management

Further Evidence for the Examiner

Survey results – Individual Survey Questions

See following page for results.

Question 26

How important are the following:	Very important/important	Neutral	Less important/not important
Addressing pollution of River Evenlode	575	8	1

Q31 To what extent do you agree that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the following?	Strongly or slightly agree	Neutral	Strongly or slightly disagree	Total
The granting of planning permission for development otherwise consistent with the Development Plan which can demonstrate that it is supported by the necessary infrastructure, e.g. sewerage.	418	81	64	563
	74.2%	14.4%	11.4%	

The answers to both questions show strong public opinion in relation to protecting the River Evenlode and ensuring proper infrastructure to support development. This was supported by many free text comments (see below).

Free text comments

There were over 60 free text comments relating to drainage, the River Evenlode and the quality of water, emphasising the importance to residents. Some examples are given below:

Need to support a drive to ensure water quality in the local rivers are protected in terms of quality/cleanliness

Water Drainage issue on the Fawler Road rectified

More frequent highways drainage clearance and ditch maintenance.

River Evenlode Water Pollution. The disgusting state of the River Evenlode is a blight on our village and the AONB as a whole, as has been well documented caused by Thames Water dumping tons of sewage directly into the river. It's a local, indeed a national scandal. Building more and more local houses will only increase issues with Thames Water sewerage and the state of the Evenlode.

*The issue of water pollution is absolute central. Our children and dogs get sick if any of that water passes their lips. There is *no* life left in that water as it is absolutely toxic. Not just sewage but all the untreated chemicals getting into the water. Having worked in the aid sector for over 20 years this blows my mind. The right to access to clean water is a fundamental human right. The water coming out of our taps stinks of chlorine and god knows what half the time. Our dogs will not drink the tap water unless they are absolutely desperate because it smells so awful. With likely restrictions on water supply as the droughts worsen year on year it is important that we are able to e.g. get emergency water from the river in our community. Given the appalling quality of the water is a direct trade off made by Thames Water - shareholder dividends vs returning profits into provision of basic service*

maintenance and the necessary investment in key infrastructure. They should have their contract REMOVED unless they take immediate action to stop paying profits out of the country unless/until they have rectified ALL infrastructure shortfalls and actually delivered the infrastructure upgrades needed to (a) ensure all leaks, spills, and overflows are wholly eliminated, and (b) ensure the infrastructure is in place for future decades of efficient, effective, non-toxic service provision.

I would like to really emphasise the impact that the Evenlode river has on our village and ask that the neighbourhood plan specifically address the pollution levels in our beautiful river.

The river water quality has sadly deteriorated by unaccountable water companies and unsustainable housing developments, this must be improved and be more accountable to enable future generations to enjoy the river and its surrounding area.

Policy SEL9 – Tranquillity and dark skies

Further Evidence for the Examiner

The whole of the parish of Stonesfield is located within the Cotswolds AONB, which is a prime consideration in any development proposal. The above policy, SEL9, is consistent with paragraph 191 of the NPPF. That paragraph requires the identification and protection of tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason and also requires the limitation of the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Policy SEL9 is also consistent with Local Plan 2031 policy EH1 which places great weight on conservation of the AONB, and policy EH2 which seeks to conserve and enhance the character and features of the landscape, including its tranquillity and dark skies.

Policy SEL9 is also consistent with the Cotswolds Management Plan policies CE4 and CE5. Policy CE4 requires the preservation of the tranquillity of the AONB by seeking to avoid and, where avoidance is not possible, to minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance. Policy CE5 requires, where possible, the avoidance of light pollution and, where avoidance is not possible, its minimisation. The CMP policy CE5 also requires measures to be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the AONB by removing, and where removal is not possible, minimising existing sources of light pollution. The importance of tranquillity and dark skies within the Cotswolds is explained in two Cotswold Conservation Board Position Statements: on Dark Skies and Artificial Light – March 2019; and on Tranquillity – June 2019. Stonesfield's dark skies are an important part of its character, allowing stars to be seen at night. The map in Appendix A of the Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement of March 2019 shows Stonesfield to be one of the settlements with the lowest levels of light pollution in the Cotswolds (in the second lowest category of nine categories of night light pollution)

Policy SEL9 addresses these important issues. The second part of the policy supports only those proposals for external lighting which are designed to deliver the minimum level of lighting for identified purposes (such as pedestrian access and/or safety issues). As part of this assessment new lighting should avoid casting light to areas where it is not needed, and into any neighbouring homes in particular. Existing light pollution should be reduced or removed where possible.

In the early 1990s, a referendum on street lighting in the village was undertaken which overwhelmingly supported there being no street lights in the village.

The Landscape Assessment makes a number of relevant comments:

1. on the western side of the village the “extensive areas of deciduous woodland and tree cover... Creates a more seasonally changing setting for the village, is more intimate in scale, and enhances its relative sense of tranquillity” (page 17, final paragraph, of the Landscape Assessment);
2. “... The landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character” (page 18, final paragraph, of the Landscape Assessment);
3. throughout the Landscape Assessment the “strong rural character” of the landscape, which contributes to the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape and its “high sensitivity to development which would impact on its rural character” is repeatedly noted;
4. dealing with Local Landscape Character Area E (Kingswood to Kingswood Bottom Wooded Farmland) the author of the Landscape Assessment notes that the “area is valued for its capacity to appreciate dark skies where there is very little light spill or light pollution from buildings” and that a valued landscape quality of this area which should be respected is “Dark Skies with very little light spill or pollution within the LLCA (pages 62 & 63, Landscape Assessment);

Under the heading of ‘threats to the landscape quality of the area’, it is noted that “The introduction of new light sources has the potential to impact on the integrity of the area’s dark skies (for example floodlights and security lights on the outside of buildings” and guidance is given, recommending “protect against the introduction of lighting sources that will impact the appreciation of dark skies.”

Survey results – Individual Survey Question

See follow page for results, which shows very strong support for conserving the countryside and rural community. This support strengthens with the length of time living in the village.

Q8

Q8 If you moved to Stonesfield under 5 years, why did you move here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	
Countryside	106
Rural community	70
Other (please specify)	44
House prices	40
Proximity to employment	38
Family connections	35
Village schooling	17
Catchment area for schooling	15
Facilities	15
No particular reason	7
Total responses	387

Q9

Q9 If you have lived in Stonesfield over 5 years, why do you stay here? (Choose up to 3 reasons)	
Countryside	405
Rural community	302
Grew up here / family connections	163
Other (please specify)	106
Facilities	91
Village schooling	61
Employment	51
House prices	42
No particular reason	31
Catchment area for schooling	27
	1279

Free text comments

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield.

- Around 53 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being the quietness, while 11 identified the dark skies/lack of street lights/no light pollution.
- Around 47 responders gave, as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the quietness, while 25 identified the dark skies/lack of street lights/no light pollution.
- Around 44 responders gave, as their third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield, the quietness, while 32 identified the dark skies/lack of street lights/no light pollution.

In total, of the top 3 reasons residents like living in Stonesfield, 144 said the quiet and 66 said dark skies/lack of street lights/no light pollution, which represents a significant response. 35 people thought the village could be improved with street lights whilst 4 thought there was too much light pollution.

There were a few free text comments at the end of the Survey that were relevant:

I love the fact that the village does not have streetlights, and would strongly like it to stay that way!

I think it's important to remove the street lighting that has been erected. Other villages with chicanes don't have it. I think it's important to remove the clutter of street signs, it really spoils the village and is unnecessary - you can't read them ALL at the same time!

Stop light pollution gardens and gates and drives on the Ridings Stop cameras cctv on roads. Make them own property only

We are a small rural village, this is the reason why many people have decided to move to Stonesfield. There is often discussions/proposals about introducing street lighting to the

village...this I STRONGLY OPPOSE. We are in an area of outstanding natural beauty and oppose light pollution.

As a resident of some 38 years - and I know I'm going against established village opinion - I really do feel that some sort of solar powered, low-key village lighting scheme could be an asset to the village (on existing telegraph poles maybe?). At present I personally never venture out to walk any of the various clubs after dark in the winter. Too many walking hazards (potholes). The moon isn't always enough to see by and torches...? As for the seeing the night sky, there's often too much cloud cover. It's also possible that lighting might deter things like theft and car-keying which, although most don't like to admit to antisocial-ness in our village, does happen! Whilst many think the village is already well lit enough we should also remember that much useful lighting along some streets is actually provided (and paid for) by the residents of those streets!

I would like to see the village attain a dark sky status in accordance with the International Dark Sky Association. More effort to prevent motorists speeding through the village.

We need street lights, people are scared to go out after dark because it's so dark.

Policies for Section 10 Historic environment:

Policy SHE1 – Archaeology and heritage

Further Evidence for the Examiner

From the Character Assessment 2024:

Para 4. The parish's archaeological potential is not covered in full detail here though the longevity of human activity in the parish is acknowledged and particular aspects are covered by scheduled monument designation. These cover sections of the iron age boundary system known as Grimms' Ditch and Roman settlements represented by Stonesfield Roman villa, Callow Hill Roman villa, as well as the very edge of Ditchley Park Roman Villa (see Figure in Appendix 1) in the north western corner of the parish.

Para 21. From Churchfields the multiple lanes the two well used footpaths leading from the village towards Stockey Bottom and the Evenlode provide well used connection between the village and the surrounding landscape areas and spaces. The area of the allotments leads into a series of paths down to the woods or river, with connecting paths past the scout hut that form circular routes close to the village. These routes take in the chipping banks, the tips of loose waste material from the slate industry which are an important element of the village's history as well as being home to much wildlife including a thriving population of Roman snails. Views and glimpses are afforded over the allotments and between houses and are highly valued. Similar glimpses out to the wider countryside are also afforded from Laughton Hill, and from the higher points of Peaks Lane before it drops down to the west. These points of connectivity between this character area and the open countryside are particularly strong adding to its unique role in the village illustrating the rural situation enabling understanding of the topography and surrounding countryside.

Para 14. All features which provide evidence of the Stonesfield Slate mining industry including mine shafts themselves (all within private properties today) and the many chipping banks and heaps

visible on the slopes of the hill to the south and west of the village are important elements of the village history and character.

Section 4. Character Area 1: The Historic Core

Para 1 . This Character area covers the most concentrated area of historic occupation and buildings from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries predominate. It extends from the cluster of historic buildings around the eastern end of Peaks Lane along Pond Hill to the Woodstock Road junction, Church Street and Tthe Cross, High Street and the Primary school, the buildings along Boot Street and Well Lane to the cluster of historic buildings at the lowest point of the village where the road and footpaths lead west to Fowler and Charlbury.

Para 13. This character area contains the majority of historic public buildings including the parish Church of St James and various educational structures located in the centre of the area. The Church's square tower is glimpsed from many areas of the village, though it is comparatively invisible from the closest areas of The Cross and on Churchfields, screened by trees.

Para 19. The historic core retains the greatest number of surviving Stonesfield Slate roofs. They are an important feature and visually prominent and available to see and appreciate particularly along Boot Street and Well Lane where the houses have relatively low eaves lines as the buildings are set into the ground.

Para 28. Many of the popular views within this area have been alluded to in the above sections. The historic core offers multiple opportunities to see the oldest collection of buildings within the village in a shared context and intimate surroundings facilitated by the narrow street widths and close proximity between routes and buildings. The gradual unfolding and kinetic experience of walking along from The Cross down High Street and along Boot Street is characterful and rich in experience of the village's historic core.

Para 33. A panoramic series of views in multiple directions are highlighted at the lowest point of Laughton Hill and the entry to the village here. Views over open countryside, along the dry valley and towards the buildings of the village's historic core are all afforded here.

Positive features

- High concentration of traditional and historic buildings with varied forms and roofscape which give great visual interest.
- Strongest concentration of traditional dry stone walls in combination with Stonesfield Slate Roofs which provide a strong material coherence.
- Location of key public buildings both religious and educational. Good evidence of other forms now converted to domestic use but continuing to provide evidence of historic uses and function.
- Characterful views of buildings, gardens and landscape with pleasing mix of intimate village surrounding and occasional glimpses of surrounding landscape.

Section 5. Character Area 2: Churchfields and Laughton Hill

Para 1. This character area is divided into two separate blocks to the south and north of the historic core. Principally it includes the southern end of Church Street leading into Churchfields and lanes leading off it, and the development along both sides of Laughton Hill including Cockshoot Close and the houses on the northern side of Peaks Lane. These areas represent infill of open areas of land and

between more widely spaced older cottages over the 19th and 20th centuries. The distinct element of this character area is that the development took place in smaller stages, individual or smaller groups of houses with far greater architectural styles as opposed to the more homogeneous developments which are covered in the next character area 3.

Para 34. Laughton Hill is one of the principal routes into and out of the village from the west but with no pavements, grassy verges and varying width it retains a generally rural character. At the lower end of Laughton hill is the Victorian public tap at the junction with Boot Street. The tap itself is rather easy to miss being set quite low down and being of standard modern design. It is set into the lower part of an arc of red brick with blue tile coping, flanking pilasters and a mid-level plinth with sloped brick top. A stone plaque commemorates the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign, and above it has been set a plaque for Queen Elizabeth II's silver Jubilee. The water was originally piped down from the spring at Ruddywell to the north of the village.

Para 8. These areas are marked by variety in building line and position. Older buildings are identifiable through not only their more traditional rubble stone walling, but also in their positioning, frequently closer to the road or perpendicular to the road as in the rows of cottages off Churchfields or the former farm buildings at the Green and by the White Horse. There is an irregularity in the positioning of these older buildings which is in common with the historic core. Later buildings were almost all provided with garden space to the front and rear which provides a sense of intermittent spaces between the older properties and a general variety to the street scene.

Para 23. Linear views along the roads are encouraged where the streets are straight – particularly notable along Churchfields. Perpendicular views from Churchfields out over open land towards the surrounding countryside are positive in terms of character. Open views from the edge of the character area are afforded from the edge of the village and the paths leading out past the scout hut and on Brook Lane – this last is extremely popular and marked by an information board on the local geology and dinosaurs and a bespoke bench. Internally a similar positive view from Churchfields towards the Church across the graveyard is important. The church is relatively screened by trees but it is an important break in the housing linking to a focal building within the village.

Positive features

- Comparative variety of building forms, materials and dates but a relatively consistent overall street scape with important green character provided by gardens.
- An area with important views over to the woods and valleys to the south and west of the village. Important and well used public paths.
- Strong presence of drystone walls, the distinctive style to the church yard a notable feature.
- The village tap on Laughton hill
- The White Horse and adjacent triangular Green

NPPF

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁷⁰. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner

appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations

196. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

197. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

198. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to: a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future. Some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance. The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

199. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible. Proposals affecting heritage assets

200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

202. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

203. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

204. In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal

Considering potential impacts

205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

206. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional⁷².

207. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

208. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

209. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

210. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

211. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to

their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

212. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

213. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

214. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies. Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository

Village Survey

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield, as the NP Survey 2023 revealed.

- Around 310 responders identified the primary thing they liked most about Stonesfield being either the countryside, walks, quietness, rural setting, dark skies.
- Over 220 responders gave the same reasons as their second most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.
- Over 155 gave these reasons as the third most important thing they liked about living in Stonesfield.

Policy SHE2 – Protecting non-designated assets

Further Evidence for the Examiner

NPPF

Definitions. The NPPF defines a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are of two types: ‘designated heritage assets’, and ‘non-designated heritage assets’. Designated heritage assets are largely designated nationally under the relevant legislation (listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered historic parks and gardens and registered battlefields), but also include world heritage sites, which are designated by UNESCO, and conservation areas, which are designated locally under relevant legislation. Designated heritage assets, with the exception of conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, are listed in the National

Heritage List for England (NHLE), the official and up-to-date database of all nationally-protected historic buildings and sites in England.

Information about the different designation regimes and how to search the list can be found in the listing pages of the Historic England website. Designated heritage assets receive a greater degree of protection within the planning system than non-designated heritage assets; works to some assets, such as listed buildings and scheduled monuments, are subject to additional consent regimes. Information on conservation areas can be found on local planning authority websites.

Non-designated heritage assets are locally-identified 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by planmaking bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets' (PPG). It is important to note that some non-designated heritage assets are equivalent to designated heritage assets in terms of significance.

Non-designated heritage assets can be identified in a number of ways, including:

- Local heritage lists
- Local and Neighbourhood Plans
- Conservation area appraisals and reviews
- Decision-making on planning application.

Historic England

Neighbourhood Plans

As outlined in Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment, Neighbourhood Plans may establish policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood, thus becoming part of the development plan for the area.

Work in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan may thus usefully include the development of a policy which sets out how proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets on a list will be considered, and consideration of which buildings and sites might merit inclusion on a local heritage list.

The Historic Environment section of the PPG points out the usefulness of 'any designated and non-designated heritage assets within the plan area [being] clearly identified at the start of the plan-making process so they can be appropriately taken into account' (paragraph 005).

A local heritage list prepared as part of a Neighbourhood Plan for an area will be produced through the community because these plans are researched, written and voted on by the people who live in the neighbourhood. They thus have direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Conservation Area appraisal and review

Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities (and some other bodies) to recognise an area of special architectural or historic interest. They are generally valued by those living and working in them as special places. Conservation areas may often contain buildings, archaeological areas or historic parks, gardens and other designed landscapes which are of local interest

Decision-making on planning applications

Non-designated heritage assets may also be identified by the local planning authority during the decision-making process on planning applications, as evidence emerges. Any such decisions to

identify non-designated heritage assets need to be made in a way that is consistent with the identification of non-designated heritage assets for inclusion in a local heritage list, properly recorded, and made publicly available, for instance through an addition to a local heritage list, and through recording in the Historic Environment Record (HER).

WODC Local Plan 2031

8.85 Non-designated heritage assets do not have statutory protection, but nonetheless represent a crucially important aspect of the District's heritage, and play a defining role in the local character of an area. Those non-designated heritage assets of particular local importance, e.g. those that make a fundamental contribution, both individually and collectively, to the distinctive and special character and appearance of the area in which they are located (in terms of their siting, design and use of materials) are known as 'locally listed buildings'. Many of these buildings have been identified within conservation areas as part of Conservation Area Appraisals, taking account of a range of criteria, such as age, historic interest, building materials, architectural quality, original features of note and the contribution they make to their immediate and wider setting.

8.86 The Council's rolling programme of undertaking further appraisals, along with for example those that come to light through planning applications, is likely to increase the number of locally listed buildings in the District. Details of non-designated assets, including nonscheduled archaeological sites, non-nationally important archaeological remains, non-listed buildings and non-Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, are held on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

Stonesfield is identified in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998) as a key settlement in Character Area 6, the Lower Evenlode Valley.

Evidence for Examiner – Survey results

Free text comment:

Q31 I object to the three questions by answering the question I'm implying that I agree with development. I don't. The Charity Farm development is a classic example of a Bicester style housing estate plonked on the edge of our village, no thought to its design, totally inappropriate and out of keeping with the tradition and history of a village in the AONB. Sunderland Close is however a good example where architecture, design and planning has taken note of its surroundings. It would be terribly sad if Stonesfield ended up being 'developed' in the way our local neighbours Freeland and Long Hanborough have. Fortunately for Stonesfield we are in the Cotswold AONB and must use that status to protect ourselves from inappropriate housing developments.

It is abundantly clear that the surrounding countryside and what it offers is what the people of Stonesfield predominantly LIKE about living in Stonesfield, as the NP Survey 2023 revealed.

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