

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING  
CONSULTATION:**

**District:** West Oxfordshire

**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Version)

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**Annexes to the report contain officer advice.**

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**Overall view of Oxfordshire County Council**

Oxfordshire County Council supports the ambition of Stonesfield Parish Council to prepare a neighbourhood plan and would like to thank the Parish Council for giving the County Council the opportunity to provide comments.

Comments from OCC Property have been submitted separately.

**Officer's Name:** Rahul Chelvarajah-Lopez

**Officer's Title:** Assistant Strategic Planner

**Date:** 09 March 2026

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**ANNEX 1**  
**OFFICER ADVICE**

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council

**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)

**Team:** Strategic Planning

**Officer's Name:** Rahul Chelvarajah-Lopez

**Officer's Title:** Assistant Strategic Planner

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## **Strategic Planning Comments**

### Housing

The plan states that the housing delivery in Stonesfield anticipated in the WODC Local Plan 2031 (40 houses) has been built out. Stonesfield is not expected to contribute to West Oxfordshire's housing numbers over the period of its emerging adopted plan to 2043. There are no housing allocations or traveller pitch allocations being proposed as part of this Neighbourhood Plan.

### WODC emerging Local Plan 2043

References to West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041, are now out of date. At time of writing the plan period has been updated to run until 2043. It also has now completed its Regulation 18 consultation stage with submission before the end of 2026 being aimed for. Given the progress made in the emerging local plan's preparation, it would be beneficial for the Neighbourhood Plan to make more reference to relevant policies.

### Local Green Spaces

Oxfordshire County Council would like to reiterate their concern about the allocated Local Green Spaces that fall within Highway Land as it could fetter the Council's ability to carry out their duties as the Highway Authority.

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council

**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)

**Team:** Place Planning (North)

**Officer's Name:** Annabelle Calder

**Officer's Title:** Transport Planner

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## **Transport Strategy Comments**

No objections / main modifications suggested.

### **Policy ST3 – Walking and Cycling (Page 63)**

Clarification needed as to whether the “*negotiated dedicated cycling/walking path through Blenheim Park to Woodstock*” has already been agreed or whether this is an aspiration for the future and will need discussions to take place with Blenheim Estate.

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council

**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)

**Team:** Transport Development Management North

**Officer's Name:** Ben Mundy

**Officer's Title:** Senior Transport Development Officer

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## **Transport Development Management Comments**

It is important that any associated policies within the neighbourhood plan are aligned with Oxfordshire County Council's adopted guidance and policy documents which form the County Council's current transport guidance for assessing new development proposals

For example, Policy SH11, which requires the provision of one vehicle parking space per bedroom, would result in parking levels that significantly exceed those set out within OCC's adopted standards for a village location. This approach risks over-provision of parking and is not consistent with OCC's policy position, which seeks to apply a flexible, context-led approach to parking provision that reflects settlement type, accessibility, and wider transport objectives.

To ensure policy soundness and consistency with the County Council's role as Local Highway Authority, it is essential that the plan is prepared in conjunction with OCC's transport policies and guidance documents, including the adopted parking standards. Aligning local policy with OCC guidance will provide a robust and defensible framework for decision-making and will avoid placing officers in a position where it is difficult to object to proposals that comply with the County Council's own published standards and policies.

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council  
**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)  
**Team:** Transport Strategy and Policy  
**Officer's Name:** Hassan Asif  
**Officer's Title:** Technical Lead (Freight and Logistics)

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## **Transport Policy Comments**

### **General comments**

Several policies relating to **parking standards and car access** risk conflict with LTCP objectives to reduce car mileage, rebalance streets toward active travel, and manage parking supply strategically. This is addressed below.

**Public Transport** - is noted as a vital component to reduce car usage. The Plan could include supporting text and/or policy to directly address greater engagement with public transport operators (e.g. Rail and Bus) to ensure the needs of the community are served.

It is worth noting the area sits near a number of rail stations (Charlbury, Hanborough, Combe & Finstock) although the Plan make no reference to this and we would recommend that it notes the importance of active travel links to such locations. This would support the Oxfordshire County Council's recent adopted rail plan OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail and it is recommended a direct reference is made to this.

**Movement and Place Plans (MAP Plan)** - The plan would benefit from recognising the council is currently delivering upon its MAP plan programme. This area will come under the West Oxfordshire Uplands Plan although borders the West Oxfordshire Lowlands and Kidlington and South Cherwell.

**Street Design Code** – the Council is working towards delivering a street design code and the Plan would benefit from noting this once adopted.

### **Main modifications**

**References to active travel** should consistently use the phrase “walking, wheeling, and cycling.” It was noted that ‘wheeling’ was excluded at times, for example, policy ST3 and we would recommend this is included as per the transport user hierarchy set out in LTCP policy 1. Main modification to consistently use “walking, wheeling, and cycling” in active travel policies proposed.

**The summary notes** – “the County Council aims to reduce car use by reducing parking provision”. We can't and do not support this phrase. The County Council are actively encouraging greater usage of walking, wheeling and cycling alongside public transport to align with the transport user hierarchy to reduce car use. We ask this is phrase is amended in the Plan.

**Policies ST2 & ST3** - promote active travel and safer streets reflecting the LTCP's Vision Zero, Healthy Streets and Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN) approach. Within the supporting text, it has scope to include the County Council's commitment to Vision Zero and adopted [Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan](#).

**Policy ST3** – would benefit to link desired routes such as Woodstock, Long Hanborough, Charlbury and Witney to LCWIP and SATN proposed routes.

**Parking Standards (SH11 & ST4)** – As currently word it is considered they don't align with OCC's parking standards. We would recommend this is amended to clear state any new development or extension/alteration to a development must conform to OCC parking standards unless otherwise agreed by the council.

### **Freight & Deliveries**

No policy addresses HGV movements or last mile deliveries. Albeit it is recognised through the Plan that some of the roads are narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles. We would therefore recommend a revision is made to the plan to reflect this and the inclusion for parcel lockers is considered etc. This would align with the councils Freight and Logistics Strategy.

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council  
**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)  
**Team:** Landscape and Nature Recovery  
**Officer's Name:** Jack Wheeler  
**Officer's Title:** Senior Biodiversity Officer

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## **Ecology Comments**

### **General Comments**

It is noted that section 3.3 refers to the climate emergency declared by West Oxfordshire District Council in 2019. At the same time a Nature Emergency was also declared, the implications of which should be mentioned.

### **Main Modifications**

Aim 5 to conserve the environment is welcomed. It is suggested that that this plan has the opportunity to go further and enhance the biodiversity and environment of this parish in line with Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy ([Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) | Oxfordshire County Council](#)). The main modification request is that the LNRS is embedded throughout the neighbourhood plan in order to help deliver a nature led approach. As part of this, consideration should be given to how the LNRS interacts with Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) through a review of the LNRS documentation. If reference to CTAs is retained, clarification should be given as to the weight of these.

The acknowledgment of the SSSIs within the parish is appreciated. It is suggested that further consideration is given to other designated sites such as Road Verge Nature Reserves, habitats of principal importance, legally protected and notable species and the priorities identified within Oxfordshire's LNRS.

Further detail should be provided to explain the designation for environmentally sensitive areas as displayed on page 87 including why some areas have been excluded. Reference to the ecological receptors is requested related to previous comments and SSSI Impact Risk Zones.

In line with OCC's [Biodiversity Action Framework 2025-2030](#), if appropriately justified a proposal of a minimum of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for developments would be supported under policy SEL6.

Terms included under policy SEL6 such as 'sympathetic management' and 'health of the river Evenlode' should be refined to ensure they are interpreted as intended. The main modification requested would be to provide explanation of these terms.

**District:** West Oxfordshire District Council  
**Consultation:** Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan 2041 (Submission Document)  
**Team:** Public Health  
**Officer's Name:** John Lee  
**Officer's Title:** Health Improvement Practitioner

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## **Public Health Comments**

The Public Health team welcomes the opportunity to comment the proposals for Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan. Our comments focus on the health and wellbeing of residents, and how the Plan will work to maximise this.

It is acknowledged that Stonesfield is both a very rural settlement, and one with an increasingly ageing population. This poses challenges for a range of factors including sustainable transport, as well as access to healthcare and other amenities.

Another major consideration is the ability for Stonesfield's younger residents to access recreational amenities for the benefit of their social development and to promote physical activity. For this reason, we strongly support aim #4 of the NP, which is to enhance community facilities and their accessibility to all age groups. It is also welcomed that the list of aims includes reference to tackling climate change at the local level.

It is clear from snippets of the resident feedback that they share a concern that new housing should be appropriate and affordable for those looking to live in the area. We would support new residential developments going above and beyond existing minimum standards of affordable housing and to ensure that the housing mix includes smaller homes and apartments where applicable, so that first-time buyers and young families have a better chance of affording to live in Stonesfield. This is reflected in Policy SH2 and is strongly supported.

Resident feedback also noted the need for better recreational facilities for young people, suggesting that the provision of a skate park as an example of something that would be beneficial. This is reflective of wider studies showing the need for community facilities to better cater for older children and teenagers since many recreational spaces are targeted at younger children.

Policy SH5 is welcomed, and could go even further by ensuring that any new homes meet the standards of [Lifetime Homes](#), which enable people to remain living in their properties throughout the life course.

Policy SEA1 contains pertinent information about the rise in home working. This change in working styles could be further accommodated by utilising community spaces for hybrid working for situations where home working is difficult or impossible for residents.

Policy ST1 is strongly supported, and secure cycle storage should be located as conveniently as possible for residents, such as to the front of dwellings where

appropriate. This further encourages sustainable modes of transport and helps to reduce the reliance on the car.

Policy ST3 could be strengthened by including the need for wayfinding to ensure that any walking or cycling paths are easy to navigate, linking users to the local centre or helping to access the countryside by linking with existing rights of way. Wayfinding would also be relevant to Policy SEL7 surrounding the importance of protecting and enhancing footpaths.

We welcome the inclusion of Policy SHW1 on health and wellbeing, with its reference to Oxfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.