

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Policy \(WODC\)](#)
Subject: Response to Regulation 16 Consultation Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan (2026–2041)
Date: 20 January 2026 09:47:50

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Dear Sir,

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan and acknowledge the significant work undertaken by the Parish Council and volunteers in producing a detailed and thoughtful draft.

Overall position

I broadly support the Plan's recognition that Stonesfield has become increasingly **top-heavy with large, expensive housing**, and that recent development has failed to meet the needs of those on low to middle incomes or with strong local connections. However, I believe the Plan **does not yet go far enough** in addressing this imbalance and should be strengthened to ensure it delivers **genuinely inclusive and sustainable housing outcomes**, particularly **social and truly affordable homes**.

Housing balance and exclusion

The Plan and supporting Housing Needs Assessment clearly identify that:

- Housing delivery in recent years has been dominated by larger market homes.
- Affordability pressures in Stonesfield are significantly above national averages.
- Younger people, families on ordinary incomes, key workers, and those needing secure tenancies are increasingly excluded from living in the village.

While this exclusion may not be intentional, the outcome is **functionally discriminatory**, creating a community that is inaccessible to a wide cohort of people who contribute economically and socially but cannot afford to live locally. This risks long-term community sustainability, resilience, and inter-generational balance.

Affordable and social housing

The Housing Needs Assessment concludes that there is **no demonstrable requirement for further major market housing**, but that there *may* be a need for a small number of **social or affordable homes**, potentially delivered via a **rural exception site**. This conclusion should be treated as a **call to action**, not a justification for minimal provision.

“Affordable housing” in high-value rural villages often remains unaffordable in practice, particularly where delivery focuses on shared ownership or intermediate products. The Plan should therefore:

- **Explicitly prioritise social rent** within any affordable housing provision.
- Strengthen policy wording to ensure homes remain **affordable in perpetuity**, with clear delivery mechanisms through registered providers or equivalent robust structures.

- Avoid ambiguity or loopholes that could dilute affordable delivery through viability arguments or tenure reclassification.

Alignment with national housing policy

The direction of national housing policy under the current government is clear: there is a renewed emphasis on **increasing the supply of affordable and social housing**, supported by long-term funding commitments and planning reform. Neighbourhood Plans should align with this direction by facilitating the *right types* of homes, not simply limiting overall numbers.

In this context, Stonesfield's Plan should actively enable solutions that address **suppressed and unmet housing need**, including those who have already been priced out or prevented from forming households locally.

Landscape and character

I support the strong emphasis on protecting the landscape, character, and green spaces of Stonesfield. However, these protections must not inadvertently entrench exclusivity or prevent the delivery of **small-scale, well-designed affordable housing** that meets clearly evidenced local need. Environmental protection and social inclusion should be treated as complementary, not competing, objectives.

Conclusion

The Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan rightly identifies the village's housing imbalance but needs stronger, clearer policies to correct it. I support the principle of limited growth and rural exception sites, but urge that the Plan be amended to place **greater weight on social rent, genuine affordability, and long-term inclusivity**, ensuring Stonesfield remains a living, balanced community rather than an increasingly exclusive one.

Regards

