

# Sustainable Stonesfield

OUR VILLAGE~NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE

## Local Plan Preferred Spatial Options Consultation

WODC's Preferred Spatial Options Consultation will close on **22 December 2025**. Essentially it may determine where significant building takes place and what kind. The effect on Stonesfield could therefore be substantial.



The consultation will consider four main issues – extending the plan period to 2043, a revised settlement hierarchy, a revised spatial strategy, and potential locations for future housing and employment development. Cllr Genny Early informed the last PC Meeting that WODC are actively listening to feedback and encouraging communities to have their say before things are set in stone for 15 years.

The WODC exhibition boards for the Preferred Spatial Options can be read at:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/lsipohqp/exhibition-boards-preferred-spatial-options.pdf>

The boards are a much-simplified version of the full document which can be read at:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/aeojcxni/local-plan-preferred-spatial-options-consultation-october-2025.pdf>

We believe there are two major concerns for Stonesfield stemming from this consultation. The Parish Council have drafted a detailed response to all the major issues, but it would be helpful if SUSTO supporters could also respond, especially to the 'revised settlement hierarchy' and the 'potential locations for future housing' issues.

Stonesfield is proposed as a Tier 3 village, along with all other large villages in the District with a population of more than 1,000, and *that score favourably in the Council's updated Settlement Sustainability Report (SSR)*. Population is the main defining criterion of Tier 3.

There are 14 tier 3 villages in the District; only four of them are in the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) – the area of outstanding national beauty. The NPPF says major development (defined as 10 "homes" or 0.5 hectares) in the CNL is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and in the public interest. **We believe Stonesfield in the CNL should be moved to Tier 4 like Combe.**

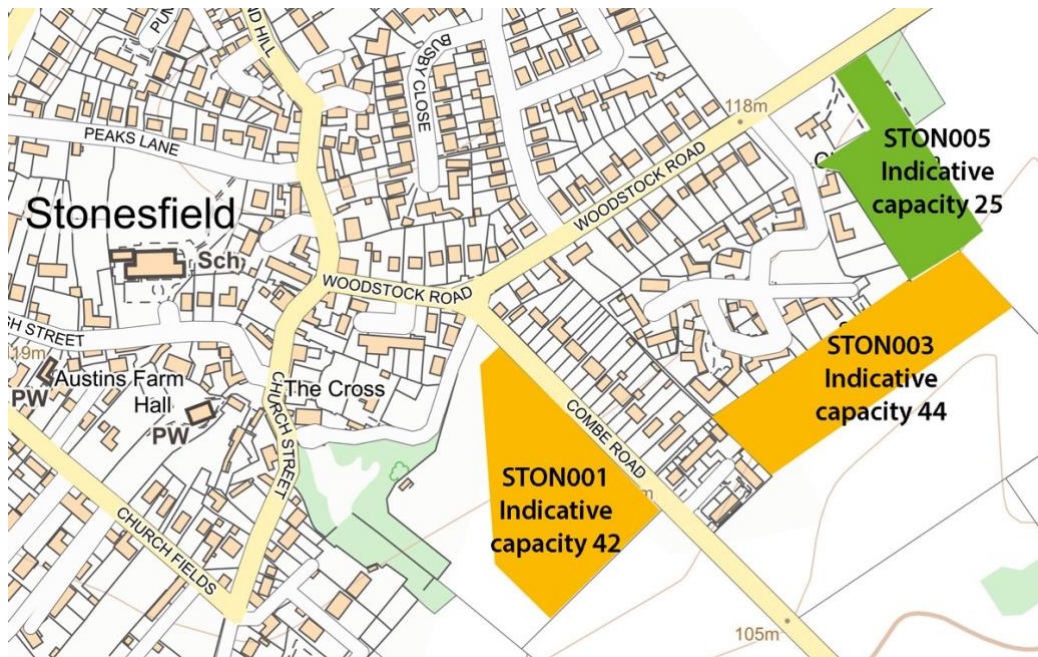
All but two of the tier 3 villages are served by an A or B class road, Stonesfield only has narrow lanes. Stonesfield has very limited services, one shop, a hairdresser, a garage and a community-owned pub. Therefore, negligible employment opportunities in the village. Public transport is limited to an hourly bus service to Woodstock and Oxford.

A key element of the revised Local Plan 2043 is sustainability; that includes building houses where people are able to get to education, health services, shops and employment by public transport, walking or cycling. The village survey showed that for the majority of Stonesfield residents a car is their means of getting to these facilities.

The second issue to comment on is the potential location of future housing in Stonesfield which is covered in the District's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). You can read the whole assessment at:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/3zel3ghz/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment-october-2025.pdf>

This document is poorly drafted and superficial. It identifies six sites in Stonesfield that have been put forward by landowners. It rules out three as unsuitable for development. The Manor Field, Combe Road, and land south-east of Charity Farm (now William Buckland Way) are classed as suitable in part for development, and land east of Charity Farm is classed as suitable for housing even though they would constitute major development. Here's a map showing the sites.



That's a potential of a further 111 houses in Stonesfield in the next 15 years. The HELAA makes no mention of the fact the whole of the village is in the CNL, has poor public transport, negligible employment opportunities within a five-mile radius, and limited facilities. It does not mention the prohibition on major development or justify major development or justify its assessment of suitability by reference to exceptional circumstances or public interest.

For these reasons SUSTO believes Stonesfield should be a Tier 4 village with a potential new housing development of 11 houses, not 111. This doesn't include potential windfall small developments in the village, for instance Glovers Yard.

To comment on the consultation document you can either register with the WODC Local Plan database before being able to take part in the consultation, or email your comment to the WODC Planning Policy Manager at: [Andrew.Thompson@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Thompson@westoxon.gov.uk) sending a copy to: [planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk)

**The deadline for comments from residents is 22 December 2025.**

***Sustainable Stonesfield***