

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response – Housing Enabling Team

17th September 2026

Application No:	PL/2026/04386
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	Construct 2 no. affordable houses with associated access and parking area.
Site Address:	Land at Top Lane, Stourton, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 6QA

Thank you for consulting the Housing Enabling Team on the above application. I note that the proposed development site falls outside the defined limits of development (as referenced in Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy) and that the application proposes that the development of 2 residential dwellings is brought forward as a Rural Exception Site. It is also understood that the applicant proposes both units be delivered as Build to Rent, a mechanism through which the applicant intends to retain ownership and nomination rights of the dwellings.

Whilst Core Policy 44 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy does promote a route to delivering Affordable Housing in rural areas, it clearly states that this should be proactively in conjunction with parish councils and should satisfy the set requirements of CP44. It is my view that the current proposals do not meet these requirements, the reasons for which are summarised below alongside specific requirements of CP44:

- 'The proposal has clear support from the local community': No evidence has been provided which details a public consultation demonstrating community support, nor collaboration with the parish council.
- 'The housing is being delivered to meet an identified and genuine local need': The application documents have confirmed that nominations of these dwellings will not be in line with Wiltshire's adopted Allocations Policy and will be eschewing Wiltshire's housing needs register in favour of the applicant's own waiting list. It is also noted that the Housing Needs Survey referenced within the application documents was published in 2018, which is considered an outdated source of housing needs data in 2026. As such, the applicant has not evidenced a local need for these dwellings.
- 'The proposal is within, adjoining or well related to the existing settlement': The proposed location, whilst close to other remote residential dwellings, is located near the end of a narrow track and not considered well related to the built centre of Stourton.
- CP44 also states that Rural Exception Sites should be 'solely for affordable housing': Appropriate tenures for rented homes on Rural Exception Sites are either Affordable Rented or Social Rented tenure and are therefore required to be transferred to a Registered Provider in accordance with the NPPF definition of Affordable Housing. It is noted that the applicant has specified that the units being proposed are Build to Rent units, which would not require transfer to a Registered Provider. However, the proposed development does not demonstrate the characteristics of a Build to Rent scheme, which are generally considered to be purpose built rental developments, often held in single institutional ownership and usually offering additional facilities such as communal spaces and tenant amenities such as gyms, with the purpose of delivering rental homes at scale to meet the needs of urban and suburban areas. Whilst it is acknowledged that the definition of Build to Rent in the NPPF allows for some flexibility, the PPG makes it clear that 'build to rent is a distinct asset class

within the **private** rented sector'. It is therefore not considered to be Affordable Housing, as required by Core Policy 44 on a Rural Exception Site.

- 'The affordable housing provided under this policy will always be available for defined local needs, both initially and on subsequent change of occupant': The PPG encourages the setting of rent levels and eligibility criteria for private affordable Build to Rent units in the S106 Agreement. The Council would therefore expect to restrict the rent to Local Housing Allowance level and to specify a maximum household income within eligibility criteria in order to ensure that the units remain affordable. However, the Renters' Rights Act 2025 has changed the types of tenancy agreements that can be used, and how and when landlords can seek possession of their property. Build to Rent operators will not be able to evict tenants because they no longer satisfy the income threshold for affordable rent. The PPG states that in cases where the scheme operator becomes aware that the tenant breaches the income threshold on a Build to Rent scheme, the operator should deallocate that property as an affordable rent property, increase the rent to full market rate, and allocate another equivalent property as affordable. In practice, this means that Build to Rent units are not suitable for a Rural Exception Site as they could potentially be 'deallocated' and therefore not meet the 'in perpetuity' requirement of CP44.

It is with the above considerations in mind that the Housing Enabling Team do not consider the proposals suitable as a Rural Exception Site under Core Policy 44 and as such cannot support the application.

Kind regards,

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