



Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan

2019-2031

FINAL VERSION

Submitted by Shaftesbury Town Council
to Dorset Council in **January 2021**

Cover art by Phyllis Wolff
Designed by Andy Hargreaves



Disclaimer:

Please note that all map data in this document may contain
Ordnance Survey® products supplied by
Pear Technology Services Ltd. Email: info@peartechnology.co.uk
© Crown Copyright and database rights from date shown above
Ordnance Survey® licence number 100023148

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Foreword.....	6
1.2 What Is a Neighbourhood Plan?	7
1.3 Why should I read it?	8
1.4 How to read this document	9
1.5 Index of policies	10
1.6 Our population, Strategic Planning Policies and Basic Conditions.....	11
1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan area	12
1.8 Aims, objectives and vision	13
1.9 Community views on planning	14
1.10 Climate change.....	15

2.0 THE TOWN CENTRE

2.1 The Town Centre: Key messages and aims.....	18
2.2 What Is the Town Centre?	19
2.3 Policy SFTC1	20
2.4 Policy SFTC2.....	22
2.5 Policy SFTC3.....	23
2.6 Policy SFTC4.....	24

3.0 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Housing and Employment: Key messages and aims	26
3.2 Policy SFHE1	29
3.3 Policy SFHE2.....	32
3.4 Policy SFHE3	34
3.5 Policy SFHE4.....	36

4.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 Green Infrastructure: Key messages and aims	39
4.2 Policy SFGI1	42
4.3 Policy SFGI2	44
4.4 Policy SFGI3	49
4.5 Policy SFGI4	50

5.0 DESIGN AND HERITAGE

5.1 Design and Heritage: Key messages and aims	52
5.2 Shaftesbury Character Zones.....	55
5.3 Shaftesbury Conservation Area	65
5.4 Policies SFDH1 to SFDH7	66
5.5 Policy SFDH8	73
5.6 Policy SFDH9	74

6.0 COMMUNITY AND LEISURE

6.1 Community and Leisure: Key messages and aims	77
6.2 Policy SFCL1	79
6.3 Policy SFCL2.....	82
6.4 Policy SFCL3.....	84

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Index of appendices	88
7.2 Other documents to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan document	89
7.3 Appendix A – Projects: Town Centre	90
7.4 Appendix B – Projects: Housing and Employment.....	91
7.5 Appendix C – Projects: Green Infrastructure	93
7.6 Appendix D – Projects: Community and Leisure.....	94
7.7 Appendix E – Projects: Design and Heritage	95
7.8 Appendix F – Views Audit	96
7.9 Appendix G – Health	106
7.10 Appendix H – Education.....	107
7.11 Appendix I – Community Venue Utilisation Report.....	108
7.12 Appendix J – Shaftesbury Trees.....	111
7.13 Appendix K – Locally Important Buildings List and Maps by Zone	113
7.14 Appendix L – List of Local Green Space (LGS) and Important Treed Areas (ITA) ...	124
7.15 Appendix M - Schedule of Evidence Sources	133
7.16 Appendix N - Population Statistics	137
7.17 Appendix O - Explanation of the new use classes described by SFTC2	139

1. Introduction

An aerial, sepia-toned photograph of a village. In the foreground, a large house with a prominent thatched roof is visible on the left. The middle ground shows a cluster of stone buildings with multiple chimneys, situated on a slight rise. The background features rolling hills and fields under a cloudy sky. The text '1. Introduction' is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

1.1 Foreword

Contestants on TV reality shows often talk about being on a 'journey'. You could also apply that term to the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan. We are proud to present to you the result of thousands of hours of work, undertaken by three teams of townspeople since 2014.

This document has been researched and compiled by a group of eight Shaftesbury residents. We volunteered to pick up the baton and continue the work of the previous Neighbourhood Plan groups during a public meeting at the Guildhall in January 2018.

We're mindful that everyone who has given their time to this evolving process has shared the same belief, that Shaftesbury is a special place with unique qualities that need protecting. We're grateful to them.

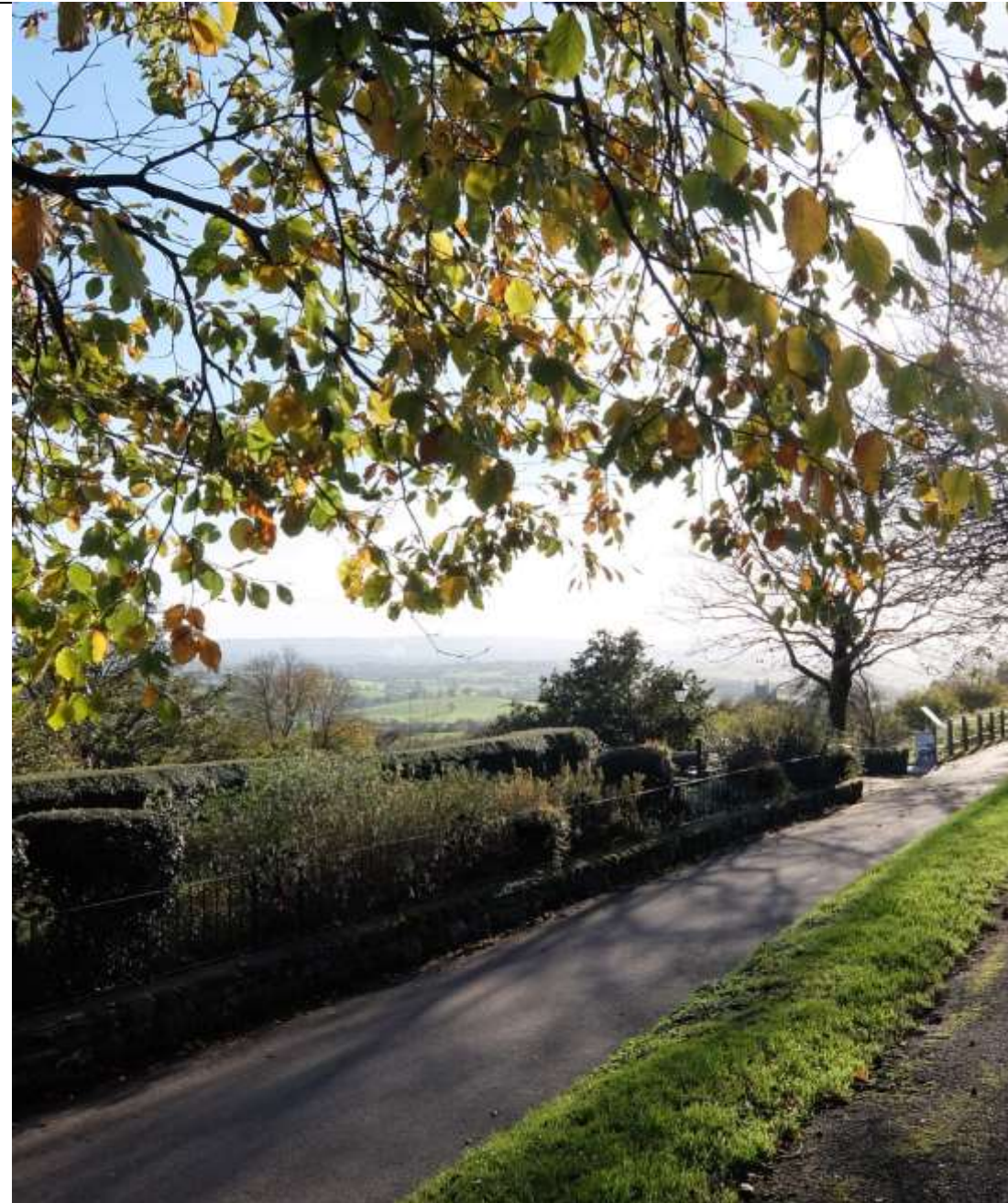
We have updated the earlier research, asked many additional questions and assessed fresh evidence to produce what we believe is the most comprehensive survey of Shaftesbury public opinion ever undertaken.

This plan has been written over 18 months when Brexit, political change and the environmental crisis has dominated the headlines. Nationally and globally there is uncertainty. However, in Shaftesbury, we have found clarity and a clear message about what people want. We received 878 responses during the first phase of consultation in February 2019. These responses have helped us determine what sort of place Shaftesbury could be in the year 2031.

So much has been written about our historic town's past. This Neighbourhood Plan is all about shaping our future. Please share your feedback and join us on the latest leg of Shaftesbury's journey.

Tim Edwyn Jones

Chairman, on behalf of Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan



1. Introduction

1.2 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Neighbourhood Plan is a set of guidelines that will ensure that planners consider Shaftesbury's heritage and setting and the needs and aspirations of residents when assessing new development.

The government does not allow Neighbourhood Plans to block development. We can't say that we don't want any more houses built, for example. Instead, our plan will help ensure that any new development is appropriate to its setting and is sustainable.

Neighbourhood Plans have no power to demand that new facilities are built, either. We have no authority to request another doctors' surgery, school or car park, for example. But if agencies do propose such developments, a neighbourhood plan will give the Local Planning Authority team an understanding of how to design those buildings, so they fit in with their surroundings.

i The 'planners' are the 'decision makers' at the Local Planning Authority, Dorset Council. These decision makers include planning officers, members of the Planning Committee, planning inspectors, and even the Secretary of State. Planners can easily be

interpreted as just the planning officers at the Council who, although they make the majority of planning decisions, are not the only ones who can do so.



People want to live in Shaftesbury. We enjoy a strong community spirit. There's a thriving arts sector, interesting independent shops, our lively street market, and good schools. Shaftesbury's setting is stunning. Green slopes, ancient woodlands and the chalk downs surround us. As you climb up through the ancient, tree-lined holloways to reach our historic Saxon hilltop town, you get a sense that this really is a special place.

You probably care passionately about Shaftesbury. That's why you are reading this document. A team of volunteers who feel the same way has created this Neighbourhood Plan. We're all residents, we all love our town and we want to protect the unique aspects of Shaftesbury life that make this an exceptional place to live.

This plan is a blueprint, a guide for planners when they make decisions about our town's future. The plan is different to any strategy that has been prepared before and it's based on what you've told us. We've surveyed fellow residents to find out what needs to happen to make life better here. Each and every one of the policies that we're proposing is based on months of research, evidence gathering and consultation.

The policies in this document could be used when planners assess applications for new individual homes, housing estates and commercial or community premises. The plan could also guide the planners when they need to decide whether property owners may change the use of their premises, from shops to accommodation, for example. Planners will need to take the policies in this document into consideration from the moment that the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, until the year 2031. The Neighbourhood Plan's guidelines will apply if a majority of people in Shaftesbury vote 'yes' to this plan.





1.3 Why should I read it?

Some Shaftesbury developments have used high quality building materials, appropriate to their setting within the town or countryside. At the other end of the scale, some projects have paid little reference to their location and their construction and finish has not been well received.

A Neighbourhood Plan can inform planners what our town's residents expect from the style and design of new developments. People who make the decisions which impact on Shaftesbury are not necessarily based here. They might not have visited our town. With a Neighbourhood Plan in place, developers or local government officials will quickly understand what Shaftesbury people want.

It is important to understand that the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan policies cannot block development that is already part of the wider Local Plan which covers the whole of the former North Dorset district. But Shaftesbury's Neighbourhood Plan can shape where that development will go and what it will look like.

Again, we need to stress that we are not allowed to say 'NO' to any more development. We know that many Shaftesbury residents have strong views about more building. This plan cannot refuse any more housing. The Neighbourhood Plan should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. But it can block development on land deemed important to the local community. These small areas can be designated as 'Local Green Spaces'. What we can set out is what the community expects from any new development.

This Neighbourhood Plan is not a publication that will be forgotten about. It won't sit on a shelf, gathering dust. It may need to be updated as circumstances change in the future. Just like our town, it will need to be adapted to cater for new demands and to embrace fresh ideas.

During the consultation we asked our community to read the policies. We asked for feedback on which policies they supported and feedback on those policies they did not support. We advised our community that the Plan is the only planning guide that will advise authorities 'what Shaftesbury wants'. We reinforced the need to agree a Neighbourhood Plan that will preserve the character of our small, unique Dorset town and keep it vibrant. Not just for us, but for the next generation of Shaftesbury residents

The wide-ranging policies in the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan touch on nearly every aspect of Shaftesbury life. If you shop or socialise, play sport, work, walk or drive in or around our town, we think that you will find at least one policy which addresses your concerns or experiences. Later this year, you will be able to vote on whether you accept the policies of this Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan or not.

If the majority of residents approve the plan, it will be adopted as an official planning guide that planners, developers and decision makers must consider.

1. Introduction

1.4 How to read this document

We have split the Neighbourhood Plan into two separate parts.

Part 1 - Sections 1 to 7 will be of interest to most people who care about Shaftesbury. It explains how Shaftesbury has developed through time and outlines some of the challenges we face today as the town continues to grow.

Part 2 - Appendices and Supporting Information contains more technical information, references and evidence. If you are interested in the background behind some of the ideas, you may find it useful.

The plan follows themes. We have colour-coded each section in the hope that it makes it easier to follow.

The **Town Centre** section is blue

The **Housing and Employment** section is yellow

The **Green Infrastructure** section is green

The **Design and Heritage** section is purple

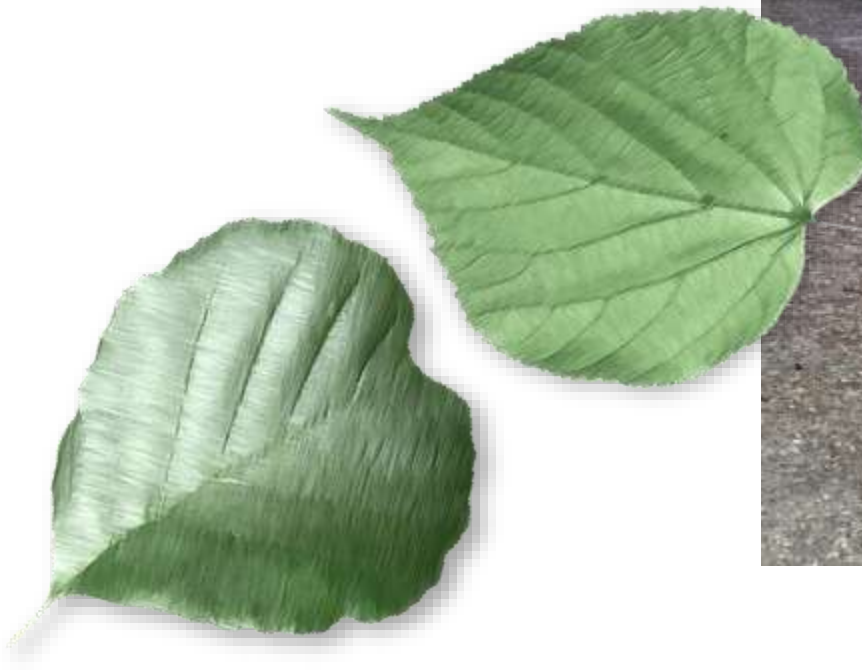
The **Community and Leisure** section is pink

We understand that not everyone has the time to read this entire document. It is large! So, we've created a **quick read option**. On each page, we have summarised each of our policies or explained technical terms that you might be unfamiliar with. If you're in a rush, you can get an understanding of what we hope to achieve by browsing the quick read notes.

The actual planning policies (which are what planning applications are tested against) are shown in ***bold italics***.

You might be interested in reading more about your local area and seeing how consultants have compared it to other districts of Shaftesbury. You will find separate mini chapters in Design and Heritage on:

- Bimport
- The Town Centre
- St James
- Barton Hill and Cockram's Field
- Layton Lane
- Cann
- Enmore Green
- East of Christy's Lane including Grosvenor Road



1.5 Index of policies

SFTC 1	Define the Town Centre and priorities for development	20
SFTC 2	Define primary shopping area and main frontages	22
SFTC 3	Preserve and enhance the character and design of the historic town centre	23
SFTC 4	Ensure planning decisions pay regard to congestion and the need for adequate parking in the town centre	24
SFHE 1	Sustainability of new developments	29
SFHE 2	To learn from the issues that have arisen from previous large-scale housing developments in Shaffesbury	32
SFHE 3	Encourage conditions for attracting and retaining employment	34
SFHE 4	Preservation of the Shaffesbury Eastern Bypass corridor	36
SFGI 1	Protect the most important and locally valued green spaces	42
SFGI 2	Ensure development respects Shaffesbury's topography and its position in the landscape	44
SFGI 3	Ensure development respects and enhances the Green Infrastructure network	49
SFGI 4	To protect our dark skies	50
SFDH 1	Respecting local character	66
SFDH 2	High quality designs	67
SFDH 3	The scale, positioning and orientation of buildings	68
SFDH 4	Creating an attractive public realm	69
SFDH 5	Accommodating vehicles	70
SFDH 6	Building styles and detailing	71
SFDH 7	Building materials	72
SFDH 8	Preserve Shaffesbury's unique and fascinating past	73
SFDH 9	Protect and celebrate locally important buildings	74
SFCL 1	Improve and increase the range and availability of community facilities	79
SFCL 2	Support and grow the tourist economy	82
SFCL 3	Support safe walking and cycling routes that are well connected	84

1. Introduction

1.6 Our population

The first population Table in **Appendix N** shows the anticipated population growth in the town from 2011 to 2031 and this equates to about a 38% increase.

The second Table in **Appendix N** highlights an 18% increase in Shaftesbury's population from 2011 to 2016, which is the highest in Dorset.

2,767 more people in 2031 v 2011	Equates to 38% increase
1,250 more houses in 2031 v 2011	

Strategic Planning Policies

In preparing the 2016 Local Plan, North Dorset District Council looked to its main towns (including Shaftesbury) to function as the main service centres and to be the main focuses for growth. As part of this work, consideration was given to the amount of development that was needed and would be appropriate for each town. Local Plan Policy 2: Core Spatial Strategy identifies Shaftesbury as one of the four main towns in North Dorset, where growth will be focussed.

For Shaftesbury, it has long been recognised that the potential for expansion is limited by the landscape and biodiversity constraints. There are only a limited number of potentially developable sites where the town could grow.

The main planning objectives for the town are included in Policy 18 of the Local Plan, whilst Policy 12 of that document supports town centre enhancement and growth.

A number of more detailed policies from the earlier 2003 Local Plan have been saved, for example in relation to safeguarding the character of the town.

The Neighbourhood Plan has to work within the strategic framework provided by the adopted Local Plan. Our aims very much fit within this framework and should ensure that changes to the town and surrounding area are positive ones that respect the environment and unique history of the area.

Basic Conditions

Legislation requires Neighbourhood Plans to be accompanied by a Basic Conditions Statement which confirms, for example, that the document meets legal requirements, has regard to national and strategic policies; and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. A copy of the Statement can be found on Dorset Council's web-site.

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/shaftesbury-neighbourhood-plan



1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan area

The Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan can only influence decisions on planning and development within the boundaries of the parish of Shaftesbury, the Town Council's area.

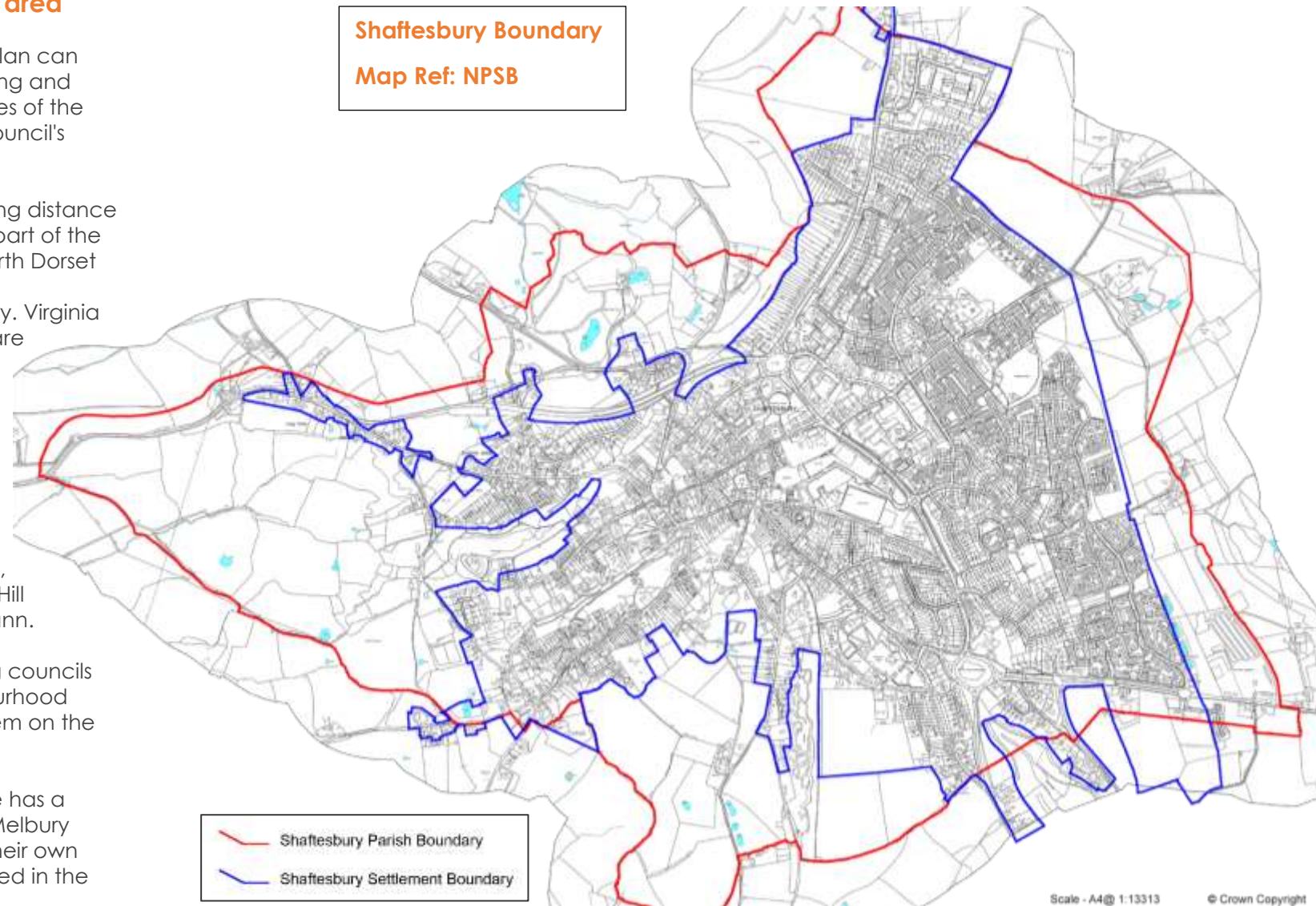
Some places that are within walking distance of Shaftesbury Town Centre, and part of the settlement area defined in the North Dorset Local Plan, are not actually in the administrative parish of Shaftesbury. Virginia Hayward's premises on the A350 are in Motcombe Parish, for example.

Some of the land ring-fenced for employment use south of the A30 Salisbury Road is in Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish.

Parts of the Lower Blandford Road, Higher Blandford Road and Foyle Hill are also in Melbury Abbas and Cann.

We aim to liaise with neighbouring councils to share the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan policies and engage with them on the content of the plan.

The adjoining parish of Motcombe has a Neighbourhood Plan (2019) and Melbury Abbas and Cann are preparing their own plan. Strategic issues will be covered in the Dorset-wide Local Plan.



1.8 Aims, objectives and vision

Vision for 2031: “Shaftesbury is the best example of how an historic, hilltop market town adapts and thrives in the 21st century, working towards net-zero emissions whilst keeping its unique identity and character and respecting its beautiful countryside setting.”

Shaftesbury is one of England's most historic settlements and was established around the Abbey in the year 888. The town we love today has been shaped by its history as a place of pilgrimage and as a successful market town.

Our street layout reveals a great deal about our heritage. Different areas of our town have their own unique feel and character. Retaining that sense of place and individuality is really important to the Neighbourhood Plan.

The historic 'core' comprises a single main street, the High Street, and parallel lanes, like Bell Street and Bleke Street.

The Medieval market town to the east is made up of an irregular grid of streets and lanes, including Muston's Lane and Angel Lane. A pattern of roads spreads out from the town to nearby settlements.



Below the hilltop is St James, an early 'sub-urb' of the town. The settlement follows one long street.

Historic buildings form a major part of the character of Shaftesbury. The majority of modern suburban development is largely concentrated to the east of the historic town. Smaller areas of modern housing are found on the edges of Enmore Green, St James and Cann.

Modern suburban development in Shaftesbury is typical of its period. It has little local distinctiveness.

Open and wooded areas on Shaftesbury's historic hilltop and on the steep slopes around the town include Abbey Park and Castle Hill, both settings for ancient monuments. These, and the long views across the Blackmore Vale to the north, west and south, contribute significantly to the distinctive rural hilltop character of the town and are a magnet for many visitors.

The nationally important landscape of the Cranborne Chase, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, wraps around the north, east and south sides of the town, which has recently achieved international acclaim for its dark night skies.

Our work has comprehensively covered all aspects of the town relevant to neighbourhood planning. We have used five different themes to present this:

- The Town Centre
- Housing and Employment
- Green Infrastructure
- Design and Heritage
- Community and Leisure

We're proposing 24 separate policies within these headline themes.

There's much more detail on each of the policies later on in this guide. But broadly our policies aim to:

- Support projects and proposals that go beyond the current standards for sustainable development, including zero carbon, significant biodiversity benefits and the take-up of sustainable transport modes
- Support the vibrancy of the town centre, with its independent shops and markets, and strong association with arts/crafts
- Ensure further housing and employment provision reflects the needs of local residents and businesses
- Protect important green spaces and corridors, and maximise their potential for recreation, walking and cycling links and as wildlife areas
- Make sure that new buildings are of high quality that complement the best of Shaftesbury whilst being environmentally friendly
- Establish that the social, educational, healthcare and road infrastructure is sufficient for future needs, and that any improvements are delivered in a timely manner.

1. Introduction

1.9 Community views on planning

We have read and assessed the feedback from 'free form' comments from the previous Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire (2014), particularly focusing on the questions with the highest response. Free form comments are when someone writes down their ideas or suggestions without answering a specific question, so they are able to raise any topics they are concerned about.

Following on from this, we have run three more consultations. A mini survey was run in June 2018. This checked that the results of the earlier 2014 still held true. In February 2019, we consulted on our draft policy ideas to check that they were generally supported. And finally, in August and

September 2019, we consulted on the first full version of this plan.

There were two questions in the February 2019 consultation that resulted in policy amendments (where a high percentage of respondents disagreed with the policy intentions we had suggested).

Even though many people agreed with the option to accept small scale affordable housing developments outside of the settlement boundary (which could mean building on green fields) over 60% of responses indicated no support for this policy.

We have listened to the community. As a result of this consultation feedback there is no specific policy on affordable housing. There is, however, insight relating to the needs of local people as defined in the Dorset Council housing register and therefore a project is included in Appendix B.

Another of our earlier draft policies suggested adding an additional floor to certain buildings in the town centre to create accommodation. Whilst nearly 60% of people agreed or felt neutral with upward extension of single storey buildings in the town centre, there were still a significant amount of responses that did not support this policy intention, so we have not encouraged this change.

Feedback from initial consultation in 2015 – summary of key points:

Key Point	Number of responses	Additional comments in free form text
The importance of protecting and enhancing the quality of housing development	752	205
Concerns about infrastructure, such as roads, public transport, community buildings **	828***	220
Concerns regarding healthcare and medical facilities	967	232
The importance of protecting and enhancing our open spaces and views	967	305
The need to improve the walking and cycling network	666	289

** includes questions relating to parking, traffic congestion, education provision, road safety, outdoor space, public transport and leisure facilities. *** An average of 828 responses based on a total of 10 questions relating to infrastructure.

Percentage of residents concerned and personally affected by:

Key Point	Number of respondents concerned	% of responses
GP and health facilities: Had an unacceptable wait for an appointment within the last year	113	73%
Frequently unable to park within reach of where I need to go	68	44%
Traffic congestion: Frequent Delays on Shaftesbury's Roads	73	47%

Feedback from phase 1 consultation (February 2019) – summary of key points:

Key Point	Number of responses	Number of residents	% residents
Residents who broadly agreed with the Town Centre Policy intentions	160	125	78%
Residents who broadly agreed with the Housing and Employment Policy intentions	232	132	57%
Residents who broadly agreed with the Green Infrastructure Policy intentions	164	143	87%
Residents who broadly agreed with the Design and Heritage Policy intentions	142	118	83%
Residents who broadly agreed with the Community and Leisure Policy intentions	158	128	81%

1.10 Climate change

During the drafting of our Neighbourhood Plan, the need for an urgent response to climate change has become more widely acknowledged. Public concern about the impact of a changing climate and the loss of biodiversity is increasingly apparent globally, nationally and in Shaftesbury.

Parliament, Dorset and many other councils, as well as Shaftesbury Town Council, have all declared a 'Climate Emergency'. The UK Government has committed to the achievement of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Shaftesbury Town Council is working towards a climate emergency action plan.

This was the context for the consultation on Shaftesbury's draft Neighbourhood Plan in the Summer of 2019. The one over-arching issue in feedback was whether enough had been done to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This is an integral part of all the themes within the plan, so we have taken the opportunity to look again at our policies and projects, reinforcing them where possible.



A Bee 'Hotel'

What would we need to do differently for Shaftesbury to achieve net-zero emissions and in what ways is our town vulnerable to climate change? More specifically, what can this Neighbourhood Plan help with?

Shaftesbury's townspeople have a high dependence on nearby towns and cities for services and employment, rely on car transport to a significant extent, and are vulnerable to rising energy prices.

Climatic changes and past farming practices have adversely impacted local wildlife and biodiversity. Our characteristic tree cover is vulnerable to extremes of weather that are becoming more frequent.

The surrounding countryside is known for beef and dairy farming with relatively few local producers of fruit and vegetables.



Giving Up Plastic

We have a substantial elderly population whose health is at risk during heatwaves. Some of our older housing stock is not particularly well insulated or energy efficient.

Cutting carbon emissions can be achieved through reducing our need to travel and by reducing the fossil fuel-derived energy we use in our homes and our businesses. For a more sustainable future we'll need to be:

- Buying more locally sourced seasonal food, eating a healthy low-carbon diet, and reducing food waste
- Walking or cycling short distances, and using public transport or electric cars when travelling further
- Working locally, and using videoconferencing instead of business travel
- Ensuring that older (including historic and listed) as well as new buildings retain warmth in winter and remain cool in the summer
- Fitting renewable energy and water-saving devices
- Generating more of our energy requirement locally using renewables
- Managing green spaces for biodiversity and creating places where wildlife can thrive
- Planting trees and managing pasture to increase carbon capture

1. Introduction

1.10 Climate change (continued)

Many of the policies and projects in the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan will help our transition to a low-carbon future. Our policies will have an impact on any new development, whilst our projects relate to existing buildings and green spaces or focus on making climate-smart lifestyle choices more accessible. These projects will become part of the town's climate emergency action plan.

The relevant policy and project contributions are outlined by themes below:

The Town Centre:

- Developing the town centre as a safe and pedestrian-friendly public space – **Policy SFTC1 and Project TC5.**
- Supporting our vibrant town centre so that people can shop locally - **Policy SFTC2.**
- Supporting the installation of electric (or other ultra-low emission) vehicle charging points – **Policy SFTC4.**
- Investigating a shuttle bus to serve the town centre and residential estates - **Project TC4.**

Housing and Employment:

- Making environmental sustainability a key consideration if development of new housing is proposed – **Policy SFHE1.**
- Reducing the need for commuting by requiring housing development to

include provision for those working from home and by supporting local employment opportunities – **Policies SFHE2 and SFHE3.**

Green Infrastructure:

- Protecting or promoting a network of biodiverse green spaces and green corridors, conserving established trees and hedgerows, planting more trees and ensuring appropriate species are used in new tree and other planting – **Policies SFGI1 and SFGI3, Projects GI1 and GI3.**
- Requiring energy-efficient lighting that protects dark skies and reduces light pollution that is harmful to insects – **Policy SFGI4 and Project GI4.**
- Encouraging community-supported renewable energy generation – **Project GI5.**

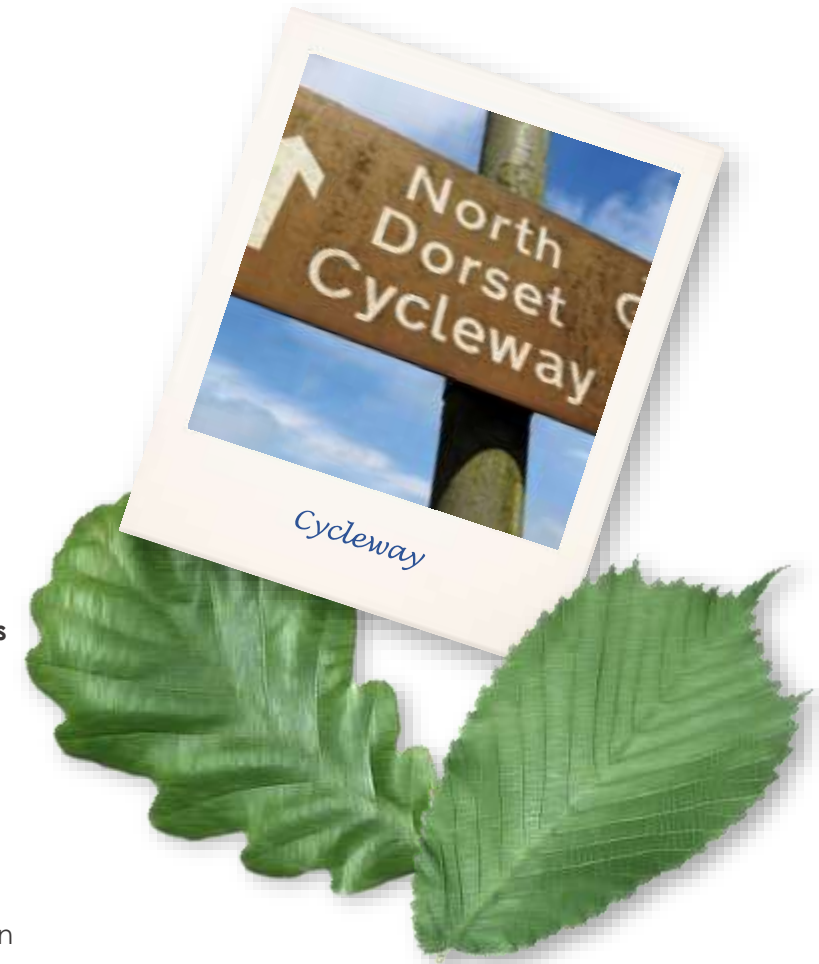
Design and Heritage:

- Promoting green, environmentally sustainable building standards – **Policies SFGI2, SFGI3, SFGI4 and SFDH7.**

Community and Leisure:

- Supporting increased provision of allotments – **Policy SFCL1.**
- Considering the need for community facilities that would be convenient for residents on the eastern side of the town – **Project CL1.**

- Giving proper consideration to routes for buses, cyclists, footpaths and green infrastructure in our housing developments – **Policies SFHE2 and SFCL3, Projects CL3, CL4 and CL6.**
- Improving connections with cycle routes beyond the town – **Project CL7.**



2. The Town Centre



2.1 The Town Centre: Key messages and aims

The context

Shaftesbury has some powerful advantages that set our town centre apart. It has a unique hilltop location with iconic views from Gold Hill. Shaftesbury centre is historic and picturesque and enjoys a range of independent shops. Economically, it is holding up reasonably well compared to other towns.

However, if our town centre is to continue to thrive, it will need to adapt and make the most of its benefits.

Shaftesbury town centre needs to remain distinctive and to retain its appeal to both residents and visitors.

There could be more leisure activities offered in the town centre. Surveys have highlighted concerns with traffic congestion and parking. Although the Neighbourhood Plan cannot solve traffic problems, we do cover parking and we have recommended some projects that could help.



Key feedback from consultation

The policies developed have tried to take account of all the earlier consultations undertaken.

Key themes from these were:

- There is support for a varied selection of shops with independent stores and the market.
- Residents want to keep our distinct character and heritage.
 - There are concerns about parking and congestion.

The initial consultation, conducted in February 2019, tested our draft policies. A very clear majority of those who responded were in favour of each of the four draft policies for the town centre.

There was one particular element of the character and design policy that was not popular, though. A majority of people were against the suggestions that single storey buildings could be extended

upwards by adding a first or second floor. This idea has been dropped.

Key messages

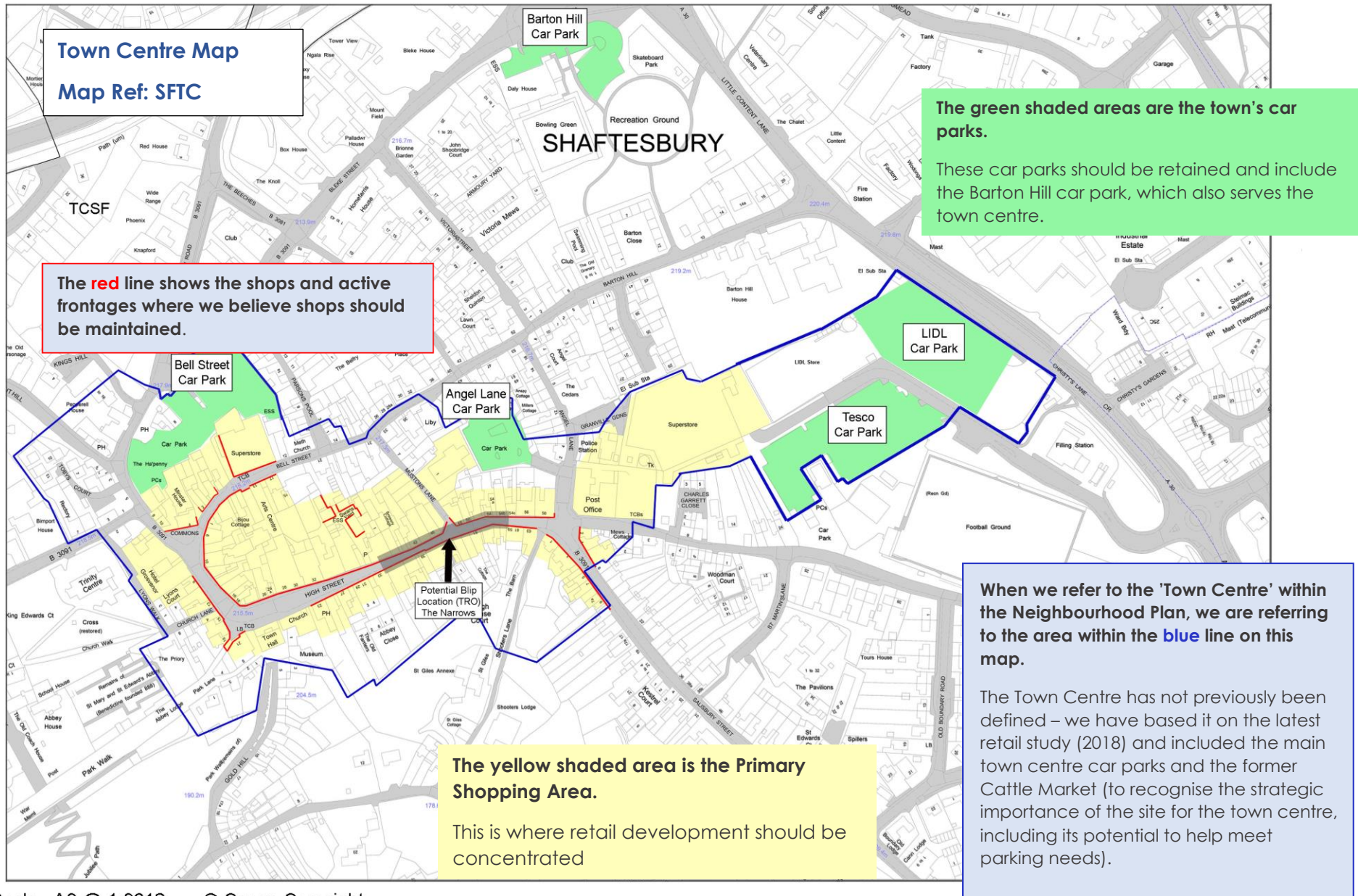
Based on what local people have told us, we have the following aims for the town centre.

The town centre should:

- Retain a variety of retail businesses and a strong presence of independently owned shops
- Strengthen our leisure-based opportunities and be a vibrant social centre for the whole community.
- Enhance its attractiveness and character for visitors and residents alike
- Improve its accessibility, balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and car users.



2.2 What is the Town Centre?



Scale - A3 @ 1:9612 © Crown Copyright

2.3 Policy SFTC1

What does Policy SFTC1 set out to do?

To define the Town Centre and our priorities for development in that area.

This includes independent shops, enhanced leisure and tourism, the potential for commercial offices and flats above shops, and a welcoming and charming historic environment.

Details:

Our survey has told us what you value from our town centre. And some statistics reveal what could be made better.

POLICY SFTC1 - Development proposals within the town centre area (the area within the blue line on Map SFTC1) will be supported if they meet one or more of these following aspirations and do not undermine others:

- **They maintain a strong and vibrant retail presence within the town centre area. They enable the continued presence of a varied range of small independent shops.**
- **They ensure the continued operation of the street markets.**
- **They enhance the leisure activities for both residents and tourists. These could include cultural, arts and community**

venues, additional overnight accommodation and food or drink establishments.

- **They provide opportunities for office-based employment, which complement and support the town centre's vitality and viability.**
- **They offer opportunities for housing on otherwise underused upper floors where these are shown to be no longer suitable for commercial use.**
- **They protect and enhance the town centre's historic and architectural charm.**
- **They create a safe and pedestrian-friendly public space.**
- **They provide sufficient public and private car parking for the town centre and the parking provision caters for forecast future needs.**

In line with national and local plan policies, any retail development outside of this area, must not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Why is enhancing leisure important?

Whilst shops remain important, other uses that bring people to town and generate town centre activity will also be encouraged.

i The range of leisure services offered in Shaftesbury is limited and makes up only 13.9% of total outlets compared to the UK average of 23.9%.



2.3 Policy SFTC1 (continued)



Grosvenor Arms Hotel



Shaftesbury Food Festival

Why do we need to maintain a vibrant town centre?

The findings of the 'health check' for Shaftesbury town centre paint a largely positive picture. On most measures Shaftesbury fares better than national averages and other towns in rural Dorset. For example, the shop vacancy rate is recorded as 3.9% compared with a national average of 11.2%.

Not all is rosy, though. The health check was based largely on 2016 data, and since then there have been more shop closures and some premises lie empty.

During public consultation, many members of the Shaftesbury community raised concerns about the level of traffic in the High Street. A project is proposed to look at the potential of pedestrianising or reducing traffic in the town centre. This, however, will need to consider practicalities, cost feasibility, and impact on deliveries, footfall and retailers.

i When people were asked what they most liked about Shaftesbury Town Centre, the two key features most frequently mentioned were "attractive environment/nice place" (29.4%) and "good range of independent shops" (17.1%).

Why is tourism important?

i Tourism is important to Shaftesbury's economy. Each year, our town receives

472,000 day visitors and 19,000 people stay overnight. Visitors spend £18.3 million locally each year and that supports 370 local jobs.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

The term 'town centre' means different things to different people. This is a planning document and we need to make sure we are clear about the precise area that we are referring to.

It also sets the scene in terms of what is important to consider when planning decisions are made.



Busy High Street

2.4 Policy SFTC2

What does Policy SFTC2 set out to do?

To define the primary shopping area and main frontages, and the different uses/changes allowed that should support the vitality of the town centre.

Whilst shops remain important, other uses that bring people to, and generate activity in, the town centre will also be encouraged.

Within the section known as The Narrows, the restricted width causes major difficulties for deliveries and collections.

Details:

POLICY SFTC2 - For the main shopping frontages within the primary shopping area (as shown by the red line on Map SFTC1), the use of ground floor or street level units should fall within one or more of the following use classes:

- **Commercial, Business or Service (Class E)**
- **Learning and non-residential institutions (Class F1)**
- **Local community (Class F2)**
- **Other sui generis uses deemed compatible, including: public house or drinking establishments; hot food takeaway establishments (except within the section known as The Narrows, as shown on map SFTC 1); live music venues; theatres; cinemas;**

concert halls; bingo halls; and dance halls.



Salisbury Street



Sunday Market

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

If all of the shops in the High Street became offices or residential properties, the town centre would soon feel very different.

Local jobs and our town's economy could be affected. We don't feel that a row of offices should be allowed to replace retail shops in the High Street, for example.

We think it is important to identify areas where we don't think the current use of buildings should be greatly changed, from commercial use to residential use for example. There is a nationally recognised planning code for each type of business - E, F1, F2 etc.

i This policy has been modified to take account of the changes to the Use Classes Order that came into effect on 1st September 2020, and that a short explanation of the new Use Classes is provided in Appendix O.

2.5 Policy SFTC3

What does Policy SFTC3 set out to do?

To preserve and enhance the character and design of our historic town centre through the application of character and design guidance to any proposed future development or redevelopment.

The historic buildings and character of the town centre already have a high degree of protection because of the large proportion of Listed buildings and because much of the area is also part of the Shaftesbury Conservation Area (since 1970). The Dorset Historic Towns Survey of Shaftesbury (2011) usefully describes the town's historical development and how this has shaped its character.

An important emphasis is that any new building will be of very high quality, that enhances the town centre, both in its architecture and materials used. This does not mean that it must reference the surrounding historic architecture or local building materials, but that in its design and realisation, it is a development of which the town can be proud.



Details:

POLICY SFTC3 – In Shaftesbury Town Centre any street lighting, street signs, litterbins or benches should be consistent with the guidance set out in the Shaftesbury Design Guidelines.

Shopfronts need to retain entrances and openings so people can access them from the street and so they appear connected with, and provide interest to, the street.

The loss of historic shopfronts will be resisted. They should be maintained and enhanced through adopting the following principles:

- *Shop front signage should preserve and enhance the historic character of the shopfront – painted fascias and swing signs will normally be preferred; plastic signs are discouraged*
- *The introduction of solid or perforated external security shutters that would have a detrimental impact will be resisted*
- *Any alterations or replacements of windows and doors should favour painted wood as the primary material. They should retain the traditional design and glazing, where possible, although*

alternative glazing options to single-glazed units may be considered due to the greater energy efficiency (and better visibility for internal displays).

The merging of adjoining shops or units together may be favourably considered provided that the external integrity and historic nature of the front of the building(s) is preserved. The design should allow for joined units to be separated back into individual units to provide flexibility for future uses.

The redevelopment of late 20th and early 21st century buildings that detract from the historic character of the town centre will be encouraged where this would enhance the historic character of the area.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

Shaftesbury is unique. If our town centre streets are altered without consideration for their heritage, they will be ruined, perhaps forever.

2.6 Policy SFTC4

What does Policy SFTC4 set out to do?

To ensure that planning decisions pay full regard to congestion and the need for parking in the town centre, as the provision of sufficient and affordable parking is critical to the centre's continuing success.

National planning guidance recognises the need to improve the quality of parking in town centres and, where it is necessary to ensure the vitality of town centres, the quantity too. With the potential development of the Cattle Market, this issue is even more important to the town.



It is also important to ensure provision is made for electric/ultra-low emission vehicle charging points, and there is government funding available to help with this. Their installation should not significantly affect parking available for other vehicles.

Details:

POLICY SFTC4 - Proposals that increase the level of parking provision for the town centre should be strongly supported.

Developers may be required to provide financial contributions to help fund the provision of additional off-street parking spaces and improvements to parking management. This would apply if the development, cumulatively with other planned developments, would increase parking pressures in the Town Centre area causing an unacceptable level of harm.

Proposals that reduce the number of off-street parking spaces to serve the town centre will be resisted.

Proposals for installation of electric/ultra-low emission vehicle charging points should be supported. This should not harm existing heritage assets or the roots of protected trees.

i Planning policies that seek to increase parking provision are unlikely to be sufficient on their own. Practical measures are needed to manage demand and congestion. The recent Shaftesbury Parking Study proposes options including using signposting, altering the length of stay and better enforcement.

A project is proposed in Appendix A to review these options and, in particular, work with Dorset Council on a number of potential projects to consider parking provision, signage, length of stay and wider transport considerations.

Community and Leisure Policy 3 also sets out to achieve safe walking and cycling routes that are well connected with the town centre and other key areas.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

The Neighbourhood Plan commissioned the Shaftesbury Parking Study. Data collection and surveys were undertaken in late 2018 for the four car parks serving the town centre - Bell Street, Angel Lane, Tesco and Barton Hill. They are shown on the town centre map. Observations were also undertaken of on-street parking.

In total, the four car parks have 514 spaces and there are 283 on-street parking spaces. The main conclusions of the study are:

- Car parking is in high demand in Shaftesbury.
- Car parks are heavily used.
- Demand has increased since the previous survey in 2005.

3. Housing and Employment



3. Housing and Employment

3.1 Housing and Employment: Key messages and aims

The context

Policy 6 of the North Dorset Local Plan advises that the scale of housing development in Shaftesbury will be at least 1,140 homes between 2011 and 2031. That figure is not an upper limit.

What's the Local Plan?

i The Local Plan is the North Dorset area blueprint for development. It covers the future use of land and planned infrastructure changes for a much bigger area than just Shaftesbury.

The Local Plan deals with Shaftesbury, Blandford, Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and places in-between. If you think of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in terms of a hierarchy, or a 'pecking order', then the Local Plan sits above

this Neighbourhood Plan in that it sets out the strategy for a much wider area.

The Neighbourhood Plan cannot change a Local Plan policy. But the Neighbourhood Plan can create a policy which offers more local flavour to a Local Plan policy, in order to meet Shaftesbury's specific needs.

In 2017, the Local Planning Authority announced that it couldn't meet its 5-year housing land supply across the district. That means that there is not enough land with (or likely to get) planning permission which could then be built on to meet potential requirements over the next five years. Because of that, the Local Planning Authority is under immense pressure to allow more housing by granting planning permission to develop sites that are outside the settlement boundary.

Shaftesbury people have been very clear in their response to our consultation. They do not

want housing developments on the countryside or slopes that surround our

town. That's why we don't want to alter the settlement boundary.

In the initial consultation we asked whether locals would agree or disagree with the construction of affordable housing outside the settlement boundary. Even when considering building homes that would provide accommodation for essential workers or local people, the message was clear. 61% of respondents opposed building on fields and open land.

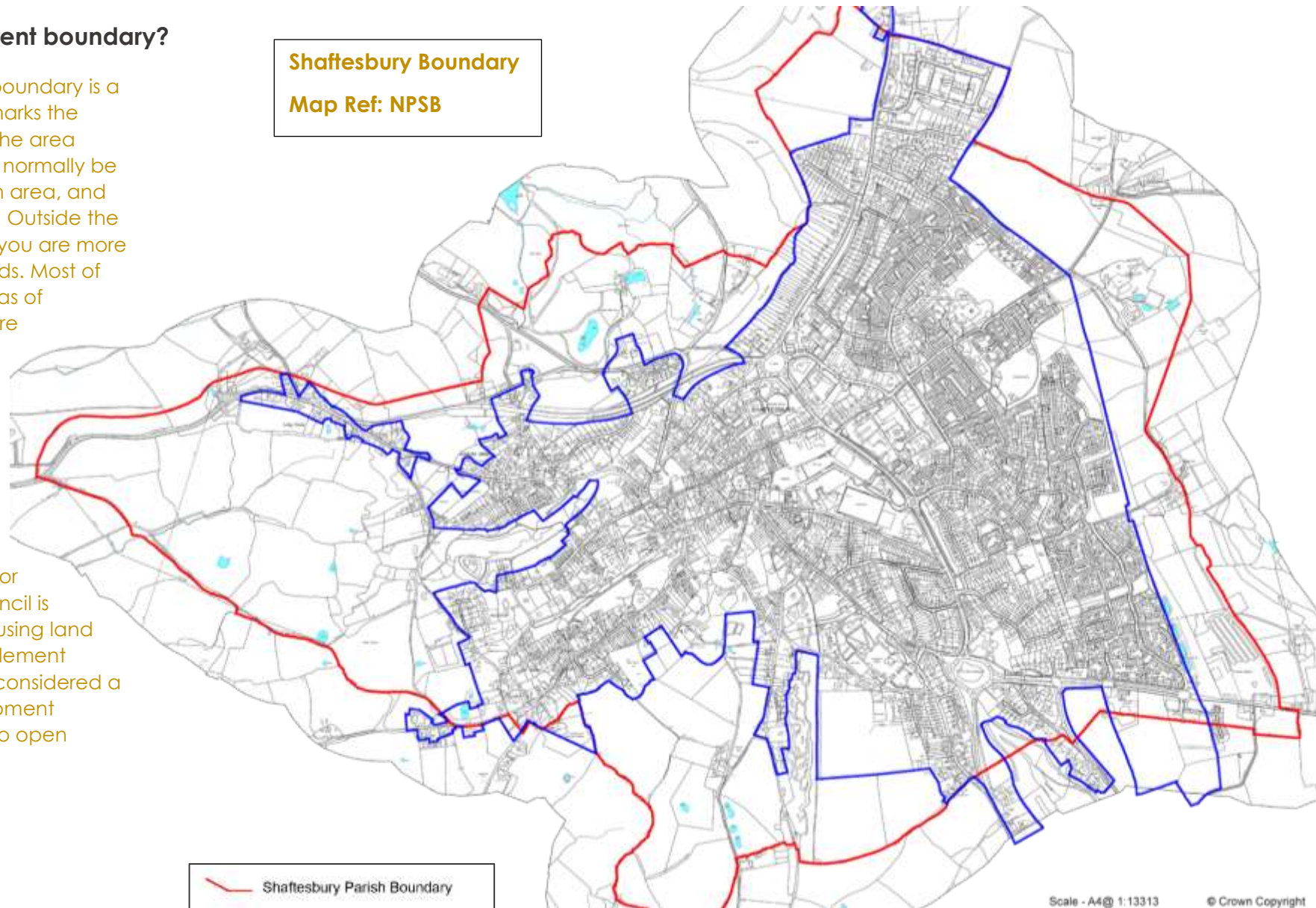


What's the settlement boundary?

i The settlement boundary is a line on map. It marks the separation between the area where building would normally be considered, the urban area, and the open countryside. Outside the settlement boundary you are more likely to find green fields. Most of the undeveloped areas of Shaftesbury's slopes are currently outside the settlement boundary.

Usually, developers have to present strong arguments for building outside the settlement boundary. However, for so long as Dorset Council is unable to meet its housing land supply target, the settlement boundary will not be considered a firm barrier to development extending beyond into open spaces.

Shaftesbury Boundary
Map Ref: NPSB



— Shaftesbury Parish Boundary
 — Shaftesbury Settlement Boundary

Scale - A4@ 1:13313 © Crown Copyright

3. Housing and Employment

Why does this matter?

Let's go back to the Local Planning Authority not meeting its 5-year land supply quota. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot simply say 'no' to further housing, especially if it is affordable housing for local people.

Much of the land that could be targeted for such development is outside the Shaftesbury Parish, so that means it is outside our Neighbourhood Plan. There is potential for development which could impact on Shaftesbury on sites across the Wiltshire county boundary or in Motcombe, Melbury Abbas and Cann Parishes. So, we need to have a good working relationship with adjoining councils.

As we have said, we are not looking to change the settlement boundary and we are not intending to identify further land for housing. We feel strongly that any decision to release more housing land should be after the existing housing growth has been completed. We feel there is much to learn from how recent large-scale developments have been handled. Our emphasis is on making sure that what is built is something we can all be proud of.

The Local Plan review process should provide an appropriate level of scrutiny to help consider and address the wider impacts of further growth. This cannot easily be done for individual unplanned housing sites, triggered by the presumption in favour of building more housing due to the housing shortage in other areas. The overall impact of several individual developments, when added together, can easily be missed. For example, the adjoining Donheads parishes have

highlighted their vulnerability to poorly managed drainage systems - yet they are not consulted on planning applications in Shaftesbury unless it abuts their parish boundary.

Shaftesbury has taken its fair share of new homes

We've already referred to the Local Plan, the district-wide blueprint for development agreed by the former North Dorset District Council. It still applies, even though the new Dorset Council has replaced North Dorset District Council.

The Local Plan requires 285 new homes for North Dorset for each year, from 2011 to 2031. Homes could mean houses, bungalows or flats.

Shaftesbury will probably have met its quota, allocated by North Dorset District Council, six years before the end date of this plan



The review of the North Dorset Plan was suggesting a 28% increase in the rate of housebuilding across the area. A new Local Plan for Dorset is being prepared which will reconsider (and could similarly increase) the number of homes to be built in this area.

Shaftesbury already has enough housing land for the foreseeable future without releasing further greenfield sites, according to North Dorset District Council's Annual Monitoring Review, which was published in December 2018.

So, whether you use the original North Dorset housing target for Shaftesbury of 57 homes or an

increased figure that is 28% higher, Shaftesbury already has enough housing land for at least 7 to 10 years without releasing further greenfield sites so there is no need to find land for more housing before the new Local Plan is agreed.

i During our widespread public consultations, we have not questioned residents on whether there should be any more new housing built in Shaftesbury. We didn't ask that question because we know that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot make the decision to prevent development.

However, we are mindful of the strong local opposition to any further development. In 2014 and 2015, 205 people responded to the previous Neighbourhood Plan's survey to say that they opposed more house building. They were not responding to a question or prompt. They were writing to share their views via the free form text option.

Donhead St Mary Parish Council highlighted that their area is vulnerable to any mismanagement of water drainage systems (such as the current lagoons) as the water courses flow down into their area from the east side of Shaftesbury and could cause flooding.

What about the traffic?

Whilst there may be a degree of overlap, the policy also highlights other matters such as the existing housing supply in Shaftesbury, likely traffic growth and the overall effect of all other developments. We have, as part of the work, obtained data on growing levels of traffic on Christy's Lane, which continues to strengthen the need for the Eastern Bypass to be built.

3.2 Policy SFHE1

What does Policy SFHE1 set out to do?

To ensure that the need for, and sustainability of, new development is carefully considered. There is already a substantial housing supply in Shaftesbury (houses with planning permission but not yet built). Additional houses and people would increase traffic on the road network and put additional pressure on our infrastructure. A growing population will also need local employment opportunities, which may require more employment land. All of these changes will potentially impact on the town’s sensitive environment and for that reason inappropriate development outside the settlement boundary will be resisted. Where development outside the boundary is proposed it will have to be accompanied by detailed supportive evidence, as referred to in the following policy.

Details:

POLICY SFHE1 - *In circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the Local Plan housing supply policies are not up-to-date, and an application for housing outside the settlement boundary is received, this should be accompanied by a clear assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the development on its own and cumulatively with other planned developments, including the likely impact on the capacity of the town’s infrastructure and highway network*

The table on the right shows the housing completions for each year from 2011 through to 2031.

	Completed	Projected	Cumulative Total
Year 1 Completions (2011/12)	220		220
Year 2 Completions (2012/13)	62		282
Year 3 Completions (2013/14)	119		401
Year 4 Completions (2014/15)	122		523
Year 5 Completions (2015/16)	85		608
Year 6 Completions (2016/17)	36		644
Year 7 Completions (2017/18)	55		699
Year 8 Completions (2018/19)	69		768
Year 9 Completions (2019/20)		88	856
Year 10 Completions (2020/21)		121	977
Year 11 Completions (2021/22)		90	1067
Year 12 Completions (2022/23)		92	1159
Year 13 Completions (2023/24)		71	1230
Year 14 Completions (2024/25)		20	1250
Year 15 Completions (2025/26)		0	1250
Year 16 Completions (2026/27)		0	1250
Year 17 Completions (2027/28)		0	1250
Year 18 Completions (2028/29)		0	1250
Year 19 Completions (2029/30)		0	1250
Year 20 Completions (2030/31)		0	1250
Total	768	482	1,250

3.2 Policy SFHE1 (continued)

There has been significant expansion of the town in recent years. As of April 2019, there were still 432 dwellings that were permitted or under construction – which exceeds the planned requirement to 2031.

Having regard for the adopted Local Plan's strategy for North Dorset, and the number of sites currently available, there is no obvious need for more housing to be included in this Neighbourhood Plan prior to the review of the Local Plan. There is no need to change the existing settlement boundaries.

Furthermore, as it wouldn't make sense to build outside of the bypass corridor and, given the

limitations of the slopes around the town, there are few, if any, obvious options for development.

A review of the Dorset Local Plan is now underway, and it is likely that this will include further proposals for Shaftesbury as the plan is extended forward by several years. The new Dorset Council Local Plan will consider the role of Shaftesbury and will be subject to a public examination. It is the appropriate forum for discussing how much and what type of development is needed in the future. In the meantime, policy SFHE1 tries to ensure that any shortfall in housing elsewhere in Dorset is not seen as a reason to allow development outside of the settlement boundary, without taking all of these issues into account.



Affordable Homes



New Builds

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

We think that Shaftesbury has shouldered its share of the district housing quota.

It's really important to remember that we cannot refuse any more housing - we don't have that authority. But if more housing is imposed on Shaftesbury through home-building targets, we believe that the existing developments should be given time to 'bed down' and the town needs to be given 'breathing space' to adjust to the demands placed on its infrastructure.

3.2 Policy SFHE1 (continued)

Map of development areas

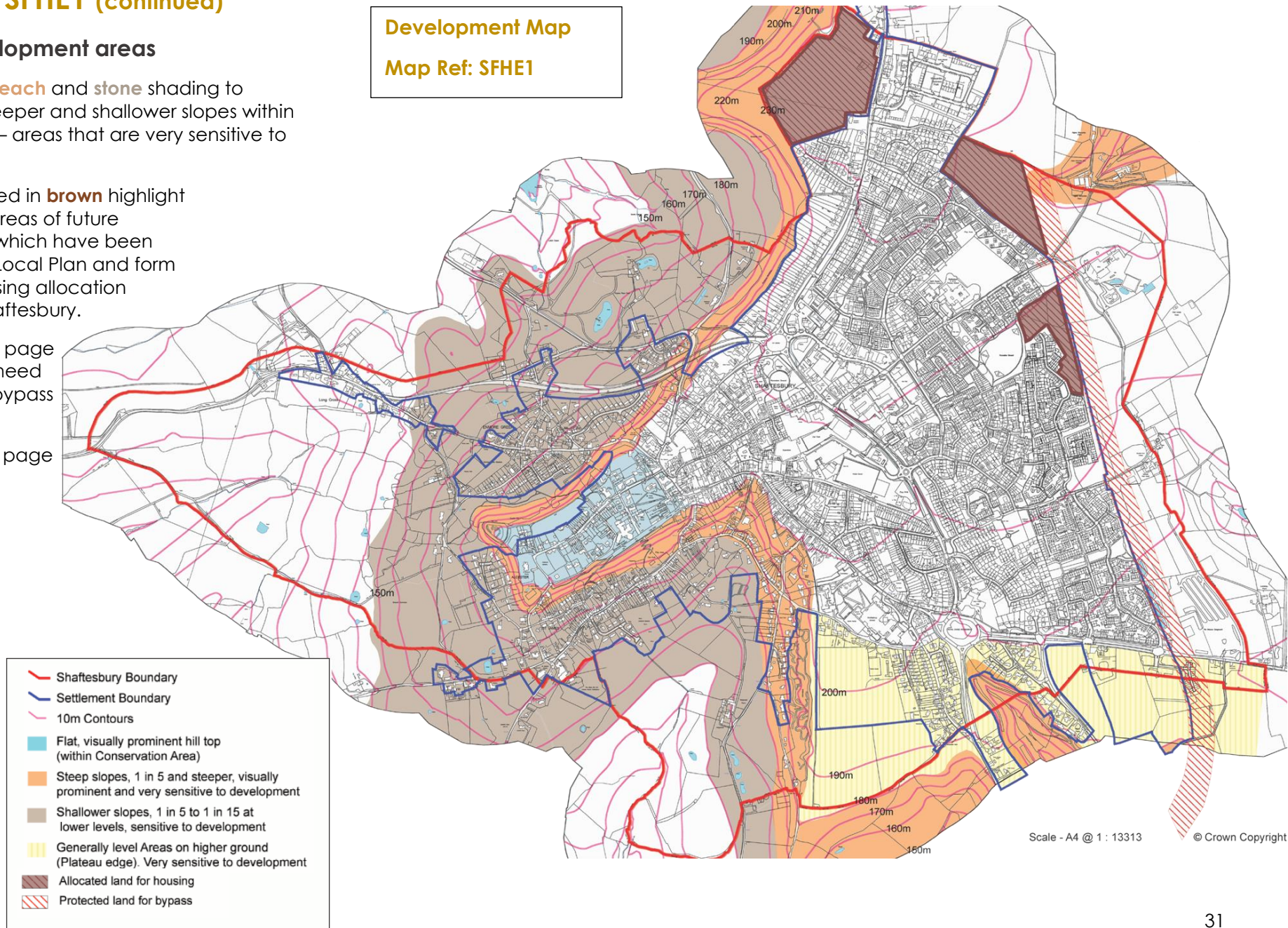
This map uses **peach** and **stone** shading to highlight the steeper and shallower slopes within the landscape – areas that are very sensitive to development.

The areas shaded in **brown** highlight the proposed areas of future development, which have been outlined in the Local Plan and form part of the housing allocation numbers for Shaftesbury.

Policy SFHE4 on page 36 outlines the need to protect the bypass corridor.

Policy SFG12 on page 44 outlines the protection of the slopes.

Development Map
Map Ref: SFHE1



Scale - A4 @ 1 : 13313 © Crown Copyright

3.3 Policy SFHE2

What does Policy SFHE2 set out to do?

To learn from the issues that have arisen from previous large-scale housing developments in Shaftesbury.

In some cases, particularly with larger schemes which may take more than a year to build, the quality of development has been lower than was expected. Not all developers have done everything they said they would do when they were originally granted planning permission (large schemes are often approved as 'outline' permission, with detailed matters dealt with incrementally through later phases). Sometimes important parts of the scheme have been significantly delayed, and in some cases failed to materialise. This can mean long periods of disruption and that the finished development is of a lower quality and the overall scheme has been 'watered down'.

There has been significant expansion of the town in recent years. As of April 2019, 432 properties had been granted planning permission or were under construction. That is 90% of the number of

homes that are planned to be built by 2031. Having regard for the adopted Local Plan's strategy for North Dorset, and the number of sites currently available, there is no obvious need for more housing to be included in this Neighbourhood Plan until such time as it is reviewed, and the existing settlement boundaries are unchanged.

With the review of the Dorset Local Plan now underway, the overlying strategy for Shaftesbury's future development needs to be examined through that process.

Dorset Council is responsible for making sure that planning conditions and obligations are followed. Active monitoring as building works progress can flag up problems at an early stage so that these can be resolved and are less likely to be repeated. On larger sites, Dorset Council can charge developers a fee, as part of a section 106 planning obligation, to cover the costs of Dorset Council monitoring the delivery of the infrastructure promised by the developer.

One example of an issue that needs to be addressed is the timely adoption of highways and related traffic management measures, which has been a cause for concern in some recent developments. The timeframe for

adoption should be clearly specified at the outset, and Dorset Council can use their powers under the Highways Act to get funds from the developer that allows them to remedy the situation if the proposed roads are not made-up to a suitable standard to be adopted.

In terms of house types, our research has specifically highlighted affordable housing as a priority for the local community, and also the housing needs of our older residents (given that 25% of the population is in the 65+ age group and this is forecast to increase). Innovative forms of housing designed to meet the specific needs of older people (who may be less mobile and have a higher reliance on care and social support networks) should be encouraged.

At least 1 in 20 workers work from home. Updated Building Regulations now require all new homes to be designed to support fast broadband connections of up to 1,000 megabits per second. Having some homes that include ground floor space which could be used as a home office, workshop and storage area would be desirable.



3.3 Policy SFHE2 (continued)

Details:

POLICY SFHE2 - The following key principles should be applied to any future proposed small to medium size housing sites (i.e. up to 1 hectare in size):

- They should be integrated into an existing built-up area;
- The mechanisms that will be used to ensure that planning obligations and conditions are monitored and complied with should be set out clearly;
- The delivery of affordable housing should address the needs of the local community (including key workers engaged in services in Shaftesbury, such as health and social care, education and emergency services).
- The use of a suitable delivery vehicle, such as a Community Land Trust (CLT) should be secured where possible to manage the allocation of affordable housing and give priority to those with a local connection in housing need.

On sites of 10 or more dwellings, the mix of housing should include dwelling types likely to be suitable for older people and also for those working from home and avoid being any one type in order to promote social integration. Any affordable housing should be pepper-potted and indistinguishable from open market housing, and delivered in tandem or advance of the open market housing.

On site of 100 dwellings or more:

- The development should be phased to ensure the provision of any employment land, community facilities and infrastructure (including bus-friendly routes, cycle routes / cycle-friendly streets, shared parking areas and onward highway connections) as well as green infrastructure is delivered in tandem and each phase is fully completed in a timely manner.
- Information on the variation in scale of building heights (including information on the impact of local topography and views); all landscape features to be retained; and proposed green spaces, corridors and landscaping; should be clearly identified prior to the commencement of development.

i A Community Land Trust or CLT is a not-for-profit organisation. CLTs must benefit a specific community. The Trust owns the land on which affordable homes are built.

Recently, the government announced funding to support CLTs. This could be in partnership with Housing Associations or landowners who want to promote affordable housing. The CLT arranges the building works and then manages the homes when they are ready to live in.

These houses or flats remain exempt from the right-to-buy rules. The CLT must make sure that the homes remain affordable.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

What has been actually built in some of Shaftesbury's new larger developments has drifted from what was originally agreed by the planners. We want developers to be bound by their proposals, so their designs don't change greatly, and they get built in a timely manner.

Smaller developments, on smaller sites, 'fit in' and work better. In our extensive consultation, 85% of the people who responded felt that we should encourage more small sites rather than larger scale developments to meet future housing needs.

There should be footpaths, green space and environmental measures included.

3.4 Policy SFHE3

What does Policy SFHE3 set out to do?

To encourage conditions for attracting and retaining employment.

The availability and attractiveness of employment sites is a key factor for Shaftesbury's future success. Housing availability is also important along with a thriving town centre and an attractive environment that employers and employees will be happy to live in and operate from.

Our research showed that there were very few vacant employment units. It often takes time to develop new employment land, particularly in recent years when policies and funding have been more focused on housing delivery. As new housing areas are built, the town's workforce will grow. It will be increasingly important to provide opportunities for businesses to locate here so residents won't necessarily have to commute out from Shaftesbury for work.

Details:

POLICY SFHE3 - Existing employment areas (as shown on Map SFHE3) will be protected, including Longmead, Wincombe, land south of the A30 (existing) and Blackmore Vale Dairy, for future employment needs.

The allocation of the land to the south of the A30 (insofar as it lies within the parish) as employment land will be safeguarded.

Development that would bring vacant or underused parts of existing buildings back into economic use should be supported.

Which areas are employment land?

The key employment areas in Shaftesbury are:

- The town centre, which has 162 businesses and covers 225,000 square feet.
- Wincombe Business Park, which accommodates 86 employers over 125,000 square feet of office, factory and warehouse space, a retail warehouse and a restaurant.
- There are 48 businesses on the mixed use, 250,000 square foot Longmead site. That includes factory, warehouse and office space.
- There are 8 businesses on the 50,000 square feet of land at Ivy Cross, including a garage, shops, depot and take away.
- The Blackmore Vale Dairy covers a 50,000 square foot site.

Land to the south of the A30 is identified as employment land in the Local Plan. There are four businesses sharing 6,000 square feet of retail, warehouse and storage space here, and room for much more.

Currently (April 2019) Persimmon Homes is requesting planning consent to develop this site. Their proposal to create 135 homes has been opposed by Shaftesbury Town Council, who want to retain the land for employment.

Whilst employment areas include those falling within traditional 'B' Class uses (business and general industrial premises), in practice we need to consider a much wider range of employment types - the education and training sector, leisure and tourism, healthcare etc, where the use of that land or building directly supports jobs. Care homes that employ an equivalent number of staff as a typical B1 type use will be considered as an employment use. However, they should not be located on industrial estates where their occupants would be disturbed by the associated noise etc.

Littledown Business Park is outside the Neighbourhood Plan area in Motcombe.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

We believe that the land earmarked for industrial estates and business parks should be retained for that purpose.

We do not support building homes, for example, on land that could accommodate factories, retail space or offices.

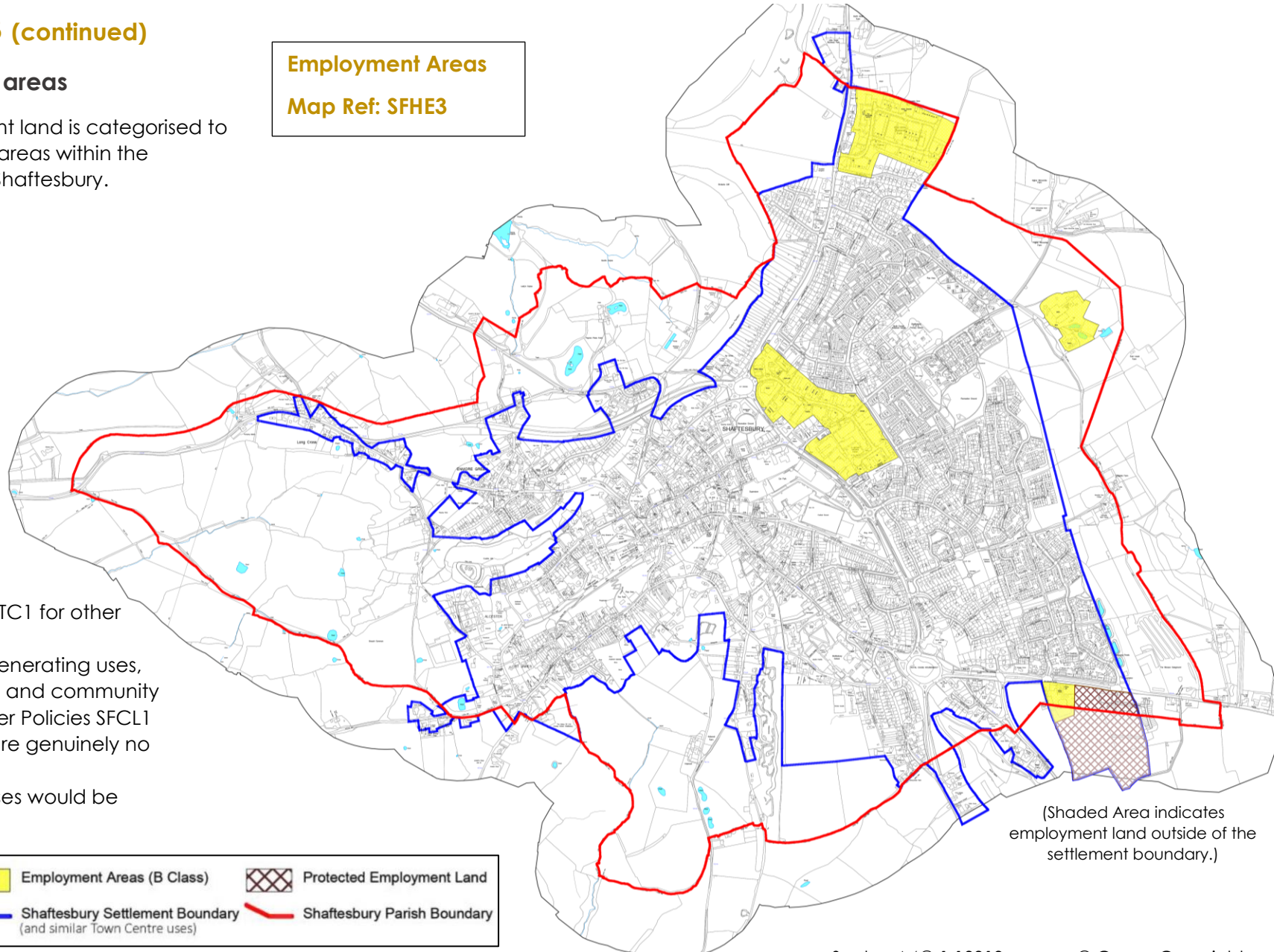
Shaftesbury Chamber of Commerce believes this is important too.

3.4 Policy SFHE3 (continued)

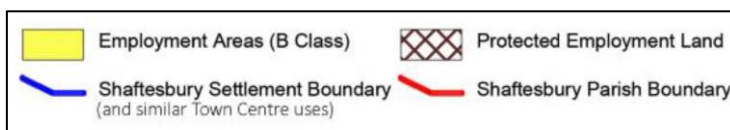
Map of employment areas

Each area of employment land is categorised to present the commercial areas within the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury.

Employment Areas
Map Ref: SFHE3



Cross reference to Policy SFTC1 for other employment areas. Other employment areas generating uses, such as healthcare, schools and community facilities are protected under Policies SFCL1 and SFCL2 but that if they are genuinely no longer required, alternative community/employment uses would be supported.



(Shaded Area indicates employment land outside of the settlement boundary.)

Scale - A4@ 1:13313

© Crown Copyright

3.5 Policy SFHE4

What does Policy SFHE4 set out to do?

The Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor will be protected, and its provision supported.

Details:

POLICY SFHE4 - The bypass corridor to the eastern side of the town will be protected and its provision supported.

Development will be strongly resisted that would jeopardise the construction of the bypass.

Insight into Shaftesbury's road network

The A350 currently runs to the east of Shaftesbury town centre along the road 'Christy's Lane.' For most of its length, through the town, coincides with the east-west A30, carrying large volumes of traffic including HGVs heading to and from Poole and the South Coast ports.

This volume of traffic creates a significant barrier for both pedestrian and cycle access that effectively divides the town into two halves - already referred to locally as 'East Shaftesbury' and 'West Shaftesbury'.

Christy's Lane was originally constructed as the external relief road for the town and is still referred to locally as the 'bypass'. However,

it now has development both to the east and to the west and is acting as a distinct barrier to movement between the two parts of the town.

The 2002-3 Enquiry by Design process expressly sought to prevent this eventuality. It proposed that the role of Christy's Lane should be transformed from a road to a street, through development that would help create a street scene and sense of enclosure. Additional traffic management measures, including the provision of improved pedestrian and cycleway crossings, would be implemented to facilitate linkages between the town centre and the existing and proposed developments to the east of Christy's Lane.

In 2019, the Neighbourhood Plan group conducted the first phase of wider public engagement relating to the Shaftesbury-specific Plan. There were 241 responses relating to the question asking residents about the preservation of the bypass corridor to the east of the town. 199 responders

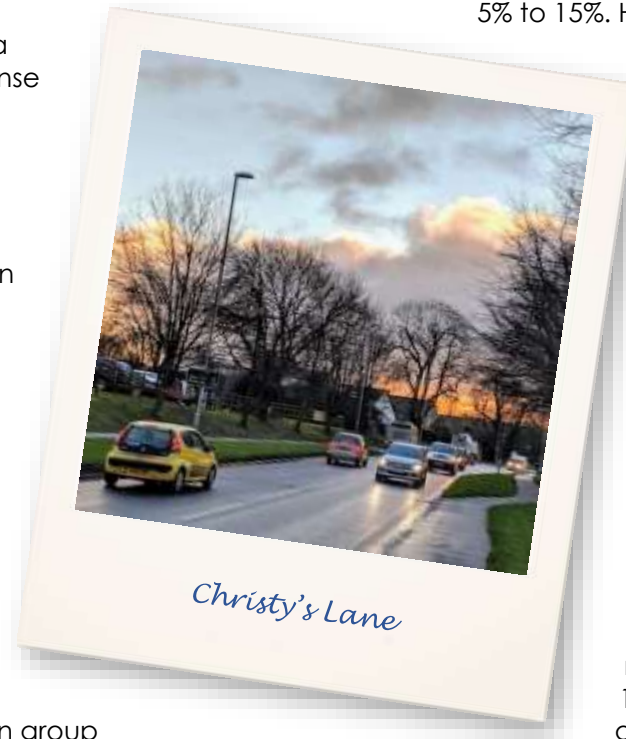
answered yes, which represents 82% of the responses received, so the majority are in favour of preserving the bypass corridor.

Christy's Lane has seen a 22% increase in traffic since 1996 according to Dorset Council's figures. On an average day in 2017, 20,500 vehicles used this short stretch of road. In the last 22 years, the number of HGVs on Christy's Lane has risen from around 5% to 15%. HGVs make up 17% of traffic

on the A350 Grosvenor Road, a road lined with residential properties, which leads Christy's Lane traffic heading towards Warminster out of Shaftesbury.

It is likely that Christy's Lane will become busier. More housing developments are planned for Shaftesbury. Residents of new estates at Littledown and an estate on land marked for development at Wincombe will need to drive along Christy's Lane when travelling north or north-east. A new 1,600 home development outside of the parish on the Shaftesbury side of Gillingham is also likely to increase traffic on Christy's Lane.

The planned bypass would reduce pressure on Christy's Lane and Grosvenor Road.



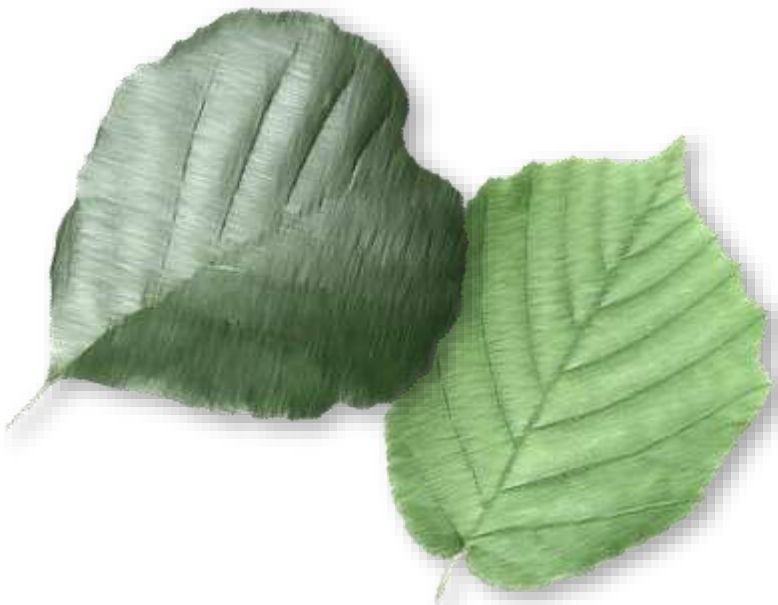
3.4 Policy SFHE4 (continued)

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot allocate funds or decide transport policy, we believe that the by-pass corridor must be retained for reasons of safety and to encourage community social cohesion by preventing our town being split in two by increased traffic.

Route of the Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor

The line of the road (red hatched area - as shown in the 2003 Local Plan) should remain protected from development as there is no other realistic option for traffic relief, now or in the longer term.

The route of the road may be reviewed in the next Local Plan.



4. Green Infrastructure

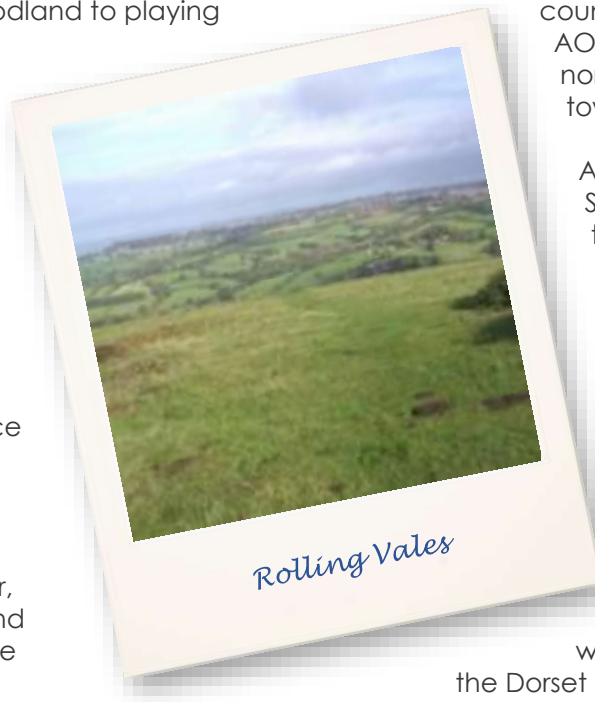
A photograph of a dense forest with tall, slender trees and a thick canopy. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text "4. Green Infrastructure" is centered in white, bold font.

4.1 Green Infrastructure: Key messages and aims

The context

Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces and waterways that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. It ranges from pastures and woodland to playing fields and street trees. Within a town, each green infrastructure element may have an obvious primary function but will also bring many other benefits. For example, street trees can enhance a residential area but also serve to reduce airborne pollution, provide shade and shelter, support insects and birds, and mitigate climate change.

Shaftesbury's distinctiveness comes from its elevated position above undulating countryside characterised as 'rolling vales' to the north, west and south. Our historic hilltop town boasts some outstanding open views yet from the surrounding countryside much of Shaftesbury is hidden, nestling amongst the extensive tree cover.



For townspeople and visitors alike, the experience of walking around the town is marked by hedgerows alive with noisy sparrows, lichen-marked stone walls, footpaths that descend through 'hangings' of mature trees or out into the countryside of the Cranborne Chase AONB, which wraps around the north, east and south sides of our town.

Any new developments in Shaftesbury should allow residents to move around the town and access schools by foot or by bicycle - safe and accessible walking and cycling routes that enable residents to experience our town's rural setting. New projects should consider how fresh air and the opportunity for exercise, by walking and cycling, can enhance a sense of wellbeing.

Key characteristics of the wider countryside, as described in the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment, relate to its diverse pattern of trees, woodland, hedgerow and small-scale fields, watercourses and narrow lanes, and the generally rural and tranquil nature of the area.

We have carried out a survey of green spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area on foot, with notebook and camera to hand.

This is described within the Green Infrastructure Audit. This can be found in the supporting documents.

We have applied the national Fields in Trust standards formula to the amount of green spaces that a community could expect, to assess what is currently provided for; formal sports grounds, equipped play areas, parks and gardens, allotments and accessible open areas.

Shaftesbury falls short of the recommended national Fields in Trust standards. That means it is really important to protect the existing open spaces close to where people live.



4. Green Infrastructure

Key feedback from consultation

In our consultation exercise on our draft policy ideas, the community told us they wanted the Neighbourhood Plan to protect our slopes and the green and open spaces in and around our town.

86% of respondents to that survey said that they broadly agreed with our green spaces policy intentions. A similar view was expressed in an earlier Neighbourhood Plan survey, carried out in 2014 and 2015. Then, over 85% of people said that protecting and/or enhancing our green infrastructure was important.

Key messages

Based on what local people have told us, we have identified the following aims:

Landscape and topography:

To conserve and enhance the sense of place by ensuring new development integrates with the patchwork of wooded areas, hedgerows, slopes and pathways across the landscape and respects important views both from the town and from vantage points in the wider area.

History and culture:

To protect and enhance the environment around Shaftesbury's historic sites.

Ecology and biodiversity:

To enhance sustainability in its widest sense by promoting and providing habitats that boost biodiversity; mitigate climate change, noise and air pollution; help with management of surface water and drainage; and provide opportunities for education, recreation and play.

Health and wellbeing:

To protect and enhance a green infrastructure network that sustains wellbeing and incorporates green spaces and amenity areas interconnected by new and improved footpaths and cycleways.

To improve access to open countryside and walking/cycling routes to local towns and villages.

To ensure that there are adequate and easily accessible formal and informal sports provision and play areas for all residents.

To ensure that there is adequate provision of allotments and communal spaces with opportunities for community growing.



Protecting Shaftesbury's special green spaces

A Neighbourhood Plan can protect many of the green spaces that are particularly special to local people. This protection could be because of their historic or cultural significance, their recreational value, their intrinsic beauty or tranquillity, or for their richness of wildlife.

Provided areas are local in character, within the Neighbourhood Plan area, and not needed for development, they can be designated as Local Green Spaces (or LGS). The rules on what can and can't be designated are defined by National Planning Policy.

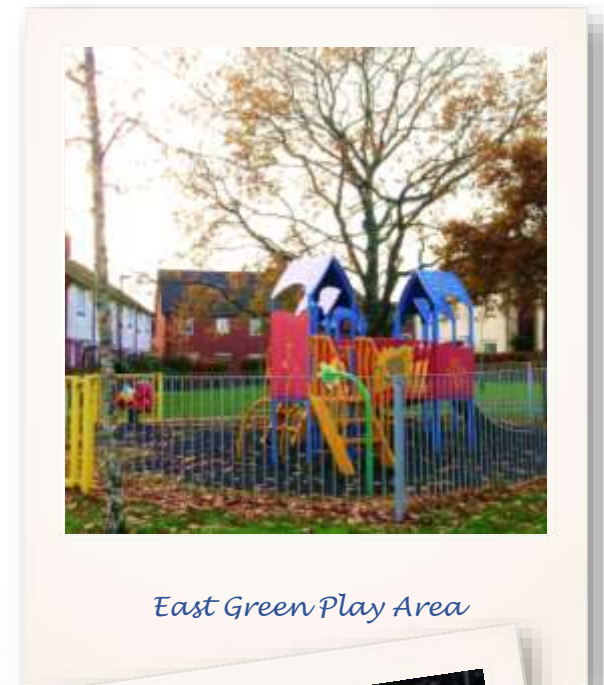
Within Shaftesbury's development boundary there are a number of green spaces with tree cover that are important for their contribution to the character of Shaftesbury, but they have either limited or no public access. Historically, many of these were classed as Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWAs) and these have been identified as Important Treed Areas (ITAs) in this plan.

The trees will have additional protection from felling where they are within the conservation area or have an existing Tree Preservation Order.

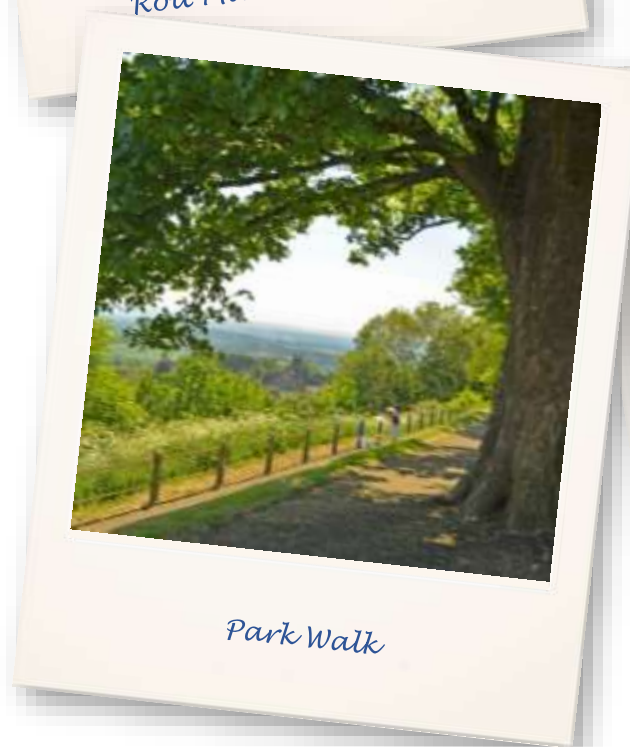
The justification for designation of spaces as LGS or ITA is given in Appendix L, and more detail is provided in the separate Audit document.



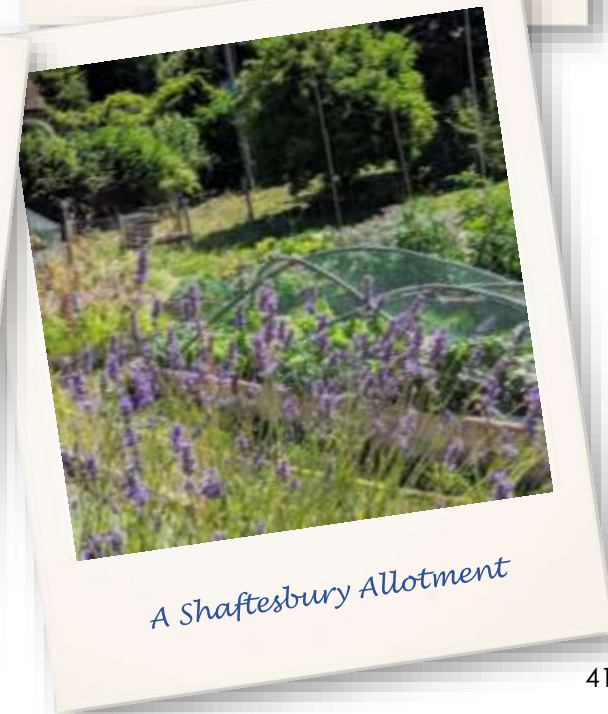
Rott Millennium Green



East Green Play Area



Park Walk



A Shaftesbury Allotment

4.2 Policy SFGI1

What does Policy SFGI1 set out to do?

To protect the important and locally valued green spaces.

Shaftesbury has green spaces that are linked to highly valued historic sites, wooded spaces that contribute to the character of the town and mitigate climate change, and spaces that give access to long views. Other spaces are valuable to nearby residents because they offer play or other recreational opportunities. Such spaces have been designated for protection from development, where they qualify. Some important spaces could not be designated at this time.

New development at Littledown, to the north of the town, will provide a significant area of parkland giving long views over Gillingham Royal Forest. This will become an important landscape feature and leisure area but cannot be said to be 'valued' until public access is made available. It may,



however, be eligible for LGS designation at the first review of this Neighbourhood Plan.

A further important space is the semi-natural area with ponds that has been created by the sustainable urban drainage system on the south-eastern edge of the town. This is used for play and dog-walking and is becoming an important asset for the many people living nearby, for whom there is currently no readily accessible alternative. However, part of the area sits within the bypass corridor (see Policy SFHE4) and this potential future development means that protection is not appropriate.

Details:

POLICY SFGI1 - The areas shown on Map SFGI1 and listed in the Green Infrastructure audit (as referenced in the separate GI audit document attached as Appendix L) are designated as Local Green Spaces (LGS). Development will not be permitted within these designated spaces or on land immediately next to them, if it would harm their green character and the reason for their designation.

Development within a Local Green Space will only be permitted if it is compatible with, and does not cause substantial harm to, the space's character and continued use. Any

reduction in the recreational amenity or ecological value of a Local Green Space must be replaced through, for example, the provision of an alternative green space of equal or better value and as accessible to the surrounding community.

The Important Treed Areas, as shown on Map SFGI1 and identified within the Green Infrastructure Audit (as referenced in the separate GI audit document attached as Appendix L) should retain their treed character. Where the loss of trees is unavoidable, replacement planting will be sought in order to maintain the treed character of the local area.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

A Neighbourhood Plan can protect some green spaces. We have identified those in Shaftesbury that are special for their historic or cultural significance, their beauty, their recreational value to people nearby or because they are rich in wildlife.

These spaces that are to be protected have been listed and mapped and the list can be added to when the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed.

4.2 Policy SFGI1 (continued)

Map of audited Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Important Treed Areas (ITA)

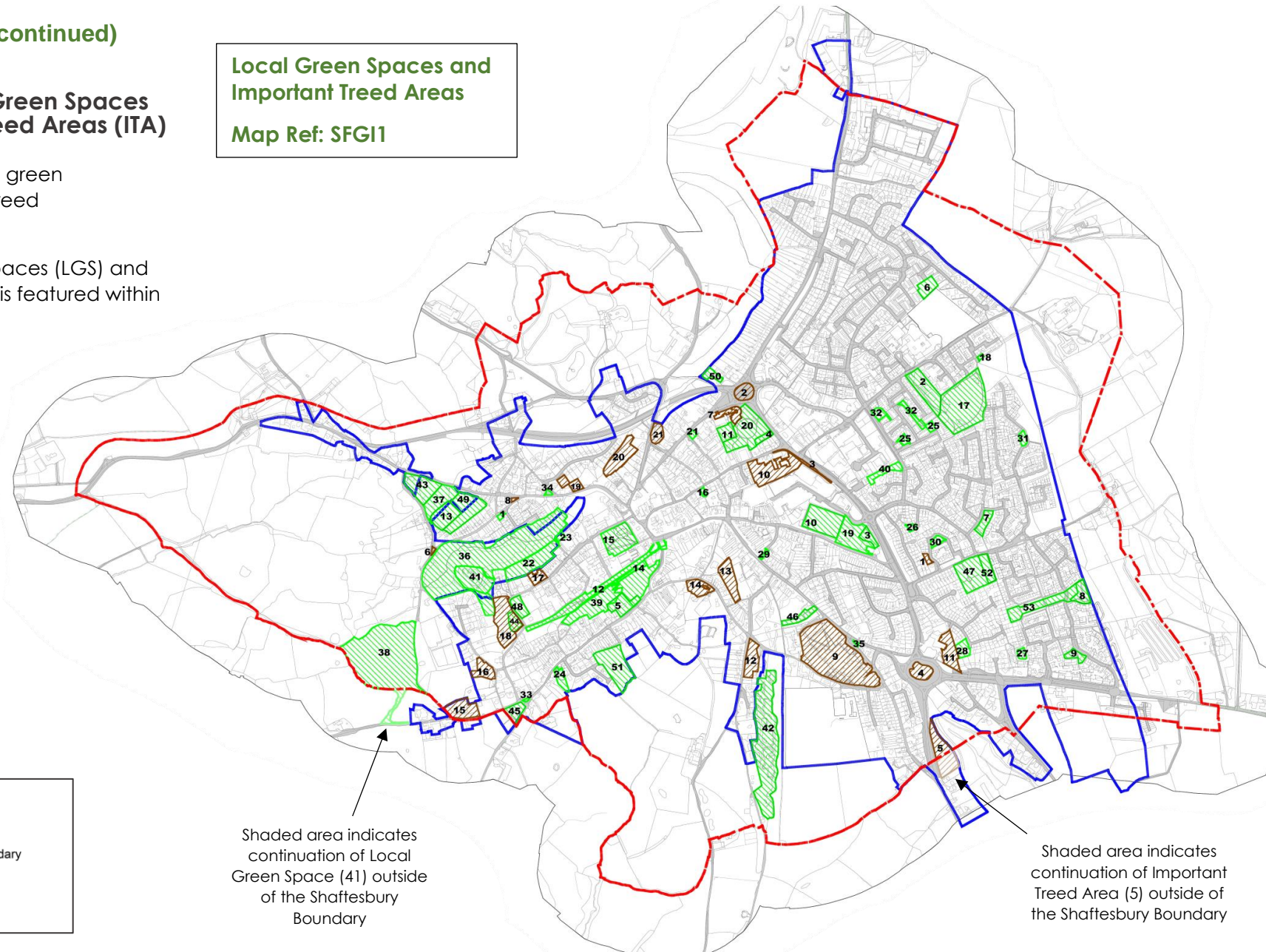
This map highlights the local green spaces and the important treed areas.

The index of Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Important Treed Areas (ITA) is featured within Appendix L.

The Green Infrastructure Audit (accompanying document) details the classification of each green space shown on the map.

Local Green Spaces and Important Treed Areas

Map Ref: SFGI1



Shaded area indicates continuation of Local Green Space (41) outside of the Shaftesbury Boundary

Shaded area indicates continuation of Important Treed Area (5) outside of the Shaftesbury Boundary

4.3 Policy SFGI2

What does Policy SFGI2 set out to do?

To ensure development respects Shaftesbury's topography and its position in the landscape.

Details:

North Dorset's Local Plan has historically offered protection to Shaftesbury's unique setting through what have been called the Slopes Policies. This Neighbourhood Plan updates these policies and the areas it covers, through its new Slopes Policy Map (SFGI2). This provides clarity as to which areas are part of 'The Slopes' – a designation that dates back to the 2003 North Dorset Local Plan. To produce the map, we have looked at both the landscape character areas (based on assessments undertaken in 2003 and 2008 for Cranborne Chase AONB and North Dorset) with additional detail provided by the changing topography (based on contour information to calculate the degree of slope).

For the detailed slope analysis, a contour map (as shown) was coloured dark red in areas where the gradient is 1:3 or steeper and orange for gradients in the range 1:3 to 1:5. The dark red shaded areas along with the adjacent orange areas are the basis for the definition of the steep slopes.

The foot of the shallower slopes is a more complex transition to the North Dorset rolling hills and vales, which meet the lower, generally flat, Blackmore Vale to the north and west and Cann Valley to the south. The analysis used a combination of the 150m contour line and trackways to define the lower boundary of these shallow slopes, after an

assessment of the area's topographic and visual prominence.

Being on the lower hillside slopes, the settlements of St James and Enmore Green are visible both from the hilltop and from distant viewpoints in the surrounding countryside. The steep slopes, the top of the spur, and these lower settlements are all highly sensitive to development.

Tree cover is an important consideration for any new development on the shallower slopes, including on the shallow slopes below the hilltop to the south east of the town.

Developers must make sure that planned development respects Shaftesbury's contours, landscape and 'lie of the land'.

POLICY SFGI2 - The outstanding character of Gold Hill, and views from the flat hilltop and other key locations as shown on map SFGI2 will be protected.

On the steep slopes (as shown on map SFGI2) any development that does not preserve the remaining open or wooded areas and their distinct rural character, will generally be resisted.

On the shallow slopes and plateau edge (as shown on map SFGI2), the design, scale and location of the development should not adversely affect the generally undeveloped character of the slopes and should respect the highly sensitive nature of the plateau edge. It should not negatively impact on views from higher and lower ground.

Development on the edge of the town will be expected to respect the environmental context, including green infrastructure, that draws the rural landscape into the settlement and provides a soft edge to the town.

There should be public access to the countryside via footpaths (and where appropriate, bridleways or cycle paths), connected to the wider countryside rights of way.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

The slopes surrounding our town are really important to residents. Planners should not allow any new building that spoils Shaftesbury's views, whether those views are looking down from the hilltop or looking up towards the town. Gold Hill's view must be protected.

We want new developments on the edge of town to blend in with the countryside. The use of trees and hedgerows will help retain that sense of rural setting.

We want more car-free routes connecting parts of our town and linking Shaftesbury with the surrounding countryside.

4.3 Policy SFGI2 (continued)

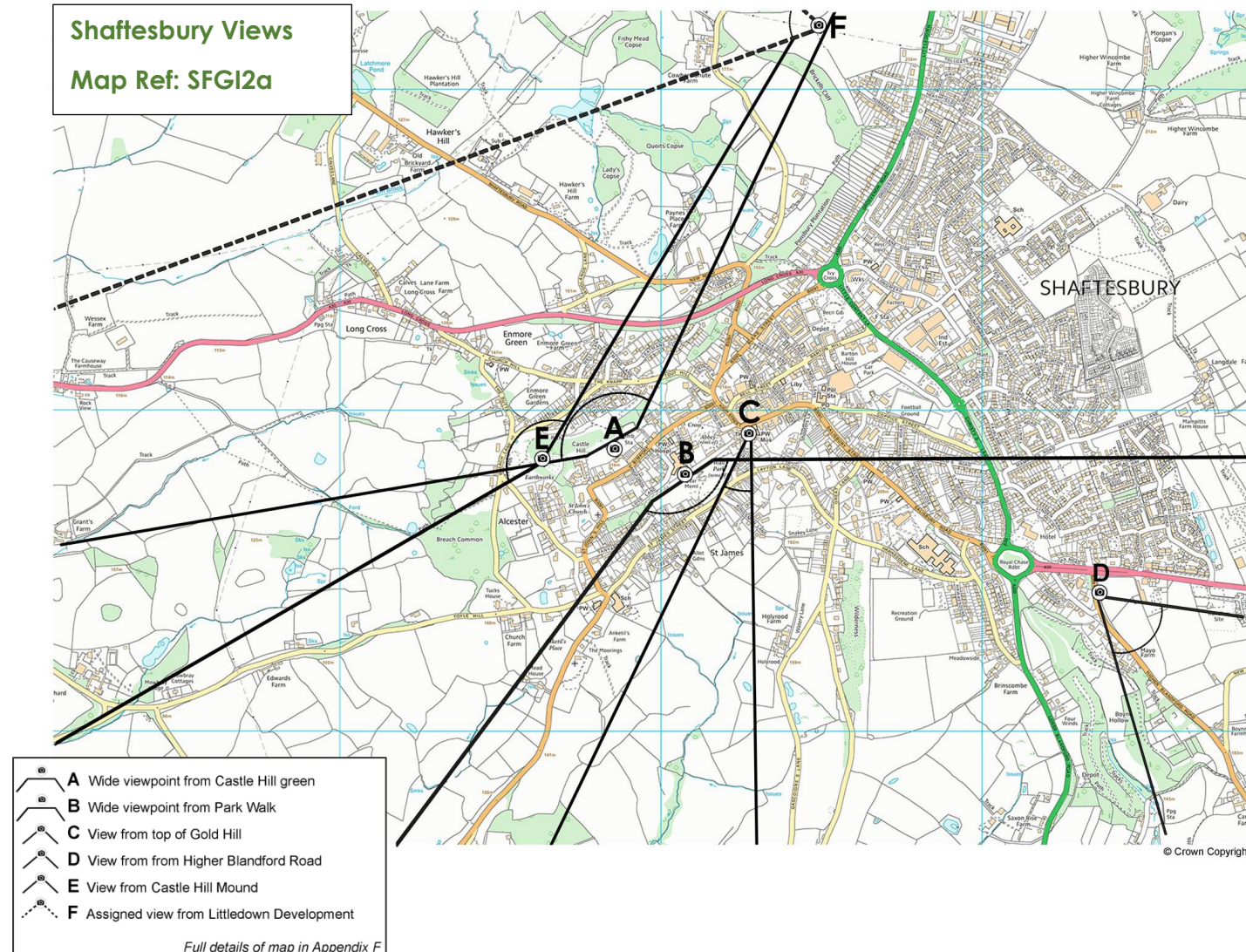
Viewpoints

Shaftesbury's distinctive topography (map SFGI2a) provides outstanding views from the town.

Shaftesbury's best-known view, famous not just in Dorset but also used in promoting England overseas, is that available from Gold Hill (viewpoint C on map SFGI2a). This historic cobbled street runs down the steep slope behind the Guildhall and from the top, the view across Blackmore Vale is framed by picturesque cottages and part of Shaftesbury Abbey walls.

A short walk away there are more open views to the south (B), and north (A) of the spur, and views limited by more extensive tree cover to the west. New development to the north of the town will give public access to further outstanding long views (F).

To the south and east of the town, where the land slopes more gradually, there are still notable views. A popular feature of glimpsed views looking south from eastern parts of the town is 'the caterpillar', a group of trees on raised ground that appear on the skyline. This is clearly seen from viewpoint D.

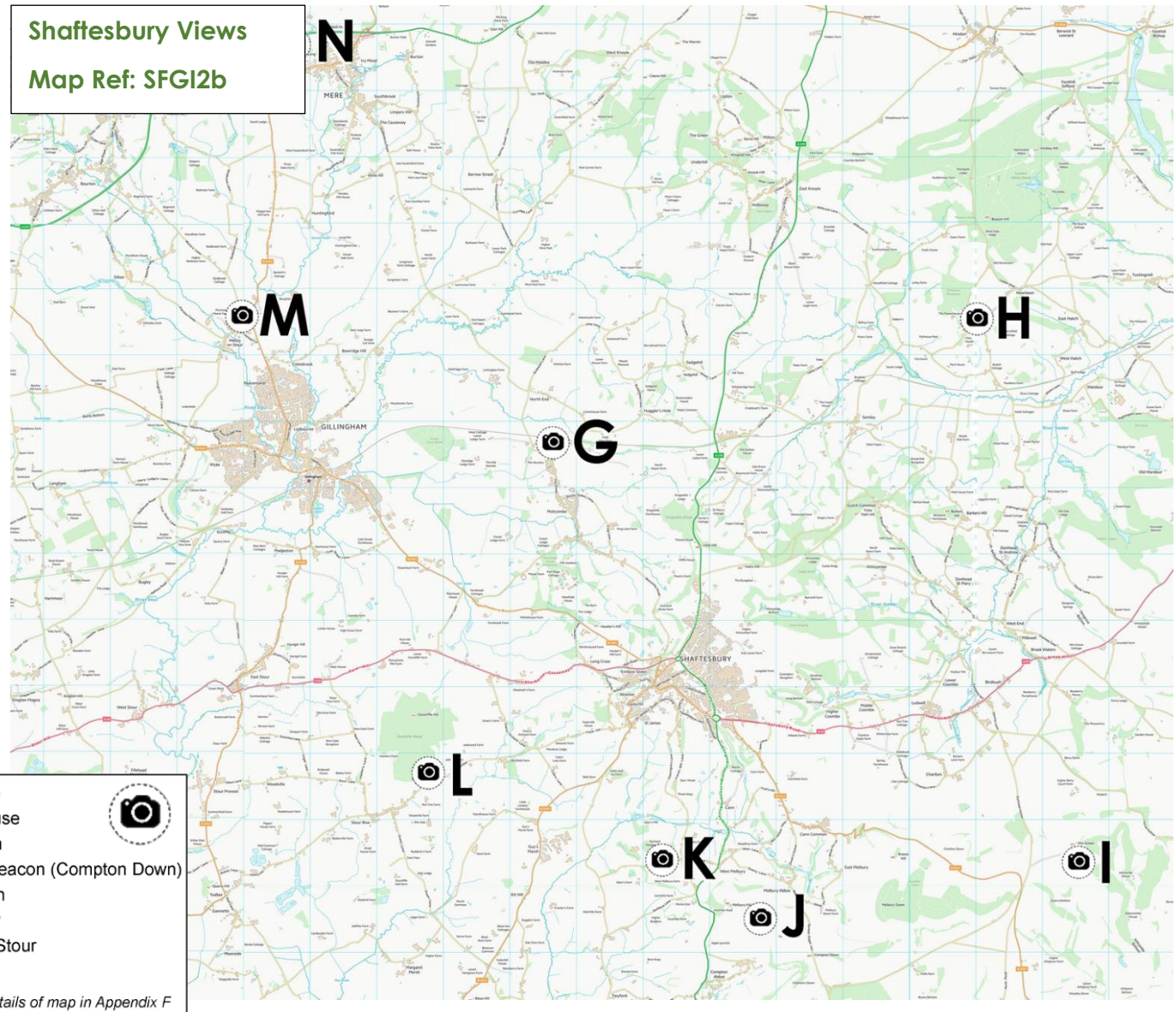


Policy SFGI2 (continued)

Shaftesbury features on the skyline from many places in the surrounding countryside and a selection of these are indicated on map SFGI2b.

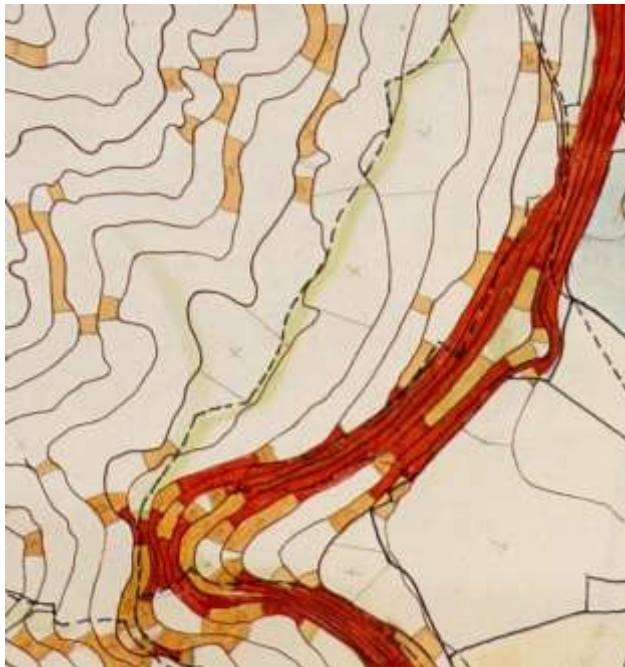
The view of Shaftesbury from Hatch House Hill (H) serves to illustrate the importance of tree cover for development around the edge of the town.

Appendix F documents the accessible views, looking both out of and towards the town as seen from the viewpoints on maps SFGI2a and SFGI2b.



4.3 Policy SFGI2 (continued)

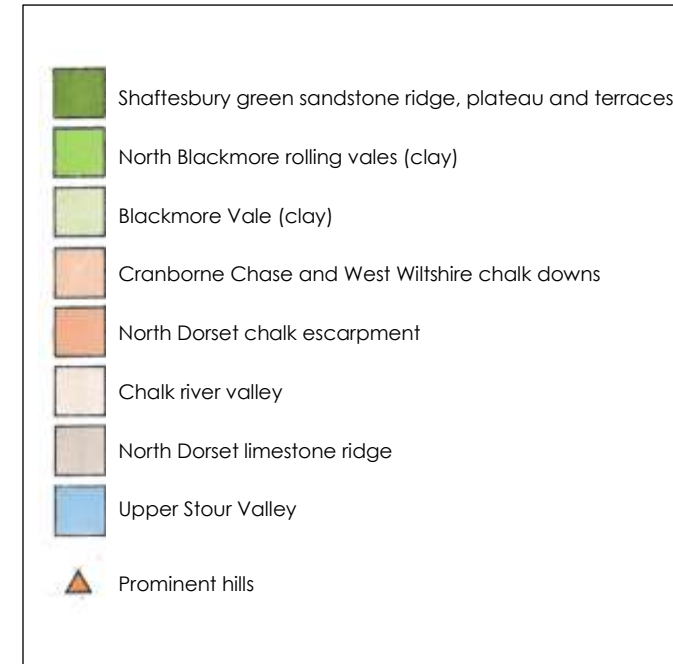
Shaftesbury's slopes



Slopes analysis map



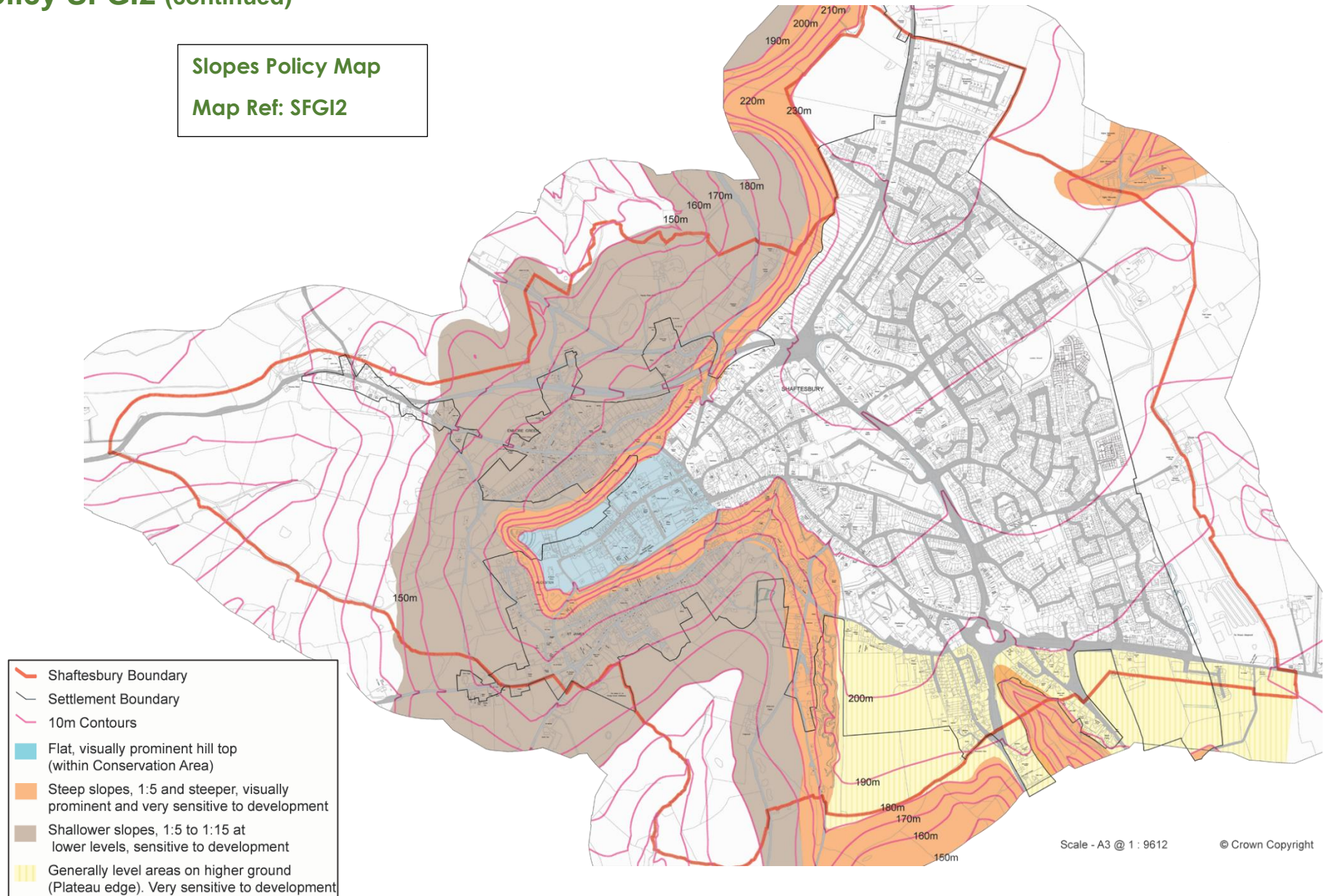
North Dorset and South Wiltshire Landscape Character Areas



A map of the slopes has been created through a detailed study of the landscape character and steepness of slope around the town. This illustrates how the town is located on an elevated (green sandstone) plateau with land sloping steeply to the north, west and south. It also shows the distinctive spur of land to the west upon which the town was founded. The plateau edges and spur form critical ridges which, where tree cover permits, gives Shaftesbury its distinctive long panoramic views.

4.3 Policy SFGI2 (continued)

Slopes Policy Map
Map Ref: SFGI2



4.4 Policy SFGI3

What does Policy SFGI3 set out to do?

To ensure development respects and enhances the Green Infrastructure network - its green spaces and green corridors - and the contribution this makes to the character of the town, its sustainability and biodiversity, and the general well-being of its residents.

Details:

Shaftesbury's distinctiveness comes from its place in the landscape and its green spaces and corridors, trees and hedgerows. New development must integrate with the existing green infrastructure network across and beyond the town. There are fewer opportunities for greening the town centre, but (for example) more trees could be planted in our car parks

Green infrastructure is vital to health and well-being. At the same time, it is a crucial element of adapting to climate change and protecting and improving biodiversity. It provides wildlife habitat, routes for walking and cycling, space for food growing, enhanced regulation of the climate at a local scale, and contributes to flood water retention and reduced surface water runoff.



Grass Verges

POLICY SFGI3 - Outside of the town centre, comprehensive landscape proposals should provide buildings with an attractive, verdant setting, having regard to the character of the area, views into and out of the area and potential to connect from, and provide new, green spaces and corridors.

Existing mature trees, native hedgerows and green corridors should be retained and included within a landscaping scheme for all new developments.

The design of green spaces within a development must:

- Contribute to the character of the town.
- Mitigate climate change, contribute to the achievement of net-zero carbon emissions, and provide opportunities for sustainable drainage.
- Enhance biodiversity as required by Dorset Biodiversity Protocol.

In addition, where practical, these spaces should:

- Enhance tree cover.
- Provide new habitats to enhance the town's ecological network.
- Enable local food production.
- Provide educational opportunities.

- Provide opportunities for play and recreation including walking and cycling.

Planting schemes should use local species appropriate to the site's size and location (a list of tree species that are likely to be appropriate is provided in Appendix J).

Measures should be taken to ensure future maintenance of any landscaping scheme and green spaces. This could be through the use of conditions or a legally binding agreement that takes account of possible changes in design, planting or maintenance routines, in line with the need to promote nature recovery and mitigate climate change.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

Planting and open spaces as part of any new housing or other development are important. It should be considered from the outset and done right.

It's important to retain features like ponds, trees and hedgerows that are valuable for local wildlife and mitigate climate change. Suitable arrangements must be put in place so that it's clear who is responsible for maintenance.

4.5 Policy SFGI4

What does Policy SFGI4 set out to do?

To protect our dark skies, particularly considering the adjoining Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its International Dark Skies Reserve status.

Details:

One of Cranborne Chase's special qualities is that it does not suffer greatly from light pollution, the glow you get from streetlights which means you cannot see the stars in many towns. Cranborne Chase is one of the best places in southern England for viewing the Milky Way and you can often see it with the naked eye.

If we work to keep our night skies dark, then Shaftesbury's economy could benefit from astro-tourism. Stargazing visitors have helped boost the tourism economy of Exmoor, which is also very dark.

Dark skies are also better for animals and birdlife, too. Wildlife can become confused, stressed and suffer disrupted sleep patterns when they mistake bright artificial lighting for the sun.

POLICY SFGI4 - Development should be designed to conserve and enhance the quality of the dark night skies and prevent glare affecting the Cranborne Chase AONB. In particular:

- External lighting should be avoided unless required for security or safety reasons.
- Where lighting is considered necessary, its design should minimise its impact, both on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties, and in terms of light spillage and glare.
 - Light sources should be fully shielded and pointed downwards, so that light is not emitted above the horizontal.
 - Movement sensitive and timed PIR lights, down-lighters or 'wall washers' are examples of lighting schemes that generally have less adverse impact whilst providing appropriate illumination.
 - Any lighting scheme within or visible from the AONB should meet or exceed the level of protection appropriate to Environmental Zone 1 (as defined by the Institution of Lighting Professionals), with the addition that external LED lighting should not exceed a correlated colour temperature (CCT) of 3,000K.



Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

The Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) begins just one mile east of Shaftesbury Town Hall.

Maintaining dark skies is not about turning lights out; it's all about, 'the right light, in the right place, at the right time'.