

3. Housing & 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.

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, Gillingham, 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, when the first version of this Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, the Local Planning Authority announced that there was not enough land with (or likely to get) planning permission which could then be built on to meet potential housing requirements over the next five years. Because of that, the Local Planning Authority was under immense pressure to allow more housing, and sites that were outside settlement boundaries and which would normally be refused were allowed. In October 2024 Dorset Council was finally able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply (a position confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate), but by December 2024 the Government had changed the way housing targets are to be calculated, nearly doubling Dorset's housing requirement. When there is a housing shortfall, sites outside the settlement boundary may get planning permission more easily, because the policy of restricting development in the

countryside outside of this boundary is given less weight. However, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan can be strengthened if we can identify suitable sites to meet our identified housing requirement.

Shaftesbury people have been very clear in their response to our previous consultations that they do not want housing developments on the countryside, or slopes that surround our town. That's why we are not altering 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.



Development Land near Lidl

What's the settlement boundary?

i The settlement boundary is a line on a map. It marks the separation between the urban areas where building would normally be considered, 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.

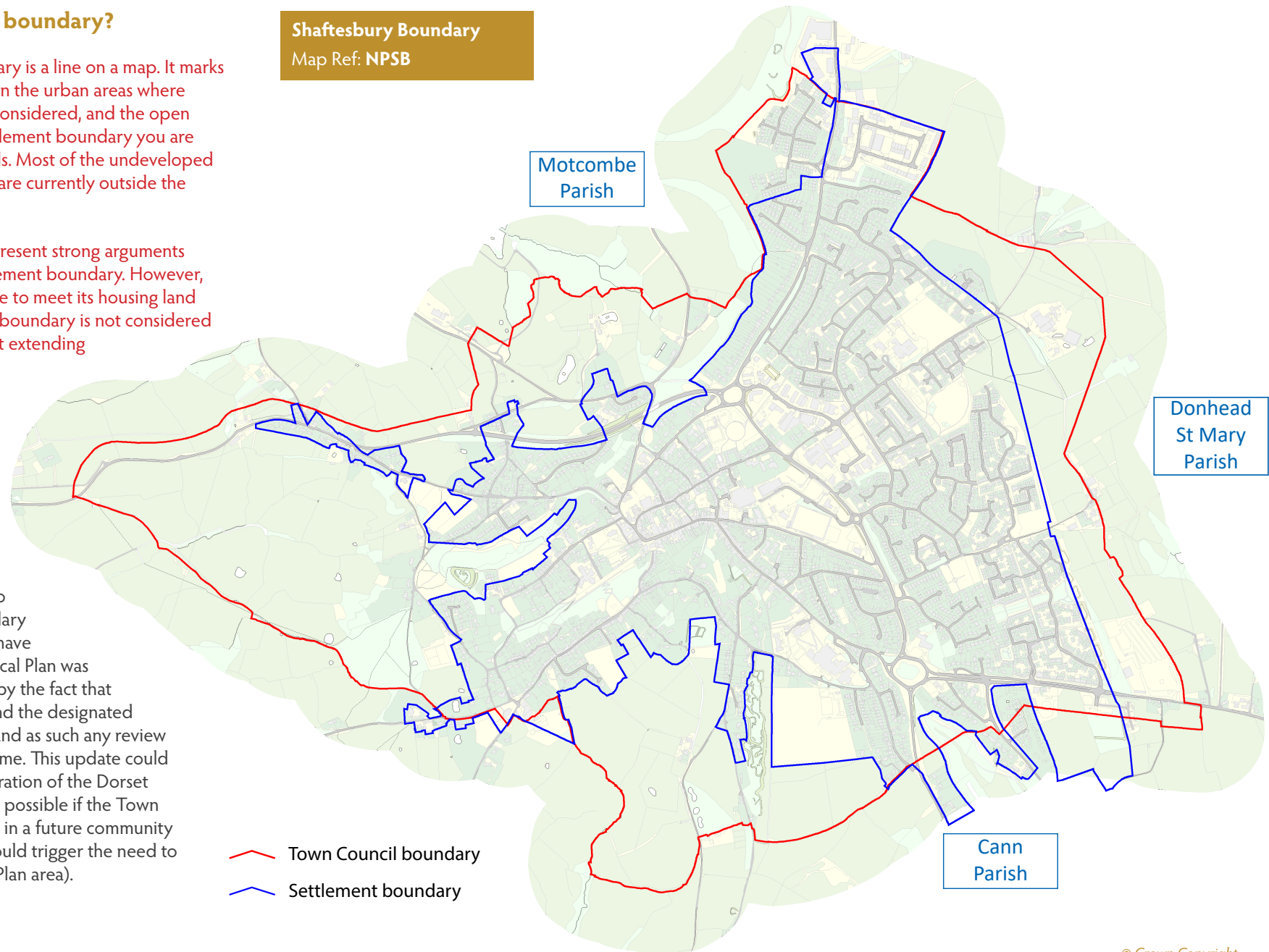
Usually, developers have to present strong arguments for building outside the settlement boundary. However, when Dorset Council is unable to meet its housing land supply target, the settlement boundary is not considered a firm barrier to development extending beyond into open spaces.

An example of where this boundary was breached during the period that Dorset Council could not meet its housing target is the land off Higher Blandford Road.

Whilst it would be possible to update the settlement boundary to include those areas which have been developed since the Local Plan was adopted, this is complicated by the fact that the town area expands beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan area—and as such any review could only be partial at this time. This update could be done as part of the preparation of the Dorset Council Local Plan, or may be possible if the Town Council boundary is changed in a future community governance review (which would trigger the need to update the Neighbourhood Plan area).

Shaftesbury Boundary

Map Ref: NPSB



Shaftesbury has taken its fair share of new homes

The Local Plan requires 285 new homes for North Dorset for each year, from 2011 to 2031, and Shaftesbury's equivalent target was 57 new homes each year (1,140 homes in total). Homes could mean houses, bungalows or flats.

If we factor in an uplift to take account of updates to how housing needs are calculated, and taking account of the completions between 2011–2019, an appropriate housing target for our area would be about 600 homes over the plan period. This takes into account the Government's latest method for establishing the housing requirements which was updated in December 2024. The housing target for Shaftesbury for 2024 onwards no longer relies on the adopted North Dorset Local Plan strategy, but instead is based on Shaftesbury taking a proportionate share of the Dorset-wide figure (as it is not yet known how the Local Plan strategy will need to be adjusted to accommodate the higher Dorset-wide housing target it now has to meet). This has been agreed by Dorset Council as a reasonable interim housing target, and the calculations underpinning this are included in **Appendix N**.



Our research, which is based on the latest housing monitoring reports published by Dorset Council, shows that with the homes that have been built since 2019, the sites that have been granted planning consent, and other opportunities within the settlement boundary, the town should deliver more than 670 new homes during this period. For more detail on this please refer to **Appendix N**. This supply is likely to be an underestimate based on the additional infill sites identified in this Plan coming forward. Therefore, until such time as the new Local Plan is prepared, the evidence suggests that Shaftesbury will have more than met its quota, including a reasonable uplift based on the most recent Dorset-wide housing target, without amending the settlement boundary.

Balancing housing and employment

The *Dorset and BCP Employment Land Study (March 2024)* has considered the need to balance housing and employment land provision, as the housing provides the basis for labour supply, and impacts on where businesses may choose to locate and wider travel patterns. The report recommends that "It would be reasonable for Dorset's market towns to be seeking to achieve closer to or above 15 sqm of employment space per dwelling in the round" (having fallen to averages well below this) and that it is important to ensure that each market town "has the ability to expand its employment land provision to support the local economy".

Why does this matter?

When the Local Planning Authority cannot meet its 5-year land supply quota, the Neighbourhood Plan cannot simply say 'no' to further housing, especially if it is affordable housing for local people.

In order to give our Neighbourhood Plan more strength, particularly in the scenario that the housing land supply falls below 5 years' worth, we are including site allocations for those sites within the settlement boundary which have

not yet been built, but are likely to come forward in the near future and meet our housing needs. Without these allocations the plan would have less weight in decision making.

This is because paragraph 14 of National Planning Policy Framework requires our Plan to contain policies and allocations to meet the identified housing needs for our area, if the Plan is to be adhered to at such times.

As we have said, we are not looking to change the settlement boundary and we are not intending to identify further greenfield sites for housing. We feel strongly that any decision to release more housing land outside of the settlement boundary 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 process is intended to ensure that the wider impacts of significant further growth are properly assessed. This cannot easily be done for individual unplanned housing sites, in the scenario when the 5-year housing land supply quota is not met. 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 (including lagoons) that could cause flooding—yet they are not consulted on planning applications in Shaftesbury unless it abuts their parish boundary.

In the first draft of the emerging Dorset-wide Local Plan (published in January 2021), Dorset Council did not suggest allocating any more sites for housing around Shaftesbury, recognizing that further development is likely to have significant impact on the town's character.

Where could new homes be built?

In addition to small-scale infilling of one or two dwellings, the following sites have been identified as part of work on the review of this Plan as having potential to contribute towards meeting Shaftesbury's housing needs:

- ▶ Land west of Littledown (Redrow Homes)
- ▶ Land adjoining Wincombe Business Park (David Wilson Homes) and south-east of Wincombe Lane
- ▶ Land at Higher Blandford Road and south of the A30 (Persimmon Homes)
- ▶ Barton Hill House and grounds, Barton Hill
- ▶ Land adjoining Lidl, Christy's Lane
- ▶ The Police Station and Post Office sites, Angel Lane

These sites were identified through a review of Dorset Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the latest housing supply monitoring reports and local knowledge. More details on these are given on the following pages.

Land north of Enmore Court, outside of the settlement boundary, was granted outline planning permission for 23 affordable homes on appeal, but the reserved matters application was refused and the permission lapsed. There is likely to be significant construction costs associated with the underlying geology and land slip potential associated with the slopes, and the Town Council do not consider it to be a suitable site, and it has not been included as a site allocation.



Land within the settlement boundary at Boynes Hollow on the A350 was granted outline permission for 7 homes in February 2024. The southern part of the site falls outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore cannot be included as a site allocation. The development should not compromise the main wooded corridor and further planting is proposed as part of the permission.

Planning permission was granted for 24 dwellings at the former ATS site in March 2023 (P/FUL/2021/01338), but this permission has now lapsed and the site has been acquired by a new owner, and is now in active use as a car park to serve the town centre.



New Build west of Littledown

Land west of Littledown (Redrow Homes)

Land west of Littledown was initially given outline planning permission for up to 170 dwellings in March 2017. It has been brought forward in phases and is now nearing completion. Given its advanced build stage, it is not necessary to allocate this site.

Land adjoining Wincombe Business Park (David Wilson Homes) and south-east of Wincombe Lane

This area is one of the strategic growth areas set out in the Local Plan. The area closest to the Business Park was given planning permission in February 2022 for 162 dwellings (P/FUL/2021/01429), and is currently being built out. There is scope for about 60 more dwellings in the remaining undeveloped area east of the Recreation Ground, south of Wincombe Lane, west of the reserved bypass corridor (locally known as the Hopkins Land), alongside any remaining community infrastructure requirements for this area.

Whilst the site was part of the much larger allocation in the 2003 Local Plan saved Policies SB8-10, for the avoidance of doubt the remaining area is allocated for mixed-use development through this Neighbourhood Plan.



Affordable New Build Housing at East Shaftesbury

Land at Higher Blandford Road and south of the A30 (Persimmon Homes)

Land south of the A350, including the parcel of land east of Higher Blandford Road, have been granted planning permission on appeal. The southern part of both of these sites lies beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area, within Cann parish. The 55 homes on the site adjoining Higher Blandford Road have been constructed, and Persimmon Homes have now commenced construction of houses on the site further to the east. This area was allocated for employment uses only, but was given permission for an employment led, mixed-use scheme in February 2022 (2/2018/1773/OUT). This included industrial starter units, flexible commercial uses to include a combination of hotel and non- food retail or a residential care home, a primary school, and up to 135 dwellings, together with car parking, sport pitches, public open space and associated works. The land use parameter plan shows only the commercial and industrial starter units in the area within Shaftesbury parish. So in terms of housing, this could include a residential care home. A reserved matters application for the housing was approved in November 2024 (P/RES/2023/05407), but detailed permission for the employment area and school site have yet to come forward.

Land adjoining Lidl, Christy's Lane

A planning application for 41 retirement apartments was submitted by Churchill Retirement Living in September 2023 (P/FUL/2023/05051) and granted on appeal in June 2024. Whilst in many ways this site could be better used for parking or employment (as it is bounded by a supermarket car park, a main road (A30), a 24 hour petrol station, and a service road to a supermarket), it is now likely to come forward as housing.

This site is appropriate for town centre compatible uses, which could include housing, and has been allocated on this basis should the current plans fall through.

Barton Hill House and Grounds, Barton Hill

Barton Hill House, the boarding complex of Shaftesbury School, closed in 2023 due to the falling demand for student accommodation. The property was leased from Dorset Council, who have yet to make a decision on its future.

Whilst the site has several constraints, including the Grade II Listed Ice House in the grounds and many mature trees, the accommodation has the potential to be re-purposed, and there is scope to accommodate further buildings in the grounds. In this location it would be suitable for residential use.

The Police Station and Post Office sites, Angel Lane

With the closure of public 'front desks' at the police station (in 2015), and underutilised elements of the Post Office site, there is scope for some degree of redevelopment within this part of the town centre, which could bring forward a small amount of housing as part of a mixed use scheme.

The Post Office building is locally listed, and as such should be retained (although alterations sensitive to its historic importance are possible), rather than redeveloped.

At the current time whilst the landowner's intent is uncertain, the Neighbourhood Plan has allocated this site in order to highlight its potential for development, which could include housing.

What about the cumulative impacts of development?

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.

Policy SFHE4 continues to protect the route of the Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor.

Section 6 and **Appendices G, H and I** deal with community, leisure & tourism infrastructure needs. These will largely serve the town's population and should be accessible on foot/by bicycle and potentially also by bus.



New Build Housing at Nivens Walk

3.2 Meeting local housing needs

What does Policy SFHE1 set out to do?

To ensure that the local need for housing is met, and that the sustainability of any further unplanned development is carefully considered. There is already a substantial housing supply in Shaftesbury (houses with planning permission but not yet built), and no clear need to develop on greenfield sites outside the established settlement boundary.

Additional unplanned houses and people increase traffic on the road network and put additional pressure on our infrastructure. A growing population 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.

There are additional problems associated with developing on land outside of the settlement boundary, due to the topography and underlying soil conditions. These are detailed further in **Chapter 5 (Policy SFG12)**.



Post Office Land

POLICY SFHE1

Sufficient land has been identified within the Neighbourhood Plan which, if delivered, together with the extant planning consents and potential for further sensitive infill within the settlement boundary, should meet the identified housing target of about 600 dwellings for Shaftesbury over the period 2019–2031.

Site allocations that include the potential for housing are as follows:

- ▶ Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land) as part of a mixed-use development
- ▶ Land adjoining Lidl, Christy's Lane
- ▶ Barton Hill House and grounds
- ▶ Post Office/Police Station site

Given the identified supply exceeds the current housing need requirement, applications for residential development outside the settlement boundary will only be supported where they are consistent with policies in the development plan.

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, wildlife corridors and opportunities to expand and enhance these, historic character and important views.

On major development sites where housing is proposed, it is considered appropriate for the site to include some provision for employment premises if feasible, at an equivalent level of 15sqm of employment space per dwelling.

Further detail on key requirements for the larger site allocations sites which do not currently benefit from planning permission are set out in the following policies **SFHE1a–c**. It is important that we take the opportunity to allocate sites for housing to ensure that our Neighbourhood Plan is taken seriously when development is proposed.

Quick Read

What does this policy mean and why is it important?

We think that Shaftesbury has shouldered its share of North Dorset's housing quota to 2031.

We have identified a number of sites within the settlement boundary that are expected to provide further housing, and either have planning permission or would otherwise be acceptable. By allocating these sites we show that we are meeting our housing needs.

There are no plans or need to extend the settlement boundary. Unplanned, additional growth is not a good idea.

3.2 Meeting local housing needs (continued)

Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land)

This site is one of the last greenfield sites within the town boundary that was part of the proposed eastward expansion of the town. It extends to approximately 2.8ha in total. The expansion of the town has been guided by Policies SB8-11 from the 2003 North Dorset Local Plan, together with the 2003 Development Brief, which are still in use but may be considered out of date, and as such the elements specific to this site are 'refreshed' through this site allocation. In particular, Policy SB9 refers to including a road network which links the A30, Mampitts Lane and Wincombe Lane—and this parcel of land is critical to provide the last component of this road, as well as improving footpath and cycleway connections.

The design of this site will be guided by the policies in **Chapter 5**—the area lies within the character zone 8—East of Christy's Lane, which highlights the importance of referencing the local vernacular, use high quality materials, and incorporation of areas of open green space, and avoiding past mistakes in regard to issues such as poor quality detailing and featureless grassed areas. Given the importance of the link road in enhancing legibility, consideration should be given to both the placement of any landmark buildings along this route, and the inclusion of street trees. The eastern edge of the development, should also be landscaped, taking into account its



interface with the countryside and safeguarded bypass corridor, with green pedestrian/cycle corridors linking through the site to connect with the recreation/play areas to the south and west, and, if feasible, to Shaftesbury Primary School.

Consideration will need to be given as to how the site integrates with the SUDS corridor to the eastern edge which is an accessible green space. This provides opportunities for greater pedestrian/cycle connectivity and well as landscape and wildlife improvements.

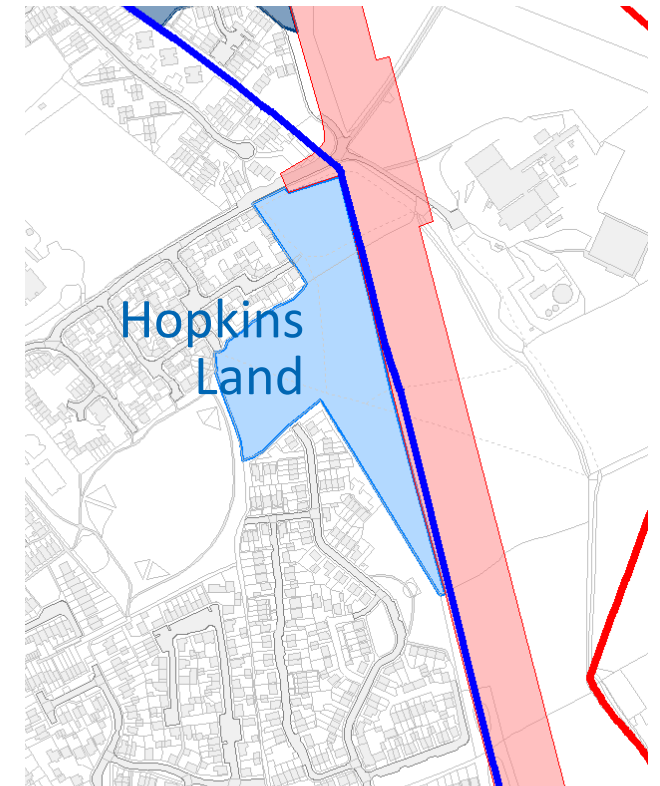
POLICY SFHE1a

Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land) is allocated for mixed use development to include predominantly housing, with potential for some small-scale employment/community uses and open space.

The design and layout of the development should ensure the provision of a link road from the northern end of Maple Road to Wincombe Lane, together with footpath and cycleway connections. This should be designed to be legible, with street tree-planting and appropriately placed and designed landmark buildings.

Green corridors with footpath/cycleway corridors should be included to provide safe and attractive connections to the adjoining play/recreation areas to the south and west, and to access the countryside to the north-east. They should link through and work with the SuDS corridor to the east. The provision of direct, safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to Shaftesbury Primary School should also be considered and included if feasible.

Detailed design should accord with **Policies SFDH1–7** of this Plan.

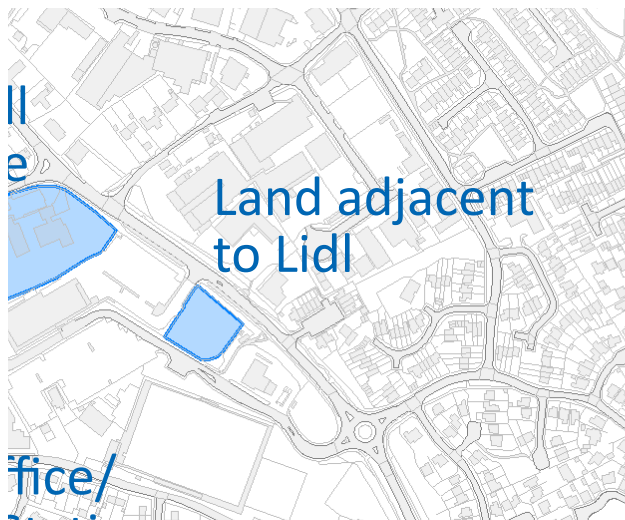


Land adjoining Lidl

This site lies within the defined town centre area, with vehicular access from Christy's Lane. It is therefore appropriate for a range of uses provided that these help maintain a strong and vibrant retail presence within the town centre area. **Policy SFTC1** recognises that this can and should include opportunities for housing on otherwise underused upper floors.

The plans that have been put forward for retirement apartments should indirectly support the town centre (through increasing the local population using the shops and services), although the adjoining roads, car park and petrol station are not particularly good neighbours. The applicant has provided a noise impact assessment that suggests a 2m acoustic fence to the south-east and south-west sides of the site, and acoustic double glazing and alternative means of ventilation (so that the windows do not need to be opened) to ensure that noise within habitable rooms as a result of the road traffic is kept to an acceptable level.

The Town Council consider this to be a missed opportunity for something that would be much more



relevant to and link through to the town centre. Leisure and commercial development such as indoor bowling, soft play area, climbing walls, training centre, food and retail outlets would work well in this location.

It is also unfortunate that it does not propose to directly provide more affordable housing.

For these reasons, whilst planning consent for the retirement homes has been granted, should this not happen the preferred approach would be to provide commercial/community uses on the ground floor appropriate to a town centre (or alternatively town centre parking), with the potential for flats/apartments above to ensure the efficient use of the site. This should be designed to increase the permeability of this part of the town, including provision for a footpath/cycle link through to Tesco's car park (with best endeavours made to deliver this—which will be dependent on negotiations with Tesco, who it is hoped will not put its own profits over providing for a better access for the town's shoppers and residents).

There are also a number of mature beech trees within the site (along Christy's Lane), which are now protected through a Tree Preservation Order. As such, any development should be set back from the road in order to ensure that these trees can be retained, and to mitigate the potential noise impacts on any residential occupants.

The design of this site will also be guided by the policies in **Chapter 5**—the area lies within the character zone 4—Grosvenor Road, Barton Hill and Cockram's Field, which highlights the importance of the mature trees along Christy's Lane, and the generally Inter-war and early post-war character of the built form, and seeks to avoid placeless larger buildings (typically designed for commercial uses) that lack local identity.

POLICY SFHE1b

Land adjoining Lidl is allocated for either retirement apartments, or as a mixed use development to include town centre uses, which may include residential uses predominantly on the upper floors.

The design and layout of the development should ensure the retention of the avenue of beech trees along Christy's Lane, and residential amenity of occupants, without compromising the detailed design that should accord with **Policies SFDH1–7** of this Plan.

Provision should also be made for a footpath/cycleway link through to Tesco's car park (allowing connections to the Town Centre), with best endeavours to secure its delivery.



3.2 Meeting local housing needs (continued)

Barton Hill House and Grounds

The original Barton Hill House dates back to the Victorian period, and although extended is of some local historic interest (and has now been proposed to be locally listed) and should be retained and re-used. The more recent student accommodation blocks are of little architectural merit, but consideration should be given to their embodied energy and materials in any redevelopment. Vehicular access into the grounds is from Barton Hill, with parking provision existing on-site.

The total area of the site is 1.2ha. However there are a number of constraints that will limit the overall amount of development that can be accommodated. The garden wall and gate piers that run along part of the boundary with Barton Hill are Grade II Listed, as is the largely underground Ice House towards the southern boundary. There is also an area Tree Preservation Order dating back to the 1980s, giving protection to the many mature trees within the grounds.



Barton Hill House

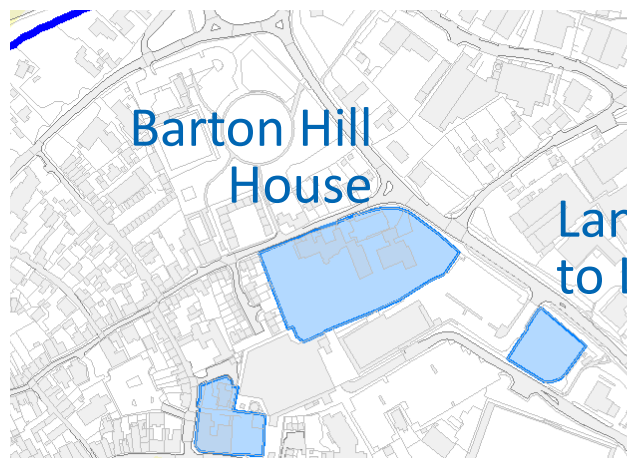
POLICY SFHE1c

Barton Hill House and Grounds are allocated for residential use. The original Victorian building should be retained, in accordance with **Policy SFDH9**. Any new buildings should respect and enhance the design of the original Victorian building and the setting of the Listed wall and Ice House within the grounds.

An arboricultural assessment should be undertaken to ascertain the importance of the many mature trees within the grounds, and the design should ensure that those most important to the character of the area and boundary landscaping are retained.

An archaeological assessment shall be required in accordance with **Policy SFDH2**. Detailed design should accord with **Policies SFDH1–7** of this Plan.

An ecological assessment should be undertaken to ascertain the presence or otherwise of bat roosts within trees and buildings onsite. Where possible, bat roosts should be retained. Lighting of the site should respond to the presence of roosting bats and the location of any identified flight paths and foraging areas.



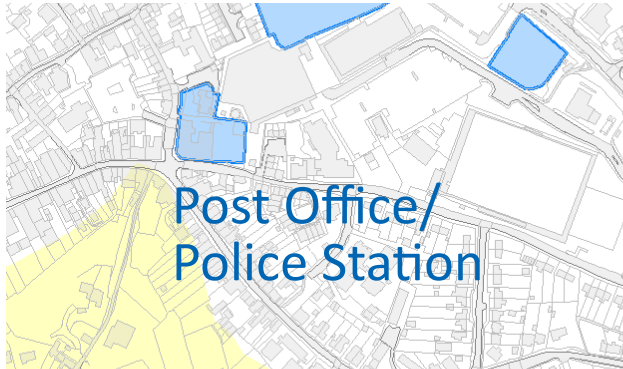
The Police Station and Post Office sites

Whilst the Town Council consider it important to have a police presence in the town, there may be the possibility of combining/reconfiguring how this site works that could release some or all of the site for redevelopment. Currently, the Post Office runs a counter from the ground floor (a critical facility for the town), with the BT telephone exchange using the upper floors, and the yard used by Open Reach.

This site extends to about 0.4ha, and is on an important junction that effectively marks the south-eastern gateway into the town centre. The Post Office is recognized as an important local building—noted in the Historic Towns Survey as “perhaps the most visible and notable modern building” in the town centre, and because of its appearance and cultural associations from long public use, should be retained. However the yard area to the rear and potentially underused upper floors may present an



Police Station



opportunity for further development. The Police Station is typical of its time (1960s), set well back from the street, of little architectural merit and doesn't make effective use of the site. Whilst it would be possible to consider the two sites separately, it makes sense to consider whether they could be more effectively re-developed as a whole, and how any new buildings can present a positive frontage onto to both Coppice Street and Angel Lane.

Both Angel Lane and the lower end of Coppice Street have predominantly greensand buildings (mainly designed for residential use) that reinforce the special character of this area.

Given the site's central location it is appropriate to consider whether it could improve pedestrian/cycle connections into the town centre, and the opportunity to link through the site from Angel Lane to the entrance of the Tesco store could usefully be explored.

The design of this site will also be guided by the policies in **Chapter 5**—the area lies within the character zone 2—Shaftesbury Town Centre, which highlights the importance of the tightly developed street frontages, and historic character of the townscape with quality signage and detailing on shop fronts. It is important that any new frontage is locally distinctive, and if spaces are retained (for parking/servicing), these do not result in large areas of tarmacadam but accommodate trees.

POLICY SFHE1d

The Police Station and Post Office sites are allocated for town centre uses, and may include residential uses predominantly on the upper floors. Whilst the sites may be developed separately, consideration should be given to ensuring the efficient use of the site as a whole.

The Post Office building should be retained, and any new buildings should respect its landmark status and present a positive frontage onto Coppice Street/Angel Lane.

A pedestrian/cycle connection through the site from Angel Lane to the Tesco entrance should be secured if feasible in accordance with Policy SFCL3.

Detailed design should accord with **Policies SFDH1–7** of this Plan.



3.2 Meeting local housing needs (continued)

Map of development areas

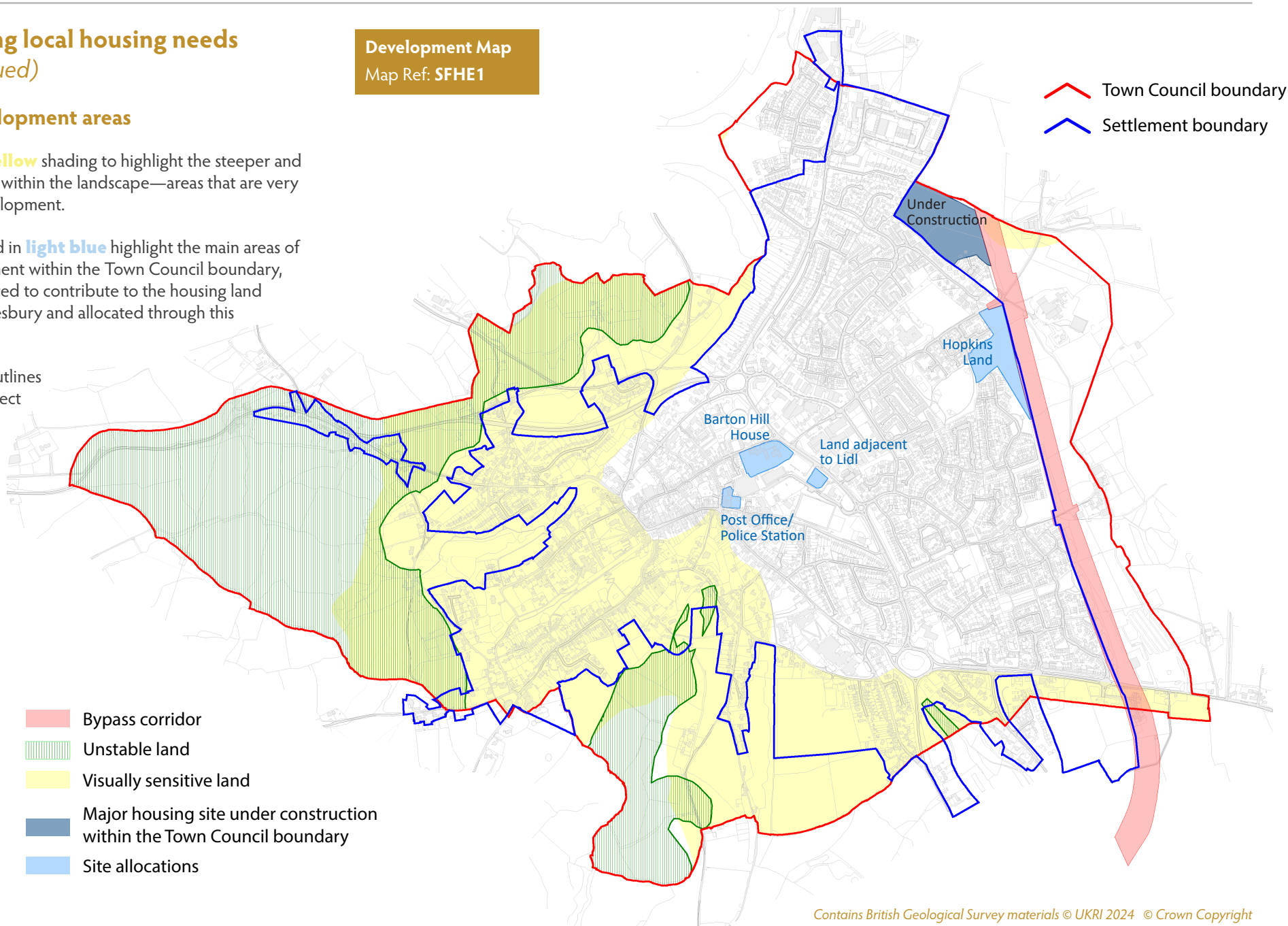
This map uses **yellow** shading to highlight the steeper and shallower slopes within the landscape—areas that are very sensitive to development.

The areas shaded in **light blue** highlight the main areas of future development within the Town Council boundary, which are expected to contribute to the housing land supply for Shaftesbury and allocated through this Plan.

Policy SFHE4 outlines the need to protect the bypass corridor.

Policy SFG12 outlines the protection of the slopes.

Development Map
Map Ref: SFHE1



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3.3 Housing sites: Key principles of development

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'.

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.

Whilst we don't anticipate the need for large sites to come forward within the plan period, the following policy nonetheless considers the need for phasing, and the benefits of a comprehensive approach to masterplanning.



Bramble Patch

addition, it would be appropriate to ensure that key workers for the area are also given priority in finding affordable housing. For the purpose of this plan, a Key Worker means a person employed in Shaftesbury (i.e. the Neighbourhood Plan area and adjoining built-up areas) or with a confirmed job offer related to employment here, as a front-line worker in: health/social care; education and training; emergency services; or in other front-line public service employment.



Mampitts Lane

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 24% of the population is in the 65+ age group and the overall number of elderly residents in the town 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. In



Allen Road

3.3 Housing sites: Key principles of development *(continued)*

According to the 2021 Census, about 1 in 5 workers worked from home. This figure reflects the impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions/furlough arrangements at that time, but it is unlikely that this will have fallen back to 2011 levels when only about 1 in 18 workers worked 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 is also desirable.

POLICY SFHE2

The following key principles should be applied to any future housing sites:

- ▶ The development should be designed to sensitively integrate with the surrounding area;
- ▶ The mechanisms that will be used to ensure that planning obligations and conditions are monitored and complied with should be set out clearly;

On sites of 10 or more dwellings:

The mix of housing should include dwelling types likely to be suitable for older people and 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.

The delivery of affordable housing should address the needs of the local community (i.e. those with a local connection to the town, including key workers engaged in frontline services in Shaftesbury, such as health and social care, education and training, 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.

Development should be phased when necessary to ensure the provision of any employment land, community facilities and infrastructure (including bus-friendly routes, pedestrian routes and 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. CLTs can work in partnership with Housing Associations or landowners who want to promote affordable housing. The CLT manages the homes when they are ready to live in. The CLT must make sure that the homes remain affordable, and the houses or flats remain exempt from the right-to-buy rules.

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.



Marnpitts Lane

3.4 Meeting local employment needs

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. 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 grows, and we want to provide opportunities for businesses to locate here so residents won't necessarily have to commute out from Shaftesbury for work.

Land to the south of the A30 was identified as employment land in the Local Plan. The western end was developed first, and was home to four businesses sharing over 550 sqm of retail, warehouse and storage space when the Neighbourhood Plan was first prepared. The remaining area now has outline planning permission (2/2018/1773), with a mix of commercial uses and industrial starter units proposed in the part of the site within our Neighbourhood Plan area but most of the remaining site now to be development as housing. As a result, the total area of potential employment land around the town (including Cann parish) has reduced significantly, diminishing the town's ability to be self-sufficient in jobs.

The part of the site fronting onto the A30 will be seen by many visitors travelling into the town from the east, and as such it is important that its design provides a positive image suitable to Shaftesbury's unique character, and conveying a sense of pride in the town and its heritage. The provision of standard industrial 'boxes' should not be accepted in this location. Whilst a boulevard of street trees can and should line the road frontage, this should not be used to justify poor quality designs.

POLICY SFHE3

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

Protected employment land to the south of the A30 (as shown on **Map SFHE3) will be developed for employment uses. This should include an area of industrial starter units, and may include, commercial uses such as non- food retail, hotel and/or a residential care home. The design of premises and associated areas fronting onto or clearly visible from the A30 should reflect the historic character of the town, and be suitably set back to accommodate large-scale street trees along the A30 (and such tree planting should be provided in line with **Policy SFG13**).**

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

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.

In addition, **Policy SFHE1** seeks to ensure that a balanced approach to the provision of housing and employment is taken should new housing sites come forward.

Which areas are employment land?

The key employment areas in Shaftesbury as recorded when the Neighbourhood Plan was first prepared are:

- ▶ The town centre, which had 162 businesses and covers approximately 21,000 sqm.
- ▶ Wincombe Business Park, which had 86 businesses and covers over 11,600 sqm of employment premises including mainly office, factory and warehouse space.
- ▶ The Longmead site, where there were 48 businesses including factory, warehouse and office space with 23,000 sqm of premises.
- ▶ Ivy Cross, where there were 8 businesses in approximately 4,600 sqm of premises, including a garage, shops, depot and take away.
- ▶ The Blackmore Vale Dairy which has premises of over 4,600 sqm in general industrial use.

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. Research undertaken by the Homes and Communities Agency in 2015 calculated that a typical office environment may support the equivalent of one full time employee (FTE) for every 10–13 sqm of internal floorspace. Light industrial units, in contrast, will generate less employment—typically one FTE for every 47 sqm. Care homes that employ an equivalent number of staff as a typical office/light industrial use will be considered as an employment use. However, they should not be located on industrial

3.4 Meeting local employment needs (continued)

estates where their occupants would be disturbed by the associated noise etc.

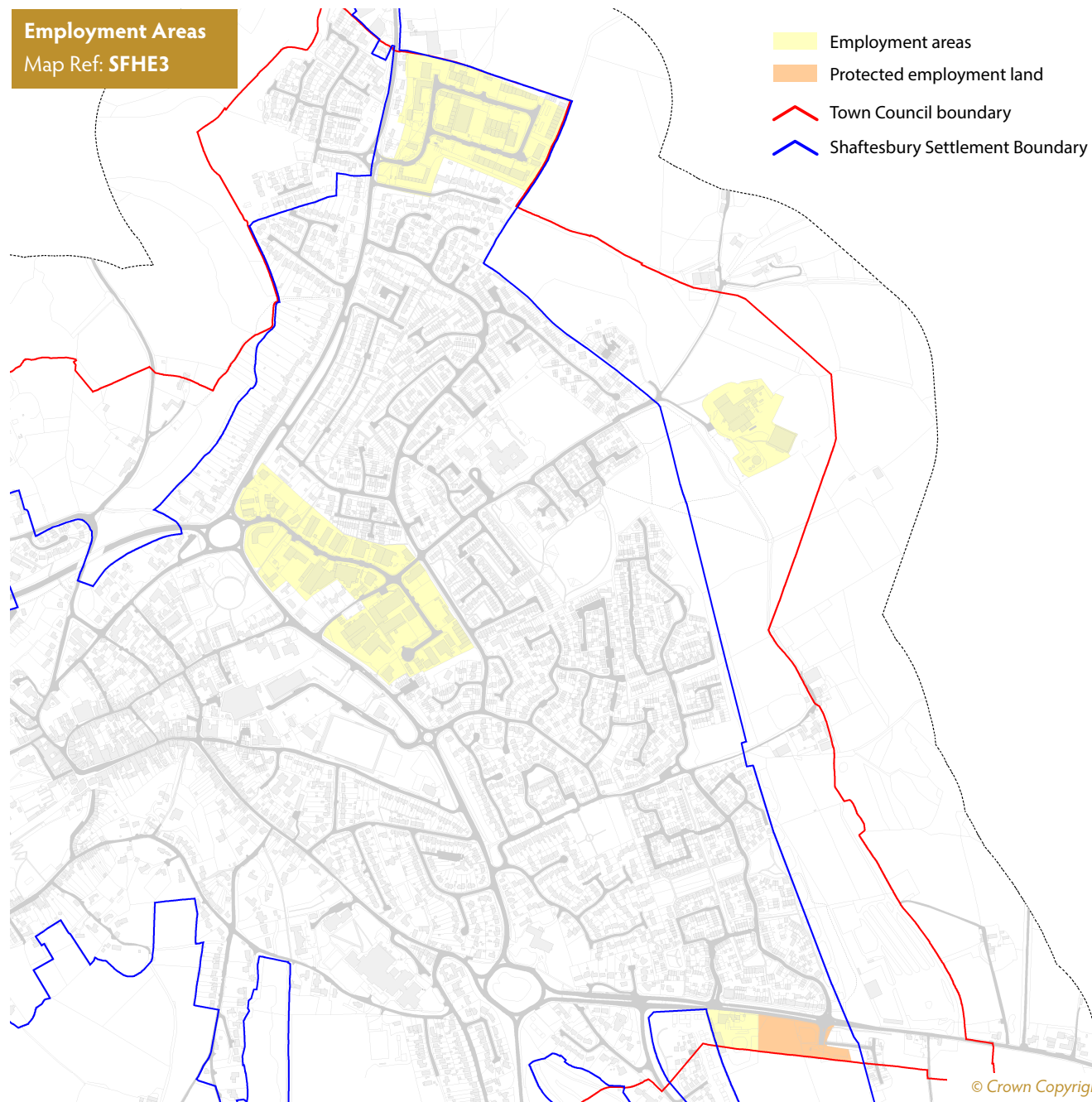
Littledown Business Park is outside the Neighbourhood Plan area in Motcombe parish.

Map of employment areas

This map shows the main areas of employment land (existing and proposed) within the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury.

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**. Where these become vacant, alternative community/employment uses compatible with that area would be supported.



3.5 The Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor

What does Policy SFHE4 set out to do?

To support the provision of the much needed eastern route, and ensure that it is not prevented from being built because the land that is needed to deliver it has been built on.

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. However, the eastward growth of the town has meant that it is now 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, 20,600 vehicles used this short stretch of road. More recent statistics from 2022 indicate these levels remain broadly the same. The number of HGVs on Christy's Lane and Grosvenor Road has remained relatively constant at around 600–700 vehicles a day.

 More more detail on traffic levels can be found online at these sites:

<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/manualcountpoints/6318>

<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/manualcountpoints/73419>

It is likely that Christy's Lane will become busier, as the remaining housing developments are completed. Residents of the new estates at Littledown and at Wincombe will need to drive along Christy's Lane when travelling north or north-east. The expansion of Gillingham is also likely to increase traffic on Christy's Lane.

Having some form of road that connects from the A30 Salisbury Road to the A350 heading north out of the town would reduce pressure on Christy's Lane and Grosvenor Road. The new road, when built, should also link into the eastern side of the town as far as this is feasible, so that less traffic from the eastern expansion

has to use Christy's Lane, which would help integrate the eastern part of the town with the town centre and other areas, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

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



Christy's Lane



3.5 The Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor *(continued)*

Funding for a bypass could have been secured if the A350/C13 formed the strategic route between the M4 and Dorset Coast. Whilst this now seems unlikely, the need for a road linking from the A30 Salisbury Road to the A350 heading north out of the town still exists, and the Town Council will continue to lobby for such a route through the Local Plan, and Local Transport Plan.

To the west of Shaftesbury, the Local Plan also proposes the construction of a link road between the A30 and B3018 (known as the Enmore Green link road) as part of wider improvements of road links south from Gillingham to encourage the use of the A30 as an alternative to the A303 for trips to Yeovil and Salisbury. This is largely within Motcombe parish, and is also dependent on significant funding becoming available.

Route of the Shaftesbury Eastern Bypass corridor

The preferred 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 that has been identified.

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

