

# Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan Review

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## Modifications Statement

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Prepared by: Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, on behalf of Shaftesbury Town Council

*Date of report: November 2025*

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## 1. Introduction

Shaftesbury Town Council began the review of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2023, in order to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in guiding development within the parish. The review provided the opportunity to consider the implications of the various planning permissions which have been granted since the original Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, changes in national planning guidance, the likely changes to local policies as indicated by the draft Local Plan that was published in early 2021, and priorities for local residents – in particular the continued work on local projects such as those found in the Sustainable Shaftesbury Action Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan regulations require that the Town Council publish a statement setting out whether or not it considers that the modifications proposed are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan, and to give reasons for this opinion. This is the statement that fulfils this legal requirement, as well as explaining the main changes proposed.

## 2. Main Modifications Proposed

The main changes proposed as part of the review of the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan, as impacting on the Plan's policies, are set out below. Other changes are minor in nature, such as factual updates and improvements to the clarity of phrasing in places.

The plan period (2019 – 2031) remains unchanged. Details on the policy changes are outlined in the table that follows.

### *Chapter 1 Introduction*

The Introduction has been updated to reflect that the Neighbourhood Plan has undergone its first review. The background section on strategic planning policies has also been updated to include reference to the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, noting that the Local Plan strategy does not propose any further growth around Shaftesbury other than the sites already planned. Similarly, the population statistics have been updated to include figures from the 2021 Census. The vision has been expanded slightly to note the importance of the views which are of national (if not international) renown.

### *Chapter 2 The Town Centre*

The chapter on the Town Centre has been updated to take on board some of the changes within the town centre. The review has allowed us to consider the implications of the opening of the Lidl store, the closure of some of our High Street banks and other shops as socio-economic patterns have changed, and also the importance of the local independent outlets which has been even more evident coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings and recommendations from Dorset Council's retail study (published in 2022) have also been considered. The main policy changes are to Policies SFTC2 and SFTC4, with a minor update to the primary shopping area and the reiteration of the importance of connections and public car parking for the vitality of the town centre.

### *Chapter 3 Housing and Employment*

The housing need for the area has been checked, using the data on completions and new permissions granted and considering the extent to which it may be appropriate to apply an uplift to the housing target for the town to reflect more recent housing need calculations for the wider area. This work has been done in conjunction with Dorset Council, and has been updated again following Regulation 14 to include the latest data available.

The housing figure for Shaftesbury in the adopted Local Plan is a minimum figure of 1,140 dwellings for the 20 year period to 2031. Since that time the calculated annual need across the North Dorset area

has increased – first in 2015 when the update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published, then again in 2017, then 2021, after which it has been updated by using the Government's standard method. These uplifts have then been applied to the Shaftesbury figure, resulting in an adjusted housing target of 1,363 dwellings over the Local Plan period. Taking into account the housing completions in the period up to the start date of the Neighbourhood Plan, this would then result in a Neighbourhood Plan housing target of at least 595 dwellings. This target was rechecked and updated following the Regulation 14 consultation in order to take on board both the latest available data on completions and consents, as well as the Government's revised method for calculating the housing target, which resulted in an increased target for the wider Dorset area. Whilst it is not yet known how this higher target will be apportioned across Dorset, a proportionate approach has been taken. This is considered to be a reasonable approach taking into account the constraints around the town and given that the very first draft of the emerging Local Plan was not promoting any significant further growth at Shaftesbury (and there is no expectation from Wiltshire at their Local Plan examination for Shaftesbury to take any unmet growth from their area).

Based on dwelling completions to date (291 dwellings to March 2024) and sites with extant planning permission at that time (375 dwellings), plus the remaining element of the Local Plan allocation off Wincombe Lane and potential for further infill within the settlement boundary, the target of at least 595 dwellings should be comfortably exceeded even if some of the potential sites are not built out. In order to provide clarity, the Neighbourhood Plan has been modified to include site allocations for the larger sites within the settlement boundary which have not yet been built, but are considered to have reasonable prospect of coming forward in the plan period. These are:

- Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land) – the last remaining part of the allocated site from the 2003 Local Plan saved policy SB8, which has not yet been consented – whilst the landowner has not indicated their intent to develop this site there are no other obvious issues that would prevent the site being developed;
- The former ATS Euromaster site – this site has planning permission for housing but not yet implemented – it has recently exchanged hands and an application has now been submitted for its use as a car park, but this would not prevent it from being developed for housing either under the current consent. The Plan therefore acknowledges that either use may be possible;
- Land adjoining Lidl, Christy's Lane – granted planning permission for retirement homes in June 2024 but not yet implemented;
- Barton Hill House and grounds, Barton Hill – a redevelopment opportunity identified through the Neighbourhood Plan, following the closure of the boarding school element of Shaftesbury School that formerly occupied the site;
- Post Office / Police Station site – a redevelopment opportunity identified through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The fact that the housing land supply exceeds the uplifted housing target demonstrates that Shaftesbury can meet its local housing needs. The Plan therefore makes clear that, whilst infill development within the settlement boundary is expected to happen, the release of greenfield sites outside the settlement boundary should be resisted. The decision to release such sites is more appropriately considered through the plan-making process (as part of either the Local Plan or future Neighbourhood Plan review).

In terms of employment needs, the most recent employment land study dating from March 2024 suggests the level of employment land allocation in Shaftesbury 'may be ambitious' but has not accounted for the outline planning permission that has been granted for the development of land south of the A30, which includes a significant amount of residential development and primary school site on what was the employment allocation in the adopted Local Plan. The permission does include a mix of

commercial uses and industrial starter units in the part of the site that lies within the parish, and given that this is much reduced in scale, and that the study recommends that it would be reasonable for Dorset's market towns to be seeking to achieve 15 sqm or above of employment space per dwelling in order to balance housing and employment needs, the need to safeguard this area for employment is clear. The latter guidance has now been included in Policy SFHE1. Policy SFHE3 has been updated to better align with the range of employment uses included within that permission, and provide guidance on design considerations given its prominent position on one of the main entrance routes into the town.

#### *Chapter 4 Green Infrastructure*

The chapter on Green Infrastructure has been checked to ensure that the approach to retaining the most important green spaces and wooded areas within the parish remains robust. This included consideration of the new green spaces that have been provided as part of the developments that have been built out, such as on land south of the A30, and cross-checking the local green space (LGS) and important treed areas (ITA) against the national studies that have been published in the intervening period by Natural England and Friends of the Earth. The policy wording of SFGI1 has been amended to more closely follow national policy on Green Belt, in line with Government guidance on Local Green Space policies.

The other main area of change centres on the area's geology and land instability. It was apparent, in light of the planning decision granting permission for an affordable housing site on land at Enmore Green, that there was insufficient evidence provided on the implications of the site's geology and topography for building. As such, research was undertaken to identify those areas where landslip and instability are most likely to be present, and Policy SFGI2 has been modified to ensure that this matter is further investigated as part of any future planning applications.

Policy SFGI3 has been updated to require tree planting along the main route corridors into the town to be provided where feasible – this reflects the original intent of 2004 Eastern Development Masterplan in relation to the A30, but extends the principle to all of the main routes. A minor change has also been made to the dark skies policy SFGI4 to reflect the latest guidance from the Cranborne Chase National Landscape advisors.

#### *Chapter 5 Design and Heritage*

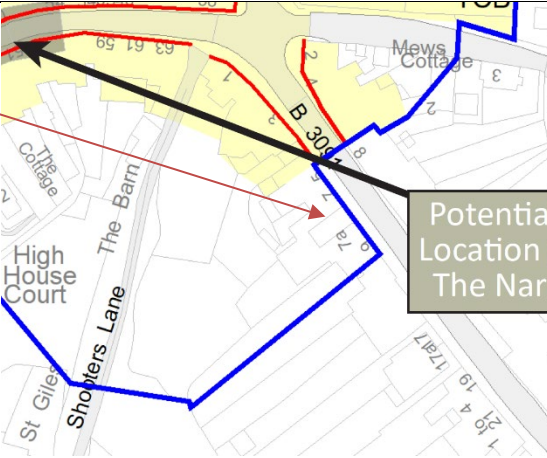
The chapter on Design and Heritage has a number of updates arising from a review of the character areas and recent planning decisions. Minor changes are proposed to the character area boundaries to better group areas of consistent character and age. The policies on design have also been reviewed to ensure that sufficient clarity and emphasis is provided on matters relating to climate change. It is expected that new development should include air or ground source heating; solar panels; rainwater butts / storage; and shading where overheating may be an issue, as a matter of course, or explain the reasons for their omission. The new national requirements on biodiversity net gain, as well as the expectation that development should make provision for street trees, have also been incorporated.

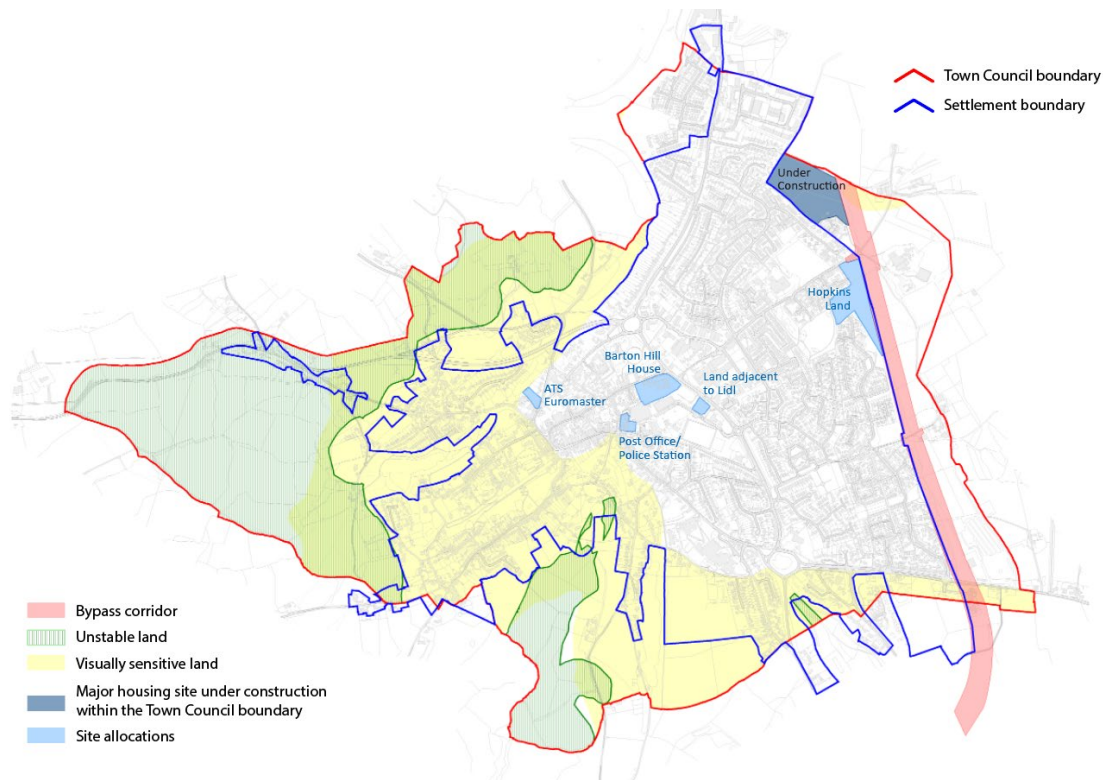
Barton Hill House is proposed to be added to the list of Locally Important Historic Buildings.

#### *Chapter 6 Community and Leisure*

The final chapter, which covers Community and Leisure and includes Tourism, has been updated to reflect changes in the provision of such facilities across the area. This has picked up on matters such as the implementation of the 'Shaftesbury Loop' cycle and the provision of new play and recreation areas provided as part of the ongoing development around the town. Reference is made to the new community hub at Mampitts Lane, which can be updated further as this project progresses.

*The main changes proposed to the plan policies are summarised below:*

Policy	Main change
SFTC2	<p>A relatively minor change has been made to the Town Centre Map primary shopping area, to reflect the lack of retail within the southernmost part of Salisbury Street which is now primarily residential. We have not altered the town centre boundary in this location, as this would deter these premises from reverting to a town centre use should they so wish.</p> 
SFTC3	<p>Minor changes have been made to the third and fourth bullet points at the advice of Dorset Council (at Reg 14) to improve the clarity of this policy without changing its intent.</p>
SFTC4	<p>A minor change has also been made to the Town Centre Map to include the Coppice Street Car Park which is now operational, as this additional provision supports the vitality of the town centre and is well-connected to serve the town centre. The supporting next notes the unfortunate fact that there is no easy and direct link between Lidl store and wider town centre – and the policy has been amended to ensure that in the future, enhancing such links is an important consideration, as well as safeguarding against the loss of off- street parking spaces that already serve the town centre.</p>
SFHE1	<p>This policy has been adapted to identify specific sites to help meet the identified housing need for the area, and in doing so provide a clear reason for resisting the release of unallocated greenfield sites for housing outside of the settlement boundary. The proposed site allocations include five sites which are identified on map SFHE1. The sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land)</li> <li>– The former ATS Euromaster site (if not brought forward for parking)</li> <li>– Barton Hill House and grounds, Barton Hill</li> <li>– Land adjoining Lidl, Christy's Lane</li> <li>– Post Office / Police Station site</li> </ul>



All of these lie within the existing settlement boundary of the town. Additional detail on the sites is provided in supplementary policies SFHE1a-d, with the exception of the former ATS Euromaster site where planning permission has been granted and no site-specific issues need to be covered should the site come forward for housing. The plan notes that, for this site, either housing or town centre parking would be supported as being beneficial to the town.

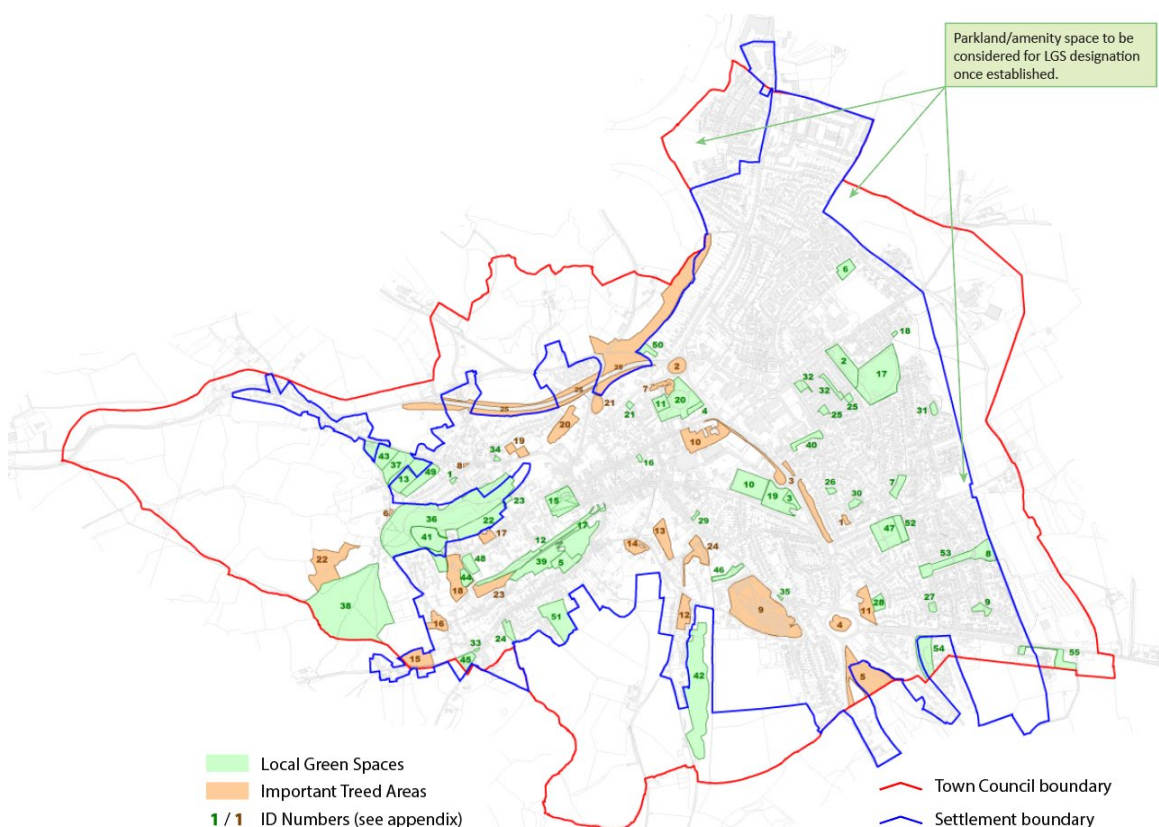
The site south-east of Wincombe Lane (the Hopkins Land) forms the last major part of the strategic extension of the town to the east, as included in the adopted Local Plan. The allocation seeks to provide more detail on the development of this site, drawing on the original masterplanning for the proposed strategic extension contained in the 2003 development brief. In particular the policy highlights the need for the link road which will provide the intended connection from the south through to Wincombe Lane, as well as green corridors and incorporation of footpath / cycle links. The potential for some community and small-scale employment alongside residential use is also included.

The site adjoining the Lidl store has planning permission for retirement apartments. However should the site be sold on to another developer, the policy would support an alternative, broader mix of uses of main town centre with residential uses on the upper floors, in light of its edge of town centre location and potential for noise / disturbance from the adjoining sites and Christy's Lane. The provision of a footpath / cycleway link through the site to allow a connection into the Town Centre is also strongly encouraged.

The former boarding school and grounds at Barton Hill House is within a residential area, and has not previously been identified for redevelopment as its recent closure was unexpected. As a brownfield site, in a residential area adjoining the town centre, it would be suitable for residential use, and it may be possible to provide a significant amount of affordable housing through repurposing the student blocks. There is an existing vehicular access off Barton Hill that should be used as this neither compromises the listed wall or belt of mature trees along Christy's Lane. There is also an old Ice House on the southern part of the grounds that is listed, and whose setting will need to be

	<p>carefully considered to ensure that the significance of this heritage asset is not harmed – indeed there may be potential to design the scheme to provide a better understanding of this feature and provide for its ongoing maintenance. The original Victorian building is quite striking and is considered to contribute to the character of the area and is being considered for Local Listing – and the policy seeks its retention and re-use. The remaining student accommodation blocks and grounds can either be repurposed or redeveloped, depending on their suitability for conversion and to make the most efficient use of the site. The trees within the site are also protected by a TPO, and a measured approach will need to be taken to ensure that those that are healthy and contribute significantly to the amenity of the area are retained.</p> <p>The Police Station and Post Office sites are not being actively promoted for development at this time, but there is scope for either site to come forward either in part or whole during the plan period, particularly if their current uses are relocated or rationalized to make more efficient use of the land. The site is on an important junction that effectively marks the south-eastern gateway into the town centre, and the Post Office is recognized as an important local building, so these constraints are highlighted in the policy and a design approach is suggested to address these points. As a result of feedback during the Regulation 14 consultation, reference is now also made to the provision of a pedestrian / cycle connection through the site from Angel Lane to the Tesco entrance if feasible.</p> <p>The final paragraph of the policy has also been revised to provide further guidance on the consideration of economics / infrastructure, drawing on recent guidance on employment land supply produced for the Dorset Council area that suggests the equivalent level of 15sqm of employment space per dwelling may be needed in order to provide an appropriate balance of jobs to homes going forward.</p>
SFHE2	<p>This policy has been revised to be more easily understood / applied, but is not significantly different from the existing policy in its content. As a result of feedback during the Regulation 14 consultation, the definition of key workers has been further clarified, and reference to infrastructure provision amended to include pedestrian (as well as cycle) routes.</p>
SFHE3	<p>This policy has been updated to acknowledge the planning consent on land to the south of the A30 and range of employment uses (within the Town Council boundary). Further detail has been added in respect of the design approach to this site, in particular the visibility of the site from the A30, which will be seen by the many visitors travelling into the town from the east, and should be designed and landscapes (including tree planting) to provide a positive image suitable to Shaftesbury's unique character, and convey a sense of pride in the town and its heritage. The map is updated to better reflect the area with employment consent (insofar as it relates to the Neighbourhood Plan area), in addition to the existing employment area to the west.</p>
SFGI1	<p>Whilst the policy wording has not changed significantly (with minor amendments to seek to ensure it remains consistent with Green Belt policy), some amendments have been made to the map, to include greenspaces now provided and enjoyed by local residents as part of the housing developments, or highlighted through more recent research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– LGS38 (Breach Common): extended to the north and east to include the adjoining strips of common land;</li> <li>– LGS(new): Land off Higher Blandford Road (immediately east of the junction with the A30) in active use as part of the greenspace for the housing development;</li> </ul>

- LGS(new): A30 Allotments – Town Council site which opened in October 2021 and serves residents in the south-eastern part of the town;
- ITA3 (Christy's Lane): extended southwards long either side of Christy's Lane to include the avenues of tree planting;
- ITA5 (A350 South): extended to cover the tree'd areas to the west, north and south, and to omit the less tree'd part which has planning consent for housing;
- ITA(new): identified on land to the rear of St Edwards Church / off Great Land;
- ITA(new): identified on land to the north of Breach Common;
- ITA(new): identified on land to the west of St James Park;
- ITA(new): identified on land either side of the A30 corridor.



The public open spaces being created within the sites at Littledown and Wincombe Lane, and also at Mampitts, are indicated (once they have been established and in full use can be considered for LGS status in the next review).

SFGI2

An additional paragraph has been added to the policy to highlight the requirement to address the geological instability of the steep and shallow slopes where development is proposed in those areas (based on the geological maps now included in Map SFGI2). These indicate areas of unstable land in which sites may exacerbate existing, underlying land instability.

	<p> <span style="color: red;">—</span> Town Council boundary  <span style="color: blue;">—</span> Settlement boundary    <span style="color: brown;">—</span> 10m contours  <span style="color: green;">▨</span> Unstable land  <span style="color: blue;">▭</span> Flat, visually sensitive, prominent hilltop  <span style="color: brown;">▭</span> Steep slopes 1:5 and steeper  <span style="color: pink;">▭</span> Shallow slopes 1:5 to 1:15  <span style="color: yellow;">▭</span> Plateau edge, generally level areas on higher ground </p>
SFGI3	Minor textual changes have been made for clarity, to give greater attention to the importance of wildlife corridors and choice of planting (to take into account the species' resilience to climate change). As a result of feedback at Regulation 14, a further addition has been made to refer to the need for tree planting along the main route corridors into the town to be provided where feasible.
SFGI4	The dark sky guidance has been updated in relation to the correlated colour temperature (CCT), changing this from 3,000 to 2,700K which has been advised by the Cranborne Chase National Landscape team.
SFDH1	Minor amendments have been made to the character zone maps and supporting text in regard to Zones 4 (renamed Grosvenors Road, Barton Hill and Cockram's Field), 6 (Cann) and 8 (renamed East of Christy's Lane) to better group areas of consistent character and age and include reference to recent development where appropriate.
SFDH2	Minor amendments have been made to add information about the expectations for sustainable design measures that should be incorporated into new buildings - with reference to the use of air or ground source heating; solar panels; rainwater butts / storage; shading to avoid overheating, and the incorporation of wildlife features such as bat boxes and swift bricks. This has been based on the recently published Dorset Council sustainability checklist as well as updates to national planning policy.
SFDH4	Minor wording changes have been made to improve clarity, including reference to waste bins, signage and other street furniture, and the inclusion of street trees.
SFDH5	Minor wording changes have been made to reference LTN1/20 as the most up-to-date standards regarding cycle parking provision.
SFDH6	Very minor wording changes have been made to improve clarity (such as the inclusion of 'local' in reference to the use of traditional buildings).

SFDH7	The expectation that materials should have high sustainability credentials where feasible has been inserted.
SFDH8	Additional wording has been added to clarify the approach to be taken should an archaeological find be uncovered.
SFDH9	Barton Hill House is proposed to be added to the list of Locally Important Historic Buildings.
SFCL1	Whilst the policy wording has not changed, Map SFCL1 has been updated to include the Mampitts Hub project and new areas of play and recreation space.
SFCL2	Whilst the policy wording has not changed, Map SFCL2 has been updated to remove the former TIC building (which has now been incorporated into the Morrisons supermarket).
SFCL3	Minor change to the policy wording to strengthen the policy regarding the need to provide reasonable footpath and cycle path network connections through a site, connecting to / from the town centre and other community facilities and to the wider countryside. Map SFCL3 has been updated to better reflect the existing routes that have been provided and remaining routes that are proposed.

### Appendices

The projects have been reviewed to ensure that they remain up-to-date and align with the Sustainable Shaftesbury Action Plan projects.

## 3. Consideration

Shaftesbury Town Council consider that the proposed modifications are **not** so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Plan.

The reasons for this are as follows:

- The changes do not look to modify the plan period;
- The amendment to the vision is relatively minor and is already reflected in the existing Plan's contents;
- The changes do not look to extend the settlement boundary, and whilst the Plan includes proposed site allocations, these are all either brownfield sites that lie within the settlement boundary where in principle such development is accepted, already benefit from existing planning permissions or allocated through the Local Plan;
- The additional changes to the areas of Local Green Space will have been subject to consultation with the owners as part of the Regulation 14 consultation and are not considered likely to be controversial given their existing status as either common land or public open space required through planning obligations;
- The inclusion of information on the geological stability of the slopes does not prevent development in these areas, but in line with national policy is intended to ensure that the potential problems and costs of addressing land instability issues are fully understood and considered should proposals for development come forward in these areas;
- The changes reinforce the expectation of climate change measures to be incorporated in recognition of the importance of addressing this important issue, and do not fundamentally alter the Plan's stance on these matters;
- Most of the other changes are relatively minor in nature.