



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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Interim Town Clerk: Ms Billy Maddock

VAT Registration Number: 241 1307 58

For the attention of: Andy Mead, Examiner

via email to: Steve Carnaby, Associate Director
Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd

7th April 2026

Dear Mr Mead,

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE SHAFTESBURY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FIRST REVIEW

The following provides a statement from Shaftesbury Town Council in respect of the changes to the basic conditions as a result of sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 that came into force on 25th March 2026.

In summary, the further legal compliance requirements are as follows:

- so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, the plan must be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; and
- so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, the plan must be designed to take account of any local nature recovery strategy under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021 that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood plan area.

In addition, there is a new Basic Condition requirement:

- the making of the draft plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in that area than if the draft plan were not to be made.

Climate change basic condition:

The Town Council has been conscious of the need to consider climate change as it was preparing the original Neighbourhood Plan, and this has been carried through in consideration of the modifications in its first review.

Section 1.10 on page 17 sets out how matters related to climate change have been embedded into the plan's policies and seeks to ensure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. This section was expanded slightly as a result of the modifications to note the role that farming can play in supporting wildlife and sustainable local food production.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy basic condition:

Dorset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy was only adopted on 9 December 2025, well after the Regulation 14 consultation and even after the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan, making it difficult for the Town Council to take account of the final strategy as part of the process.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not specifically reference Shaftesbury, but the three layers that comprise the mapped elements of the strategy (appended and linked [here](#)) indicate both existing designations, high opportunity nature areas and potential activities. The latter two include an area that is proposed for development in the Neighbourhood Plan (and adopted Local Plan) – Land south-east of Wincombe Lane (Hopkins Land) through Policy SFHE1(a).

The Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultant has taken this opportunity to reach out to the Local Nature Recovery Officer at Dorset Council, who has advised the following:

They propose to develop specific guidance for those preparing Neighbourhood Plans on how to meet the updated requirements and how they can use the LNRS as a tool to help prepare their plan. In the meantime, they would suggest the following reference is included in the plan:

[Dorset local nature recovery strategy](#) has 13 nature recovery priorities which can be used to inform site design, and its [local habitat map](#) identifies high opportunity nature areas, with mapped potential activities suggesting what type of habitat creation or enhancement could be most beneficial in an area, which can guide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery.

Their webpage <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/how-the-dorset-local-nature-recovery-strategy-will-work-with-planning-policy-1> explains that high opportunity nature areas do not prevent development but can highlight the importance of considering the nature recovery activities that can be delivered as part of site design, using both the potential activities map layer and the potential activities in the written part of the strategy (in particular those under Priority 7 - urban).

They also note that part of the local habitat map includes Shaftesbury's Green Wheel Project, submitted by Shaftesbury Town Council and their Sustainable Shaftesbury Advisory Committee (SuSAC) (this is referenced in Section 4.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, which notes that "the Sustainable Shaftesbury Advisory Committee (SuSAC) is progressing further initiatives, and hopes to work with local landowners to establish a 'Green Ring' around the town. Any relevant policy implications arising from these initiatives can be considered in the next review.")

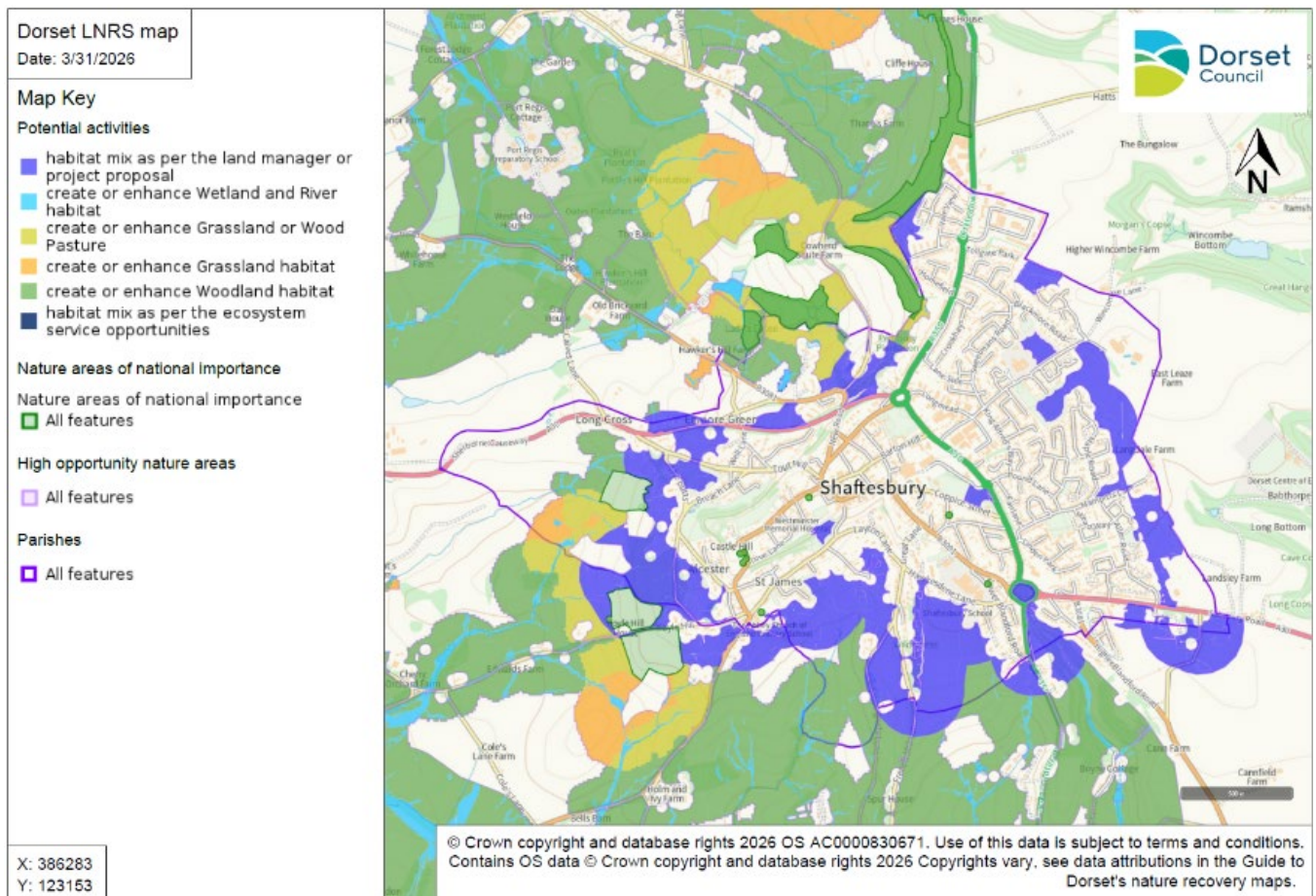
Whilst it was not possible to take account of the local nature recovery strategy in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council are satisfied that there are no clear conflicts with the strategy, and that the allocation Policy SFHE1a includes the provision of open space and green corridors to link through and work with the SuDS corridor to the east and provide opportunities for habitat improvements in line with the strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes reference to the need to promote nature recovery and mitigate climate change as part of comprehensive landscape proposals under Policy SFG13. The Town Council would also look to include reference to the Dorset local nature recovery strategy as advised by the Local Nature Recovery Officer as a minor (non-material) modification with the agreement of Dorset Council.

Housing provision basic condition:

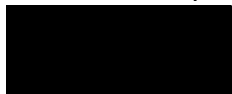
The Town Council consider that the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in that area than if the draft plan were not to be made. This is covered in our response to the housing target appendix updates in the previously supplied Statement of Common Ground. This found:

- The adjusted target for Shaftesbury for the period 2019-2031 (which is an uplift on the adopted Local Plan and takes into account the latest standard method as applied to the parish) would be at least 598 dwellings
- This target is on track to be exceeded on the following basis:
 - Completions for the period 2019–2025: 365 dwellings
 - Extant consents as at April 2025: 236 dwellings
 - Local Plan allocated site (Hopkins Land): 60 dwellings
 - Windfall allowance, 5dpa between 2029–2031: 10 dwellings
 - Total supply for the period 2019–2031: 671 dwellings

At the current time it is not possible to establish what the future Local Plan may propose for what would be an extended plan period that is likely to end in the mid-2040s. It is highly likely that the adoption of the new Local plan would trigger a further review of this Neighbourhood Plan, and in any event the Plan would not prevent the Local Plan from allocating further sites to meet housing needs. The Town Council believes firmly in the need for a plan-led planning system, to provide residents, businesses and infrastructure / service providers with clarity on the likely level and location of development coming forward in what is an environmentally sensitive area.



Yours sincerely,



Ms Billy Maddock
Interim Town Clerk

On behalf of Shaftesbury Town Council