

SHAFTESBURY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019 - 2031

Information Statement

This information statement is about the referendum to be held on the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan

About town and country planning

In England, planning applications are determined by local planning authorities such as Dorset Council. Planning decisions are made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.

At the current time, [the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 \(adopted January 2016\)](#), which forms part of the development plan, is the starting point for considering planning applications in the area covered by the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Council's [Local Development Scheme](#) contains information on development plan documents that are being prepared.

About neighbourhood planning and the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. In parished areas such as Shaftesbury, the town or parish council is responsible for preparing a neighbourhood plan. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in the neighbourhood plan area. If a plan is made following a successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area.

Shaftesbury Town Council initially started preparing a neighbourhood plan in 2013 as part of a joint Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann neighbourhood plan. In 2017 North Dorset District Council agreed that Shaftesbury Town Council could proceed with producing a neighbourhood plan that just covered the Shaftesbury parish area. After much research and having listened to the various issues and suggestions made through various consultation events, a draft plan was produced for consultation in August 2019. The plan was then revised in response to the consultation and submitted to Dorset Council in January 2020. Dorset Council consulted on the submitted plan from 7 February to 20 March 2020.

Mr David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT was appointed to examine the Plan as independent examiner. In August 2021 the examiner produced his [report](#) confirming that he was satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions and recommended that it should, subject to some changes, proceed to referendum.

Dorset Council considered the report and issued its decision, which was in agreement with the examiner's findings, that the plan as modified should proceed to referendum.

What the referendum is deciding

The question which will be asked in the referendum is:

'Do you want Dorset Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Shaftesbury to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

The referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to this question.

When the referendum will be held

The referendum will be held on **Thursday 6 May 2021**.

What is the area covered by the referendum?

The referendum area and the area covered by the neighbourhood plan is the parish of Shaftesbury.

Who is entitled to vote?

You are entitled to vote in the referendum if you live in the referendum area, you are on the electoral register to vote in local council elections and you are 18 years of age or over on 6 May 2021.

You have to be registered to vote by Monday 19 April 2021 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by telephoning **01305 838299** during normal office hours.

How can people vote?

The referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

You can vote in person at your relevant polling station which will be detailed on your poll card. We will issue poll cards to voters around 29 March 2021. The polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on 6 May 2021.

To vote by post or proxy in this referendum, you will need to have filled in an application form and sent it to the Electoral Registration Officer. Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from the elections website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/councillors-committees-elections/elections-and-voting/ways-you-can-vote.aspx> or by contacting Dorset Council.

Applications to vote by post must be received by 5pm on 20 April 2021.

To vote by proxy, application forms should be received by 5pm on 27 April 2021

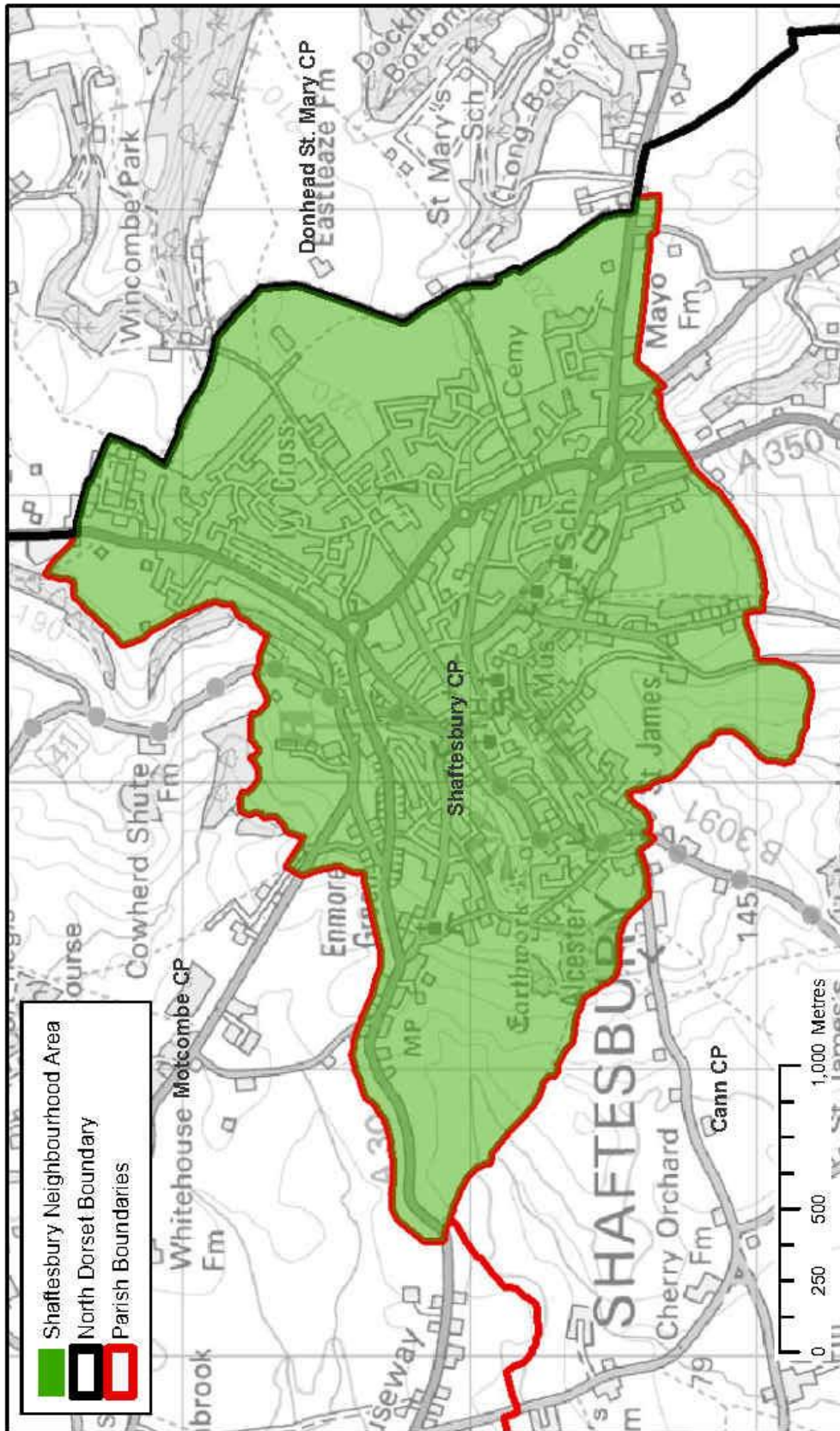
However, in certain circumstances emergency proxy vote applications can be received up until 5pm on the 6 May 2021. Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

Ballot papers for people who vote by post will be posted from 19 April 2021, and will need to be returned by 10pm on the day of the Poll, 6 May 2021.

Referendum expenses

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum is £2,362 plus £0.059 per registered elector (the electorate in March 2021 was 6,820).

Map of the referendum area



Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Area
 North Dorset Boundary
 Parish Boundaries

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 Ordnance Survey LA100018415

Name of the neighbourhood area **Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Area**
Designation date **29 November 2017**
Organisation who made the application **Shaftesbury Town Council**

What information is there available about the neighbourhood plan?

A copy of the specified documents, that is the documents listed below, may be inspected at the following locations:

- Online at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/shaftesbury-neighbourhood-plan
- Dorset Council's Offices, South Walks House, Dorchester DT1 1UZ (currently closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, please call 01305 251010 to confirm future possible opening).
- At the following Dorset Council libraries:
 - Dorchester Library, South Walks House, Dorchester DT1 1UZ
 - Shaftesbury Library, Bell Street, SP7 8AE

Dorset Council libraries are currently closed due to Covid-19 restrictions. In line with the Government's roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions, the earliest date that they might re-open is 12 April. They are however operating an order and collect service – please call 01305 228400 to order over the phone, or go online:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/libraries/library-services-during-covid-19/dorset-libraries-order-and-collect.aspx>

The specified documents are:

- A **Summary of Representations** submitted to the examiner;
- The **Examiner's Report**;
- The **Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019–2031 (referendum version)**;
- The **Decision Statement**, which includes a statement by the local planning authority that the plan meets the basic conditions; and
- This **Information Statement**, which includes general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum.

We apologise that the Covid-19 restrictions are likely to have an impact on the distribution of hard copies of the specified documents. If you are unable to view the documents online or obtain them through one of the locations listed above, please phone 01258 484201 or email neighbourhoodplanning@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk for assistance.