**Tourism**

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| Tourism and the visitor economy are extremely important for Bridport and the surrounding area. Additional tourism development must be sympathetic to the environment and infrastructure.The visitor experience is closely linked to the independent and vital nature of the town centre with its strong sense of community, its industrial heritage and the town’s proximity to the heritage coast. Again as a result of the creative nature of the town, events and festivals have grown over the last 10 years and, along with, the twice weekly market are a huge draw into the town.The importance of tourism is, therefore, clearly linked to the previous issues and is dependent on the continuing health and vitality of the town in all its guises.The riverside is a great area for recreation which is currently under-utilised. Land usage and re-development projects which make use of the riverside and the sea should be encouraged.The river corridor from West Road, through the sports facilities, around St Michael’s and on through the playing fields, alongside Palmer’s Brewery and on to West Bay is a neglected and under-utilised resource which could be opened up and enhanced and this could be reviewed as part of the town re-modelling studyTourism is a very important source of income for Bridport and its surrounding area. The value is frequently underestimated. The South West Research Company in 2013 put the value of tourism to Bridport at nearly £57 million per annum which supports over 1300 full time equivalent jobs.  Visitors to the area benefit not only the accommodation providers but also pubs, restaurants, shops, taxi firms, and garages, many of which would find it very difficult to survive without the visitor economy.The Neighbourhood Plan can do a great deal to support the tourism industry and therefore improve job prospects and local prosperity.  Through the plan we want to facilitate the removal of 'negative experiences' for visitors. These include:* Time wasted trying to find a parking space.
* Time wasted in traffic jams in the town centre and on the surrounding arterial roads
* The lack of things to do on bad weather days.

We also want the plan to facilitate improvements to the visitor experience by:* Improving signage so that visitors understand the full range of attractions and events available to them during their visit.
* Being supportive of applications for visitor attractions and visitor accommodation provided any visual impact can be sufficiently mitigated.
* Being supportive of temporary car parks for use during peak visitor times.

Bridport is already a big success with visitors and we need to protect important characteristics of the town so that it does not lose its charm. The plan can encourage this by:* Encouraging small retail space and discouraging amalgamation of existing small retail space into large open plan shops.
* Discouraging the loss of parking space
* Discouraging conversion of pubs, restaurants and hotels into housing.
* Being supportive of planning applications which build on the town's reputation for local produce, food and quirky and popular events.
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| * Consideration of tourism opportunities outside the town/built up area.
* Review of facts showing importance of tourism to the local economy.
* Review of relevant Local Plan policies
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| There is an existing Local Plan policy that would permit appropriate tourism/ leisure facilities for riverside or water sports.There is an existing Local Plan policy (as well as permitted development rights) that would permit appropriate tourism developments on farms. |
| West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan ECON5, page 92Bridport & West Bay Economic Plan evidence base (Coastal Community Team, 2016) |
| 1. We are essentially content with the two policies in the Local Plan which concern themselves with tourism, namely,

ECON8 on 'diversification of land-based rural businesses' and COM4 on 'new or improved local recreational facilities'.and conclude that additional NP policies would not add much (indeed, could just complicate Local Plan policies)1. St Michael’s is a key tourism attractor and the NP should concentrate on this area as we have shown in Issue 1.
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