

<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Environment and Heritage</b>
<b>Vision 2030 objectives:</b>	To enhance and protect our AONB status, the conservation areas and the Jurassic Coast.  To maintain, protect and enhance the unique nature, heritage, important features, character and environmental assets of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
<b>What the Local Plan says</b>	There is general protection in the Local Plan to avoid harm to the AONB, World Heritage Site, Heritage Coast, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and other designations (ENV1/2/4).  RIGS, and seeks to enhance local landscape character. There are also policies on protecting and enhancing landscape, local character and biodiversity (ENV2/3/4/10). However the plan does not list all possible assets (particularly those valued at a more local level) nor does it clearly define what constitutes part of the local green infrastructure network.
<b>Working group members:</b>	Richard Nicholls, Sal Robinson, Nick Gray, Horatio Morpurgo, Terry Moseley and Brian Wilson

### Evidence gathering and research – what we found:

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Heritage assets:</b> ensuring that all new development respects the heritage assets of the area and, more generally, is designed to complement the existing built environment.
<b>Research:</b>	Desk research was the main activity, to collate information from the various official and semi-official reports on the area’s heritage and design features. Bridport town centre was also ‘walked’ to identify building heights and some photographs were taken to illustrate the heritage.
<b>Findings:</b>	The full set of findings can be found in a written paper titled, <i>Evidence Base on Heritage and the Built Environment</i> .  The history of the rope and twine industry remains well preserved and very evident in the street layout, buildings and plot boundaries of Bridport, and at the harbour in West Bay.  The built environment of Bridport has a distinctively low skyline. No building exceeds four storeys in height and only a handful exceed three storeys (in one or two cases inappropriately).  Bridport town centre has iconic views towards countryside along West and East Streets. South Street is a special and typical historic Dorset streetscape.  There is a need to protect the impressive 515 Listed Buildings across the NP area, which are found in all five of the parishes. Three buildings are Grade I listed.  There are Conservation Areas exhibiting special characteristics in Bridport, West Bay, Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Symondsbury and Walditch. These characteristics need to be maintained and respected by future development.
<b>Evidence sources:</b>	Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Bridport report (which shows Character Areas) Allington Parish Plan Bothenhampton Village Design Statement and Village Plan Bradpole Parish Plan Symondsbury Parish Plan

	<p>Walditch Design Statement and Parish Plan</p> <p>Conservation Area Appraisals for Bridport, West Bay, Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Symondsburry and Walditch</p> <p>Listed Buildings from the Historic England National Heritage List</p> <p>Registered Parks/Gardens and Scheduled Monuments on Dorset Explorer website</p> <p>The Buildings of England: Dorset, by Newman &amp; Pevsner</p> <p>Bridport &amp; West Bay: the buildings of the flax and hemp industry, by Sir Neil Cossons</p> <p>Bradpole Parish Council Environment and Heritage Report</p>
<b>Potential policies / options to take forward:</b>	<p>A development management policy to inform planning application decisions for new development proposals in the area. This to ensure that new development respects (and where possible enhances): the area's heritage assets; characteristic features of note; the low skyline in the town; and important townscape views.</p>
<b>Maps / locations</b>	<p>Maps showing the Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Bridport town centre Character Areas are all included in the supporting evidence base paper.</p>

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Landscape character and setting:</b> ensuring that all new development respects and retains the unique features which characterise the landscape around the greater Bridport built-up area and its setting within that landscape.
<b>Research:</b>	The Landscape Character Assessment for the area was reviewed for its description of key features. Photographs were compiled which would illustrate the particular landscape character and setting issues of the area. Similar policies were identified in other neighbourhood plans.
<b>Findings:</b>	<p>The local area has a distinctive landscape and topology, which provides a unique backdrop to its settlements.</p> <p>The flat topped hills with their steep wooded sides are notable features, sitting within and adjacent to the greater Bridport built-up area. Aside from their lower slopes, they are undeveloped and create a pleasing green skyline.</p> <p>The river valleys that flow through the built-up area are also notable features, providing important green corridors and adding to the sense of living within a countryside setting.</p> <p>If development were allowed to encroach upon these unique landscape features it would fundamentally alter the much-loved character of the area. It would also cause the loss of much used green space which contributes to residents' health and wellbeing.</p>
<b>Evidence sources:</b>	West Dorset Landscape Character Assessment (2009) Photographs to illustrate the setting of the greater Bridport built-up area
<b>Potential policies / options to take forward:</b>	A development management policy to inform planning application decisions for new development proposals in the area. This to ensure that new development respects (and where possible enhances): the green river corridors; and the undeveloped hills. Development should not compromise the green skylines.
<b>Maps / locations</b>	No specific maps are provided for this issue. However, maps of the area certainly do illustrate the pattern of undeveloped hills and green river corridors interwoven with and shaping the settlement pattern. An indicative map showing the general location of key features could be produced if required.

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Local gaps between settlements:</b> retaining the modest areas of countryside which maintain the physical separation of the town from outlying smaller settlements, thus preserving the settlement pattern.
<b>Research:</b>	Parish Plans and Village Design Statements for Allington, Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Symondsbury and Walditch were reviewed. A map of the area was examined to identify the most likely local gap locations. Photographs were compiled which would illustrate some of the local gaps (and hence the issue). Local gaps policies were identified in some other neighbourhood plans.
<b>Findings:</b>	<p>The designated neighbourhood plan area consists of the greater Bridport built-up area and some outlying, smaller settlements e.g. Eype, Pymore, Symondsbury and Walditch.</p> <p>Residents say that they value and wish to maintain the rural and semi-rural character of the area.</p> <p>The physical separation of the outlying settlements is what gives them much of their identity or 'sense of place'.</p> <p>There is a risk that town growth happens (perhaps incrementally) in a way which undermines the visual and physical separation of settlements.</p> <p>The pattern of growth should avoid ribbon development along roads to the outlying settlements, which would effectively turn them into suburbs of Bridport, eroding much of their identity and rural character in the process.</p>
<b>Evidence sources:</b>	<p>Parish Plans and Village Design Statements</p> <p>Photographs to illustrate the (undeveloped) gaps between settlements</p>
<b>Potential policies / options to take forward:</b>	<p>There would appear to be two policy options. The preferred one is for a local gaps policy, which names (and marks on a map) specific locations where local gaps should be protected from development which: erodes their integrity; and undermines the separation of settlements. (It is noted that many Local Plans contain a gaps policy, but that for West Dorset does not, so this would perform such a task and should not conflict with an existing policy.) The second option would be a less specifically worded policy which is a general statement seeking to avoid coalescence between settlements in the area. Such policies would not preclude small-scale and appropriate development, such as agricultural buildings.</p> <p>The local gaps identified by the Working Group are those between:  Bridport and Pymore (along the Pymore Road);  Bradpole and Pymore (west of Sir John Colfox School);  Bridport/Bothenhampton and Walditch (e.g. around Lower Walditch Lane); and  Bridport (West Allington) and Symondsbury.</p> <p>A potential fifth gap is that between Bridport (Skilling) and Higher Eype, though this is already cut through by the A35.</p> <p>It is noted that the Lodgers Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy (E1) which seeks to preserve the gap between Lodgers and Bradpole.</p>
<b>Maps / locations</b>	An indicative map is included in the evidence base document, to show the broad locations of the proposed local gaps for this policy.