

Theme:	<p>Local Economy</p> <p>Employment, Retail and Tourism</p>
Vision 2030 objectives:	<p><i>To facilitate the expansion of the local economy, extending opportunities for established local and for new businesses, ensuring that our economy is robust with high quality jobs and skills.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain, protect and enhance the independent nature and vitality of our town centre.</i></p> <p><i>To encourage sustainable tourism which uses local services, facilities and locally produced goods, creating an accessible and attractive destination for visitors and local people</i></p>
What the Local Plan says	<p>The Local plan allows employment development within or on the edge of a settlement , through the intensification or extension of existing premises or as part of a farm diversification scheme, through the re-use or replacement of an existing building in the countryside or in a rural location where this is essential for that type of business (ECON1).</p> <p>The Local Plan sets out the appropriate concentration and mix of retail and other town centre uses in the town centre (ECON4). There are policies on the future expansion of the town centre (BRID4) and specific guidance for a mixed use scheme on St Michael’s Estate (BRID5). The employment land on Vearse Farm is covered by BRID1.</p> <p>The local plan includes policies on new or improved tourism attractions as well as tourist accommodation including caravan and camping sites (ECON 5 – 7). This focuses new development within the settlement boundary or through the re-use of rural buildings. Exceptions may be made for attractions and campsites, but these will need to demonstrate wider environmental benefits or enhancement or be of real community/economic benefit.</p>
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Bridport and Area Neighbourhood Plan Local Economy

Issues, Background, Evidence gathering, research, policies

Issue # 1	Regeneration of St Michael's Trading Estate
<p>Background - why this issue is important</p>	<p>St Michael's Trading Estate lies a few hundred yards from the bustling main streets of Bridport and is well established as a vibrant and attractive area of artisan, vintage and commercial businesses. It forms a key element of the tourist experience for those who love the vibe of Bridport as well as for locals. It has, however, suffered from lack of investment and inertia.</p> <p>The local community wishes to encourage various forms of investment into the trading estate in order to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unlock the great potential for economic growth ▪ renovate, repair and improve the site ▪ create new community facilities <p>Bridport once led the world in the manufacture of rope, net and sailcloth. St Michael's was the site where expansion took place from the late 19th Century.</p> <p>English Heritage has described it as: - <i>"a nationally significant area of historic textiles activity which underpins the raison d'être of the town."</i></p> <p>Since the demise of traditional industries, St Michael's has transformed further, with new businesses occupying the space. However, it has retained its rich heritage of unique industrial buildings which represent an important and thriving part of the historic market town. This is why it has been designated as a Conservation Area.</p> <p>We believe that employment should be the key driver and present employment numbers should (at least) be retained on the site. Existing employment land, and in particular, small business accommodation must be protected, if not expanded, where possible. We forecast that the proposed development of St Michael's as recently unveiled by the owners will lead to a loss of 72 jobs due to demolition and 19.5 FTEs due to disruption.</p> <p>St Michael's should build on its present strengths of Art, Vintage and Antiques. A specialized food market for small local producers started there in April 2016. Other specialized markets could also take place - vintage, for instance. This in turn generates the need for food and drink outlets.</p> <p>While 'Mixed Use' development has been allocated to this site, it is believed that an excessive number of dwellings would directly cause a significantly detrimental impact on the local economy and is likely to result in the actual loss of employment.</p> <p>Apartments above ground floor commercial outlets may be an appropriate mix of development, <i>preferably affordable</i>. Dwellings should be largely confined to the North West corner.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to develop the riverside environment with walks linked with signage, a more cohesive approach to the wider town centre public realm and as part of the tourism offer, as well as, producing a more attractive working and retail environment. (Linked to Issues 3, 4, 5 and 6)</p> <p>Parking should be available, allocated and in reasonable numbers.</p> <p>There is a need for a Master Plan as a means to engage interested</p>

	parties and demonstrate the overall intention and purpose as well as proposals for the site.
Research	Enterprise St Michael's: Small Businesses job count survey - April 2016 St Michael's Trading Estate review in Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan: Economy Evidence Base
Findings	See Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan: Economy Evidence Base Survey of Trading Estates.
Evidence sources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working group instigated survey of units and employment (2016). 2. Bridport and West Bay Economic Plan (Coastal Community Team, 2016) 3. South West Quadrant (SWQ) Regeneration Framework 2002 4. Dorset County Council Corporate Plan 2014 - 2015
Initial Draft Policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) While 'Mixed Use' development has been allocated to this site, it is believed that an excessive number of dwellings would directly cause a significantly detrimental impact on the local economy and is likely to result in the actual loss of employment. 2) Apartments above ground floor commercial outlets may be an appropriate mix of development, <i>preferably affordable</i>. Dwellings should be largely confined to the North West corner. 3) Existing employment land, and in particular, small business accommodation must be protected, if not expanded, where possible. 4) There is an opportunity to develop the riverside environment with walks linked with signage, a more cohesive approach to the wider town centre public realm and as part of the tourism offer, as well as, producing a more attractive working and retail environment. 5) There is a need for a Master Plan as a means to engage interested parties and demonstrate the overall intention and purpose as well as proposals for the site. <p>Discussions with Haywards will help to strengthen these draft policies</p>
Maps/locations	A map showing the extent and location of the St Michael's site is provided

Issue: # 2	Employment Sites
<p>Background - why this issue is important</p>	<p>In order to retain the future vitality and viability of the town, Bridport has a number of potentially conflicting and certainly challenging prospects. The town will need to provide jobs in a range of sectors with higher level skills and wage levels with the prospect of better career progression than is evident at the present time.</p> <p>There is a need for a good balance between housing and jobs, with the main housing need being to provide an affordable range of dwellings to enable young people and young families to remain living and working in the area. The area has an imbalance of retired people, and whilst they add significantly to the life, culture and civil well being of the town, this should not be at the expense of (or, at least, overlook) the range of opportunities available to retain young people in the area.</p> <p>As it stands, the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan will fail to solve West Dorset's housing needs if its plans for housing go ahead and, furthermore, it will give rise to a damaging shift in demographics. West Dorset has more older people than the national average. When we look at the 65+ age group we find that Bridport has 71% above the national average.</p> <p>The Office of National Statistics projects an increase of 48% of those aged 60 or more during the plan period and yet it projects the crucial 20-39 age group to decrease by 14% over the same period. So we are faced with a dramatic increase in older people and a critical decrease in the key 20-39 group. Finally, we see a projected DOUBLING of those aged 80 or more during the same period. From 8,383 to 16,542.</p> <p>West Dorset cannot afford to allow its population to become so massively skewed, it is on the edge already. Currently we are attracting older people by building homes that suit their needs and we are losing our key younger people because we are not providing them with homes that they can afford. This is a serious issue for the Economy Group, for the Housing Group and for the Neighbourhood Plan overall.</p> <p>Alongside this, the range of jobs and sectors available in the town needs to be addressed along with the availability of employment sites to meet these development needs</p> <p>Key opportunities at this stage of the Economy Group's work are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The availability of centrally located commercial space is recognised as key to the Bridport area local economy. ➤ We need to create opportunities for young people to live and work in the town. ➤ Ensuring that employment land of 4 ha to the east of the Vearse Farm site is secured for appropriate employment use and not major retail. ➤ Support for the LSI re-purposing where business incubation space will be provided. ➤ Link to other wider initiatives and funding led by WDDC and Dorset LEP to "bend" those towards Bridport's needs. ➤ Encourage and support farm diversification in the outlying areas. <p>We propose that these key opportunities should be supported by the following reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A review of demand among existing businesses for further growth and employment opportunities,

	<p>including size and type of units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A review of the present and future need for business and office space in the town and the size and placement of units.
Research	It was decided to undertake a survey of trading estates and main employment sites in the local area, supplemented by contacting a few commercial (estate) agents. The aim was to gather some hard data, for example about vacant units, plus some qualitative information about the state of the commercial market. The opportunity was also taken to ask about staff recruitment. This was undertaken by Brian Wilson Associates in August 2016.
Findings	<p>The survey has found few vacant units on the area's main employment sites and trading estates, and some evidence that businesses find it hard to move premises locally. The commercial market appears to be fairly buoyant. What businesses are seeking varies. On the one hand there is demand for modern flexible business units and on the other hand there is a market from the smallest businesses for affordable units or workshops. The scope to develop additional premises on the main existing employment sites appears to be limited.</p> <p>The survey has also highlighted certain limitations local businesses face when recruiting staff. Although labour force issues can't be addressed directly by planning policies in a Neighbourhood Plan, they may be of relevance to other local initiatives.</p>
Evidence Sources	<p>Bridport and West Bay Economic Plan evidence base (Coastal Community Team, 2016)</p> <p>Economic Profile: statistical analysis of the local economy (BW)</p> <p>SURVEY OF TRADING ESTATES AND MAIN EMPLOYMENT SITES Undertaken by Brian Wilson Associates in August 2016. Commissioned by: Bridport Town Council Produced for: Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and its Economy Working Group</p>
Initial draft policies	<p>The Economy Group wish to provide more substance to the development of the 4 hectares of new employment land at Vearse Farm, saying more about it than the Local Plan (BRID1) does.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This could promote the development of infrastructure that would typically support higher skilled, professional and better paying sectors. We know there is demand for modern, good quality and flexible employment space (of the type currently found at Gore Cross Trading Estate). The site infrastructure should include sufficient parking, loading bays/space and high-spec telecoms. 2. A policy could also promote part of the site being set aside for affordable workspace, which is particularly suited to start up businesses and those with limited resources who are seeking to grow. This part of the site might be handed over to a community-based organisation for its management, as a developer contribution. Whether there exists in the area, a suitable organisation with the capacity to take this on would need to be researched. By cutting out the land purchase (and possibly some building) costs, lease and rental values could be kept at sub-market levels. 3. We are in favour of development which supports employment associated with professional services and higher skilled and higher paying employment 4. Identify additional new employment land in/around the Bridport area to meet needs. There are, for example, some sites which have recently become vacant/disused at the lower end of South Street, which could be allocated for mixed use

<p>Maps</p>	<p>redevelopment (housing and employment) and which doesn't detract from the vitality of the town centre.</p> <p>5. Employment sites in a rural environment are scarce, and, <u>therefore conversion of</u> employment land to housing should be strongly resisted (needs to be discussed with Housing Group) Redevelopment of employment land for residential use will not be permitted unless proved that continued employment use is not possible.' (Local Plan already says this.)</p> <p>A map showing the employment land allocated to the Vearse Farm site is provided</p>
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Issue: # 3	To maintain, protect and enhance the independent nature and vitality of our town centre, shopping offer and markets
Background - why this issue is important	<p>Town centre</p> <p>A thriving town centre is essential for a sustainable market town such as Bridport for residents, people from surrounding areas and for visitors to the area.</p> <p>Bridport is popular with visitors and local residents because of its independent character. The town does not want to become another clone, with the high streets full of national chain shops and supermarkets.</p> <p>Town centre retail, office and light industrial land must be preserved to keep the town alive, although it is recognised that viable development of affordable dwellings in the St Michael's area would enhance the vitality of the town centre.</p>
Research	<p>Shop survey</p> <p>Purpose: to evidence the thriving independent nature of the unique retail offer in Bridport town centre, to counter the rationale that Bridport needs further comparison retail space suitable for national chain retailers.</p> <p>Scope: Primary and secondary shop frontages, as defined in Bridport Town Centre (Local Plan policy ECON4)</p> <p>2014 Petition on the Bridport carparks and bus station</p> <p>We should like to include ancillary evidence. In 2014, a petition was organised in relation to local plan proposals for the Rope Walks and Bus Station areas in Bridport.</p> <p>More than 1000 signatures were collected which evidenced the public's unhappiness with development of town centre car parks and the bus station.</p>
Findings	<p>See appendix for full report</p> <p>In April 2016 members of the Working Group conducted a survey of the primary and secondary frontages within the defined town centre.</p> <p>We can conclude the following from the shop survey undertaken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centre contains a good range of types of retail outlets; • The town centre has a particularly low vacancy rate i.e. few empty premises; • Charity shops make up a fairly modest share of town centre retail outlets; • The town centre has a high number of independent retail outlets; • Consequently, the town centre has a low number of chain retail outlets; • The mix of available retail premises is one that favours independent retailers. <p>The evidence shows that Bridport town centre is vibrant and faring well. It compares well when compared with national averages. It appears to have built a distinctive offer based upon having a good range of shops, many of which are independents that cannot be found elsewhere. By bucking the trend that is seeing so many town centres dominated by chains, it appears to</p>

	<p>have carved out a successful and popular niche. It would seem prudent to design Neighbourhood Plan policies that maintain and enhance that trading position. This may also prove more sustainable in the long term, as chains conduct an ever larger share of their transactions online.</p>
<p>Evidence sources</p>	<p>Working group survey of shops in the town centre - see above</p> <p>Various accolades for the independent nature of the town in national papers re top towns in UK, namely:</p> <p>“BRIDPORT has been named the happiest place to live in Britain - with market towns reportedly 'more popular than ever'.</p> <p>The West Dorset town topped a list in The Times as the happiest town, stating that market towns 'offer the ideal blend of urban bustle and rural charm'.”</p> <p>Bridport News 16 April 2015</p> <p>“The Sunday Times included the market town as part of its Best Places to Live guide. Bridport and Mudeford were the only Dorset representatives to feature alongside 13 other South West locations. The locations were selected for offering the best quality of life to the widest number of people.</p> <p>Chosen locations also displayed a strong, positive community spirit, good local shops and services, plus attractive outdoor spaces”</p> <p>Bridport News 25 March 2016</p> <p>WDDC and Weymouth and Portland DC Joint Retail and Leisure Study</p> <p>Supplementary Assessment of other West Dorset Market Towns Final Report December 2008</p>
<p>Initial Draft Policies</p>	<p>Local Plan Policy challenge</p> <p>A policy is needed to overwrite Local Plan BRID4 (which in any case is not a strategic policy). This would challenge the development of Rope Walks and the Coach Station area for the use of multiple national retailers and loss of significantly important parking for the town.</p> <p>If an extension to the defined town centre remains sensible, given town growth, then this should be to include the St Michael's trading estate (and not Rope Walks or the Coach Station). See 1) above</p> <p>Challenge to WDDC and Weymouth and Portland DC Joint Retail and Leisure Study Supplementary Assessment of other West Dorset Market Towns Final Report December 2008</p> <p>The report at section 2.14 “identifies ‘key’ multiple retailers in Bridport as defined by GOAD Experian. These retailers are acknowledged to be important in attracting shoppers.”</p> <p>The report then states at section 2.15 that “There is a limited provision of key attractor stores and indeed national multiples generally within the town and no department stores..... Arguably, if Bridport is to enhance its shopping role then a greater representation of key multiple retailers in the centre would be welcome.”</p>

	<p>This appears to be then identified in the Local Plan as the “evidence base” at 13.5.1 for “a need for more comparison retail space than can be accommodated in the town centre by the end of the plan period and the identification of the two sites at Rope Walks and Coach Station for such development.</p> <p>We challenge this by demonstrating the vitality of the town and its predominance of independent retailers and food outlets combined with its perceived and real attractiveness to visitors, tourists and residents AS IT IS NOW. It is not ‘key’ multiple retailers which makes Bridport attractive and the loss of car parking would actually detract visitors.</p>
Maps/locations	Map showing revised town centre boundary is provided.

<p>Issue: # 4</p>	<p>Availability of access to town centre retail and business sector in a predominantly rural area, with increasingly fewer bus services and reliance on cars along with bus and coach travel.</p>
<p>Background - why this issue is important</p>	<p>Car parking</p> <p>We cannot remain a thriving viable market and tourist town unless we have car parks. We have recently lost spaces at the now defunct Magistrates Court and can ill afford to lose any more. Instead we would hope to see reasonable car parking on St Michael’s Estate and other opportunities pursued to ease this problem which is particularly acute on Saturdays at all times of the year, but particularly in the summer months.</p> <p>At certain times, the town and West Bay are already desperately short of parking spaces. This is having a negative effect on retail.</p> <p>Central car parking is vital to the existing abundance of locally run businesses and the accessibility for local residents and visitors. The loss of Rope Walks car park, were that to happen, would seriously undermine, we believe, the ‘anchor’ Waitrose store, which it serves.</p> <p>Coaches need to easily access the town centre and to park in the bus station car park. This car park also provides a town based facility for touring motor homes, thus again adding to the positive visitor experience.</p> <p>Additional parking at certain times is urgently needed. Temporary car parks could be encouraged to meet this need, e.g. grass fields with protective plastic grids. We are aware that approval of Askers Meadows to provide such temporary car parking has not been given. We would seek to gain better understanding of the objections to the temporary car parking proposed at Asker Meadows</p> <p>This could also be incorporated into the town re-modelling study.</p> <p>Out of town retail parks are a threat to vitality of town centres and we would wish to see these discouraged in policy statements.</p> <p>Car parking is also at a premium in West Bay. The proper marking out of car parking spaces in West Bay Road car park will help in the short term. Bridport & West Bay Economic Plan evidence base (Coastal Community Team, 2016) has identified the need to resurface this car park.</p> <p>However, greater use must be made of the 'pop-up ' car parking facility afforded by occasional use of temporary car parking on the Britt Valley Camp site. It's recent use at West Bay Day, for example, took account of several hundred extra cars and added to the commercial success of the day.</p>
<p>Research</p>	<p>Car parking survey</p> <p>Purpose: to evidence the very heavy demand for car parking spaces in Bridport town centre at peak times e.g. Saturdays. This to show how important car parking capacity is for the vitality of the town centre and to counter the proposal that some car parks should be built over.</p> <p>Scope: CM</p> <p>The availability of car parking is also essential to the visitor experience in the town. (Stats re tourism growth and importance - BW please help here) Loss of car parking would make it difficult for visitors to stay in the town. The car parks also need to be clearly linked to any town public</p>

	<p>realm enhancement and to inform and sign visitors to the different areas of the town, shopping, cultural, food, arts etc, (see next section).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bridport Market Town Healthcheck 2007 - useful stats</p>
Findings	<p>The main findings from this work are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local opinion from surveys is that the area currently has too few car parking spaces. ○ The survey finds that at peak times (Saturday mornings) there are very few, if any, vacant spaces to be found in town centre car parks. ○ The survey also finds that at peak times (Saturday mornings) there are often cars looking for spaces and that queues may outnumber vacant spaces. <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The findings of this survey confirm that demand for town centre parking is high at peak times and there is no excess capacity in car parks. Indeed, it finds more cars trying to enter the surveyed car parks than there are vacant spaces, with queues forming in some cases.</p> <p>This mirrors the widespread experience of local people on a typical Saturday morning and especially on a Saturday morning in Summer months, when spaces are known to be hard to find from about 9.30 am onwards. It also mirrors the experience relayed by local shops, that some customers have spent time driving round town searching for a space. This can add to traffic congestion and may dissuade shoppers or visitors from returning.</p> <p>There is a strong case for protecting the car park provision that exists at Bridport. If anything it would appear to be under-supplied. Any loss of car park capacity could have an adverse effect on the town centre viability.</p>
Evidence sources	<p>Town Centre Car Parks Survey Caroline Meredith and Brian Wilson BANP Economy Working Group Version 2: February 2017</p> <p>Working group survey of demand for spaces at town centre car parks and car park ticket machine statistics provided by WDDC.</p>
Initial draft policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Complement challenge to Local Plan BRID4 in Section above 2) We would hope to see reasonable car parking on St Michael's Estate and other opportunities pursued to ease this problem which is particularly acute on Saturdays at all times of the year, but particularly in the summer months. 3) We would seek to gain better understanding of the objections to the temporary car parking proposed at Asker Meadows.
Maps/locations	

Issue: # 5	To provide an improved and cohesive town environment (public realm)
Background - why this issue is important	<p>A cohesive and welcoming town environment</p> <p>We propose a cohesive and welcoming <i>re-design</i> of the town’s public realm which links “quarters” together more clearly through flow, design, street furniture, signage etc.</p> <p>The “quarters” will need to be imaginatively identified but areas are likely to include Bucky Doo square, South Street, East Street, West Street, the bus station area, St Michael’s and linkages from South Street and West Street through to St Michael’s.</p> <p>We propose significantly improved information about the town quarters and flows between them through the town which could also imaginatively promote the town’s rope and net making heritage, in the form of a “living museum” linked to the town Museum in its redevelopment. We envisage “lanes of access” linking the Town Centre streets to St Michael’s, by way of Gundry Lane and Borough Gardens, Bus Station area - thereby making it something of a Town Trail and linking the quarters. Gundry Lane has historic associations and the Borough Gardens are delightful to stroll through.</p> <p>The town market held on Wednesday and Saturday is a significant attractor, particularly in the summer. Consideration needs to be given to the difficulties for the stall holders in bad weather and to review improvements to facilities.</p> <p>Crowded pavements in South Street, West Street and East Street are a problem at the height of the season during market days. It is particularly difficult for people with disabilities and for people negotiating around them. A larger pedestrianised area would help to alleviate this problem plus a re-design of the town centre flow.</p> <p>The potential of a larger pedestrianised area including Bucky Doo and improved usage of the courtyard in front of the Arts Centre could be a new focus for town events and for enjoying the outdoors. The potential to pedestrianise the top end of South Street from Gundry Road could also be further considered, although it is recognised that this is a difficult point with traders, but worth looking at as part of a town centre review.</p>
Research	<p>Studies to be requested</p> <p>Feasibility Study for re-modelling of Public Realm. Look at Frome NP Policy TC1 for wording.</p>
Findings	<p>There is scope for improvements to the town centre public realm, to improve the environment, manage traffic flows and encourage pedestrians to visit St Michael’s and its environs.</p> <p>Bridport Market Town Healthcheck 2007 - “The town has an interesting history and this is not fully exploited in promoting the town to local residents and visitors”</p>
Evidence sources	<p>Frome Town Centre - re-modelling - Public Realm policy TC 1 in the Frome Neighbourhood Plan (not yet approved)</p> <p>Bridport Market Town Healthcheck 2007</p>
Initial draft policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We propose that Bridport Town council develops and commissions a cohesive and welcoming <i>re-design</i> of the town’s public realm which links “quarters” together more clearly through flow, design, street furniture, signage etc.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The “quarters” will need to be imaginatively identified but areas are likely to include Bucky Doo square, South Street, East Street, West Street, the bus station area, St Michael’s and linkages from South Street and West Street through to St Michael’s. 3. A policy could probably only be enabling and forward looking at this stage (much like the Frome draft NP policy, TC1), proposing joint work on a public realm study and improvement works that would flow from that. 4. We propose having a policy to encourage town centre remodelling or improvement, linking it better with the St Michael's area. In that context, it is worth a look at Policy <i>AP3 Access and movement</i> on page 37 of the Stroud Neighbourhood Plan. The link is below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-building-control/planning-strategy/neighbourhood-planning/emerging-neighbourhood-plans/stroud-town-council/stroud-town-regulation-17-18
Maps/Locations	

<p>Issue: # 6</p>	<p>Tourism</p>
<p>Background – why this issue is important</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 study</p> <p>Tourism 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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. <p>We also want the plan to facilitate improvements to the visitor experience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging small retail space and discouraging amalgamation of existing small retail space into large open plan shops.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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
Findings	<p>There is an existing Local Plan policy that would permit appropriate tourism/ leisure facilities for riverside or water sports.</p> <p>There is an existing Local Plan policy (as well as permitted development rights) that would permit appropriate tourism developments on farms.</p>
Evidence sources	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan ECON5, page 92</p> <p>Bridport & West Bay Economic Plan evidence base (Coastal Community Team, 2016)</p>
Initial draft policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are essentially content with the two policies in the Local Plan which concern themselves with tourism, namely, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECON8 on 'diversification of land-based rural businesses' and COM4 on 'new or improved local recreational facilities'. <p>and conclude that additional NP policies would not add much (indeed, could just complicate Local Plan policies)</p> 2. St Michael's is a key tourism attractor and the NP should concentrate on this area as we have shown in Issue 1.
Maps and layouts	