

21 SEPTEMBER 2021

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a draft response to a Community Governance Review.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dorset Council launched a Community Governance Review (CGR) on 5 August 2021, and details can be found at <http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/community-governance-review>. The web page includes a consultation survey, inviting public views.
- 2.2 The areas that CGRs cover are:
- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes (grouping or de-grouping parishes)
 - Increasing or decreasing the number of Councillors
 - Creating ward boundaries, or changing existing Warding arrangements
 - Changes to Parish names
 - Correcting minor boundary anomalies
 - Changing a parish council into a parish meeting

3.0 THE PROCESS

- 3.1 The responsibility of undertaking CGRs falls to the principal council (Dorset Council), whose Full Council meeting on 15 July 2021 agreed that now was the appropriate time to carry out a council-wide review.
- 3.2 The legislation that covers CGRs requires any review to be completed within 12 months of Dorset Council publishing its Terms of Reference on 5 August 2021, although any changes to governance arrangements agreed as part of the Review, cannot take effect until the next scheduled elections in May 2024.
- 3.3 The process that Dorset Council is following is:
- Publication of Terms of reference that sets out what will be covered – in this case a review of all parishes that sit within the Dorset Council area (5 August 2021).
 - Public consultation for 12 weeks seeking proposals/initial submissions (5 August to 28 October 2021).
 - Consideration of consultation responses and preparation of draft recommendations (to be agreed by Full Council - December 2021).
 - Public consultation on draft recommendations (20 December 2021 – 28 February 2022).
 - Consideration of further responses and then publication of final recommendations. (to be agreed by Full Council – April 2022).

4.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 When preparing any submissions, parishes are recommended by Dorset Council to take into account the considerations that will be applied, that are set out in the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance that has been provided to all Parish Councils (a link to the Guidance can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf). These are:
- The need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
 - reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area.
 - is effective and convenient.
 - The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
 - The impact on electorate size of future development within the next 5 years.

5.0 BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE

- 5.1 The Town Council was advised of the review in advance of the formal launch, and in response set up a working group to develop its submission. The group met five times in July, August and September, and its draft response is shown at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 In addition, the Council Leader has held exploratory meetings with representatives of all of the surrounding parish councils.
- 5.3 Through extensive discussion and evidence, the draft response aims to address the considerations at 4.1 above, and comprises three options:
- (i) Option 1 is given as the preferred option. It proposes the creation of a single 'Greater Bridport' parish boundary comprising the existing Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch, Bradpole, and Bridport parishes, divided into wards that respect the identities of those areas and a fair representation in terms of numbers of councillors.
 - (ii) Option 2 sets out a parish boundary based on individual boundary anomalies identified by the working group.
 - (iii) Option 3 focuses on the impact of the forthcoming Foundry Lea development, incorporating it into Bridport parish, along with some relatively small associated changes in the Magdalen Lane, Pine View and Watton Park areas.
- 5.4 If approved in principle by members, we will further engage with affected parish councils and, if needed, refine the proposals further before submitting to Dorset Council by 28 October 2021.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Members are recommended to approve the draft submission at Appendix 1, with any further refinement delegated to the Council Leader, in consultation with the Community Governance Working Group and the Town Clerk.

13 September 2021

Will Austin
Town Clerk

Bridport Town Council

DRAFT Submission of Options for a Review of Community Governance

1. Introduction

This submission sets out the range of issues for community governance since the last changes affecting Bridport parish were made in 1986, and identifies three options for consideration. Bridport Town Council contends that there are strong reasons to consider a wide-ranging change to boundaries, governance and electoral arrangements, and will recommend this as its preferred option. We urge Dorset Council to accept this and consider the rationale to be indisputable. We are concerned however to ensure that if there are as yet unidentified reasons for not taking this option forward, other narrower changes should be considered as a more basic requirement for the adequate provision of community governance in Bridport. Two further options are therefore presented; one considers a range of relatively minor boundary changes and the addition of an area designated for a forthcoming major housing development, and another is very narrowly focused on this forthcoming development. This third option is deemed essential and has the support of the parishes most affected – Symondsbury and Bridport.

The market town of Bridport is made up of several parishes. In addition to the Town Council area of Bridport Parish (population c.8,500), it also includes most of the parishes of Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch and Bradpole, and part of Symondsbury parish, which is soon to be greatly increased by the construction of up to 930 houses directly abutting the western edge of Bridport Parish at Foundry Lea (formerly Vearse Farm). The population of the surrounding parishes almost doubles the population of the community – approximately 15,000 in total. This submission is made in that context, and takes account of a decision of the principal council (at that time West Dorset District Council) in September 2018 recommending that "...Bridport Town Council resubmits its request to the Dorset Council after its creation in April 2019 in order that a more wide-reaching review, including the areas highlighted by local residents in the initial consultation, can be undertaken." The report accompanying this decision states that the areas concerned were Allington, Bradpole, Bothenhampton, Walditch, West Cliff Estate, Pine View, Skilling Hill Road, and Watton Park.

A very small number of residences in Burton Bradstock parish are contiguous with the Bridport parish boundary, and these are also considered in the submission.

2. Post-War Development

In the Post War era the expansion of Bridport took place largely by 'infill' so that there is little by way of separation between parishes, creating a sense of a 'greater Bridport'. However the boundaries were not changed to incorporate the expansion within the jurisdiction of the Town of Bridport. This has resulted in a variety of anomalies.

It is estimated that since the end of WWII something in the region of 2,000 new houses have been built in the adjoining parishes. As above, this figure will increase by almost half with the addition of the Foundry Lea development.

3. Public Service Provision

Bridport Town Council has expanded its operation in recent years to meet community expectations and to respond to the contraction of provision by principal councils. This expansion benefits residents of Bridport parish, but residents in adjoining areas also benefit to as great a degree from public services provided by Bridport Town Council as Bridport parish residents. Examples include:

- Open spaces – Bridport Town Council maintains a large number of recreational areas, sports pitches, meadows, formal gardens, and other public open spaces that are enjoyed by residents of both Bridport parish and the surrounding parishes.
- Markets – the town's street market and a range of speciality markets are managed by the Town Council and benefit both residents of the wider Bridport area, and the local economy.
- Tourist Information Centre – the Council's town centre information 'hub' is a vital support to the visitor economy but also provides community information to residents of the wider local area.
- Town events – the Town Council supports all of the larger events that form part of the annual events calendar – Food Festival, Beer Festival, Jurassic Fields Music Festival, Folk Festival, Carnival, Torchlight Procession, Hat Festival, Christmas Cheer, and Charter Fair. The Council also organises its own public events, such as the Community Fair, Remembrance Sunday Parade, weekly summer entertainment in Bucky Doo Square in the town centre, and supports a host of smaller community events. This major programme of mainly free events is open to residents from across the Bridport area, and maintains the town's reputation as 'Dorset's Eventful Town' – a major visitor draw providing a further boost for the local economy.
- Community Bus Service – this subsidised service runs through three of the surrounding parishes and provides access to the town centre for residents, particularly those with mobility difficulties and no access to private transport.
- Community buildings – Bridport Town Hall, WI Hall, the Salt House and Mountfield are widely used by community groups in the Bridport area and for public events.
- Financial support to externally-run community facilities – the Town Council provides significant financial support to the Arts Centre, Leisure Centre, Museum, Bridport & District Citizens Advice, the Youth & Community Centre, the Literary & Scientific Institute, 20-20 Skate and Ride (indoor skate park) and West Bay Discovery Centre. Without this support, these facilities – benefiting the entire greater Bridport community – would struggle to operate.

This is not an exhaustive list, but gives an indication of the way in which the Town Council supports residents from an area far wider than its parish boundary.

A range of local services are outside the Bridport parish boundary, for example Bridport's Cemetery (Bothenhampton & Walditch parish), Sir John Colfox Academy (Bridport's Comprehensive Senior School, Bradpole parish), St Catherine's Catholic Primary School (Bradpole parish), Bridport Leisure Centre and the adjoining Rugby Pitches (Symondsburys parish), Bridport Community Hospital (Allington parish), Gore Cross Industrial Estate (Bradpole parish), and the Indoor Skate Park (Bradpole parish) are all situated in adjoining parishes and not within the Bridport parish boundary. Some of these – the Leisure Centre and Indoor Skate Park – receive direct financial support from Bridport Town Council to sustain their viability. The Cemetery is owned and managed by Bridport Town Council.

Parish councils often lack the capacity or expertise to run services or manage facilities in their own areas and request assistance from Bridport Town Council. The most recent example of this is in relation to Jellyfields, a local wildlife and popular walking area, and Bothenhampton Nature Reserve. These lie in Bothenhampton & Walditch parish and are to be transferred to local ownership and management by Dorset Council. The parish council is keen to see this happen but cannot take on the burden. The Town Council has agreed to take ownership and manage the site, with a contribution of £500pa from the Parish Council, but this arrangement will require a funding/service agreement – a bureaucratic template that would have to be replicated for any future similar arrangements with neighbouring parishes.

This is not to say that neighbouring parish councils do not provide for their communities; they do. However, their capacity is limited and consequently it is inevitable that services provided in Bridport that are unavailable in a neighbouring parish, will attract residents from those parishes. The Town and surrounding parishes have developed good working relationships in a limited number of areas of service provision to address this issue – sharing costs in respect of the jointly-produced Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, and contributions to the community bus are examples. The Town Council considers it unlikely that a cost-sharing mechanism could be agreed that covers most or all of the services from which neighbouring parishes benefit. There are no examples of parishes contributing to the cost of services wholly contained within Bridport parish, that also benefit the surrounding parishes.

The Town Council recognises that Symondsbury parish, situated mainly at a distance from Bridport, differs from other surrounding parishes, in that its residents benefit to a lesser extent from the work of the Town Council, and it identifies as a rural parish, much of which is managed by the Symondsbury Estate which has recently improved facilities in the village.

4. Identity

Bridport parish contains two discernible traditional centres – the town centre and West Bay. Bothenhampton & Walditch parish similarly has two traditional village centres, albeit that the village of Bothenhampton is now subsumed within a much wider post-war expanse of residential development. Bradpole has two traditional centres – Bradpole and Pymore – with distinct identities, and Symondsbury village provides a historic and distinct identity for the parish. Allington does not contain a discreet or discernible traditional village centre.

Whilst Bradpole, Bothenhampton, Walditch and Symondsbury contain functioning village centres, only a fraction of the post war development can be seen to be an expansion of the historic villages. Most are clearly an accommodation of the expansion of the town of Bridport into the extremities of those surrounding parishes. Larger examples are residential developments in the areas of Jessopp Avenue (Bradpole parish), Lower Walditch Lane and Crock Lane (Bothenhampton & Walditch parish), Bridport Hospital (Allington parish), and West Cliff (Symondsbury parish).

All five parishes making up the community contain significant tracts of green/rural land, albeit that in Bridport parish much of this is owned, managed, or otherwise influenced by the Town Council, whereas the rural land in surrounding parishes is largely privately owned. The consequence is a shared identity of part urban, part rural life, across the greater Bridport area.

Naturally, the existence or otherwise of a town or parish council in any given area, is not a major factor in a resident's thinking when considering their local identity, and changes to town or parish governance will not affect where people consider themselves to live. However, more than half of Town Council correspondence received from residents in the Bridport area is estimated to be from people who live outside the Bridport parish boundary. The notion that this means they consider themselves Bridport residents can be debated; what it clearly does indicate is that people from outside the parish identify the Town Council as 'their' council, and look to it to provide services, information and support. Eight of the Town Council's 18 councillors live in surrounding parish areas, a further indication of the same principle. Only 11 Bridport Mayors over the last 25 years have actually lived in the parish, whilst 14 have lived in the surrounding parishes.

Poundbury is an example of a very distinct local identity, but the area is part of Dorchester parish. More locally, West Bay is commonly identified as separate from Bridport, but in the main is part of Bridport parish.

The Town Council recognises that Symondsbury parish in the most part does not share all of the same characteristics of Bridport and the three other surrounding parishes. Its main settlement in Symondsbury village is both rural in its nature and separated by a mile of open green land from the boundary of Bridport parish. It has a particularly strong sense of local identity as a consequence of this rural nature and its affiliation with the Symondsbury Estate.

In terms of public perception, the very design and layout of Bridport lends itself to the notion of a single cohesive settlement comprising Bridport parish and much of the surrounding area. As you enter Bridport from Dorchester, the roadside sign on the A35 proclaiming entry to "Bridport" is placed in Walditch. It is a further 750 metres until you actually get to a property which is not in either Bradpole or Walditch and within the Bridport Parish boundary. As you enter the town from the North on the A3066, you enter the 30mph area, and then the built-up area which is in Bradpole for the first 600 metres. As you enter Bridport from the west, the first 500 metres of houses are in Symondsbury. The next 400 metres of housing is in Allington before you reach the Bridport boundary at West Road Garage. Arriving from the south east, it is a journey of 1km beyond the 'Welcome to Bridport' sign before you encounter any property to the east side that is within Bridport parish. In all of these cases there is no discernible transition from the surrounding parish to the parish of Bridport – it is to all intents and purposes a single settlement.

5. Effective and Convenient Local Government

The contraction of principle local government, followed by the creation of a unitary Dorset Council, has created challenges for town and parish councils in the area, particularly in 'stepping up' as the now second tier of local government in their areas. Bridport Town Council, as one of the larger councils in Dorset, has responded positively to protect and enhance services in its area. The Council has taken on devolved responsibility for a number of services that were at risk of reduction or withdrawal. Examples include highway verge maintenance, the Tourist Information Centre, management of parks and meadowland, some areas of licensing, creation of a community bus service, and the rescue of the Youth & Community Centre. The Council is positive about further devolution, and is currently looking to take over responsibility for public conveniences and other assets from Dorset Council. The Council's aim is to maximise local control and provision of services by,

and for, the community. Smaller parish councils, such as those surrounding the parish of Bridport, are unlikely to have the resources or capacity to respond in the same way for their parishioners. Whilst it is accepted that parishes may not want to do this at all, the pressures on public service provision for Bridport Town Council, as set out earlier in this submission, are considerable and limit the scope for further devolution.

The creation of a unitary authority has also created a challenge for local democracy. Three members for this new authority took the place of nine for the previous county and district councils in the now Bridport ward of Dorset Council. This has arguably placed an increased distance between citizens and their elected members, and diluted the influence of town and parish councils. Conversely, the pressure for greater local control of services remains.

The ability of parish councils to bridge this 'democratic gap' is in contrast to that of the Town Council. Currently the surrounding parishes do have Parish Councils but often struggle to attract councillors. Many do not have the full quota of democratically elected councillors, and so almost never have elections. None of the surrounding parish councils had a contested election in May 2019 and all required the co-option of members to fill the available seats. In 2019, 35 candidates stood for 18 seats in Bridport. In Allington, 4 stood for 7 seats. In Bothenhampton & Walditch, 7 stood for 9 seats (initially one candidate, with a further six identified in late May). In Bradpole, 5 stood for 10 seats. In Symondsbury, 7 stood for 8 seats. The shortfall in candidates for the surrounding parish seats was 11 – while there were 17 'excess' candidates in Bridport. The 23 that were elected in 2019 were elected unopposed. Further councillors have been co-opted since the election, but none of the parishes list a full complement on their websites at the time of drafting this submission. In reviewing community governance arrangements there is clearly a need and an opportunity to address this democratic deficit.

In terms of effective local government across the Bridport area, it is to be noted that the Bridport ward for Dorset Council **and** the designated area for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan both marry exactly with the five parishes of Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch, Bradpole, Bridport, and Symondsbury. The Town Council contends that it makes abundant sense to make the best of this alignment across different tiers of local government, and that this is best served by a common vision and direction across the five parishes. There is precedent for this approach – prior to the reorganisation of local government in 1974, both Bridport Municipal Borough and Bridport Rural District Council included parts of the current adjoining parishes. The Diocesan Parishes of Bridport, West Bay, Allington, Bradpole, and Bothenhampton & Walditch coalesced to form the Bridport Team Ministry 35 years ago, recognising the benefits of joint administration across the parishes.

The Town Council recognises that Symondsbury parish faces less of a challenge in terms of attracting parish council candidates for election, and that its separation and rural nature means that a vision for its future may not coalesce to the same extent as those parishes predominantly within the built-up area of Bridport.

6. Community Cohesion

The whole town of Bridport has a strong sense of local identity and community spirit. Residents come together for the town's large community events, and gather in the town centre in what is arguably one of the most sociable environments imaginable. There is little that divides the community, despite the varied backgrounds of its residents. We are

urban and rural, lifelong and recent, agricultural and industrial, wealthy and of limited means, coastal and inland, traditional and quirky, modern and heritage, young and old, artistic and scientific, left and right. These varied traits are no barrier to social, economic, environmental and community cohesion. The local response to Covid-19 is an outstanding recent indication of this – led by the Town Council, community groups supported by 170 volunteers from across the greater Bridport area set up a single support network that assisted over 2,000 of those left vulnerable by the pandemic.

Whilst the level of precept/Council Tax levied on residents is not a matter for the review, its impact on community cohesion is arguably an increasing factor. The tax base (the number of combined Band D equivalent households paying a precept) for Bridport Town Council is 3,000. The figure within the surrounding parishes paying a much reduced 'parish tax' rate is 2,728. This has resulted in an increasing number of complaints from Bridport parishioners, that residents of neighbouring parishes receive the services of the Town Council at a heavily discounted rate. Whilst the symptom of this weakness in cohesion is related to Council Tax, the cause is the governance arrangements in a single built-up residential area.

Some efforts have been made in recent years to reach agreement over parish contributions to Town Council costs. There have been modest successes with 'one-off' projects, for example with some parishes contributing to the Town Council's community bus service and all parishes meeting the cost of administering the Neighbourhood Plan. However, there are no examples of parishes contributing to the cost of services wholly contained within Bridport parish – such as the majority of those listed at 3 above – that also benefit the surrounding parishes.

The Town Council recognises that community cohesion in Symondsburry parish is strong and less affected by the issues discussed in this section.

It is of note here that a previous community governance submission in 2018 by the Town Council – primarily aimed at incorporating the Foundry Lea (then Vearse Farm) development into the parish – was halted by the principal council (at that time West Dorset District Council). This decision recommended that Bridport Town Council resubmit its request following the creation of the unitary authority, in order that a more wide-reaching review could be carried out, including areas highlighted by local residents in an initial consultation. The report accompanying this decision states that the areas concerned were Allington, Bradpole, Bothenhampton, Walditch, West Cliff Estate, Pine View, Skilling Hill Road, and Watton Park.

7. Specific Boundary Anomalies

This submission has so far focused on the broader issues presented for community governance by Bridport's current arrangements. The Town Council recognises that these issues of principle may not be accepted universally. However, the Council considers that there can be little argument about the anomalous arrangements, where localised areas are split between Bridport & another parish. The Council highlights:

- Four houses on the eastern side of West Bay (plus 4 more for which planning consent exists) are within the Parish boundary of Burton Bradstock. These are contiguous with the Bridport parish boundary but are two miles from the settlement of Burton

Bradstock. Burton Bradstock Parish Council has approached Bridport Town Council with a proposal that these homes be included in Bridport parish.

- The West Cliff estate at the west end of West Bay is a private estate – comprising of 129 properties, wholly within the parish of Symondsbury but lying some three miles from the village of Symondsbury. This estate has no direct road link with the parish without going back through Bridport parish, via either the centre of Bridport, or the A35 trunk road.
- Watton Park currently has 27 properties, soon to be added to by a further 33, all of which are within the parish of Symondsbury but again adjoined to Bridport parish and isolated by some distance from the village of Symondsbury.
- 20 houses on the west side of, and 5 older houses on the southern end of Magdalen Lane south of the Symene River, and the whole of Pine View (67) are also in the parish of Symondsbury, whilst being most closely associated with, and adjoined to, the Skilling area of Bridport parish. These houses will be 'sandwiched' between the proposed Foundry Lea development and the current Bridport parish boundary.
- Around 90 houses on the north side of West Allington to the west of De Legh Grove, including two past the Symene Bridge are in the Parish of Allington. The boundary actually cuts right across Houndsell Way and De Legh Grove, separating adjoining houses within the street into two parishes.
- Hospital Lane Estate has up to 200 houses, all also in the parish of Allington, but clearly designed to be an adjunct to the North Allington area of Bridport.
- The relatively new 56-house estate of Dibdin View was built on land completely in Allington Parish as a boundary change was not possible at the time, but with an agreement that Magna Housing would instigate a transfer to Bridport Parish at the earliest opportunity. This is the first opportunity.
- Around 120 houses, including those in Claremont Gardens, Beaumont Avenue & St Cecilia's estate on land to the south of Watton Hill is integral with the extended development northwards from Bridport. These houses are in Bradpole Parish, albeit contiguous with those in Bridport. Watton Gardens just to the north has 5 houses, 4 are in Bradpole and the boundary passes through the 5th which is in Bridport parish.
- Approximately 175 relatively new homes are situated immediately to the south of the A35 East Road, as you enter Bridport. These are within Bothenhampton & Walditch parish, surround the Cemetery that is owned and managed by the Town Council, and are commonly perceived as being part of Bridport.
- Approximately 300 homes sit immediately to the north of the A35 East Road, and are in Bradpole parish, but are separated from the rest of the parish by green space and have a closer geographical relationship with Bridport.
- Outline planning approval is in place for 760 homes and other infrastructure at Vearse Farm, an area of land in Symondsbury parish, but with little geographical relationship with the rest of the parish. The site immediately borders the Skilling area of Bridport, is close to the town centre, and will undoubtedly consider Bridport as the source of its services. The draft Dorset Council Local Plan allows for a further expansion of this development beyond the 760 already approved in outline.

8. Conclusion and Options

A number of key issues arise from the discussion on previous pages of this submission:

- The development of the built-up area of Bridport since WWII, and in particular since the last review of the parish boundary, has created a single settlement with no discernible transition between Bridport parish and three of the four surrounding parishes. This

pattern of the town's evolution will continue, with the addition of the Foundry Lea development.

- Surrounding parish residents represent a large proportion of the users/beneficiaries of Town Council services, and yet have no direct say in their provision and do not contribute to their costs. Residents of Bridport parish subsidise this arrangement and no solution has been identified to address this, within the current governance arrangements.
- A single 'Bridport' identity is strong across Bridport parish and three of the four surrounding parishes. There are local centres that identify within that single identity. For example within Bridport parish, local identity is retained in West Bay despite the majority of the area being in Bridport parish. There is however little evidence that the existence of a parish council is a strong determinant in local identity in the Bridport area.
- The existing parish arrangements are not fit for purpose in responding to the challenges of effective local government, following the creation of a unitary Dorset Council.
- Local democracy is not well served by the current governance arrangements in the conjoined parishes, with only those electors in Bridport parish given the opportunity to exercise a meaningful electoral choice.
- Community cohesion is significantly undermined by the sense that Bridport residents are meeting the cost of services provided to residents of surrounding parishes, and by the inability of those surrounding parish residents to have a meaningful say in service provision.
- Most of these challenges are of lesser impact and concern in respect of Symondsbury parish.

The Town Council's contention is that these issues are best resolved by the creation of a single 'Greater Bridport' parish boundary comprising the existing Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch, Bradpole, and Bridport parishes, divided into wards that respect the identities of those areas and a fair representation in terms of numbers of councillors. The detail of this proposal is set out as Option 1 below.

Option 1 represents a major change to community governance in the area and whilst the Town Council considers it to be the optimal approach for the foreseeable future, we recognise from our discussions with the affected parish councils (other than Symondsbury and Burton Bradstock Parish Councils) that it will not have their support. Our contention is that parish council opposition does not equate to community opposition and that with the exception of the potential impact on Council Tax in the surrounding parishes, there is unlikely to be a significant rational counter-argument. The issue of Council Tax is not part of the review, except insofar as it presents a concern for community cohesion under the current arrangements, with a sense that one part of Bridport is unfairly and inequitably subsidising other parts. Nonetheless, we offer further options for consideration, in the event that the review decides against our preferred change. These options are to protect the basic integrity and governance requirements of Bridport parish in the years to a further review.

Option 2 sets out a parish boundary based on the boundary anomalies identified in section 7 above. Whilst not addressing all of the issues identified in the submission, this lesser expansion of the boundary does provide for a greater level of cohesion, and more effective and convenient local government for those affected. We recognise again that this option will not have the support of the affected parish councils, other than Symondsbury and Burton Bradstock Parish Councils.

Should the review give what would in our view be undue weight to the objections of three parish councils, option 3 is presented; one that focuses on the impact of the forthcoming Foundry Lea development, incorporating it into Bridport parish, along with some relatively small associated changes in the Magdalen Lane, Pine View and Watton Park areas. This is our 'bare minimum' option and one that we understand has the support of Symondsburry Parish Council, in whose parish the vast majority of the affected area currently lies.

Option 1

This option creates a single 'Greater Bridport' parish boundary comprising the majority of the existing Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch, Bradpole, and Bridport parishes, divided into five wards that respect the identities of those areas and a fair representation in terms of numbers of councillors. Symondsbury parish is affected but maintained as a separate rural parish. A minor change to the boundary between Bridport and Burton Bradstock parish is proposed. The key points are:

- A single Bridport parish comprising the existing built-up area of the town. The total electorate is 9,685.
- The existing Bothenhampton & Walditch and Bridport parishes are included in their entirety.
- All of Bradpole parish is included, except for the area west of Pymore Lane, which would become part of Symondsbury parish.
- The built-up area of Allington parish, and Allington Hill are included. The rural area would become part of Symondsbury parish.
- The West Cliff and Vearse Farm areas of Symondsbury parish are included in the proposed Bridport parish, with the reduction in electors compensated for by the addition of the area west of Pymore Lane and the rural part of Allington parish.
- The proposed Bridport parish is divided into 5 wards, represented by 20 councillors as follows:

Ward	Councillors
Allington & West Bridport	4
Bothenhampton & Walditch	4
Bradpole	5
Central Bridport	5
West Bay	2
Total	20

This option resolves the issues identified earlier in the document, confirming a single Bridport entity and identity throughout the built-up area, whilst retaining local identities through the warding arrangements. It provides for good governance and public services through a single council, a strong likelihood that all seats would be filled, through contested elections. The proposals also provide a strong community voice as the second tier of local government in the Dorset Council area. It also facilitates engagement between the unitary council and the community, in that communication will be between two councils instead of five on issues of mutual interest.

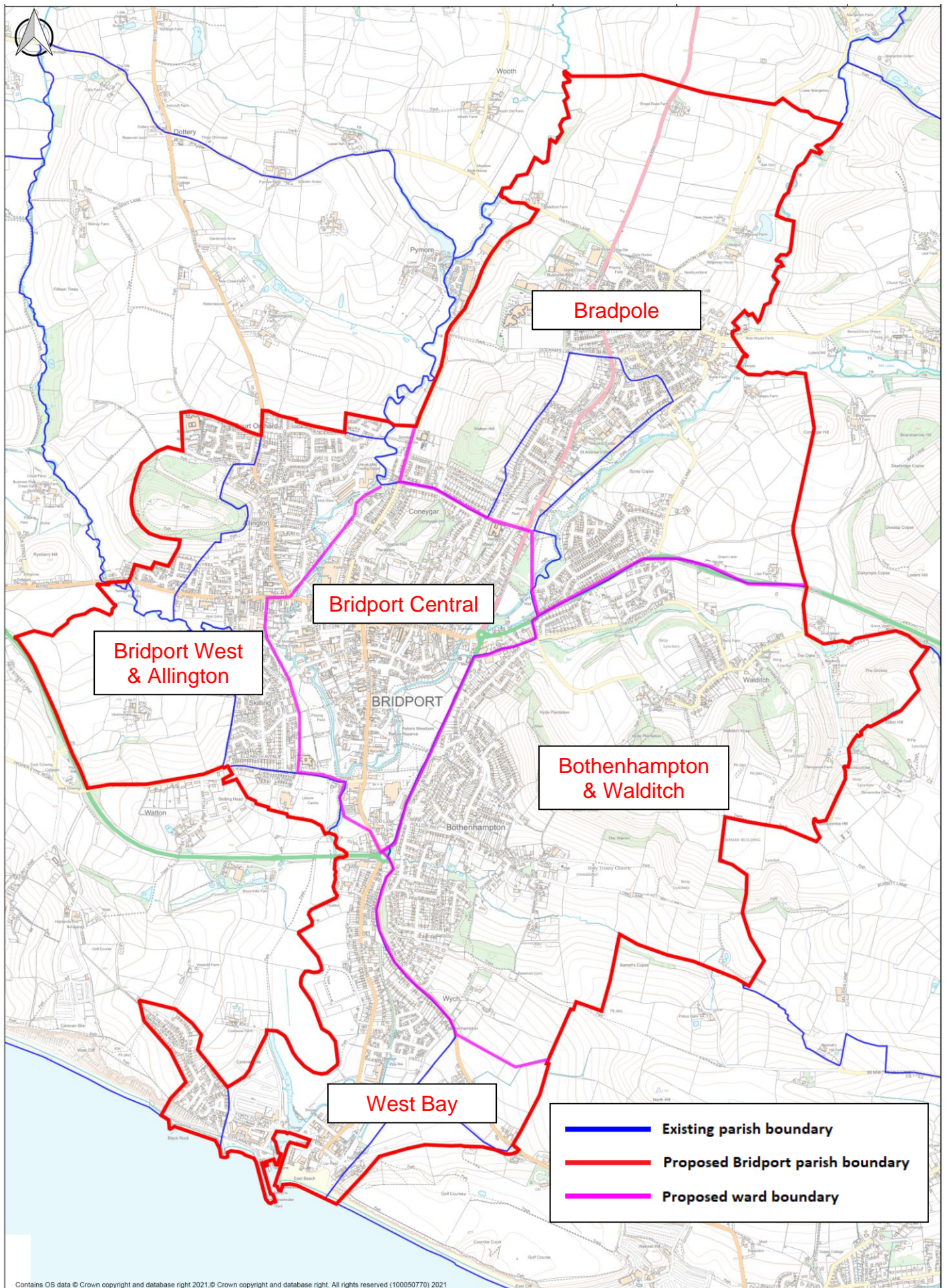
Option 1 also provides for reduced bureaucracy in the monitoring and delivery of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, by a reduction from five participating councils to two. This is of particular benefit in relation to Plan projects, whose funding and project plans are subject to individual 'sign-off' by each participating council.

Symondsbury parish is recognised as being a rural parish with a separate local identity that warrants a separate parish. The built-up areas that are currently contiguous with Bridport are included in the proposed Bridport parish, including the area formerly known as Vearse Farm, where up to 930 homes are due to be built on the edge of Bridport. The addition of

these areas to Bridport parish is offset by the addition to Symondsbury of Pymore village (currently in Bradpole and Allington parishes) and the rural area of Allington parish.

A minor change in the boundary between Bridport and Burton Bradstock parish incorporates four dwellings into Bridport that are contiguous with the built-up area of West Bay.

Overall, this option provides the best solution for Bridport for a period of up to 15 years until the next required review of community governance.



Option 2

This option provides an adequate incorporation of the built-up area of Bridport, into the Bridport parish. It addresses the specific anomalies identified in section 7 above, and provides for good governance across the expanded Bridport parish. The distinct identities of Bradpole, Bothenhampton and Walditch are maintained by the retention of their respective parish councils, should that be deemed a necessary factor by the review. The proposals see the following transfer from Bradpole parish into Bridport parish:

- Approximately 120 houses including those in Claremont Gardens, Beaumont Avenue & St Cecilia's estate on land to the south of Watton Hill.
- Approximately 300 homes immediately to the north of the A35 East Road.

This reduction in Bradpole parish is offset by the addition of the area east and west of the A3066 north of St Katherine's Drive.

The proposals incorporate the Foundry Lea (formerly Vearse Farm) development land, currently in Symondsbury parish, into Bridport parish. In addition, those dwellings in Symondsbury at the West Cliff estate, Watton Park, Magdalen Lane and Pine View would become part of Bridport parish. To offset these changes and to retain Symondsbury's rural parish status, it is proposed that the village of Pymore, currently in Allington and Bradpole parishes, and the rural area of Allington parish, be transferred to Symondsbury.

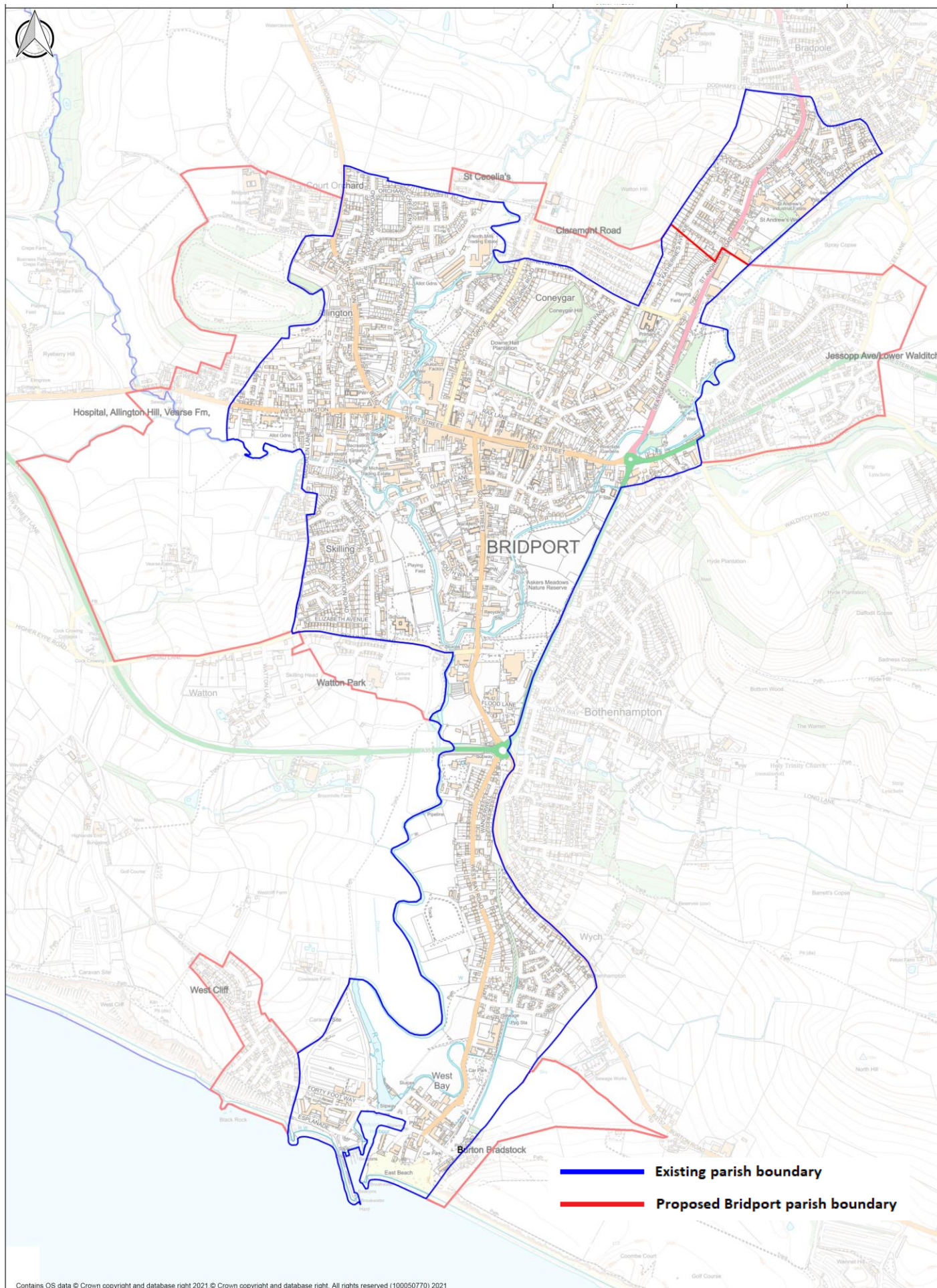
Under these proposals, Allington parish would cease to exist, with the majority of the built-up area being incorporated into Bridport parish and the rural part transferring to Symondsbury.

Bothenhampton & Walditch parish is affected by the transfer of an area south of the A35 East Road into Bridport.

A minor change in the boundary between Bridport and Burton Bradstock parish incorporates four dwellings into Bridport that are contiguous with the built-up area of West Bay.

This more limited change would not, in the view of the Town Council, require additional warding or councillors at this time. The existing total of 18 councillors is proposed, with the areas added being incorporated into the existing Bridport North and Bridport South wards. A further review of councillors and warding would be required when the Foundry Lea (Vearse Farm) development is in place.

This option provides a solution to the most obvious anomalies of communities split by boundaries within the built-up area of Bridport, as identified in section 7 above. It provides for good governance and public services through a single council serving the expanded Bridport parish, and enhances the democratic process in the areas newly incorporated into the parish.



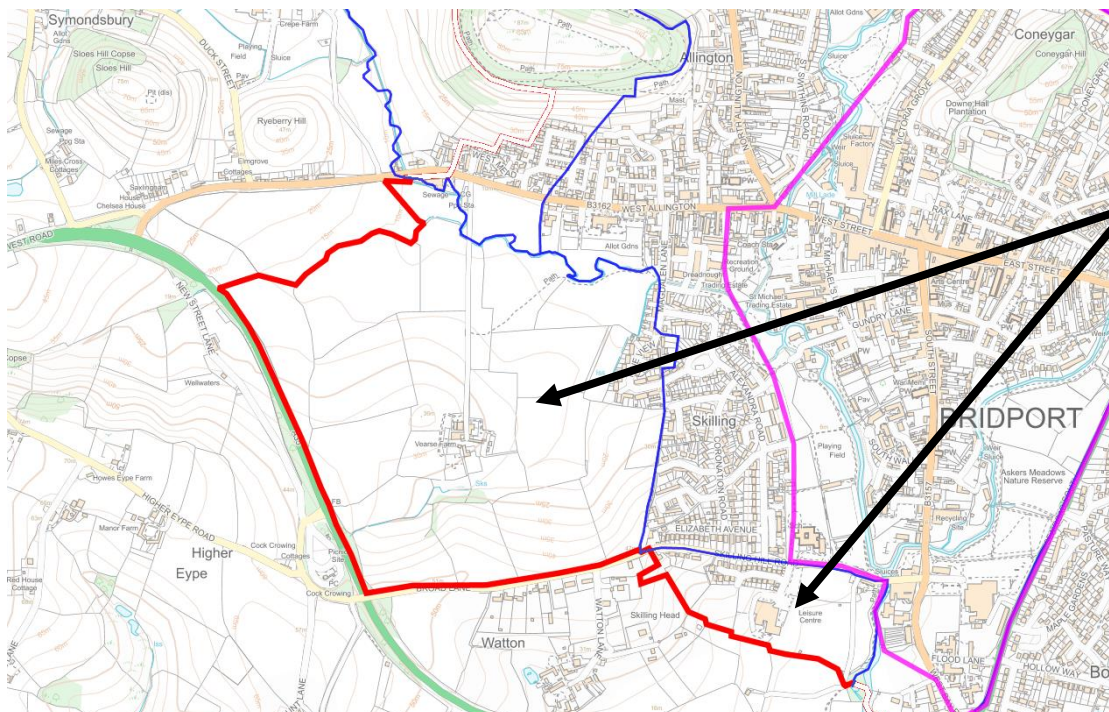
Option 3

This proposal is included as the 'must have' option, should the more significant options 1 and 2 be considered unworkable. The proposal addresses the impacts of the Foundry Lea (formerly Vearse Farm) development on Bridport, namely:

- That the residents of the new dwellings will look to Bridport town parish for their services and community focus. The main access routes will provide links to Bridport town centre.
- The increased number of residents will increase pressure on services delivered by the Town Council.
- The increased number of properties and therefore the tax base would make a significant difference to the Town Council's ability to deliver services in the town, through the increased income to be raised through the precept. This is particularly important when the Town Council will be delivering more services as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.
- It will incorporate into Bridport the 'trapped' land and dwellings of Pine View, Magdalen Lane and Watton Park, properties currently in Symondsburry Parish that have primary access from Bridport.
- To ensure that residents of the development are able to participate in the democratic process for the local council - Bridport Town Council - that will deliver services in the town that they will use.

This proposal will ensure that governance will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in the area, and will bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

At this stage, it is not proposed that the Town Council warding arrangements be changed. However, it is recommended that the warding arrangements be reviewed when the Vearse Farm site is complete and the increased electorate is known.



Areas proposed for transfer to Bridport parish.