

Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Screening Report

**REVISED**

October 2025

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to revise the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, originally undertaken in October 2017.

The purpose of a SEA screening stage is to determine whether or not the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP) requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The SEA screening will be presented to the statutory consultation bodies, which include Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency, in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) in October/November 2025.

This revised document provides an outline of the BANP document and environmental characteristics of the plan area, explains the legislative background to SEA screening, before providing an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan.

**This report provides the statement of reasons for the determination that SEA is not required in accordance with regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This document will be submitted alongside the revised neighbourhood plan proposals, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended.**

## 2. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND TO STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that could have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA Regulations.

The SEA Regulations include a definition of 'plans and programmes' to which the regulations apply, and which programmes are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. A Neighbourhood Plan is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. It is an optional process under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (subsequently amended by the Localism Act 2011). However, once a Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' it becomes part of the statutory development plan for the area to which it applies. As such, it therefore forms part of a plan that is required by legislative provisions.

Neighbourhood Plans therefore triggers a requirement to determine whether it is likely to have a significant environmental effect. This requirement is discharged by the 'responsible authority' (Dorset Council) being the authority by which or on whose behalf the plan is prepared. Before making a determination, the responsible authority shall:

- a) Take into account the criteria specified Annex 2 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004:
- b) Consult the consultation bodies.

The consultation bodies are defined in section 4 of the SEA Regulations (as amended through EU Exit legislation). As the responsible authority, Dorset Council will seek opinions from the statutory consultation bodies: Historic England; the Environment Agency; and Natural England on this screening report prior to updating and issuing its screening Determination.

In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), Dorset Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. This process is commonly referred to as a "screening" assessment. Where the Council determines that a SEA is not required, then the Council must, under Regulation 9(3), prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination. Where it is determined that proposals in a Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have significant environmental effects, the Neighbourhood Plan may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should then be assessed to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant Environmental effects as prescribed in regulation 12 (2)&(3) of the above legislation.

**In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Bridport Town Council (the qualifying body) requests Dorset Council (the responsible authority) to consider whether an environmental assessment of the revised BANP is required due to significant environmental effects.**

### 3. THE BRIDPORT AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The vision of the BANP states that *“the Bridport area will remain a place we are proud of, with an improved supply of homes and employment opportunities for local people, public facilities to match, and with a reduced carbon footprint. We will preserve our rural setting, the individual characters of our town and parishes, and ease of moving about within it”*.

The BANP covers the civil parishes of Bridport and Symondsbury, (Figure 3.1), occupying an area of approximately 2,870ha and a population of approximately 14,630<sup>1</sup> and 6,935 households.

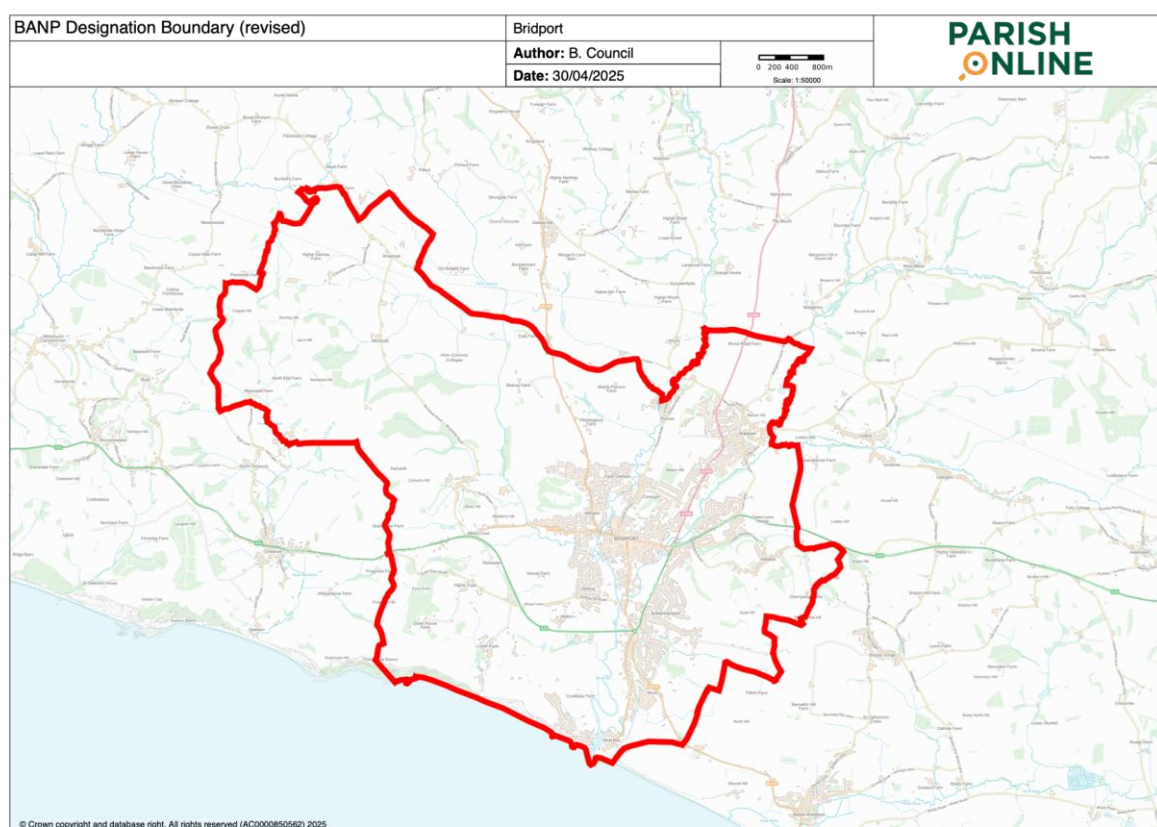


Figure 3.1: The extent of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan

<sup>1</sup> Data from 2021 Census

## THE BANP, WHICH RUNS UNTIL 2036, AIMS TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

### **Environment and Heritage:**

- To safeguard and enhance the Dorset National Landscape, the urban conservation areas and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.
- To maintain, protect and enhance the unique nature, heritage, important features, character and environmental assets of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### **Climate Change:**

- To alleviate the impact of climate change, develop renewable energy and encourage efficient waste management.

### **Housing:**

- To provide housing that the community needs, of high quality, accessible to services and affordable, in appropriate locations.

### **Local Economy & Employment:**

- 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.
- To maintain, protect and enhance the independent nature and vitality of our town centre.
- To encourage sustainable tourism which uses local services, facilities and locally produced goods, creating an accessible and attractive destination for visitors and local people.

### **Community Facilities, Services, Education and Cultural Facilities:**

- To protect our excellent community facilities including education, health, cultural, sport and leisure facilities.
- To increase their range and availability where these bring benefits to our community.
- To make sure that these facilities are accessible to all, including those living in the more rural parts of the plan area.

### **Sustainable Transport:**

- To improve access for local residents and visitors around the town, particularly to local services, and reduce reliance on the car.

### **Land Use and Location:**

- To ensure that sites that are needed for development are selected to best meet the range of local needs identified in the Plan, and designed in keeping with the local character of the area.

The BANP was approved as a 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan in May 2020. A 'light' review has been undertaken in 2025 and is expected to go forward to Regulation 14 consultation in winter 2025/26. The changes proposed as a result of the 2025 review of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan are:

- Factual updates resulting from commissioned reviews and changes in local/ national policies, in particular the Dorset Local Government Review (2023).
- Amendments to policies that reflect improvements to the clarity of phrasing as well as changes to the local and national policy frame.

The plan period (2020 – 2036), vision and objectives remain unchanged. The revised BANP does not allocate land for development.



#### 4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN AREA

The Bridport area include a number of environmental designations, indicating the importance and sensitivity of the plan area from an environmental perspective (Figure 4.1).

From a landscape perspective, the entire BANP is within the designated Dorset National National Landscape reflecting its significant landscape value. In addition, the coastal area to the west of West Bay is designated as Heritage Coast in recognition of its beauty, in addition to wildlife and heritage value.

The plan area is rich in heritage and includes the following three Scheduled Monuments which are nationally important archaeological sites:

- a bowl barrow 200m north east of Holy Trinity Church, Bradpole;
- a bowl barrow on Eype Down 275m east of Frogmore Farm, Symondsbury; and
- three bowl barrows north east of Thorncombe Beacon and south west of Down House, Symondsbury.

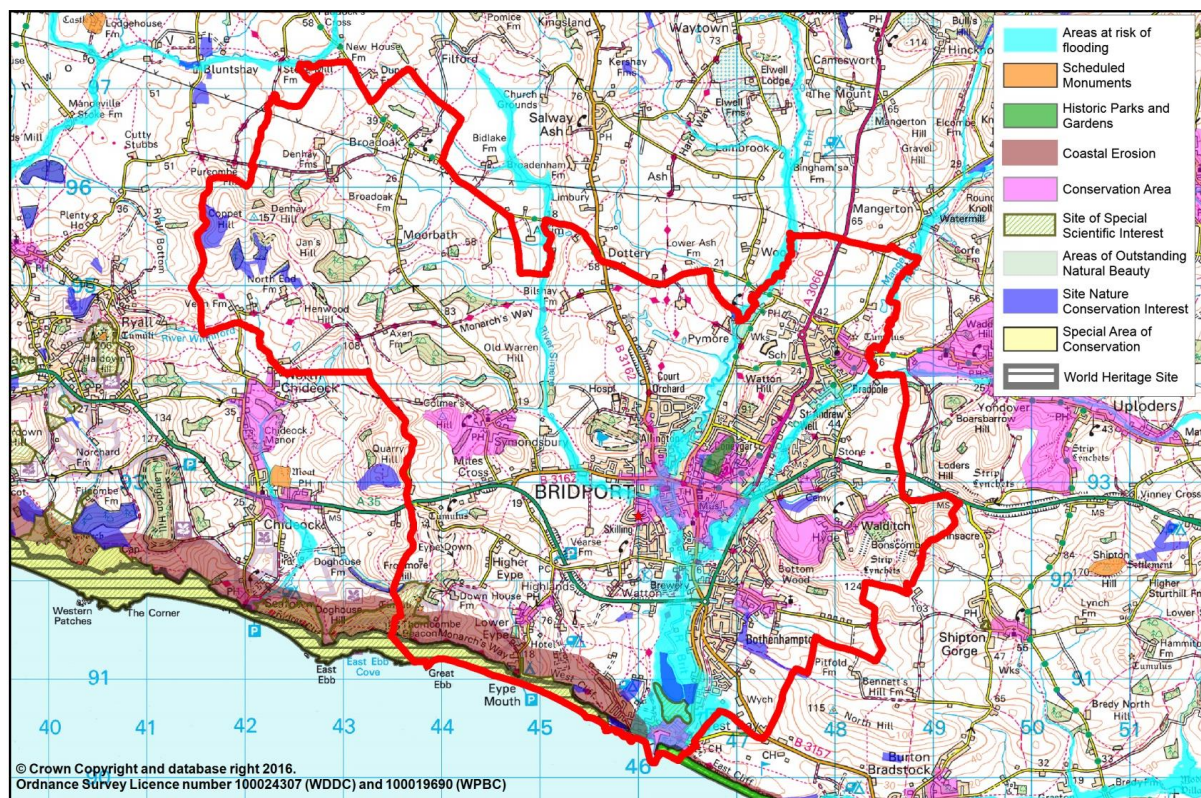
The plan area also includes the Conservation Areas at Symondsbury, Bradpole, Walditch, Bridport, Bothenhampton, West Bay, and Eype which are designated for their special architectural and historic interest.

There are over 500 Listed buildings or structures in the neighbourhood plan area, most in Bridport, with 47 in Symondsbury parish. The most notable of these are Parish Church of St Mary and the Town Hall, South Street, Bridport (both Grade I). Furthermore, Downe Hall in Bridport is a Grade II listed Historic Park and Garden.

In addition to the built or man made heritage, the coastal areas of the plan area includes the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, designated because of the cliff exposures which provide an almost continuous sequence of rock formations spanning the Mesozoic Era, which represents 185 million years of the earth's history.

A high risk flood zone runs from West Bay northwards, following the path of the River Brit into Bridport. The high risk flood zone splits into 3 and runs northwards from Bridport following the path of the Rivers Simene, Brit, and Mangerton, indicating that these surface water features are subject to flooding.

Figure 4.1: Environmental designations within the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan



The wildlife designations within the BANP (Figure 4.2) include the European sites in the coastal areas, which are the Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to the west of West Bay and the Chesil and the Fleet SAC to the east of West Bay. The national wildlife sites including the West Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest which occupies the same area as the SACs and also the area adjacent and to the north of West Bay and on the western end of the plan area, in Symondsburry.

Figure 4.2: The wildlife sites within the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan

Name of site	Type of designation	Description
<b>European wildlife designation</b>		
Sidmouth to West Bay	Special Area of Conservation (and Site of Special Scientific Interest)	Highly unstable soft cliff coastline subject to mudslides and landslips.
Chesil and the Fleet	Special Area of Conservation (and Site of Special Scientific Interest)	Large relatively undisturbed shingle bar with annual vegetation of drift lines and perennial vegetation of stony banks.
<b>National wildlife designation</b>		
West Dorset Coast	Site of Special Scientific Interest	Internationally important geological site, famous for fossil reptiles. The varied undercliffs have a range of habitats which support rare plants and animals.
<b>Local wildlife designation</b>		
Wormstall Farm	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Three areas of grassland and woodland habitat
North End Farm	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland
Broomhills Meadow	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Area of semi-improved neutral grassland
Cowleaze Farm	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Semi-improved neutral grassland
West Bay Cliffs	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Dry grassland and partially vegetated loose rock
Alder Bed	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	A thin strip of damp deciduous woodland

Wanderwell Quarry	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Old quarry with scrub and semi-improved grassland
Walditch Meadow	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Pymore Mill	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	An area of reedbed and wet woodland
West Bay	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Semi-improved neutral and improved grassland

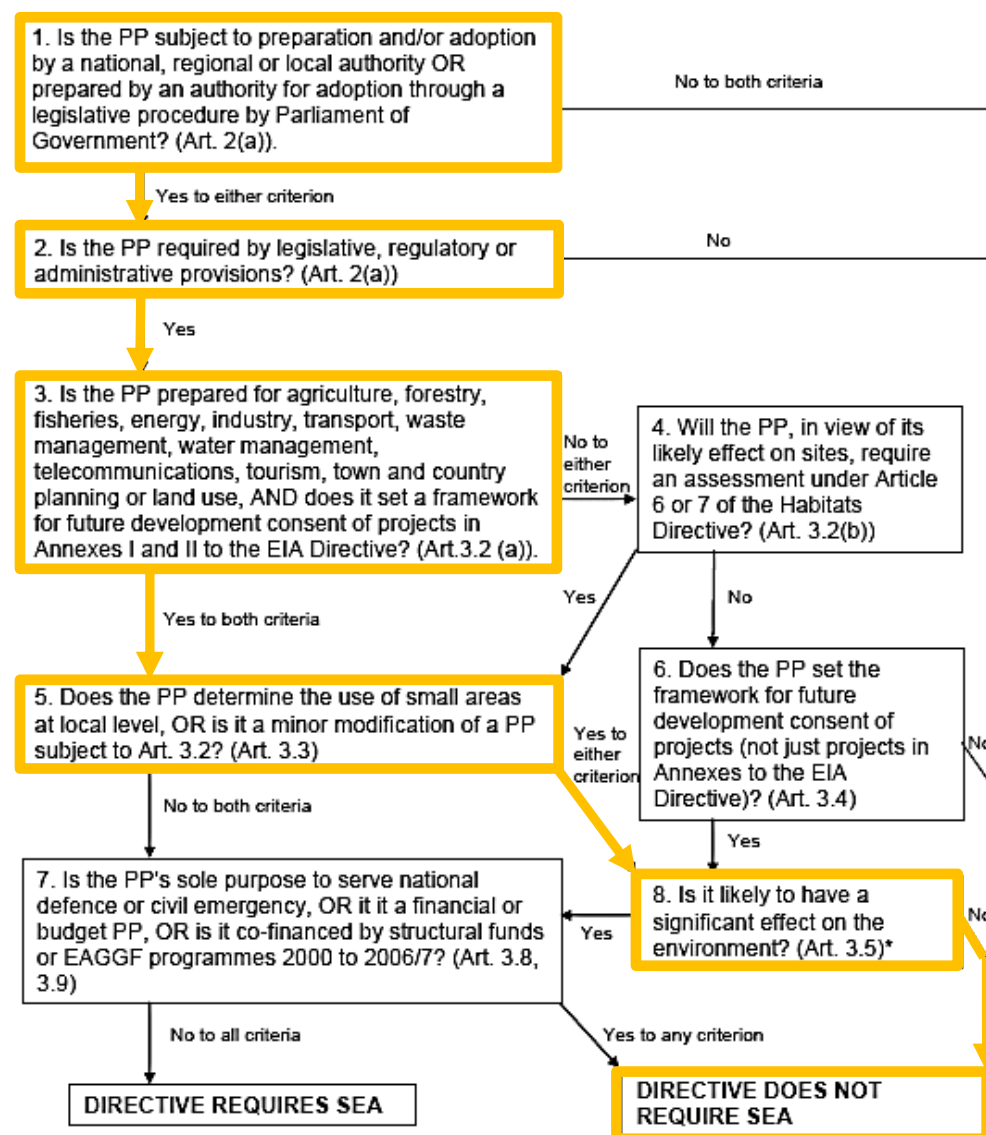
In addition, European protected species have been recorded within the BANP area, including bat, otter and water vole.

## 5. SEA SCREENING OF THE BRIDPORT AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This Chapter provides an account of the SEA screening exercise for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan. Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive provide the legislative framework for defining the types of plan and programme that require SEA.

The SEA screening process is summarised in diagrammatic form in the flowchart shown in Figure 5.1<sup>2</sup>. The screening for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is highlighted in orange and justification for the decisions made at each stage in the SEA screening process is given in Figure 5.2.

*Figure 5.1: A diagram summarising the SEA screening process with the SEA screening for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan outlined in orange.*



*Figure 5.2 – Summary of the justification made for the decisions during the SEA screening for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan.*

<sup>2</sup> Diagram taken from the Government guidance on the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations titled 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive', published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005

Question in SEA screening flow chart (Figure 5.1)	Response
1. Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government?	<b><u>YES</u></b> The intention is for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan to be 'made' part of the development plan by West Dorset District Council, a local authority, through a legislative procedure.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?	<b><u>YES</u></b> The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan would be a Statutory document, prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?	<b><u>YES</u></b> The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is a document prepared for town and country planning purposes, and may influence future development which falls under Annex II of the EIA Directive as an urban development project under paragraph 10(b).
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2?	<b><u>YES</u></b> The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan determines the use of small areas at a local level.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)?	<b><u>NO</u></b> Justification for this decision is given later in this chapter.

#### IS THE BRIDPORT AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN LIKELY TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

The final question in the SEA screening process presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan was question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

In asking this question, the SEA Directive refers to Article 3.5, which states that the relevant criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive shall be taken into account when determining whether there are likely to be significant effects. Therefore, the criteria in Article 3.5 have been taken into consideration when determining whether the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA, as presented in Figure 5.3.



Figure 5.3: The assessment of the likely significance of effects of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (Taken from Annex II of the SEA Directive)

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Response	Is there a significant effect?
(1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size, and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The framework for development projects within the area covered by Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is set by the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan ('Local Plan') adopted in October 2015. The Local Plan provides the overarching policy for the location, size and nature of development projects in this area. The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is likely to build upon this framework by providing additional small scale development within this section of the local plan area.	No
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The revised Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will be 'made' part of the development plan alongside its parent document, the Local Plan, and will become part of the Local Development Scheme. The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will expand upon the policies in the Local Plan, influencing development on a local scale.	No
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Any development which comes forward through the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to the environmental policies of the Local Plan, the aim of which is to achieve sustainable development.	No
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	The environmental problems within the Bridport Area Neighbourhood plan area are not considered exclusive to the area, and are similar to those considered and addressed in the Local Plan.	No

e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan.	No
(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects.	It is anticipated that the revised Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will run to 2036. Whilst some effects of the plan may be irreversible, for example the development which comes forward, it is considered unlikely that the plan will have a significant effect in light of the nature and scale of the proposals.	No
b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	Consideration has been given to the effects of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, in combination with other approved and existing development documents. The Loders Neighbourhood Plan lies adjacent and to the east of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, but proposes only a small amount of development to meet local needs (in the region of 10 new dwellings over a next 15 years). Furthermore, this development is proposed within a defined development boundary and the Loders Neighbourhood Plan includes policies to ensure environmental protection, and therefore significant cumulative impacts are unlikely. The approved development at Foundry Lea is substantial in scale, with approximately 760 new dwellings being constructed within a mixed use development. The revised BANP does not bring forward site allocations development. Instead the revised BANP looks to encourage a greater proportion of affordable housing in the Bridport area, it is unlikely that significant cumulative effects will occur with the existing and approved development.	No



c) The transboundary nature of the effects.	The transboundary impacts of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan beyond the plan area are unlikely to be significant in light of the nature and scale of the proposals.	No
d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g due to accidents).	The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to introduce significant risks to human health and the environment, for example due to accidents, in light of the nature and characteristics of the development.	No
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Bridport Neighbourhood Plan area occupies approximately 2,870ha and a population of 14,627 people. Whilst the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan may be of a larger scale than most neighbourhood plans, the spatial extent of the effect will still be local and the magnitude of the population affected is not considered significant for the purposes of SEA.	No

<p>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p>	<p>The area occupied by the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan and its surrounding areas contain a number of environmental designations, some of international importance such as the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site within the coastal section of the plan area, reflecting the special natural characteristics and rich cultural heritage of the area. The designations relating to the natural environment include the European wildlife sites titled 'Sidmouth to West Bay' and 'Chesil and the Fleet', national wildlife designations such as the Sites of Special Scientific Interest titled the 'West Dorset Coast', and landscape designations such as the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many designated features of cultural and heritage importance in the area including three Scheduled Monuments, which are nationally important archaeological sites, a series of Conservation Areas and over 500 Listed Buildings. The Heritage At Risk Register lists three listed buildings and a Scheduled Monument as being particularly vulnerable. Whilst the plan area is highly sensitive in terms of the natural environment and cultural heritage, the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will not look to bring forward further development and will instead encourage a greater proportion of affordable housing. Therefore it is unlikely that there will be any additional impacts upon the natural environment and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the policies which emerge through the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will be informed by the assessments which have been commissioned to give full consideration to the potential impacts upon Heritage and Build Character and the natural environment, and a design statement is going to be produced to provide further guidance. In addition the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will be required to conform with the Local Plan, which provides protection to these environmental characteristics to ensure that they are not vulnerable to significant impacts from development.</p>	<p>No</p>
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ii)	Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in the exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water and soil quality, since it is not proposing any additional development.	No
iii)	Intensive land-use	The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan will not bring forward additional and therefore an intensification of land use will not occur.	No

<p>g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The designations within the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan area of national, community or international protection status include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site;</li> <li>• Dorset National Landscape;</li> <li>• Special Area of Conservation;</li> <li>• Site of Special Scientific Interest;</li> <li>• Scheduled Monuments; and</li> <li>• Listed Buildings.</li> </ul> <p>The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan does not look to bring forward further development, and instead will encourage a greater proportion of affordable housing in the mix of housing types. Therefore it is unlikely that there will be any additional impacts upon these protected areas from the policies which emerge through the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, as no additional development is planned.</p> <p>Also, the number of assessments relating to landscape character, green space assessment and heritage/built environment character have been produced to support the development of policies, and a design statement will be commissioned to provide further evidence. This evidence base will ensure the policies which do emerge take into account the impacts upon these protected areas.</p> <p>Furthermore, the existing policy in the Local Plan, such as policy ENV 1 which forbids development which would cause unacceptable impacts upon the Dorset National Landscape and Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site and policy ENV 2 which prevents development which would cause unacceptable impacts upon wildlife sites, will further prevent the potential for impacts upon these protected sites.</p>	<p>No</p>
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## 6. CONCLUSION

The SEA screening exercise explained in this report concludes that the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts, largely due to the plan not looking to bring forward additional housing site allocations. BANP is supported by an extensive evidence base, and the environmental protection provided by the existing policies in the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan which provides environmental protection.

The consultation bodies, which comprise Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency, will be consulted on the contents of this revised SEA screening report in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

This report provides the statement of reasons for the determination that SEA is not required in accordance with regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This document must be submitted alongside neighbourhood planning proposals, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended.