

Harbours Committee - 23 September 2020

Public Participation

Susan Boyd

Question 1 – To Dorset Council Harbours Committee Chair

The Weymouth Harbour Port Marine Safety Audit was conducted in October 2019 and released to Dorset Council in November 2019. One of the key findings was that the Weymouth Harbour Master did not keep a formal system for recording incidents or near misses nor was any analysis of such incidents undertaken. The appointed Designated Person recommended that an incident database is established at the earliest opportunity and backdated to report and analyse the most serious or significant incidents for at least the previous year. Has this retrospective report now been compiled and if so has it been shared with the Harbours Committee for review.

Response

Due to a number of other priorities and staff absences the Incident Reporting System has only recently been reviewed. The update has been endorsed by the Designated Person. The retrospective report has not yet been completed and so has not been shared with the Harbours Committee. This should be achieved by the December Harbours Committee meeting.

Question 2 – To Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project Office

The Weymouth Harbour Master's update of the Peninsular development for this Dorset Council Harbours Committee meeting on Sept 23rd 2020 states that the next steps for the Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project are to complete preparations for demolishing Building B (Former Departures Lounge on Quayside), and a full design for the Quay Regeneration and obtaining the necessary consents.

His update states that further details can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/economicdevelopment/weymouth-quay-regeneration-project.aspx>

The information in the link provided has not been updated since November 2019. Please could the Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project Office provide to the Dorset Council Harbours Committee and Weymouth Harbour users an actual update of the status of this project.

Response

The project team have been working with an architect and stakeholders to develop a new and improved harbourside along the edge of the Peninsula. We now have a design that will help ensure the continued operation of the harbour, provide harbour

users with additional facilities along with improving the public realm. This will include;

- a new fish landing quay
- fishing compound area potentially with additional facilities including bait storage, and ice maker
- harbour authority facilities including office, toilets and showers, secure compound and boat & forklift shed
- Fuel facility and pontoon
- Additional pontoons
- Improved public realm
- Repair works to walls E (between Wall D just repaired and Ferry Berth) & 9 (Commercial Berth 1)

Old buildings will be demolished and the current secure area reconfigured alongside Commercial Berth 1 this will reduce the cost of maintenance for these redundant buildings and provide a less cluttered site.

Our plans have been delayed and amended due to Covid and other pressures, but we are now able to move forward with this scheme. The aim of these works is to help safeguard jobs and provide the opportunity for growth for businesses around the harbour. The improved public realm is intended to help encourage people to interact with our harbour and increase visitor numbers.

Richard Bright-Paul

It would appear from the minutes that no items or feedback from the Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group were brought forward for action by the Harbours Committee in the whole of 2019.

At September's Harbours Committee the Harbour Consultative Group chair reported no material items for feedback, commenting that the meeting was primarily being used by the Harbour Master as a briefing session. No action was taken by the Harbours Committee.

In November the Official Dorset PMSC audit noted that, unusually, the Weymouth Harbour Master felt "obliged to record and produce the minutes from each [Harbour Consultative Group] meeting himself". Clearly such a stance offers an unusual concentration of power over proceedings to filter negative feedback, but no action was taken.

At December's Harbours Committee nothing emanated from the Harbour Consultative Group with regards to the plan to relocate passenger boarding for the entire commercial fleet because these plans were never presented to it. At that Committee meeting the Weymouth Harbour Master refused, upon questioning, to provide details of the public consultation on this matter to the Committee. However, a widely supported public petition was lodged against the proposal leading Jim Clarke

to comment that there was clearly something deeply amiss with the consultation process. The chair noted the point, but no resulting action was taken by the Harbours Committee.

Following February's Harbour Consultative Group a Group member lodged a formal complaint having been shouted down for asking questions in the meeting. No action was taken as a result of this complaint.

The consultation process in Weymouth is clearly failing on multiple levels. Is the Harbours Committee not concerned that the failed Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group model is being rolled out, unaltered, to the other two harbours without the underlying issues having been in any way diagnosed or addressed?

Response

The Terms of Reference for the Harbours Consultative Groups are to be discussed at this meeting of the Committee. The aim of updating the Terms of Reference is to re-establish the purpose of the Consultative Groups and to provide consistency across the harbours where before the groups worked to difference terms. The new terms of reference outline the responsibilities of the group and its members and how the groups will work in the future. It builds in provision to reconsider membership of the group should the group determine additional representation is required, and also the requirement for administrative support for the group. It is envisaged that there will be a closer working relationship between the consultative groups other harbour stakeholders and the Harbours Committee going forward as important pieces of work such as the new Harbours Strategy are delivered.