



Harbours Advisory Committee

Date: Wednesday, 3 December 2025
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum 3)

Rob Hughes (Chair), Sarah Williams (Vice-Chair), Mike Baker, Ray Bryan, Peter Dickenson and Sally Holland

Independent Members: Lee Hardy, Mark Roberts, Mark Saxby and Richard Tinsley.

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services Meeting Contact joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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Agenda

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To consider a report from the Harbours Manager.

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Harbours Advisory Committee

3 December 2025

Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan Review

For Recommendation to Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Ed Carter – Dorset Council Harbours Manager & Weymouth Harbour Master

Email: ed.carter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2021, Local Legislation.

Report status: Public [Choose an item.](#)

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Dorset Council has completed a scheduled review of its Marine Safety Plan for Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis, and Weymouth Harbours, ensuring continued compliance with the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) and alignment with best practice. The updated Plan strengthens governance, clarifies responsibilities, and sets out clear objectives for safe, effective, and environmentally responsible harbour operations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1
 - 1. That the Harbours Advisory Committee recommend that the Cabinet Member for Place Services approves the adoption of the Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan 2026 – 2029.
 - 2. That the Harbours Advisory Committee, in agreement with the Designated Person, notify the Duty Holder that the three Dorset Council Harbours are compliant with the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code.

3. Reason for the recommendations

- 3.1 1. The Marine Safety Plan has been reviewed and updated to ensure continued compliance with the PMSC, reflect current operational priorities, and incorporate stakeholder feedback. Its adoption will provide a clear framework for safe, accountable, and resilient harbour operations across Dorset Council's three Statutory Harbour Authority locations.
2. A three-yearly compliance exercise is scheduled to begin in early 2026, requiring all marine facilities, including harbours, to report their adherence to the PMSC to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Following the Designated Person's audit reports over the past three years, the recent review of the Marine Safety Plan, and the consistently high standards maintained by the teams across the three harbours, the committee is formally notifying the Duty Holder that the harbours are compliant with the PMSC ahead of the upcoming exercise.

3. The report

- 3.1 Dorset Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its Marine Safety Plan to ensure that harbour operations at Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis, and Weymouth remain fully compliant with the PMSC. This review was part of a three-year cycle and reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining safe, effective, and environmentally responsible marine operations. The process began with benchmarking against a range of best practice examples from other UK harbour authorities. These comparisons helped to identify areas for improvement and informed the development of a more robust and transparent framework for Dorset Council's own Marine Safety Plan.
- 3.2 The revised Plan introduces a significantly expanded structure, including a detailed Improvement Plan that sets out strategic safety objectives supported by specific actions and measurable outcomes. A RACI matrix has been embedded throughout to define who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed for each action, ensuring clarity of roles and strengthening governance. This approach supports continuous improvement and enables more effective monitoring and reporting of progress. The Plan also reinforces the role of the Harbours Advisory Committee, the Duty Holder, the Designated Person, and the Harbour Consultative Groups, ensuring that all governance bodies are aligned with the principles of the PMSC and statutory obligations.
- 3.3 In addition to structural improvements, the Plan incorporates recent and forthcoming legislative updates. The Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2021 and the imminent Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Revision Order 2026

have been integrated into the Plan to reflect modernised statutory powers and operational authority. These updates ensure that Dorset Council's harbours operate within a current legal framework and are equipped to enforce safety and environmental regulations effectively. The Plan also supports the Council's ability to issue General Directions and maintain a consistent approach to enforcement across all three harbours.

- 3.4 The Marine Safety Plan has been aligned with Dorset Council's broader strategic goals, including the Harbours Strategy and the Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy. This ensures that marine safety planning contributes to the Council's environmental commitments and long-term vision for sustainable harbour operations. The revised Plan will be reviewed annually, with progress reported to the Harbours Advisory Committee and the Duty Holder, and a full review scheduled every three years. Its adoption will provide a clear and accountable framework for managing marine safety across Dorset Council's harbours.

- 3.5 The draft Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan can be found at Appendix 1.

4. **Alternative options considered**

Not applicable.

5. **Legal considerations**

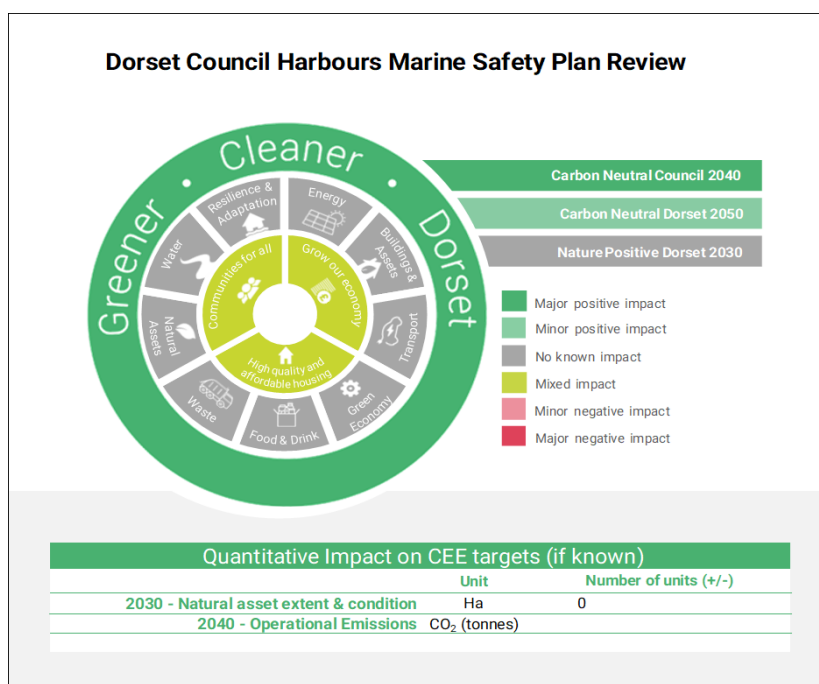
None.

6. **Financial implications**

There are financial considerations with the ongoing work in the harbour which includes ensuring compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code. These are managed through the routine Committee budget setting and monitoring processes.

7. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

There are no climate implications linked to the subject of this report. However, the Harbours aim to meet the targets of the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. Adopted by Dorset Council in July 2021, the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy sets out a framework for action to become a carbon neutral Council and the direction of travel needed for a County-wide approach. Harbours have an important role in helping to deliver some of the goals set out within the strategy and will aim to reduce their carbon footprint in line with that of other Council Services.



8. Well-being and health implications

There are no wellbeing and health implications resulting from the subject of this report. However, established safety management systems at the harbours support the ongoing health and well-being of harbour users and harbour employees.

9. Other implications

None.

10. Risk implications

10.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

11. Equalities

There are no equalities impact issues resulting from the subject of this report.

12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix One - DRAFT Dorset Council Harbours MSP 2026-2029

13. Background papers

13.1 None.

7 Report sign-off

- 11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

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