

Harbours Committee

29th September 2021

Draft Dorset Council Harbours Strategy for Public Consultation

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

Local Councillor(s): **All Council Members**

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Ken Buchan

Title: Head of Environment and Well-Being

Tel: 01305 225132

Email: ken.buchan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

Harbours Committee agree to release the draft Dorset Council Harbours Strategy for a period of eight weeks public consultation.

Reason for Recommendation:

The draft Dorset Council Harbours Strategy sets out the strategic direction for our harbours. The strategy has been widely consulted upon in its development and we are at a stage where additional views from harbour users and the general public who have not yet had the opportunity to comment are required to finalise it. Following consultation, any proposed amendments and a final draft strategy will be brought back to Harbours Committee in March for approval.

1. Executive Summary

In summer 2020 the Harbours Committee agreed that it would be useful to create a strategy for Dorset Council's harbours. This would set out the strategic direction for the harbours assisting with decision making and informing harbour users of the priorities for the harbours over the next ten years.

Dorset Coast Forum officers were engaged to carry out a consultation with harbour users which was done initially through a series of virtual workshops and an online survey resulting in over 500 responses. Forum officers worked along with a sub-group of the Harbours Committee to develop a draft strategy. This strategy has gone through a number of iterations and has also involved consultation with the three harbour consultative groups and their constituents and harbour related competent and relevant authorities. The strategy sets out six strategic goals:

- To maintain a safe working harbour and provide high quality infrastructure and facilities
- To strengthen relationships with harbour users and stakeholders and work in partnership to achieve common goals
- To be a premium destination by supporting existing and developing leisure, tourism, and commercial sectors, making a significant contribution to the local and blue economy
- To have a balanced budget whilst building the ability for investment into the harbours
- To celebrate each harbour's natural and cultural heritage by integrating the harbours into the community and linking with the wider natural and cultural offer
- To protect Dorset's natural capital by operating best practice in environmental management of the harbours

Each goal is accompanied by a list of actions to be delivered over the next ten years which will maintain and enhance safety, strengthen relationships, increase economic benefits, improve economic and environmental sustainability, and celebrate the harbours' natural and cultural heritage.

It is proposed that the draft strategy goes out for a period of wider consultation after which an updated final version can be approved by the Committee.

2. Financial Implications

The Harbours Strategy presents a number of strategic goals. One of these is to have a balanced budget whilst building the ability for investment into the harbours. The aim is for the harbours to become self sufficient during the lifetime of the strategy. In order to do this the harbours will explore and deliver commercial opportunities and identify external funding opportunities which will sustain the harbours and fund improvements. In

terms of the wider economy, the strategy supports sustainable economic development and looks to provide the infrastructure and facilities that enable economic growth and support existing businesses.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

Leisure and recreation are key components of each of our harbours. Water sports including sailing, rowing, scuba diving, and sea angling are very popular; in addition, sight-seeing and many other leisure activities are supported by the harbours. All of these activities promote the health and well-being of our communities and visitors. Culturally the harbours are a focus of activity for the towns they sit within. The strategy aims to ensure there is integration with wider culture and heritage projects creating safe, high-quality environments, that capitalise on the waterfront and heritage setting enhancing community spirit and interaction.

4. Climate implications

The Harbours Strategy aims 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.

In terms of the natural environment, the harbours will ensure development aligns with the DEFRA 25-year environment plan using resources sustainably, managing exposure to chemicals, mitigating, and adapting to climate change, minimizing waste, and enhancing biosecurity.

Adaptation to Climate Change will be required going forward and harbour operations will work alongside Dorset Council's coastal engineers as Flood and Coastal Risk Management Plans are delivered in response to sea-level rise and increased storm conditions providing safe spaces for harbour users.

5. Other Implications

None

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the draft Harbours Strategy. No negative impacts on those with protected characteristics have been identified. Opportunities around improved accessibility and support for areas of economic deprivation are promoted in the Strategy.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Dorset Council Harbours Strategy - https://www.dorsetcoast.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/4705-Dorset-Coast-Forum-Harbour-Report-Design_V7.pdf

9. Background Papers

None

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.