

Dorset Council Harbours Strategy



2022-2032



This strategy has been developed by the Dorset Council Harbours Committee on behalf of Dorset Council. The actions are to be implemented by the Dorset Council Harbours Committee and Harbour Teams. Dorset Coast Forum coordinated the development of the strategy and consultation with the Harbour Consultative Groups, stakeholders and the wider public.

Dorset Coast Forum is an independent strategic coastal partnership who provide a neutral platform to discuss coastal issues and developments. They work to promote economic, social and environmental benefits to the Dorset Coast, its communities and the surrounding seas.



Foreword

I am delighted to present the Dorset Harbours Strategy on behalf of the Harbours Committee.

Dorset Council, as a Unitary Local Authority, is the Statutory Harbour Authority for Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis and Weymouth harbours, necessitating the development of this strategy to provide aligned management and clear strategic direction for our harbours.

All three harbours are iconic and unique features on the Jurassic Coast, the only natural World Heritage site in the country. This strategy encompasses the natural capital of each harbour, enhancing the balance between commerce, recreation and the marine environment.

Each harbour is vital and integral to the local community; each one has a vibrant fishing and charter sector; leisure moorings are fully booked and a whole range of clubs and businesses operate safely within the harbours. Each harbour has a consultative group who meet regularly; this ensures continuous improvement to the harbour facilities and operations within the goal of operational financial self-sufficiency.

All the harbours have an additional role in coastal defences; major infrastructure improvements are supported by external funding in recognition of this increasingly important contribution in adapting to climate change.

I would like to thank the working group of the committee, Dorset Coast Forum who have been excellent facilitators and especially all who have guided our strategy by responding to the consultation processes.

Working harbours are cherished by our residents and visitors and the Harbours Committee are determined to ensure that thriving harbours are at the heart of our communities.

Cllr Mark Roberts

Dorset Harbours Committee Chairman



Executive Summary

The Dorset Harbours Strategy sets out the future direction of management for Weymouth, Lyme Regis and Bridport (West Bay) harbours and how each of these unique and valued harbours will develop over ten years from 2022 to 2032. It presents a set of strategic goals which will help achieve our vision to have:

“Thriving Dorset harbours at the heart of our communities”

This strategy ensures that all three harbours have a clear direction and are aligned under the management of Dorset Council whilst recognising their unique qualities and local communities. There are many challenges which our harbours face, including a changing economy, increasing tourism and marine activities, climate change and the impacts of a changing coast on infrastructure, increased flood risk and increasing pressures on marine ecology.

The harbours each have a responsibility to carry out their activities in such a way that both protects and enhances the natural environment. This strategy will help to underpin decision making on how the harbours develop by providing an overarching vision and objectives but will allow for flexibility for these changing considerations.



The purpose of the Strategy is to:

1. Set out a vision, aims, objectives and strategic goals to guide the development of the harbours.
2. Provide a working framework to ensure harbour users, local communities and key stakeholders know what they can expect in Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Regis harbours regarding development of the harbours over the next 10 years.
3. Aid regional and local planning bodies to understand the ambitions of the harbours under Dorset Council and help to ensure that future harbour development remains coherent with change delivered through the Council's Economic Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, and other regional and local strategies.
4. Generate a partnership approach to the development of the three harbours.

Dorset Harbours Mission is:

“For Dorset to have local authority harbours that are safe, sustainable and economically viable”

Strategic Goals and Actions

The strategic goals set out the aims for the harbours and the action points for each goal outline how the goals will be achieved and a timeframe for when each action should be achieved. The action points are not an exhaustive list as these will evolve and develop over time to best meet the strategic goals.

The strategic goals were developed by a Dorset Harbours Strategy working group with various stages of community consultation, involving the Dorset Harbours Consultative Groups, key stakeholders, harbour staff, harbour users, residents and the wider public through two separate surveys. Feedback from the consultation of the draft strategy showed that 90% of the responses were generally in agreement with the six strategic goals.

The strategic goals are:

1. To maintain safe working harbours and provide high quality infrastructure and facilities.
2. To strengthen relationships with harbour users and stakeholders and work in partnership to achieve common goals.
3. 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.
4. To have a balanced budget whilst building the ability for investment into the harbours.
5. 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.
6. To protect Dorset's natural capital by operating best practice in environmental management of the harbours.

Monitoring and Review

This is a ten-year strategy, published in March 2022, due for renewal in March 2032. It will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Harbours Committee by monitoring the action points against the strategic goals, together with key performance indicators linked to harbour business plans.



Introduction

Following the formation of Dorset Council through a Local Government Reorganisation in 2019, Dorset Council became the Statutory Harbour Authority for Weymouth, Lyme Regis, and Bridport harbours. Dorset Council Harbours Committee is responsible for exercising functions as the duty holder. The strategy is owned by Dorset Council and is implemented by Dorset Council Harbours Committee. The committee intends to provide strategic direction as to how these harbours will develop over the next ten years. This strategy ensures that all three harbours have a clear direction and are aligned under the management of Dorset Council whilst recognising their unique qualities and local communities and continuing to operate as three separate and distinct harbours.

There are many challenges which our harbours face; a changing economy, managing an increase in marine activities taking place in a finite space, increasing tourism pressures and changing needs of the tourism economy, keeping up with rapidly emerging technological advances, alongside climate change and the impacts of a changing coast on infrastructure, increased flood risk and increasing pressures on marine ecology. All these factors impact how the harbours will develop over the next ten years and while some are unpredictable, many can be planned for. A strategy will help to underpin decision making on how the harbours develop by providing an overarching vision and objectives but will allow for flexibility for these changing considerations.



Whilst Climate Change is a huge global challenge, there are many actions that can be implemented locally to both protect our communities but also to help reduce our contribution to it and mitigate the impacts. Dorset Council has a **Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (CEES)** which sets out the framework for action to become a carbon neutral Council and the direction of travel needed for a County-wide approach. The harbours also have a responsibility to carry out their business in such a way that protects and where possible enhances the natural environment. The harbour limits of both Bridport and Lyme Regis are located within the Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and all harbours lie adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and important habitat, such as seagrass and rocky reefs, are just some of the features that may require protection through the control of harbour activities. Harbours have an important role in helping to deliver some of the goals set out within the CEES through technology and development within each area. There are also **Flood and Coastal Risk Management Plans** which address how the areas will approach adaptation to climate change impacts like sea level rise and increased storminess and allow our harbours to be a place for safe activities.

Delivering sustainable economic growth is fundamental to the future prosperity of Dorset and the economy and the environment are closely linked. The natural and historic environment make Dorset an attractive place to live, work and visit, and our marine environment and history are part of that. The harbours need to develop in line with the Dorset Council Local Plan and also the Dorset Economic Growth Strategy; harbours are an important part of the aims to support the tourism and leisure sector but could also support maritime and marine engineering and manufacturing.

Dorset harbours contribute to a sense of place, they are steeped in history and are important to the communities that live in and around them. Having high quality destinations and facilities for local communities is vital as they are important places to celebrate local culture and heritage.

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Set out a vision, aims, objectives and strategic goals to guide the development of the harbours.
- Provide a working framework to ensure harbour users, local communities and key stakeholders know what they can expect in Weymouth, Bridport (West Bay) and Lyme Regis harbours regarding development of the harbours over the next 10 years.
- Aid regional and local planning bodies to understand the ambitions of the harbours under Dorset Council and help to ensure that future harbour development remains coherent with change delivered through the Council's Economic Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, and other regional and local strategies.
- Generate a partnership approach to the development of the three harbours.

This strategy is a high-level document which provides the framework for the development of Dorset Council owned harbours. It is an ongoing and active document which will need to respond to economic, social, and environmental changes as well as new policies. Working in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory organisations and the local community/stakeholders is essential to achieving the vision.



Governance

Harbour Authorities are responsible for managing and running safe and efficient harbours and have responsibilities in relation to the safety of vessels and people within the harbour, efficient navigation, and the protection of the port environments. Dorset Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority for Weymouth, Bridport, and Lyme Regis harbours. The powers and duties in relation to the harbours are set out in:

› **The Weymouth harbour Revision Order 2021**

› **The Bridport harbour Order 1921**

› **The Cobb Act 1821**

Dorset Council is in the process of applying for a joint Harbour Revision Order for Bridport and Lyme Regis to consolidate and modernise local legislation. The **Port Marine Safety Code** sets out a national standard for every aspect of port marine safety.

The Dorset Council Harbours Committee is responsible for exercising the functions of the Council as a harbour authority as set out in the Harbours Act 1964. The committee is responsible for any other functions arising under any Local Act and/or byelaws in respect of the operational issues in relation to the harbour land of any harbours within the council area.

The Harbour Authority is responsible for improvements to the harbour facilities to accommodate changes for the needs of harbour users, customers, stakeholders, and legislation

There are, at times, conflicts of interest between the differing aspirations across stakeholder groups. It is the duty of the Harbour Committee at all times, to strike a balance that fully respects the interests of all stakeholders, not just one group, in the light of objectives of all three harbours, including commercial and leisure considerations, and what constitutes the 'common good' for all stakeholders and the surrounding environment.

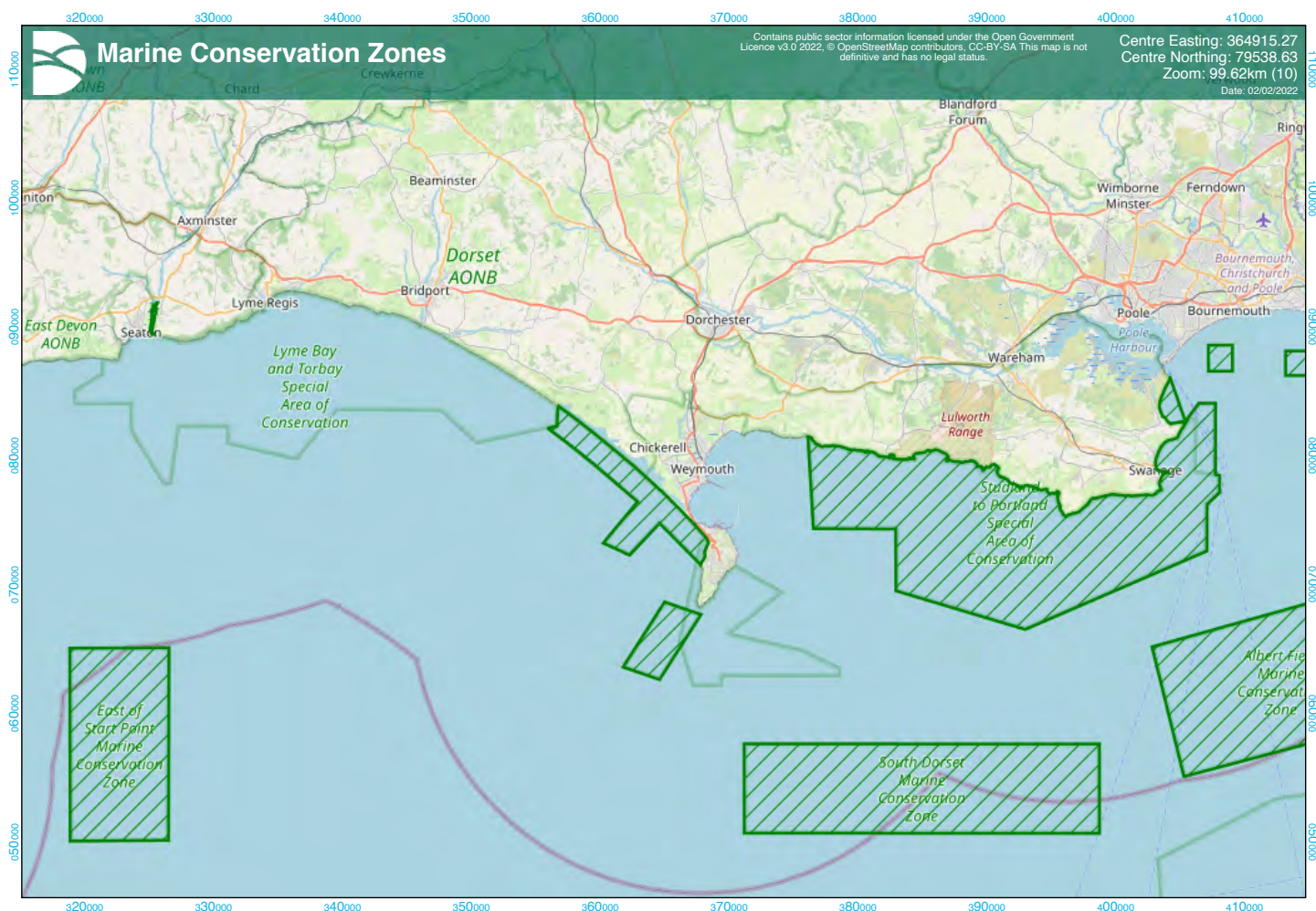


Key strategic documents that link with this strategy:

Document	Link
Dorset Council's Plan	Dorset-Council-Plan-2019-v12.pdf (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
Dorset Local Industrial Strategy	www.dorsetlep.co.uk/local-industrial-strategy
Dorset Investment Prospectus	www.dorsetlep.co.uk/dorset-investment-prospectus?nid=72e818bc-d6e6-4974-a146-38b7675e38f6
West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland adopted Local Plan	www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/west-dorset-weymouth-and-portland-adopted-local-plan.aspx
Dorset Climate Change & Ecological Emergency Strategy	www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-and-ecological-emergency
Dorset Council Economic Growth Strategy	www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/economic-development/dorsets-economic-growth-strategy/what-is-the-economic-growth-strategy.aspx
Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan	www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents-and-guidance/western-dorset-weymouth-and-portland-area/weymouth-town-centre-masterplan.aspx
Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan	www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/projects/neighbourhood-plan/
Dorset Mariculture Strategy	www.dorsetcoast.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Dorset-Mariculture-Strategy-2020-2025_WEB-FINAL.pdf
Dorset Council Cultural Strategy	www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/arts-in-dorset/arts-in-dorset/dorset-cultural-strategy-2016-2021
Harbour Operations Plans	Weymouth: www.weymouth-harbour.co.uk/fcimages/files/Tourism/Harbour%20Guide%202021%20FINAL2.pdf Bridport: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282181/Bridport_PMSC_final.pdf/7697ea2d-6e2c-64bd-4b18-d3c495a880ff Lyme Regis: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282181/Lyme_Regis_Marine-Operations-Plan.pdf/361de615-d426-7e01-4f6b-2188d498187e
Dorset Coastal Community Team Connective Economic Plan	www.dorsetcoast.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Dorset-Coastal-Community-Team-Connective-Economic-Plan-2018-1.pdf
Weymouth Coastal Community Team Economic Plan	www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Weymouth-Economic-Plan-Final-Draft-v7.pdf
A Green Future: 25-year Environment Plan	assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Overview of Harbours

Dorset's coast and its inshore waters are two of the county's most important assets where business, recreation and vibrant coastal communities coexist. The three harbours under Dorset Council jurisdiction are situated in the west of the county and sit within the Jurassic Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site, with Bridport and Lyme Regis also in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The coast is a high-quality environment which supports a great diversity of wildlife and is a highly designated area. The West of Dorset has four harbours: Weymouth, Bridport, Lyme Regis, and Portland Port. This strategy is for Weymouth, Bridport (West Bay) and Lyme Regis harbours. All differ in size, scale and the range of activities taking place.

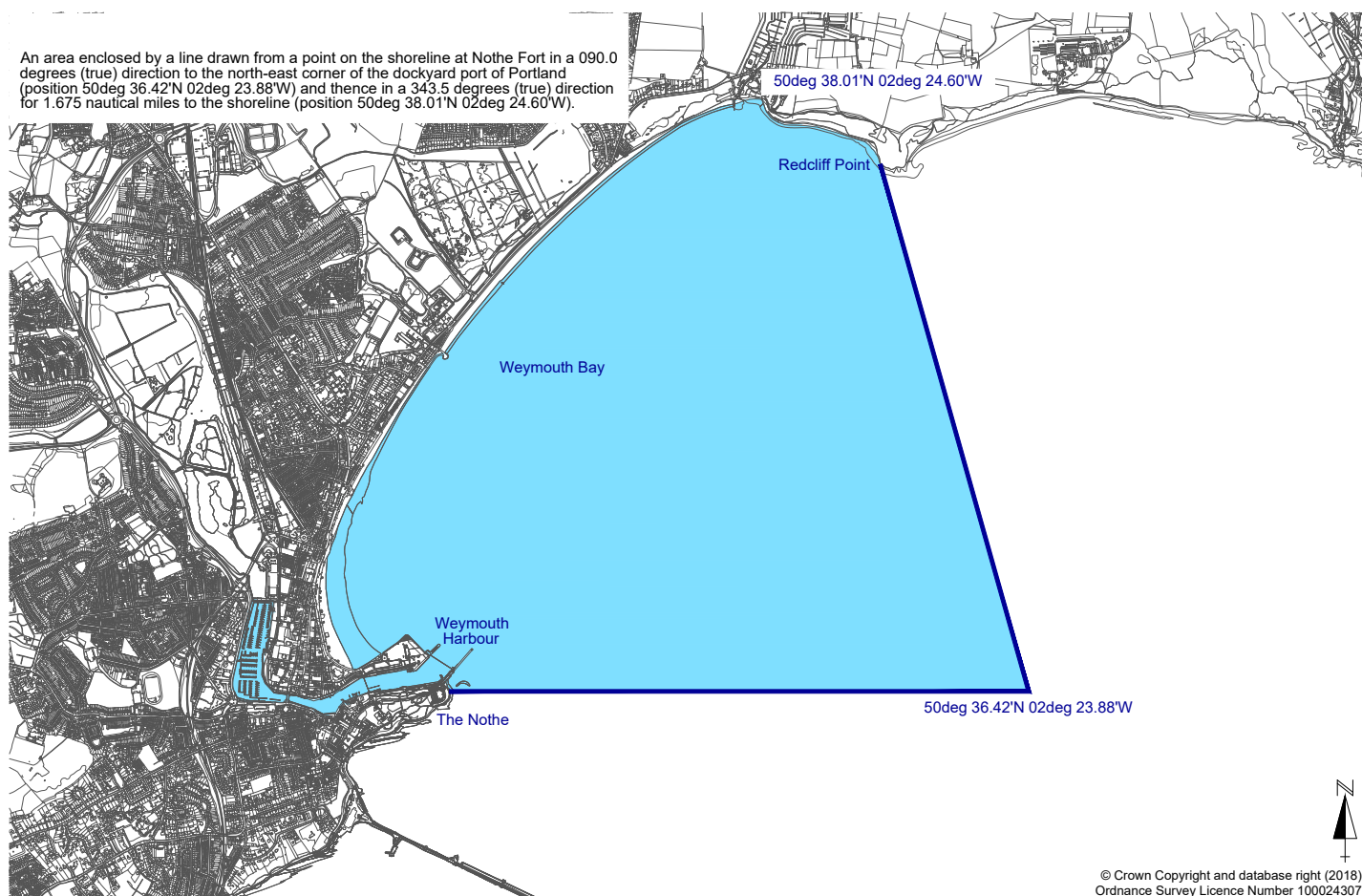


Dorset's Marine Conservation Zones (statutory designated areas)



Weymouth Harbour

Sea Area Jurisdiction



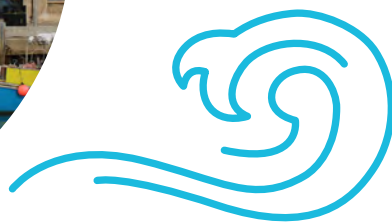
Weymouth has one of the sunniest climates in the UK and the harbour provides shelter against the prevailing south-westerly winds. The Victorian and Georgian architecture surrounding the beach highlight the town's rich heritage and plays a role in cementing the town as a popular resort. Weymouth harbour is located in the heart of Weymouth and is a busy and diverse area full of tourists in the summer season and home to a commercial fishing fleet, one of the biggest charter boat fleets in the country, scuba diving, and sea angling businesses, and a thriving leisure boat sector supported by numerous clubs and associations. The harbour has a lifting bridge that allows boats in and out of the inner harbour. The harbour extends from Westham Bridge to Town Bridge (known as the inner harbour), Town Bridge to the eastern extremity of the Stone (or South) Pier (known as the Outer harbour) and from a point 1.7 miles east of the eastern end of the Nothe to the Borough boundary at Redcliff Point. Weymouth Marina occupies much

of the inner harbour and is leased to a private operator by the Harbour Authority. The harbour has over 800 permanent moorings, most owned and operated by the Council. The harbour also includes the bathing waters in Weymouth Bay, which has a gradually sloping, sheltered sandy beach leading into adjoining shingle beaches, making it a popular seaside resort. The River Wey runs from Upwey, down through to Radipole Lake, which is a nature reserve with SSSI designation, and into the harbour. The harbour mouth is flanked by Nothe Fort on the south side and the peninsula on the north side which hosts the Pavilion and a significant area of undeveloped harbour land. A margin on the south of the peninsula is being developed to create a fish landing quay, commercial fishing storage, ice, and fuel facilities along with public realm and other improvements to the commercial area. Weymouth pleasure pier is located on the eastern tip of the peninsula.

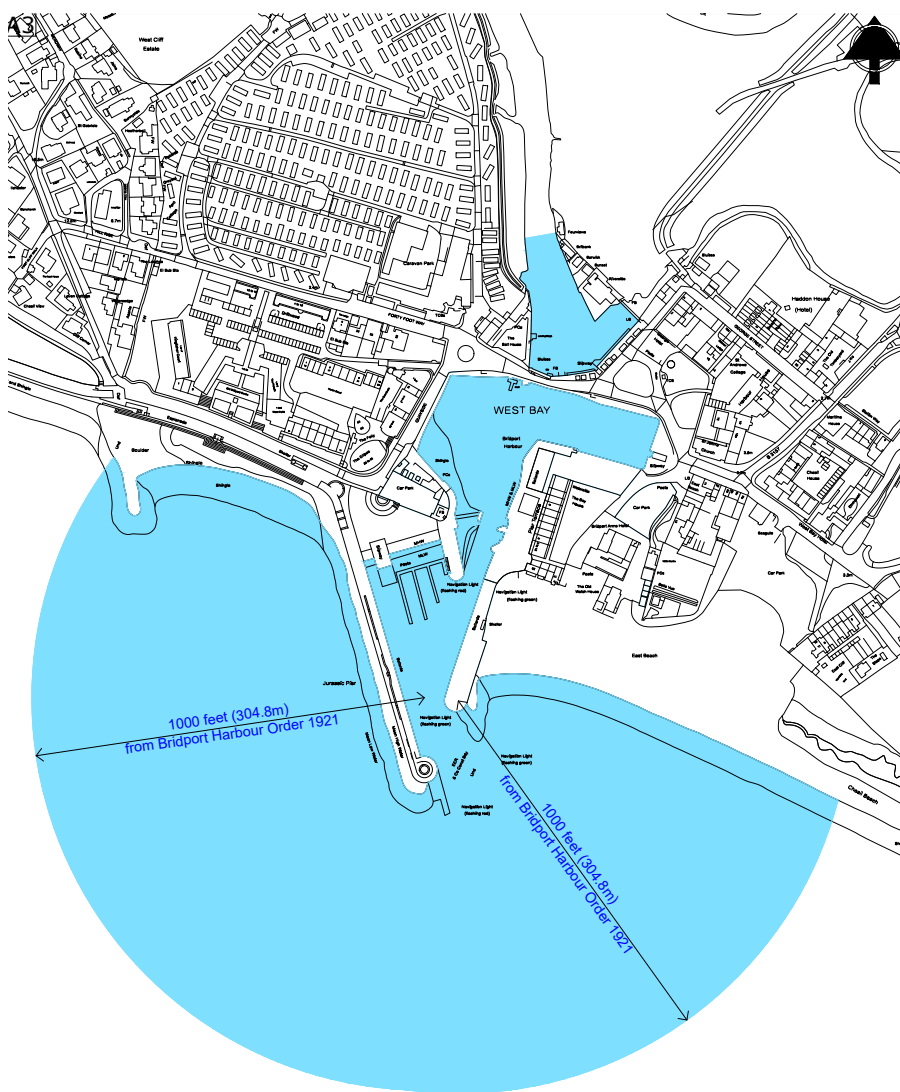
Weymouth harbour doesn't fall within any Marine Protected Areas, but the Purbeck Coast Marine Conservation Zone starts close by at Ringstead Bay and a section of the Studland to Portland SAC starts close to Durdle Pier on Portland.

Weymouth is an extremely attractive destination for leisure craft and for visitors and residents with many different restaurants and cafes offering a wide range of harbourside eateries. Although the national fishing industry has declined in recent years, Weymouth's fishing fleet still provides high quality fish to local, national, and international markets and the fishing boats are a constant source of attraction to locals and visitors. Weymouth and Portland harbours continue to be the venues for both national and international sailing and fishing events and were the focus of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Sailing Regatta.

The operation of some of the harbour is in a state of flux. There are pending plans for re-development of the Peninsula, while North Quay and Commercial Road alongside the harbour have also been identified as key sites for commercial and residential development. These plans may come to fruition during the life of this strategy.



Bridport Harbour

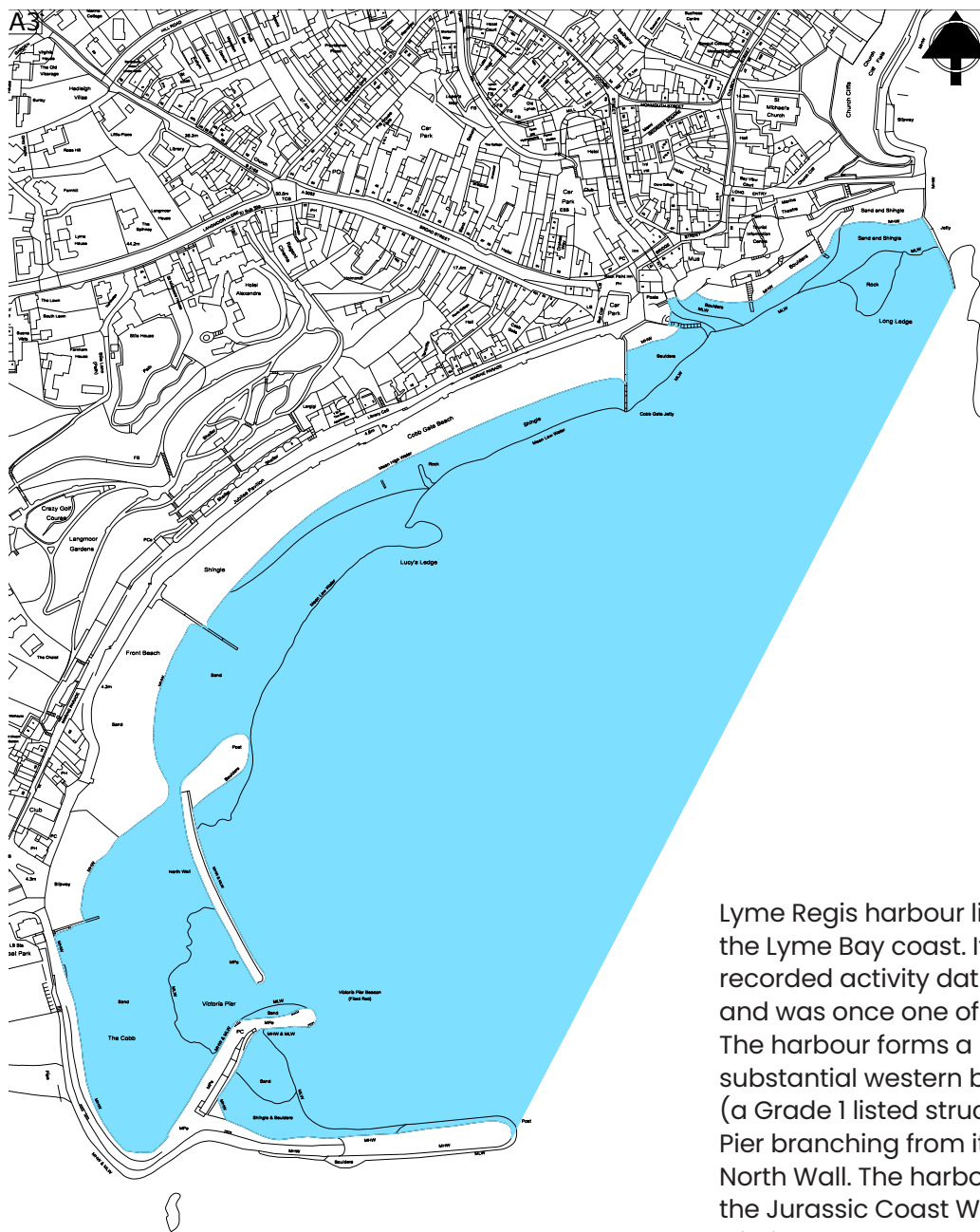


Bridport is a market town about 1.5 miles (2.4 km) inland from West Bay with the River Brit and its tributaries the Asker and Simene flowing into Bridport harbour. Bridport harbour is relatively small and is located at West Bay, south of the Town. The harbour limits run from a small section of the river, north of the sluice gate in the inner harbour, which holds back the River Brit, out to a 1000 ft semi-circle radius from the end of the Jurassic Pier. There are two large stretches of shingle beach either side – East Beach and West Beach, signifying the end of the 18-mile Chesil Bank. The area is in the designated Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and situated within the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The harbour lies within the Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve and the Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation.

The harbour is not natural and has had significant works to improve it over the years including the Jurassic Pier and outer harbour works (2005) which addressed the silting issues and enabled it to continue as a working harbour and provide infrastructure improvements to ensure there was shelter from the prevailing winds and storm events. The harbour still requires periodic dredging.

There is an active boating community based at Bridport, with private moorings for commercial fishing boats, yachts, and small day fishing boats. As well as the harbourside attractions of West Bay, the visitor experience is closely linked to the independent and vibrant nature of Bridport and West Bay with its strong sense of community and heritage. The area has a long history of rope and net making, fishing and ship building.

Lyme Regis Harbour



Lyme Regis harbour lies about halfway along the Lyme Bay coast. It is an ancient harbour with recorded activity dating back to the twelfth century and was once one of the primary ports in England. The harbour forms a basin which is made up of a substantial western breakwater known as The Cobb (a Grade 1 listed structure) that has the Victoria Pier branching from it to the east and the detached North Wall. The harbour lies within the Dorset AONB, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and is within the Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC and Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve.



The harbour dries at low water except for a pool of deeper water in the mouth which allows shallow draft craft to remain afloat at the passenger steps. It accommodates small fishing boats and yachts and other leisure craft. The landward side has been filled in by a substantial sand bank which now links the North Wall with the harbour and the shore with the beach, now very popular with recreational users.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Unique identity – character and history
Strong ties to culture and heritage of the area and communities
Diverse mix of activities
Large fleet of under 10m fishing vessels
Consultative Group mechanism in place
Popular tourist destinations
A range of marine and maritime facilities nearby
All harbours under one governance management structure
Good water quality for recreational and bathing and for the marine environment
Situated in highly designated areas (six Marine Protected Areas, AONB, UNESCO Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site)
Oceanic climate lends itself to longer seasons of marine user activity
Provides diverse range of employment
Locations strategically placed for visiting vessels travelling along the south west coast and across the English Channel

Opportunities

Identified infrastructure development opportunities
Potential opportunities to diversify activities e.g. Aquaculture, opportunities that may come with Brexit, open to new marine activities
Implement economies of scale and shared learning across the harbours
Improvements to facilities through Asset Management Plan
Implement a communications and marketing strategy
Continued partnership and integration with wider Dorset Council services
The staycation market may grow
Responsive customer facing management
Training & development across harbour stakeholders
Improvements to areas adjacent to the harbours could enhance the leisure & hospitality offer
Improved technology for the harbour authorities, employees and visiting vessels
Generation of income through festivals & events
Collaborative development
Future development and expansion offer opportunities for Net Gain in the terrestrial and marine environments, and for education and awareness-raising, for regular harbour users and visitors, on the habitats and species on the harbours' doorsteps

Weaknesses

Perceived poor transport connections across the County and to the rest of UK
Access issues- narrow roads etc
Demand for parking can exceed the available spaces
Facilities are adequate but need improving
Customer service and communication approach inconsistent
Weymouth open to effects from easterly/north easterly winds
Bridport and Lyme Regis open to effects of strong winds from southerly directions
Susceptible to climate change impacts like sea level rise and increased storminess
Some businesses are reliant on seasonal tourism
Staffing level and skills disparity between seasons
Historical environmental and spatial parameters can hinder development and expansion
Aging infrastructure that needs improvement
Wider service issues impacting upon access and use of the area
Lack of market research to support development options
Financial status: Bridport and Lyme Regis are currently running at a loss

Threats

Economic recession
Coronavirus measures affecting operational ability
Climate change
Lack of funding to implement infrastructure and facility improvements
Competition from other harbours and marinas across the South West for tourist trade and visiting vessels
Harbours are not financially self-sufficient
Brexit and changes in legislation could cause negative impacts
Insufficient staffing levels to step up to new challenges
Risk of piecemeal development as opposed to long term vision
Conflicts of interest from all the activities affecting commercial, leisure and residential if not managed properly
Busy harbours being a potential threat in terms of pollution incidents and ongoing contaminants (hydrocarbons, diesel, oil, antifoulants etc) being released into marine environment

Consultation and Strategy Development

The consultation

As part of the development of this strategy the Dorset Coast Forum (DCF), a strategic Coastal Partnership, was contracted to carry out a range of consultation and engagement activities including a desk-based research exercise, interviews with harbour staff, workshops for key stakeholders and the public and a public survey. These events took place from September to October 2020 with further consultation with key stakeholders on the Vision, Aims and Strategic Goals in March 2021. Public consultation on the draft strategy was carried out during October to December 2021. Feedback from this consultation showed that 90% of the responses generally agreed with the six strategic goals and provided constructive comments, which were, when possible, integrated into the final strategy.

Initial consultation was based on key areas of investigation for each of the three harbours:

- **What is working well at each harbour**
- **What is not working very well at each harbour**
- **Potential ideas for development or opportunities**

A Dorset Council Harbours Committee working group oversaw the consultation and has helped guide Dorset Coast Forum in the development of the strategy.

This strategy has been produced following the consultation events providing a positive vision for the future for all three Dorset Council harbours and their development and management for the next ten years. It sets out the strategic goals, guiding policies and development objectives for the short, medium, and long-term. A summary of the consultation feedback is found in the **Dorset Harbours Strategy Consultation Report**.



Dorset Harbours Vision

“Thriving Dorset harbours at the heart of our communities”

Mission and Values

The Mission is:

“For Dorset to have local authority harbours that are safe, sustainable and economically viable”

Dorset Council values

- We are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national, and global stage
- We work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- We put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- We are open, accessible, and accountable
- We use time and money wisely
- We value people and build on their strengths

Strategic Goals and Actions

- 1** To maintain safe working harbours and provide high quality infrastructure and facilities
- 2** To strengthen relationships with harbour users and stakeholders and work in partnership to achieve common goals
- 3** 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
- 4** To have a balanced budget whilst building the ability for investment into the harbours
- 5** 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
- 6** To protect Dorset’s natural capital by operating best practice in environmental management of the harbours



Strategic Goal 1

To maintain safe working harbours and provide high quality infrastructure and facilities.

It is vital that the harbours are safe places for people to live, work and visit and there are a number of ways to maintain and improve safety including following the Port Marine Safety Code which sets out the national standard for Port Marine Safety. It is essential to help maintain and improve safety by ensuring the infrastructure is safe, through the maintenance and delivery of Dorset Council Asset Management Plans and working in partnership to ensure infrastructure is resilient to the impacts of climate change and the marine environment. Having appropriately trained harbour staff with clear roles and responsibilities is essential for the safety and the provision of good infrastructure and facilities throughout the seasons. It is important that the harbours are safe and accessible to all.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Implement the Asset management plan, maintenance, review, inspection.	Infrastructure Maintenance: Maintain and enhance existing assets by reference to infrastructure condition surveys and maintenance reports. This includes assessing ways to make the harbours accessible.	All	2022
2. Improve facilities on offer.	This includes water, electricity, toilets, accessibility around the harbours. Better CCTV options to help monitor, manage, and implement safety and security for all harbour users and investigate and implement technological advances. Weymouth – redevelopment of peninsula to include improved fish landing, equipment storage and bunkering facilities. Lyme Regis – This includes storage areas, chandlery shop, harbour websites for public access, Wi-Fi, the ownership of pontoon system. Bridport – This includes harbour websites for public access, Wi-Fi, Divers Air Station, and stockroom.	Weymouth Lyme Regis Bridport	2025 2023 2023
3. Audit the existing signage on vehicular and pedestrian approaches to the harbours.	Where necessary, liaise with Dorset Council Highways Team to improve signage. Fencing and street furniture will also be studied to ensure that it is not inadvertently discouraging footfall.	All	Annual review
4. Maintain and continually update Marine Safety Management Plans.	Deliver harbour safety by compliance with a robust Safety Management System based on formalised risk assessments and the Marine Safety Management Plan. Operate marine services in accordance with the Marine Safety Management Plan.	All	On-going
5. Implement guidance of the Port Marine Safety Code.	Promote a safety-first culture ensuring the highest standards in health and safety for employees and harbour users and operating a safety management system that fully complies with the Port Marine Safety Code.	All	On-going
6. Ensure staff roles and responsibilities are clear and staff are appropriately trained.	Investing in staff safety training will help to minimise incidents. Deliver performance and strategic objectives by investment in staff incorporating induction, professional training and development and succession planning. Improve Internal communications by promoting positive two-way open communication within the organisation. Promote excellence in customer care and awareness.	All	On-going
7. Align and work with Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategies	This will ensure that any planned coast defence work is in line with future harbour developments.	All	2032
8. Promote, educate, and enforce marine safety	Deliver harbour safety working with harbour users and stakeholders on matters of safety and security to determine harbour performance and share reports on accidents and marine incidents.	All	On-going

Strategic Goal 2

To strengthen relationships with harbour users and stakeholders and work in partnership to achieve common goals.

A key part of harbours being at the heart of the communities is the relationships they have with their communities and key stakeholders. Improvement in stakeholder engagement and consultation, both through the consultative groups, harbour users and within the wider community is essential going forward. There needs to be consistency in approach to providing high quality customer service across the harbours with all users to build excellent working relationships. Working across Dorset Council services will help to integrate solutions to a range of issues which affect the harbours but sit outside of the management remit. The harbours will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders and align with local, regional, and national plans and policies to achieve common goals.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Implement a consistent customer service approach	Manage the harbours in an open, coherent, and accountable manner against common standards, delivering the highest quality customer service. Develop robust partnerships with key maritime stakeholders to attract and deliver commercial port businesses, contributing to job creation and the local economy.	All	2022
2. Develop a Communications Plan	Working in partnership with the Harbour Committee and all three harbours to improve communication, management best practice and joined up thinking. Having a communications plan will build relationships with suppliers, stakeholders, and users to improve efficiency, promote trust and responsibility.	All	2022
3. Improve consultation and engagement on developments through the consultative groups and associations and wider stakeholders	Consult regularly through the relevant groups, recreational clubs and committees as well as other harbour users, residents and Town Councils to ensure that everyone's opinion is taken into consideration	All	Annual review
4. Work across Dorset Council services on issues which affect the harbours but are not in the harbour management authority remit	This will ensure a coherent approach across harbours' business and that developments and activities near to the harbours can be considered together and advantage can be taken of any opportunities which may arise through joint working. This will also reduce potential for conflicting activities or developments.	All	On-going
5. Continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders, and input into local, regional, and national plans and policies.	Making sure harbour plans and how harbour functions are represented in a range of relevant policies and plans is essential.	All	On-going



Strategic Goal 3

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 support the harbours and their users to thrive it is essential to be responsive to different sector needs but also understand the contribution all harbour activities make to local and blue economic prosperity; Supporting existing sectors and helping developing sectors is essential as well as being responsive to new development opportunities. It is the aim that the three harbours will be premium destinations for leisure and work and the strong individual identities will be built upon.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Be responsive and open to new opportunities through horizon scanning and providing a mechanism in place to act quickly.	Promote and support investment in facilities and services, supporting third party investment in the harbours where appropriate. Facilitate where practicable public access to the waterfront. Increase use and revenues of harbours through adopting a proactive approach to developing and promoting alternative ways to utilise the harbour estate and access the water.	All	On-going
2. Identify existing, growing and developing sectors appropriate and sensitive to the existing scale and character of each harbour to achieve separate self-sustaining models.	Through the implementation of a marketing plan and improved facilities, increase visitor boat stays to the harbours throughout the year. Develop existing and generate new partnerships with local businesses to encourage new uses and additional boat visits through the provision of 'added value'.	All	2023
3. Carry out economic analysis of the three harbours	Analysis of the economic contribution of harbour activities to their respective towns is important when considering future development of the harbours.	All	Initial analysis 2023 with annual review
4. Conduct regular Market Research	Measure and monitor the needs and wishes of harbour users, the local community and visitors and bench marking fees of similar destinations through appropriate market research.	All	Annual review
5. Build a brand to promote the harbours as a premium destination.	Investigate developing a brand to promote services through the implementation of marketing plans, promote marine facilities, branding, and stakeholder benefit opportunities to assist in achieving business objectives. Implement customer feedback and response policies across marine service provision to ensure continual improvement in services provided.	All	2023
6. Link to the wider leisure and tourism sector/activities through promotion	Work with others to promote the brand to raise the profile and unique characteristics of the harbours.	All	2023
7. Help to address seasonality of industries by supporting year-round commercial and leisure activities through provision of facilities	Manage the harbours in a sustainable manner by supporting a variety of marine activities including fishing, shipping, marine-related businesses, heritage, eco-tourism, and marine recreational activities.	All	On-going
8. Develop a Master Plan for Weymouth Harbour and similar plans for Bridport and Lyme Regis.	For Weymouth this will present a holistic view on harbour development over the next 20 years and tie together the potential development opportunities for the inner and outer harbours and the peninsula area. The Master Plans for all three harbours will take account of growing sectors and trends and the economic value of existing harbour use sectors and give direction for future investment and development which will benefit the harbour, its users, and the wider town economy.	All	2023
9. Align with the local Industrial Strategy, the Dorset Investment Prospectus and the Dorset Council Economic Plan.	This will ensure that development is supported by Dorset economic overarching strategies and plans.	All	Reviewed with development

Strategic Goal 4

To have a balanced budget whilst building the ability for investment into the harbours.

It is intended for the harbours to become operationally financially self-sufficient and be able to manage any reserves to ensure that the harbours see reinvestment to support the strategic goals.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Aim to become operationally financially self-sufficient.	Ensure that the commercial and financial management is robust, market led and enables the Harbour Committee to deliver its statutory duties, strategic objectives, and fund harbour improvements. This will include contributions from external funding sources and grants towards the harbour assets.	All	2032
2. Manage capital reserves for future investment .	Operate to best value, open, fair, and accountable principles, generating a commercially acceptable rate of return from harbour assets and reinvesting surpluses.	All	Annually
3. Review Harbour Fees and Charges on an annual basis.	Changes to fees and charges are considered by the Harbours Committee in the autumn prior to setting budgets for the following year. Determination of fees and charges will be based on the economic landscape, operational requirements, input from consultative groups and benchmarking of fees and charges from other harbours.	All	On-going
4. Explore external funding opportunities	Investigate external funding and investment opportunities to help meet our needs and work in partnership to deliver key developments. It is recognised that external funding will be required for infrastructure developments in response to climate change and maintenance of the harbours.	All	On-going
5. Ensure Dorset Harbour staff are rewarded with suitable and competitive terms and conditions of employment including remuneration and pension.	This will help retain good staff and be competitive with other harbour staff in the UK.	All	Annual review
6. Develop individual business plans and Key Performance Indicators for each harbour.	Business plans will present a performance framework against which management and development can be assessed, providing opportunities to adapt to changing circumstances and trends to ensure continued improvement.	All	2022
7. Invest in Digital Technology for safety and development.	Increase investment in online platforms to reduce administration and improve the customer experience. Invest in developing IT systems to improve efficiency in managing the business and enhance the customer experience.	All	Annual review



Strategic Goal 5

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.

Each harbour has a unique history, character and community and we want the harbours to be a place where their natural and cultural heritage is celebrated and inclusive. Any developments should align or work with local and regional cultural initiatives and activities where possible. They will also align with relevant plans and policies throughout the towns and across Dorset. Working more closely with the community to celebrate the individuality of the harbours and linking into the wider natural and cultural offer throughout Dorset is essential going forward.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Provide representation on appropriate local stakeholder and community groups.	To ensure the harbours are represented on a range of groups.	All	On-going
2. Ensure there is integration with wider culture and heritage projects.	To create a safe, high-quality environment, that capitalises on the waterfront and heritage setting. This could include a linked network of attractive public spaces including a vibrant, publicly, and visually accessible waterfront enlivened with entertainment, leisure, and cultural uses.	All	On-going
3. Ensure development aligns with the unique character of each harbour and incorporates the heritage by aligning with relevant plans and policies.	To ensure development opportunities align with the heritage and culture of each harbour to carry out consultation with the community and town conservation groups/officer in response to potential developments.	All	Reviewed with developments
4. Implement collaborative approaches to wayfinding, signage, promotion of tourism offers	Working with others will ensure that the harbours are integrated into the local areas.	All	On-going



Strategic Goal 6

To protect Dorset’s natural capital by operating best practice in environmental management of the harbours.

Protecting and enhancing the harbours natural capital will be achieved through aligning with key national, regional, and local plans and policies and proactively engaging in opportunities to enhance and protect it. We will assess the environmental impact of harbour activities, both direct and indirect and work in partnership to implement mitigation measures. We want to work closely with key stakeholders and communities to raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage best practice within our harbour communities.

Action Point	Brief description	Harbour	Completed by
1. Ensure development aligns with the DEFRA 25-year environment plan	The Defra 25-year plan looks at 10 targets, all of which can be related to aspects of harbour management. Specific targets which may impact harbour development and operations include, using resources sustainably, enhancing beauty of heritage and the natural environment, managing exposure to chemicals, mitigating, and adapting to climate change, minimizing waste, and enhancing biosecurity.	All	Reviewed with development
2. Assess environmental impacts of the harbours and implement mitigation measures.	Future developments around the harbours will be scrutinised in terms of potential environmental and heritage impacts ensuring any required mitigation and enhancement measures are in place. The Harbour Authority (Dorset Council) has numerous duties under various pieces of legislation including the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the new Environment Act 2021, and future developments will be delivered in line with these duties and requirements.	All	2024
3. Actively engage in opportunities to enhance and protect the natural environment	Taking part in national, regional, and local initiatives. Incorporating opportunities to enhance and protect the natural environment on the back of future development, where possible also improving biosecurity.	All	On-going
4. Be cognisant of indirect environmental impacts of harbour development (e.g. traffic, pollution) and work in partnership to mitigate	Implications of development beyond the immediate area or which contribute to indirect environmental impacts will be considered in future development proposals as part of the planning and marine licensing process. Harbour staff and the Committee will be mindful of potential effects and aim to mitigate and provide enhancements where practicable.	All	2024
5. Meet the targets of the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy	Support sustainable retention and development of strategic marine sites including waterfront employment sites. Be aware of, monitor and provide input into all waterside developments that may have an impact on the harbours. Deliver operational improvements which contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions.	All	2040
6. Through provision of appropriate facilities and education, facilitate responsible waste disposal. Identify and implement proportionate initiatives.	Working with Dorset waste services to deliver effective and resilient services. Working to Dorset Council Single Use Plastic Policy and other initiatives like Litter Free Dorset.	All	Reviewed annually
7. Work closely with conservation bodies, key stakeholders, environmental groups, and the community to raise awareness of environmental issues.	This includes representing the harbours on wider environmental groups, helping to input and promote initiatives.	All	On-going
8. Encourage and adopt best practice within the harbour communities by raising awareness and enabling facilities to do so.	Working with stakeholders to promote local, regional, and national initiatives and campaigns that encourage best practice relating to harbour activities and ensuring that each harbour has adequate facilities for stakeholders to enact this.	All	On-going

Review, Monitoring and Communication

This is a ten-year strategy, published in March 2022, due for renewal in March 2032. It will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Harbours Committee taking into consideration operational, technological and policy changes to ensure continued relevance.

Detailed individual business plans as set out in Strategic Goal 4 will present a performance framework and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each harbour. Management and development can be assessed against the framework, providing opportunities to adapt to changing circumstances and trends to ensure continued improvements and development of the strategic goals.

The Harbour Masters will update the Committee quarterly on operational matters all of which will relate in one way or another to the strategy objectives. However, it is proposed that there will be a specific annual review of the Strategy and how it is being delivered to both the Harbour Committee and the Harbour Consultative Groups.

Part of this review will also include regular consultation and engagement with harbour users through the Harbour Consultative Groups, other relevant groups and recreational clubs and committees by continuing to invite views on future improvements to deliver the strategic goals.

Communications and engagement with the various levels of harbour management will be outlined in a Communications Plan for each harbour and will set out ways that harbour users and interested parties can share their views with the Dorset Harbours Committee, Consultative Groups, the Harbour masters and the wider Harbour teams.

Dorset Council Harbours Committee are supported by Harbour Consultative Groups who provide representation for the various harbour user groups. Members of these groups can be contacted through the Harbour Masters.

For further information or enquiries about the Dorset Harbours Strategy please contact the Harbour Master or Chair of the Harbour Committee at:

Weymouth Harbour Master

Telephone: 01305 838423

Email: weymouthharbour@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.weymouth-harbour.co.uk

Bridport Harbour Master

Telephone: 01308 423222

Email: harbour@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/harbours-and-quays/bridport-harbour-west-bay

Lyme Regis Harbour Master

Telephone: 01297 442137

Email: harbour@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/harbours-and-quays/lyme-regis-harbour

Further information is available on the Harbour websites or the [Dorset Council Harbours Committee](#) webpage.

