

Cabinet

5 September 2023

Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Improvement and Strengthening

For Decision

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

Local Councillor(s):

Cllr Ryan Hope
Cllr Gill Taylor
Cllr Clare Sutton
Cllr Kate Wheller
Cllr Brian Heatley

Executive Director:

J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

In January 2023 Dorset Council was awarded £19.5m by Government to help regenerate Weymouth's Waterside Economy. The council's bid included essential enabling groundworks to allow the eventual development of three key sites in the town. A key element and foundation of this work is the improvement and strengthening of Weymouth Harbour's walls.

As part of Dorset Council's duty as a Coastal Operating Authority, the Coastal Risk Management Team is prioritising necessary wall replacement, repair, and maintenance in the Weymouth Harbour area. The recent successful Weymouth Waterside Regeneration Levelling Up bid has secured funding to support the strengthening and repair of Weymouth Harbour wall 4 and improvements to utility infrastructure at this site.

Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 fronts a section of the North Quay and supports the highway from its intersection with Westway Road to Town Bridge. The wall is approximately 235m long and extends from Wall 11 at Westway Road to Wall 3 at Town Bridge. The wall is shown in Appendix 1: Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Locality Plan.

A general Weymouth Harbour Wall Condition Report carried out in 2019 by JBA Consulting, an international environmental and engineering consultancy, indicated that Wall 4 is approaching the end of its life, previous repairs are in poor condition, and that options to strengthen or rebuild the wall should be considered. The Coastal Risk Management Team chose to investigate strengthening the wall, deeming the process to be less costly, less disruptive to the heavily trafficked area and feasible because the concrete and stone elements were in a reparable condition. WSP was then appointed as the professional consultant to review the Coastal Risk Management Team's assessment and, if confirmed, to proceed with the design and construction monitoring.

The WSP investigation into repairing and strengthening the wall confirmed that this was viable, and that the lifespan of the wall could be extended by 40 years to beyond 2060 and that the wall could be raised to accommodate the 200-year design criteria for the anticipated 2060 sea levels. The alternative of providing a new wall would have several negative impacts, not least, a significantly higher cost. Given that an alternative solution is available which can achieve the same aim, with much less impact both environmentally and financially, this is considered by officers to be the preferred approach.

The cost of the works is estimated at £800k excluding VAT but including escalation and a contingency to mitigate risk.

It is proposed to appoint Hanson, through the Highways Partnership Term Contract, to carry out this work, as they will be mobilised on the site for the demolition of the former Weymouth and Portland Borough Council offices at North Quay and savings will be made in terms of time and cost from doing so. The Highways Partnership Term Contract is a partnership agreement between Dorset Council Highways and Hanson Construction and is pertinent to Wall 4 because it directly supports the highway linking Westway Road to Town Bridge. Utilising the services of one contractor for both the North Quay demolition work and the Wall 4 repair and strengthening work simultaneously, will not only save time and costs, but will also be less disruptive to the public.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agree to the officer recommendation for the proposed repair, strengthening and raising of Wall 4 in accordance with the estimate set out in section 2, to meet the Council's obligations to maintain appropriate sea defences and harbour wall requirements.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Highways, Travel and Environment to appoint a contractor through the Highways Partnership Term Contract to undertake the work.
3. Delegate to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Levelling Up to approve construction related spend (following receipt of an acceptable quotation) with funds from the Levelling Up bid in terms of which £1.5m has been allocated to Wall 4 replacement.

Reason for Recommendation:

The Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Improvement and Strengthening project constitutes necessary work on a wall that has reached the end of life and must be reinstated or rebuilt for the Council to properly discharge its duty to the public, the harbour, and the associated coastal sea defences.

1. Report

1.1 Background

In January 2023 Dorset Council was awarded £19.5m by Government to help regenerate Weymouth's Waterside Economy. The council's bid included essential enabling groundworks to allow the eventual development of three key sites in the town. Underpinning the successful delivery of this high-profile and much needed regeneration programme in Weymouth is the improvement and strengthening of the town's Harbour walls.

As a Coastal Operating Authority, Dorset Council has a responsibility to maintain coastal defences on behalf of the community for their safety and to protect property. The council's Coastal Risk Management team is responsible for, amongst many other duties, the repair, maintenance, and improvement of existing coastal defences as well as the construction of new defences to improve the level of protection to coastal communities. The team is currently delivering a programme of work to repair and improve the Weymouth Harbour Sea walls. Weymouth's Waterside Regeneration programme includes a focus on the North Quay area adjacent to Wall 4 where the site is to be cleared and improved in preparation for future development. Part of this work is to strengthen and extend the life of the sea wall to attract high quality investment to regenerate this key

development site. Funding from the Levelling Up project is in place to carry out this work.

1.2 The Works

The JBA Weymouth Harbour Wall Condition Report of 2018-19 records that for Wall 4:

17.5.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that temporary or permanent repair work is carried out immediately to the poor condition masonry wall section, as a depression in the footpath indicates the loss of materials from behind the wall.

The design of either wall strengthening, or wall replacement is recommended for the short term (1-3 years). As part of either design, it is recommended to raise the crest level to ensure the wall is suitable as a flood defence.

Work on the wall is therefore urgent.

Considerations

The Coastal Risk Management Team considered the recommendations of the JBA Report and took the view that repair and strengthening was preferred because:

1. The walls were stable and not showing signs of movement distress.
2. The concrete and stone masonry elements that make up the wall are in a repairable condition.
3. The wall is in a sheltered position where it is neither exposed to wave attack nor impact from berthing of large vessels.
4. Repair is preferable from a cost and disruption perspective.

Consequently, WSP was appointed to review the condition of the wall and study the applicable reports with a view to verifying whether repair and strengthening of the wall was appropriate. The conclusion is that with a robust and comprehensive repair and strengthening programme the life of the wall can be prolonged by 40 years to beyond 2060 and that, in the process, it can be raised by the relatively small amount necessary to meet the 1-in-200-year design criteria for the anticipated 2060 sea levels.

1.3 The Strategy

To maximise the operational life of the wall as described above, would be consistent with the requirements of the Weymouth Harbour and Esplanade Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Scheme Strategy and the Weymouth FCRM Scheme Strategic Outline Case.

This work also aligns with the Dorset Council Plan priority of 'Creating Stronger, Healthier Communities' by lowering the flood risk to the local community.

1.4 The Contractor

Wall 4 is the support structure to the North Quay highway, and it is therefore consistent with the Highways Partnership Term Contract with Hanson to appoint Hanson to do this work. In terms of the agreement the work will be priced at fixed rates and where the services of subcontractors are required, such services will be procured through a transparent tender process where Hanson will solicit bids from at least 3 tenderers and the best tender will be selected in conjunction with Council officers. Before any formal appointments are made, the pricing for the work will always be referenced back to the original professional estimate upon which this proposed budget is based.

In addition, Hanson has already been appointed for the demolition of the former Weymouth and Portland Borough Council offices and the reconstruction of the associated car park. This work will be taking place at the same time as the Wall 4 work, and it will be expedient to use their services on the Wall 4 project to avoid the situation where a second contractor is compelled to use the same, very confined area available, for construction establishment.

It will eliminate the confusion and probable cost of contract variations that may well result from contractors vying for limited working area, road space bookings, etc.

Also, Weymouth's Waterside Regeneration programmes stipulate time frames within which funds must be utilised and savings on procurement time and cost will be achieved by appointing Hanson.

2 Financial Implications

The cost of the construction works is estimated at £800,000 excluding VAT but including a provision for escalation, contingency and risk. The source of funding for Wall 4 construction works is the Weymouth Waterside Regeneration Levelling Up bid funding, out of which £1.5m has been allocated to Wall 4. The cost therefore falls within the prescribed Levelling Up bid budget for the wall and in terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the LUF fund managers and Dorset Council, at least £600,000 must be spent this financial year.

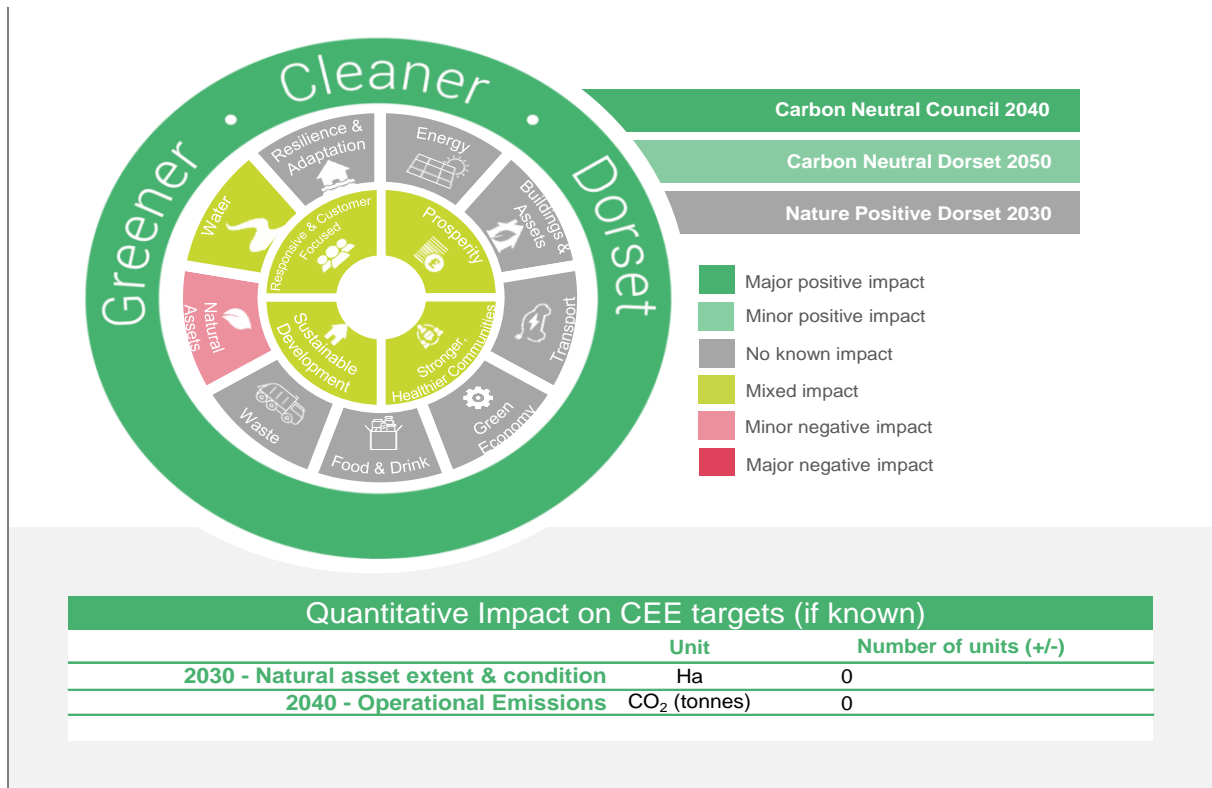
3 Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The inner harbour area of Weymouth Harbour is a heavily trafficked area, and it is not anticipated that the works will have a significant environmental or ecological impact. It is pertinent to note, however, that to maximise the

operational life of the Wall by improvements and strengthening, instead of a rebuild, will result in much lower carbon emissions at a time when reduction of emissions is a high priority.

The Climate Emergency wheel has been completed and is included below. There are no significant recommendations emerging from the assessment although it has been determined that all concrete surfaces will be specified to be the rougher “fair” finish rather than a smooth finish, to inexpensively encourage sea plant growth.

Dorset Council’s Natural Environment Team has also been consulted in this regard and it supports the foregoing approach because the project involves hard-wall remedial work to an existing hard-wall structure that does not currently host any significant sea plant growth. The locality also does not warrant additional costs for this purpose.



4 Well-being and Health Implications

There are no applicable Well-being and Health implications.

5 Other Implications

Access to and operation of the Weymouth Harbour mooring facilities will be improved.

6 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments will be performed when work starts as part of the contractor's normal Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) obligations in accordance with the Construction Design and Management Regulations.

7 Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)

An EQIA has been completed and approved.

The outcome of the assessment is that the contractor executing the work must put in place an arrangement for safe passage past or through the site, that will address accessibility of all members of the public visiting the area. It is recommended that the arrangements should be determined in conjunction with the Weymouth Access Group.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1: Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Locality Plan

9 Background Papers

There are no pertinent Background Papers.