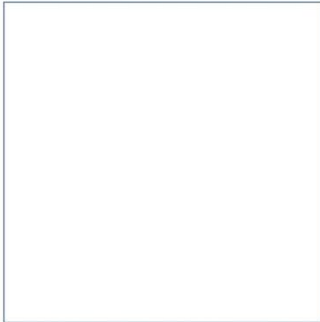
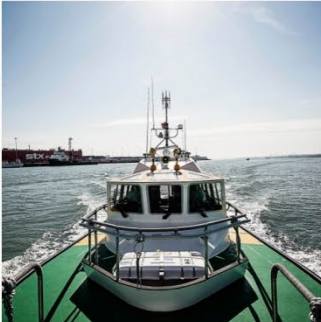
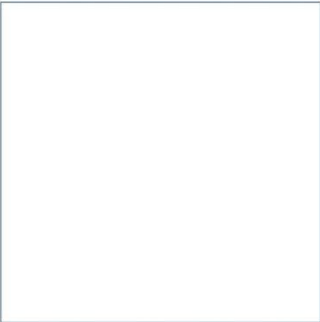
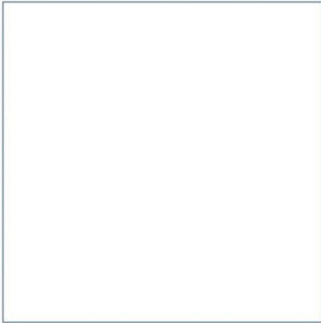


Dorset Council

# Pilotage Review

Lyme Regis

September 2023



Innovative Thinking - Sustainable Solutions



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# 1 Introduction

The Dorset Council harbour at Lyme Regis has Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) status and is listed on the Department for Transport (DfT) list of CHAs as 'West Dorset District Council'.

West Dorset was a local government district in Dorset, England. The government district was formed on 01 April 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972 (HM Government, 1972) and was a merger of the boroughs of Bridport, Dorchester and Lyme Regis, along with Sherborne urban district and the rural districts of Beaminster, Bridport, Dorchester and Sherborne. The district and its Council were abolished on 01 April 2019 and together with the other four districts outside the greater Bournemouth area, replaced by a new Dorset Council unitary authority.

As Dorset Council has CHA status, this provides the Council with a duty to supply a Pilot, should a vessel Master request this service. A CHA must arrange for pilotage as they consider necessary and may be held responsible for failure to maintain an adequate pilotage service.

Many small ports have no need for a pilotage service, and provisions were made to remove the function by means of 'Pilotage Function Removal Order' included in Section 1 of the Marine Navigation Act 2013. Removal of the pilotage function would relieve the Council of its duty and powers under the 1987 Pilotage Act and would therefore cease to be a CHA. This change in CHA status would not affect the Council's duties and powers as a Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) for Lyme Regis.

Presently Lyme Regis is not operating as a CHA under the requirements of the 1987 Pilotage Act. This report assesses the requirements for pilotage at Lyme Regis Harbour to determine whether a Pilotage Function Removal Order would be beneficial.

## 2 Description

### 2.1 About the harbour authority

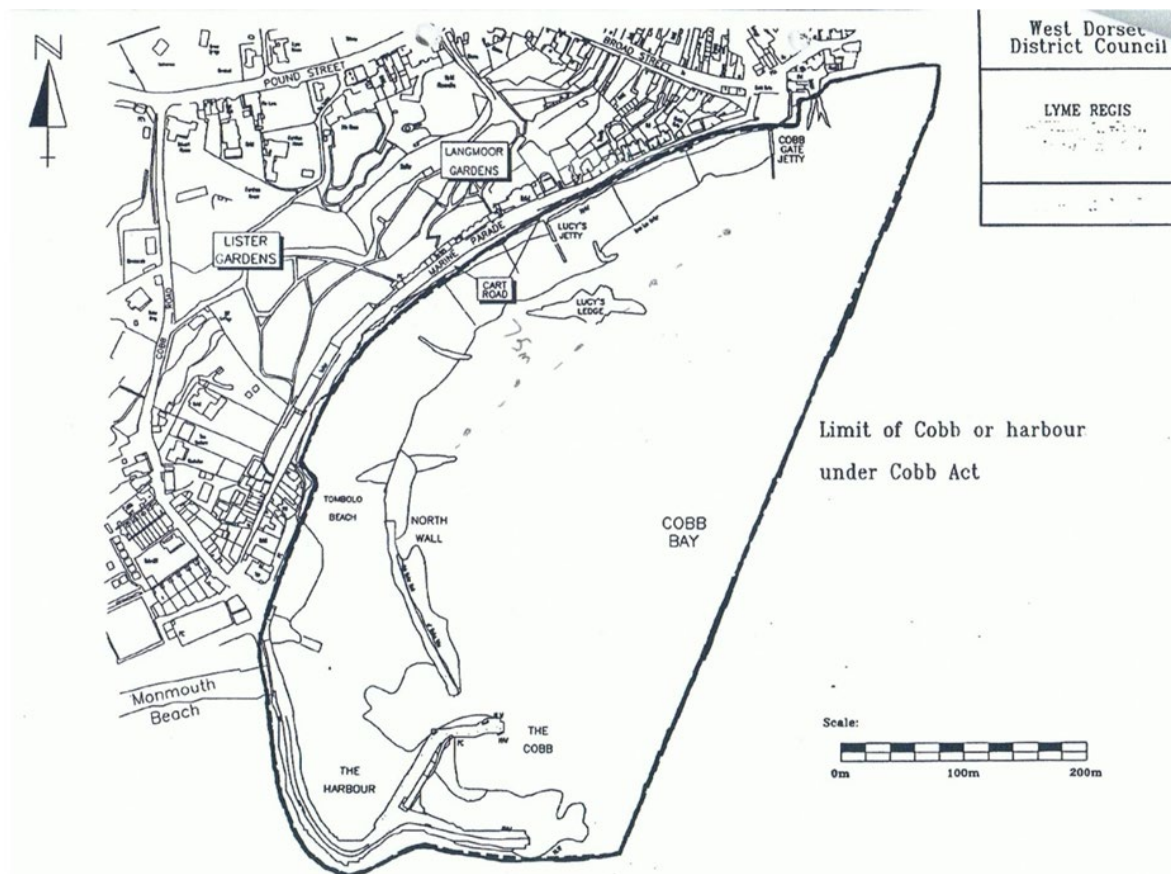
Lyme Regis Harbour lies approximately midway along Lyme Bay. It consists of a substantial Western breakwater, termed 'the Cobb', along with a detached North Wall forming a basin which constitutes the port. The harbour is normally taken up with small leisure vessels on drying moorings, commercial users are small inshore fishing boats and charter boats.

Dorset Council employs one Harbour Master, two assistant Harbour Masters and one administrative staff member for Lyme Regis. The Harbour Master is also the Harbour Master for the nearby port of Bridport. The Harbour Master splits operational time equally between the two locations; none of the Council's staff are authorised pilots for the area.

The entire coast from Sidmouth to West Bay is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), also to the south of the harbour there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for reefs and submerged sea caves. Lyme Bay is known for its bathing waters, with approximately 40 designated bathing waters.

Dorset Council is the Local Lighthouse Authority (LLA) under Section 193 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1985 (HM Government, 1985) this provides a duty to ensure Aids to Navigation are correctly positioned and operate to required international standards.

The Harbour Master is responsible for the navigational marks within the SHA, these are fixed piles with lights and top marks, these are inspected once a month and any maintenance required is carried out inhouse. There is only one light buoy within the area, which is a special mark, identifying the position of a sewage outfall and is the responsibility of West Wessex Water. Currently the harbour has one patrol vessel, this is a Rigid Inflatable Boat RIB which is used for general duties and inspections and can be used to tow small craft.



Source: Lyme Regis, 2019

Figure 1. Lyme Regis Harbour Limits

## 2.2 Current traffic use

The harbour is made up from 241 all season berths/moorings with an addition 360 m of temporary summer season (April to September) floating pontoons. The majority of mooring are trots, which are anchored to the seabed. Currently 35 of the berths are hired for commercial use. The harbour can accommodate vessels up to 11 m in length with a 4 m beam.

Lyme Regis is a seasonal harbour; the number of vessel movements vary depending on the time of year. During the summer months the harbour is busy with yacht traffic and day charter boats, many small craft are launched from the harbours slip way, with as many as 100 pleasure craft launched over a typical weekend. During the summer Lyme Regis gets many visiting boats from yachts, power boats, small inflatables, kayakers and paddle boarders. During 2023 a dinghy race was held over a five day period with 149 competitors.



The harbour has a busy fishing industry, this is made up of inshore fishing and day potting boats, these vessels work all year round. On a typical day approximately ten fishing boats leave and arrive the harbour.

All fuel bunkering within the harbour is transferred by road tanker or fuel cans, no bunker barges (vessel transporting fuel by water) enter the port. The harbour has an annual maintenance dredging campaign, which is undertaken by a small cutter suction dredger barge which is 16.5 m length overall (LOA). The dredger arrives by road and is craned into the water. The harbour area is surveyed twice a year by a small workboat.

## 2.3 Past traffic, last pilotage

The largest vessels which currently use the harbour have a length of 11 m. Given the harbour layout, it is considered that vessels up to 20 m in length could be accommodated. Vessels of this size do not typically require a pilot when entering harbour limits. The Pilotage Act 1987 also specifically excludes compulsory pilotage for fishing vessels with a length less than 47.5 m and ships of less than 20 m in length (Pilotage Act 1987, Section 7(3)).

No acts of pilotage have occurred in living memory, with no authorised pilot/pilots working within the harbour since the 1970s.

The harbour dries out at low tide and is not suitable for vessels which cannot 'take the bottom' or are not 'not always afloat but safely aground' (NAABSA) built.

# 3 Assessment of the Need for Pilotage

Pilotage is not considered necessary for the following reasons:

- A pilotage service is not required at Lyme Regis in the future due to the geographic layout of the port precluding vessels over 20 m entering the inner harbour.
- The harbour is not suited for any vessel over 20 m, there is not sufficient sea room to manoeuvre a vessel larger than 20 m; it would be impossible to turn a vessel.
- There is no freight movement in the port, there are no cargo/warehouse facilities, and none are planned for the future.
- There are no authorised pilot/pilots working within the port since the 1980s.
- The Navigational Risk Assessments do not include Pilotage as a risk control (the assessed hazard scenarios, the type of vessels and the level of risk does not identify a pilot as a suitable risk control in Lyme Regis).
- There have been no known/recorded vessel collisions, allision or grounding of larger vessels that would trigger the need for a pilotage service, as vessels of this type cannot physically enter the harbour.
- Removal of the Pilotage function will have no foreseeable significant impact on private, voluntary or public sectors.

## 4 Conclusion

The review of operations at Lyme Regis harbour concluded that there is no need for a pilotage service. This is supported by the fact that no Pilot has been requested for approximately 50 years.

The harbour is not large enough to bringing in a vessel over 20 m which would be the size requiring a pilot. There is no freight movement in the port, there are no cargo/warehouse facilities, and none are planned for the future.

The cost to the harbour authority if they had to provide a pilotage service would be substantial where a service is not required. To provide a Pilotage service would require a training program to authorise a pilot, a suitably qualified mariner would need to be employed or contracted, a suitable pilot boat would have to be sourced and crewed, passage planning processes would need to be drawn-up and pilotage risk assessments would need to be written. There would be no ability to recoup the cost from service users.

The Port Marine Safety Code (DfT, 2016) requires harbour authorities to keep their powers under constant review and take responsible action if required to add or remove powers as duties as appropriate. Presently, the pilotage function for Lyme Regis Harbour is not required and removal of the CHA duty is a responsible course of action and demonstrates the Council's intent to amend unnecessary and costly duties where they are assessed to have no ongoing use.

**It is recommended** that a Pilotage Function Removal Order is sought for Lyme Regis Harbour.

### 4.1 Benefit of removing the duty

The removal of pilotage functions from the harbour authority would:

- Relieve the Council of the duty to provide a Pilotage Service for Lyme Regis; where this assessment concludes that no such service is required.
- The cost currently incurred by Dorset Council with regards to maintaining a pilotage service are not recoverable from service users, therefore removing the Pilotage function will have a monetary benefit.
- The removal of the CHA duty and powers conveyed by the Pilotage Act 1987, will save the Council (and the public purse) time and money in conducting risk assessment reviews as an ongoing function, for a service that is not required.



## 5 References

Department for Transport (DfT), 2016. Port Marine Safety Code. Department for Transport (DfT), November 2016.

HM Government, 1972. Local Government Act 1972

HM Government, 1985. Merchant Shipping Act 1985

HM Government, 1987. Pilotage Act 1987

HM Government, 2013. Marine Navigation Act 2013

Lyme Regis, 2019. Marine Operations Plan (for compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code), June 2019.

## 6 Abbreviations / Acronyms

CHA	Competent Harbour Authority
DfT	Department for Transport
HM	His Majesty's
LLA	Local Lighthouse Authority
LOA	Length Overall
NAABSA	Not always afloat but safely aground
RIB	Rigid Inflatable Boat
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SHA	Statutory Harbour Authorities
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Cardinal points/directions are used unless otherwise stated.

SI units are used unless otherwise stated.

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