

Officer Delegated Decision Report

6 December 2024

Weymouth Harbour - Future Development and Open Port Duty

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s):

All Councillors

Executive Director:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

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

Brief Summary:

On the 19th of November 2024, Cabinet approved the following recommendation:

That

- i) An application be made to the Marine Management Organisation for a Harbour Revision Order in respect of Weymouth Harbour to restrict the Open Port Duty.
- ii) Delegated authority be given to the Executive Lead for Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services to determine the wording of the Harbour Revision Order based on legal advice and to undertake all procedures for the submission of the Harbour Revision Order to the Marine Management Organisation
- iii) A budget of £40,000 is allocated for the work set out in recommendations i) and ii) from Harbour Reserves.

The wording of the Harbour Revision Order has been prepared and was approved by the Harbours Advisory Committee on the 4th of December 2024.

Recommendation:

That the Executive Lead for Place Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, approves the wording of the HRO approves the submission of the new Harbour Revision Order to the Marine Management Organisation.

Reason for Recommendation:

Weymouth Harbour is transitioning from its historic role as a ferry port to a mixed-use facility serving smaller commercial and leisure craft. The Open Port Duty currently mandates the provision of infrastructure for large vessels, which is economically unviable and incompatible with redevelopment goals. The new Harbour Revision Order is critical to unlocking the harbour's potential and aligning operations with the Harbour Business Plan and funding obligations.

1. Report

1.1 On the 19th of November, an extensive report was made to Cabinet, outlining the reasons and risks associated with this decision. In summary:

- Restricting the Open Port Duty allows redevelopment of the Peninsula site, creating opportunities for leisure, residential, and commercial developments in line with £19.47 million Government funding commitments.
- It eliminates the requirement to maintain infrastructure for large vessels, which is no longer necessary due to the cessation of ferry services in 2015. This change enables cost savings and diversification of revenue streams.
- Enables flexible harbour operations focused on smaller commercial and leisure vessels, supporting local businesses and enhancing public spaces.

1.2 Financial Implications: The £40,000 budget covers application fees, legal support, and mandatory advertisements. By proceeding with the HRO, the Council ensures long-term savings and capitalizes on significant Government funding, reducing reliance on outdated infrastructure.

1.3 Risks Addressed: Failure to secure the HRO would perpetuate financial strain from maintaining obsolete facilities, limit redevelopment opportunities, and hinder the Council's ability to deliver funded regeneration projects.

- 1.4 Consultation Feedback: Key stakeholders, including the Harbour Consultative Group, support the proposal. Concerns about accommodating occasional larger vessels, such as Tall Ships, have been addressed by ensuring flexibility in the HRO's wording.
- 1.5 In conclusion, it is essential to progress with the Harbour Revision Order application, securing the future viability of Weymouth Harbour, and delivering significant economic and community benefits.

2. **Background Papers**

- Harbours Advisory Committee Meeting 6th March 2024
Agenda Item 12: Weymouth Harbour – Future Development and Open Port Duty
- Harbours Advisory Committee Meeting 25th September 2024
Agenda Item 12: Weymouth Harbour – Future Development and Open Port Duty
- Cabinet Meeting 19th November 2024
Agenda Item 16: Weymouth Harbour - Future Development and Open Port Duty
- Harbours Advisory Committee Meeting 4th December 2024
Agenda Item 11: Weymouth Harbour – Future Development and Open Port Duty

3. **Appendices**

- Appendix One – Weymouth Harbour Revision Order
- Appendix Two – Peninsula Plan