

Harbours Advisory Committee

17 September 2025

Designated Person Update

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Ed Carter – Dorset Council Harbours Manager & Weymouth Harbour Master

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Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

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

1. **Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report, submitted by Designated Person James Hannon of ABPmer, is to update the members of the Harbours Advisory Committee on matters relating to the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) and the recent audit of Lyme Regis Harbour.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That members note the report from the Designated Person.

3. **Reason for the recommendation**

- 3.1 To ensure compliance, it is a requirement that harbours are regularly audited against PMSC. These audits are carried out by an independent suitably qualified 'Designated Person'. To this end, when engaging ABPmer to provide Designated Person services to the Dorset Council Harbours, a programme was established where Bridport Harbour would be audited in 2023, Weymouth Harbour in 2024 and Lyme Regis Harbour in 2025. This PMSC Designated Person Report details observations made during the most recent operational visit to Lyme Regis Harbour.

4. The report

4.1 The Port & Marine Facilities Code

- The PMSC was updated and renamed the 'Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code' (still PMSC for short) on the 1st of April 2025.
- The format of the PMSC was changed to 10 distinct sections, similar to the 10-point check list in the previous version (2016).
- This latest edition of the Code does not impose any new requirements under law.
- Every three years, harbours are expected to confirm their compliance with the Code to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). The MCA's next compliance exercise opens in January 2026 and closes on the 31st of March 2026. A letter to the MCA will be prepared ahead of the December meeting of the Harbours Advisory Committee, signifying the three Dorset Council Harbours full compliance with the PMSC, to be signed by the Duty Holder, Cllr Jon Andrews.
- The role of the Designated Person is to test the effectiveness of the harbour's 'Marine Safety Management System' (MSMS). Over the past 3 years, all three ports for which Dorset Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority have been audited.
- This assurance process allows the Designated Person to update Harbours Advisory Committee and the Duty Holder, allowing you to write to the MCA on three yearly basis, with the next compliance exercise being due in 2026, as above.

4.2 Lyme Regis Harbour Audit

- Lyme Regis was found to be fully compliant with the requirements of the Code.
- The following (3) points of best practice are noted:
 - Provision and maintenance of Aids to Navigation is recognised as an area of best practice with a 100% availability statistic across all categories.
 - The Hydrographic Survey standard is very high and is recognised as an area of best practice, with an ongoing regime of surveys and promulgation of information.

- The Council has a consistent and measurable approach to marine safety.
- The PMSC audit identified 15 observations relating to improvement opportunities for management consideration, which were reported to the Harbours Advisory Committee at the June meeting:

PMSC / GtGP Reference	Evidence Required For Compliance	Evidence of Compliance	Recommendation	Action
1.11-1.12	Is the Designated Person's role explained in the MSMS?	Observation – There was no explanation or amplification of role of the Designated Person or how this is applied by Dorset Council in Section 2.10 of the MSMS.	Recommendation – Section 2.10 should include an explanation of the role of the Designated Person.	Completed May 2025 See MSMS Section 2.10
1.13	Have executive and operational responsibilities for marine safety been clearly assigned?	Observation – The MSMS, does not list responsibilities of the Chief Executive in respect to marine/harbour safety. The MSMS, Section 2.9, does not contain any details to this effect.	Recommendation – It is recommended that the MSMS contains the following (or similar) statement "The Chief Executive is accountable for the operational and financial control of the Council. The Chief Executive will advise the Council on all matters related to its duties and powers, with appropriate advice from other officers".	Completed May 2025
1.9, 1.14 – 1.15	Have executive and operational responsibilities for marine safety been clearly assigned?	Observation – There are three SHA's under the control of Dorset Council sharing the same policy, process and risk management, however the MSMS document do not align with each other making cross SHA standards difficult to follow.	Recommendation – It would be good practice to align the MSMS across the three SHA's. For example: Annex One of the Lyme Regis MSMS sets out detailed roles and responsibilities.	The MSMS for all three Dorset Council Harbours are being reviewed in light of the recent update to the PMSC.
2.3 – 2.6	Is the organisation's jurisdiction mapped and clear?	Observation – The limits of the Harbour are not shown on Pannel A 'Lyme Regis Harbour' of the Admiralty Chart.	Recommendation – The Council contact the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) to request the limits are added to the Chart.	Upon completion of the Bridport and Lyme Regis HRO, where the Statutory Harbour Areas are re-confirmed, we will apply to the UKHO to include the harbour limits in future publications of the relevant Admiralty Charts. Weymouth Harbour limits are already charted.
2.7 – 2.11	Have risks associated with marine operations been assessed and a means of controlling them deployed?	Observation – The risk assessments have recently been reviewed in December 2024. However, the risk register has not been updated since August 2022. Hazard ranking is included within the MSMS, Section 4.7 but	Recommendation – Ensure the risk register is kept up to date to reflect the review and update of risk assessments.	While all Risk Assessments have been reviewed and are up to date, the Risk Register will be updated in time for the next scheduled RA review in December 2025.

		there was no accompanying risk register.		
Cont. 2.7 – 2.11	Does the MSMS prescribe the review frequency for risk assessments?	Observation – The MSMS does not specifically state the review period of Risk Assessments, it is implied from the assessments have an annual review from the review frequency.	Recommendation – The DRA process should be captured within Section 4 of the MSMS.	Completed May 2025
2.18	Are personnel qualified and trained for their marine safety role?	Observation – There is no Marine specific training policy or inclusion of marine related matters in the Council's policy. Observation – The central skills/training section does not align with the local records. Observation – It is not clear how optional training is logged against each employee. There is no evidence of this being in place. Observation – Although there is a centralised training record for the staff it is not clear how the certification is logged and	Recommendation – Implement a training policy for marine staff. Recommendation – Develop a summary document to capture staff training, for example, as a spreadsheet. Recommendation – Optional training should be scheduled to underpin competency in activities routinely undertaken. Recommendation – A suitable recording method should be put in place to record items of training that are not certificated (for example, briefings on the use of the MSMS).	A marine specific training policy and a training matrix/record is being developed. The policy and record will encompass all three DC harbours.
GtGP 13.2	Are procedures in place for incidents involving death or crime?	Observation – The MSMS does not include PACE. This sits within the wider Council enforcement policy and process and cannot easily sit at a local level.	Recommendation – Note in the MSMS that PACE sits at the wider Council Enforcement.	Completed May 2025
2.23	Are procedures for reporting incidents to the MAIB in place?	Observation – The MSMS, Section 7.1.1, does not contain details for the process to follow should an incident need reporting to the MAIB. Observation – The MSMS, Section 7.1.1, does include DfT reporting requirements.	Recommendation – Add MAIB reporting details or a referenced procedure to Section 7.1.1. of the MSMS. Recommendation – Add DfT reporting requirements or a referenced procedure to Section 7.1.1. of the MSMS.	Completed May 2025
GtGP 13.2.2	Do staff know what to do if they suspect that a mariner (master, pilot, seaman) has committed an offence whilst on duty?	Observation – The MSMS does not provide details on the course of action to take if a professional mariner is suspected of being under the influence of drink or drugs whilst on duty.	Recommendation – The MSMS should provide details or reference a procedure concerning what actions should be taken if a professional mariner is suspected of being under the influence of drink or drugs whilst on duty.	Completed May 2025
GtGP 8.7.15 – 8.8.10	Is there a published passage plan?	Observation – Lack of detailed passage information available on the Website.	Recommendation – Update website with information to align with Reeds Nautical Almanac and Marina Guide information page 180.	Completed for Lyme Regis and Bridport websites May 2025

- Quayside checks were also carried out.
 - The overall condition of the quayside inspected, especially the public areas, were found to be in very tidy, clean and maintained in a safe condition.
 - Fishing equipment on the quayside was neatly stored and fenced from public access. Pontoons and access points were very well controlled, protected and gated.
 - The harbour team are complimented on their proactive efforts to maintain a clean, tidy and safe harbour.
- Dorset Council as the Statutory Harbour Authority for Lyme Regis is found to be compliant with the requirements of the PMSC.
- An annual report from the Designated Person will be given at the December meeting of the Harbours Advisory Committee.

5. **Alternative options considered**

Not applicable.

6. **Legal considerations**

None.

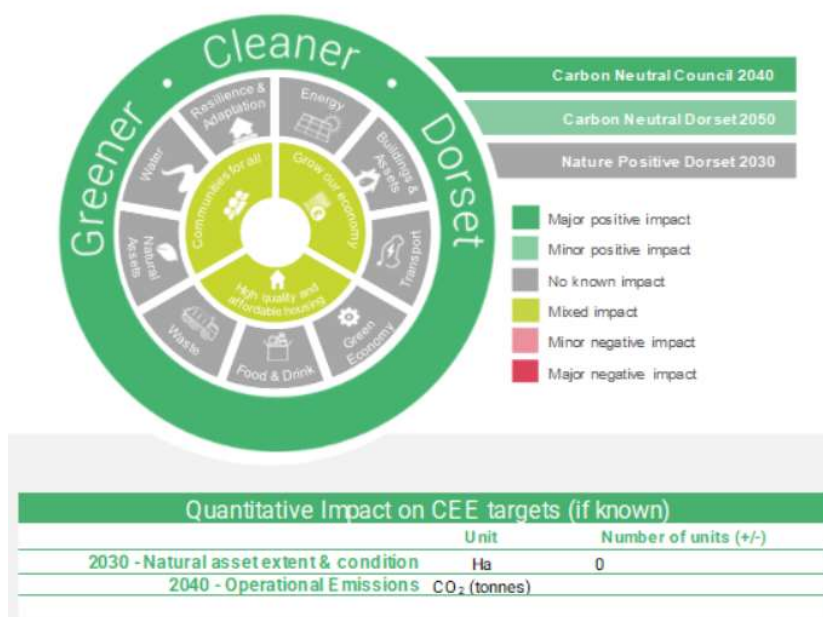
7. **Financial implications**

There are financial considerations with the ongoing work in the harbour which includes ensuring compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code. These are managed through the routine Committee budget setting and monitoring processes.

8. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

There are no climate implications linked to the subject of this report. However, the Harbours aim 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.

Designated Person Update



9. Well-being and health implications

There are no wellbeing and health implications resulting from the subject of this report. However, established safety management systems at the harbours support the ongoing health and well-being of harbour users and harbour employees.

10. Other implications

None.

11. Risk implications

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

There are no equalities impact issues resulting from the subject of this report.

13. Appendices

None.

14. Background papers

None.

15. Report sign-off

This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).