

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Dave Bolwell (Chair), Neil Eysenck (Vice-Chair), Belinda Bawden, Matt Bell, Simon Christopher, Paul Kimber, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Pete Roper and David Shortell

Apologies: Cllrs Craig Monks and Kate Wheller

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Ann Collins (Area Manager – Western and Southern Team), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Hannah Massey (Lawyer - Regulatory), Matthew Pochin-Hawkes (Lead Project Officer), Steven Tapscott (Senior Planning Officer) and Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

24. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Bell declared an interest in item 5, due to having voted on the application when it was considered by Weymouth Town Council and so did not take part in the debate or vote for that application.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2025 were confirmed and signed.

26. Registration for public speaking and statements

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

27. P/FUL/2024/05538 - Weymouth Harbour, Weymouth, DT4 8AJ

Cllr Bell left the Council Chamber at 10:08

Cllr Northam and Cllr Shortell stated that they had not been present at one of the previous meetings where the application was considered previously and had not watched the recordings of those meetings. They moved to sit in the public speakers section of the room and did not participate in the debate or vote on this matter.

Cllr Bawden and Cllr O'Leary stated that they had watched the recording of the application from the Committee in January, when they weren't present and so would participate in the consideration of the application.

The Lead Project Officer presented the application, which was for the replacement and strengthening of harbour walls F and G in Weymouth. It was explained that the application was being brought to the committee for determination again, as the parallel Marine Management Organisation application was yet to receive approval.

The site was highlighted on a map of the area and the different areas of jurisdiction were identified on the plans. It was explained that the applicant had advised that work wouldn't be started until the marine licence had been granted. The revised wording of condition 7 was shown to members.

It was proposed by Cllr O'Leary and seconded by Cllr Christopher, that the application be granted.

Decision: That the application be granted planning permission subject to the planning conditions set out in the appendix to these minutes.

28. **P/FUL/2024/02448 - Brenda Dench House, St Mary Street, Weymouth, DT4 8PU**

Cllr Bell returned to the Council Chamber at 11:17

Cllr Northam and Cllr Shortell move to the members section of the room.

The Senior Planning Officer presented the application for alterations and extensions to an existing building, to create an additional 10 dwellings. It was explained that it had come to the committee for determination as the officer's recommendation was contrary to the view of the Town Council and local Ward Member.

The building fell within the Weymouth Town Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets were highlighted on a map. These included the Grade I listed St Mary's Church, which was adjacent to the application site.

The site had consent approved in 2021, however it was explained that this had since lapsed and since then new flooding data had been released, which was now being considered.

Photographs of the building from the front and rear street were provided, as well as a photograph showing the proximity of the adjacent church to the building. Members were shown the proposed and existing elevations of the front and rear of the building, as well as the proposed and existing floor plans.

Flood risk was considered high for a 1 in 30-year event and medium for a 1 in 200-year event, based on data from the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The applicant had submitted an evacuation plan for residents in the event of a flood, however this was not considered sufficient to mitigate against the risk due to the

distance to a safe location and the route crossing deeper areas of flooding. The applicant had also referenced the Environment Agency's flood alert system, however as officers couldn't guarantee that potential residents would be signed up for this system, this wasn't considered an appropriate mitigation measure against the risk of flooding.

In terms of character and heritage, the Senior Planning Officer explained that the scheme had been redesigned since first being submitted and that although there were improvements, the terracotta render and lack of detailing on the frontage of the building meant that officers considered that the visual appearance would detract from the character of the area.

There were several amenity concerns noted by the Senior Planning Officer, these included loss of light and outlook onto a neighbouring property and there were two flats where, due to the design of the top floor, both outlook and natural light would be limited. In addition, due to the nearby placement of trees to one side of the building there would be limited sunlight in one of the flats, while no assurances could be made that these trees could be cut back.

It was noted that there were benefits to the application, including 10 new dwellings in a sustainable town centre location and the economic benefits associated with the new dwellings, however it was considered that these did not outweigh the substantial harms identified.

Mr Howard-Dobson spoke as the agent for the application. He stated that the application would provide 10 dwellings to Weymouth and improve the visual appearance of an old building, as well as making it more sustainable. He did not consider that enough weight was given to the evacuation plan provided and the fact that the flood risk would be from tidal flooding and so would only last 3-6 hours. In addition, he asked members to consider that new flood defences would likely be built to mitigate against flooding in Weymouth in the future, whilst other concerns could be overcome through conditions.

In response to questions from members the Senior Planning Officer provided the following responses:

- The name of the building couldn't be controlled.
- Dorset Fire and Rescue were consulted on the safety considerations of the gates and it was stated that they would be controlled by building regulations.
- Weight couldn't be given to any potential future flood defences and the application was only being considered in its current form.
- The flood data came from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the document was available to the applicant when they made their application.
- The structure of the building was a consideration that would be covered by building regulations.
- The lack of community space and outside space was considered to be offset by access to local amenities such as parks and the beach.
- It wouldn't be reasonable to amend the appearance of the proposed building through condition. A new application would be required.
- The evacuation plan would require a route of 600m and would cross into deeper flood waters to reach a safe point.

- Another application for residential development was refused by the committee in January on the grounds of flood risk and the lack of safe access and egress in the event of a flood.

Having had the opportunity to debate the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representation; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to approve the application was proposed by Cllr O'Leary and seconded by Cllr Northam. Following further debate Cllr Northam withdrew his seconding of the proposal, stating that he did not have enough information to go forward with the proposal. Cllr O'Leary subsequently withdrew his proposal.

Members continued to discuss the application and although several members agreed that the application would provide a visual improvement on the current building, on balance there were too many issues to overcome, particularly the risk of flooding.

Cllr Eysenck proposed that the matter be refused on the grounds set out in the officers recommendation and this was seconded by Cllr Bawden.

Decision: That the application be refused for the reasons set out in the appendix to these minutes.

29. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

30. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Decision List

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.06 pm

Chairman

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