

Cabinet

11 November 2025

Weymouth 2040: A Regeneration Vision Rooted in Place and People – Levelling up fund For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr R Biggs, Property & Assets and Economic Growth

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:

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Statutory Authority:

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

1. Executive summary

The Weymouth Regeneration Programme is a transformative initiative led by **Dorset Council**, aimed at revitalising the town's economic, social, and environmental landscape. Supported by **£19.5 million from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund**, the programme is designed to unlock the full potential of Weymouth's waterfront and urban areas.

The overarching ambition is to create a **diverse, thriving coastal town** that offers:

- High-quality public spaces.
- A vibrant mix of residential, commercial, and leisure opportunities.
- Enhanced accessibility and connectivity.
- A resilient local economy rooted in sustainability and innovation.

This report presents a comprehensive and ambitious overview of the current regeneration initiatives proposed for Weymouth. It aims to inform Dorset Council's strategic decisions by consolidating advisory input on:

- A hotel-led mixed-use development opportunity at Weymouth Peninsula,
- Development on North Quay
- Heart of Weymouth, Cultural and Visitor Centre: The Rectory, St Thomas Street

The report also provides a progress report on the Weymouth Regeneration programme and the Dorset Allied Health Professional University Proposal. A Strategic Outline Case has received Cabinet approval for the University, with agreement to progress to a Full Business Case. Funding has already been allocated to develop a Dental Faculty in Weymouth, reinforcing the commitment to health education in the County.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 Weymouth Peninsula Development Proposal

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to:

- Formally invite Hall & Woodhouse to submit a proposal for a long leasehold development on the Weymouth Peninsula.
- Ensure the proposal aligns with the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan, including:
 - Provision of hospitality and leisure facilities.
 - Delivery of public realm enhancements that support placemaking and community benefit.
- Report any recommended proposal to the Harbour Advisory Committee, Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group and Cabinet for approval.

2.2 North Quay, Development

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to:

- Approve the proposed disposal strategy for the North Quay site, based on a closed or selective tender process.
- To finalise the tender framework, including developer selection criteria and disposal conditions.
- Request a further report to Cabinet outlining the outcome of the process and recommending either a preferred developer or confirmation that the site will be included in the strategic partnership proposal.

2.4 Heart of Weymouth, Cultural and Visitor Centre The Rectory, St Thomas Street

That Cabinet approve investment of £1.1 million from the Levelling Up Fund towards the acquisition of The Rectory freehold and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to approve and progress with the most appropriate to investment option, subject to:

- i) a council review of investment options;
- ii) the Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC confirming that it has secured capital funding; and
- iii) submission and satisfactory review of:
 - Architectural plans.
 - Cost plan and development cashflow.
 - Full project programme.
 - Evidence of positive pre-planning consultation.
 - A viable business case to be produced by Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC for long term community use, including operational plans, financial forecasts, market need, and a fundraising strategy.

The proposal must demonstrate financial viability, strategic alignment with Dorset Council's regeneration objectives, and WADT secured capital funding before Dorset Council commits its funding from its contribution as part of the Weymouth Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Regeneration Programme.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Weymouth Peninsula Development - Invite Hall & Woodhouse to submit a proposal for long leasehold development at Weymouth Peninsula. The Peninsula site offers a landmark opportunity for coastal regeneration. Hall & Woodhouse's concept includes hospitality, leisure, and public realm enhancements. Formalising their interest through a long leasehold proposal could catalyse investment, activate the waterfront, and align with the town's masterplan and tourism strategy, initiate pre-application planning discussions and a comprehensive procurement review. The Peninsula is harbour land except for the Pavilion area. Any disposal of harbour land will have to be in the best interests of the harbour and the land must not be needed for harbour purposes. All proceeds must go to the harbour. The proposal would have to go through the Harbour Advisory Committee (with consultation with the Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group), for recommendation to Cabinet.
- 3.2 North Quay Development - Castletech Projects Ltd and Our Place and DJ Property have submitted proposals for a mixed-use redevelopment comprising of residential and commercial units. Our Place and DJ Property have also indicated consideration should be given to the Weymouth Bowl site as part of this process.
- 3.3 Delegating authority enables Dorset Council to undertake due diligence, explore alternative development proposal and delivery models, and ensure strategic alignment with the wider regeneration programme and Levelling Up Fund objectives, before committing to any disposal.
- 3.4 Heart of Weymouth - The proposed redevelopment of The Rectory, St Thomas Street into the Heart of Weymouth Cultural and Visitor Centre represents a strategic opportunity to revitalise the town centre, celebrate local heritage, and stimulate economic and cultural growth. However, the scale and complexity of the project require careful scrutiny to ensure:

- Financial viability and long-term sustainability.
- Strategic alignment with Dorset Council's regeneration and cultural objectives.
- Community benefit, including inclusive access and educational value.
- Secured capital funding (£6.5 million) and a robust fundraising strategy.

3.5 Delegating authority enables Dorset Council to review key documentation, including architectural plans, costings, a business case and investment options, which may be financial or involve property acquisition, before committing to the redevelopment. This ensures the project is deliverable, impactful, and aligned with the Council's broader regeneration programme..

4. **Weymouth Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Regeneration Programme**

In January 2023, Dorset Council secured £19.5 million from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (Round 2) to deliver a transformative regeneration programme focused on Weymouth's waterfront economy. This investment marks a pivotal moment in the town's long-term vision to revitalise its historic harbour, unlock development potential, and re-establish Weymouth as a vibrant coastal destination.

A Vision for the Waterfront

The regeneration programme is centred on four key sites that frame Weymouth's harbour and town centre:

1. North Quay
2. Weymouth Bowl
3. The Peninsula
4. West Marina

Together, these sites represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the town's relationship with its waterfront - creating new homes, jobs, public spaces, and commercial opportunities while preserving its maritime heritage.

5. **Site by Site Overview and Progress**

5.1 **North Quay**

North Quay is a prominent waterfront site in central Weymouth, offering strategic potential for mixed-use development. The site was previously subject to a formal procurement exercise launched in January 2024, which invited proposals from the development sector. Despite initial interest, the council did not receive any bids that met the required standards for quality, sustainability, and deliverability.

The site remains a priority for regeneration, and its successful redevelopment is considered essential to the long-term economic and social vitality of

Weymouth. The council has maintained interim use of the site as a public car park, but this is not considered a sustainable or optimal long-term solution.

The council's overarching objective is to secure a development that reflects the ambitions of the Weymouth 2040 programme. This includes delivering high-quality design, sustainable construction, and meaningful community benefits. The disposal strategy must also ensure value for money and retain sufficient control over the development process to safeguard public interest.

Dorset Council has received two development proposals from Local developers who did not bid in the procurement exercise in January 2024.

Castletech Projects Ltd and Our Place and DJ Property (with the latter two acting in partnership) have submitted proposals for a mixed-use redevelopment comprising of residential and commercial units. Our Place and DJ Property have also indicated consideration should be given to the Weymouth Bowl site as part of this process.

The recommended approach is to dispose of the land as a pure land transaction (and therefore not subject to compliance with the Procurement Act 2023) following a closed or selective tender process, inviting further engagement with the two existing developers with a proven track record in delivering high-quality regeneration schemes in coastal or heritage-sensitive environments. This method will enable the council to assess proposals not only on financial grounds but also on their alignment with local priorities and the Weymouth 2040 vision.

The disposal will be structured to include a set of development conditions, ensuring that any future scheme delivers tangible public benefit. These conditions may require the inclusion of affordable housing in line with local planning policy, the adoption of sustainability measures such as low-carbon construction and energy-efficient design, and a commitment to architectural quality that respects the character of the waterfront and surrounding conservation areas.

In addition, the council will expect the successful developer to deliver enhancements to the public realm and provide wider community benefits, such as improved access, landscaping, and social infrastructure. To ensure timely delivery, the disposal agreement will include clear phasing requirements and milestone commitments.

To safeguard the council's long-term financial interest, consideration will also be given to retaining a stake in the site through mechanisms such as overage agreements or development covenants, allowing the council to share in any uplift in land value resulting from planning gain or market appreciation.

5.2 **Weymouth Bowl**

Planning permission to demolish the disused bowling alley was granted in April 2024, with demolition being undertaken in August 2025. A substantial

Archaeological investigation will then follow this Autumn with the local community making it ready for mixed-use development. The Council has completed a design review maximising the site opportunities to allow the site to be part of the Housing Strategy and route to market. The proposed redevelopment of the Weymouth Bowl site could introduce a three-block scheme to deliver a mix of residential and potential commercial uses, while respecting the urban context and promoting sustainable living.

Massing and Urban Integration

- The massing strategy breaks the site into three distinct blocks, ranging from 2 to 5 storeys, ensuring the development is contextually appropriate and avoids over dominance.
- This approach creates pedestrian and vehicular routes through the site, with opportunities for green spaces and improved permeability.



5.3 The Peninsula

This iconic site at the mouth of Weymouth Harbour was once a ferry terminal and is now largely used for car parking. It offers a unique opportunity for a landmark waterfront development, potentially including residential units, a hotel, destination dining, retail and maritime commercial space. The working fishing harbour will remain active on the southern edge, with opportunities for improved maritime infrastructure.

A major harbour wall replacement project began in September 2025, lasting approximately 8 months. Weymouth Harbour Walls F&G are the north and east facing walls that make up part of the Weymouth Peninsula. The harbour walls are in poor condition and need to be replaced as soon as practicably possible.

WSP were appointed through the TEPS Framework as consulting engineers to assist the Coastal Risk Management Team with the design, tender and

construction monitoring of the works. For environmental and cost reasons, WSP have selected a design that involves the construction of a new sheet pile wall in front of the old sheet pile wall with an anticipated design life of 70 years. Knights Brown have been selected as the Contractor through an open tender process.

5.4 **West Marina**

Dorset Council is progressing an ambitious land assembly initiative west of the Inner Harbour and Marina, supported by Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and Council capital investment. The Council has already acquired key sites including Newstead Road, Kwik Fit, and the St John's Ambulance buildings, and is actively engaging with Homes England, One Public Estate, the Ministry of Justice, and the Department for Work and Pensions to unlock further opportunities.

The vision is to deliver a major mixed-use development that creates a seamless and connected public realm, linking the Inner Harbour, town centre, and seafront promenade. This joined-up approach will enhance pedestrian movement, improve accessibility, and strengthen the relationship between Weymouth's key waterfront and civic assets—including the Pavilion and surrounding cultural destinations.

6. **Dorset Allied Health Professional University Proposal**

The Dorset system is advancing a transformative initiative to establish an Allied Health Professional University in Weymouth, designed to address future workforce needs in health and care services. This proposal has emerged from collaborative discussions with the Health Sciences University (HSU) and key regional stakeholders, including NHS partners, Weymouth College, Care Dorset, Dorset Healthcare, Dorset County Hospital Federation, and the Weymouth 2040 programme.

The University will serve as a cornerstone for developing innovative care workforce models, particularly for bedded Reablement services, and is envisioned as a catalyst for broader educational and economic growth. Initial programmes will focus on Allied Health Professions, with future expansion into Green Energy and Engineering to support a thriving local workforce.

A Strategic Outline Case has received Cabinet approval, with agreement to progress to a Full Business Case. Funding has already been allocated to develop a Dental Faculty in Weymouth, reinforcing the commitment to health education in the region. The proposal also aligns with HSU's bid to the Office for Students for mobile health equipment, which would enhance clinical training capacity and accelerate the University's teaching offer in West Dorset.

Key priorities include:

- A comprehensive accommodation strategy for students and essential workers.

- Retention of skills through local employment and career pathways.
- Strengthening partnerships across education, health, and local government sectors.

This initiative represents a bold step toward securing Dorset's future as a centre of excellence in health education, workforce innovation, and sustainable regional development

7. **Weymouth Peninsula Development Opportunity**

The Weymouth Peninsula site presents a rare and high-impact opportunity for coastal regeneration. Located adjacent to Weymouth beach and surrounded by water on three sides, the site is currently underutilised, dominated by surface car parking and aging infrastructure. Its proximity to the town centre, transport hubs, and heritage assets makes it ideal for a flagship mixed-use development.

The Peninsula is harbour land except for the Pavilion area. Any disposal of harbour land will have to be in the best interests of the harbour and the land must not be needed for harbour purposes. All proceeds must go to the harbour. The proposal would have to go through the Harbour Advisory Committee (with consultation with the Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group), for recommendation to Cabinet.

The Hall & Woodhouse proposal includes a pub/diner with accommodation, leisure units, restaurants, and public realm enhancements. The concept plan outlines a 14,355 sq ft facility with hotel rooms, balconies, and dedicated parking. The scheme is designed to activate the waterfront, enhance tourism, and catalyse further investment.

The site is allocated for mixed-use development in the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan SPD and Local Plan Policy WEY6. It is outside the conservation area but adjacent to listed buildings and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Nothe Fort. Flood risk, heritage sensitivity, and biodiversity net gain requirements are key considerations. The site can accommodate a 3–4 storey hotel and associated leisure uses. A comprehensive masterplan is recommended to ensure integration with the wider Peninsula. The development should maximise pedestrian access, public realm quality, and views to heritage assets. Strategic flood defences and sustainable drainage systems will be essential.



8. **Heart of Weymouth, Cultural and Visitor Centre** **The Rectory, St Thomas Street**

This report seeks Cabinet approval for Dorset Council to invest LUF funding towards the acquisition the freehold of a Grade II Listed Building in Weymouth's historic town centre, using Levelling Up Fund resources, and to transfer ownership to the Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC (WADT). The building will be transformed into the Weymouth Cultural & Visitor Centre — a flagship community-led initiative designed to celebrate the town's heritage, support the creative economy, and catalyse town centre regeneration.

The proposed Centre is a legacy project of Weymouth & Portland's Town of Culture 2025/26 programme, conceived by 24 local organisations. It aims to repurpose a cherished heritage asset into a vibrant cultural destination that will serve residents, schools, artists, historians, and visitors alike. The building, located in the heart of Weymouth, is ideally positioned to become a focal point for cultural activity and civic pride.

The Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC (WADT), which is transitioning to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status, will lead the delivery and long-term stewardship of the Centre. This governance model ensures the project remains focused on public benefit, while enhancing access to grant and social enterprise funding.

The Centre will offer a year-round programme of exhibitions, performances, workshops, and community events. Key features include:

- A welcoming visitor information hub with interactive digital displays and local guides.
- A flexible 80-seater performance and event space for music, theatre, film, talks, and civic gatherings.
- Art and exhibition galleries showcasing visual arts, maritime heritage, and social history.
- Learning and workshop rooms for school visits, heritage skills training, and lifelong learning.

- A café and gift shop promoting local produce and crafts.
- Two residential accommodation units to generate sustainable income.

The project is expected to deliver significant economic and social benefits, including increased visitor numbers, extended tourism season, job creation, support for local businesses, and enhanced civic pride. It will also provide accessible cultural resources for residents and educational opportunities for schools and community groups.

The project will be delivered by WADT in close collaboration with Dorset Council, local cultural organisations, and the business community. The transition to CIO status will strengthen WADT's governance and funding capacity, while maintaining its community-led ethos. The Centre will be regulated by the CIC Regulator and, in future, the Charity Commission.

The proposal will require a council review of most appropriate investment options, which may include financial investment or property acquisition using LUF funding in order to secure the freehold use of the property for the benefit WADT and the project. Detailed legal advice will be required to ensure the structure of the investment and/or purchase and any transfer will be compliant with our legal obligations and subsidy control law.

Over the next 18 to 24 months, the project will progress through acquisition, renovation, cultural and business development, community engagement, and marketing. A sustainable revenue model will be established to ensure long-term viability.

10. **Legal considerations**

- 10.1 Under section 123(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972), a local authority is prohibited from disposing of land for less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable unless it obtains the consent of the Secretary of State. This requirement applies to long leases exceeding seven years, as such leases are considered a "disposal" under section 123. Additionally, if any of the land is classified as open space, the authority must comply with section 123(2A), which requires it to advertise its intention to dispose of the land in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and to consider any objections received before making a final decision.

To ensure compliance with these provisions, it is advisable to obtain a professional valuation for the purposes of section 123 from suitably qualified valuation professionals.

10.2 Weymouth Peninsula – Development Proposal

The site includes land designated as "harbour premises" under the Weymouth Harbour Revision Order (HRO). Legal advice confirms that while the revised HRO provides a clearer framework, the Council must continue to comply with its Open Port Duty. The Hall & Woodhouse proposal is compliant with the HRO, but the location near the harbour entrance requires careful

consideration to avoid obstructing operations. A formal procurement process may not be required, but the Council must demonstrate best value through valuation, marketing, or subject-to-planning leasehold disposal. Legal advice is recommended to determine the appropriate disposal route.

11. **Financial implications**

11.1 Capital funds

The total capital funds available amount to £25.8 million. This includes approximately £19.5 million from the Levelling Up Fund grant and around £5.8 million from other Dorset Council sources, such as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and a reserve from the Harbours budget.

As of the current reporting period, the following allocations have been made:

- £9.378 million – Peninsula project including harbour wall works
- £6.948 million – North Quay office demolition and planned public estate improvements
- £6.269 million – Weymouth Bowl and West Marina works

These commitments total £22.59 million.

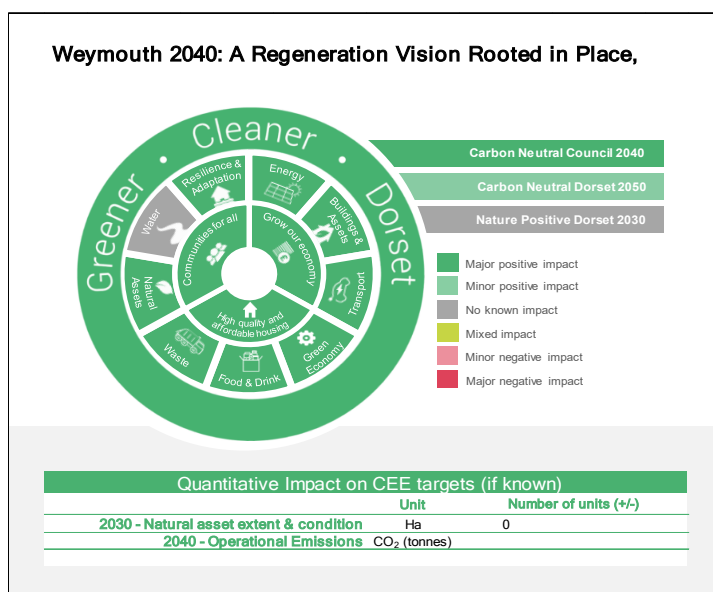
Following the above commitments, the remaining unallocated capital balance stands at £3.21 million.

The proposal to acquire The Rectory for the Weymouth Cultural & Visitor Centre is financially viable within the remaining capital funds. The acquisition cost can be met from the £3.21 million balance without requiring additional capital at this stage.

It should be noted that the restoration and repurposing of The Rectory will require a separate application for capital funding. Potential sources for this phase may include external grants, social enterprise loans, and strategic partnerships.

The proposal must demonstrate financial viability, strategic alignment with Dorset Council's regeneration objectives, and secured capital funding before Dorset Council commits its funding from its contribution as part of the Weymouth Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Regeneration Programme.

12. Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Implications



Climate Alignment of Weymouth's Regeneration Strategy

Dorset Council's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040 is embedded across the regeneration programme. Each initiative contributes to this goal through sustainable design, energy efficiency, and renewable energy deployment.

Weymouth Peninsula – Sustainable Coastal Development

The mixed-use scheme includes:

- Sustainable architecture designed to minimise environmental impact.
- Integration of renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels and efficient building systems.

The development will incorporate flood resilience and biodiversity net gain measures, aligning with climate adaptation goals.

13. 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)