

Harbours Advisory Committee

3 December 2025

Provision of Designated Person Services

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

Email: ed.carter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

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

1. **Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report is to update the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee on the continued provision of Designated Person services by ABPmer for the Dorset Council Harbours of Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis and Weymouth.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee note the continued provision of Designated Person services by ABPmer for the next three years.

3. **Reason for the recommendation**

- 3.1 To ensure ongoing compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), Dorset Council harbours must be regularly audited by an independent and suitably qualified Designated Person. ABPmer were appointed in 2022 to deliver this service across the three harbours, and have since provided consistent, high-quality audits that have supported both compliance and continuous improvement. The recommendation reflects the benefits of maintaining continuity for the next audit cycle, while recognising that a review of the market may be appropriate thereafter to ensure continued best value and alignment with evolving industry standards.

4. **The report**

- 4.1 Dorset Council has engaged ABPmer to provide Designated Person (DP) services across its three statutory harbours, Bridport (West Bay), Weymouth, and Lyme Regis, since 2023. Over this period, ABPmer's appointed DP, James Hannon, has conducted comprehensive audits at each harbour, confirming compliance with the PMSC and guiding the implementation of industry best practice.
- 4.2 The PMSC requires that the DP be independent, suitably qualified, and possess a thorough understanding of the Code and its associated guidance. James Hannon meets these criteria and has developed a strong working relationship with harbour staff and management. His familiarity with local operations and personnel has enabled a consistent and informed approach to auditing and assurance, which has proven invaluable in maintaining and improving our Marine Safety Management Systems.
- 4.3 While it is good practice to periodically test the market for consultancy services such as Designated Person provision, the current circumstances strongly support continuity. James Hannon has developed a detailed understanding of our harbour operations and built a trusted relationship with senior staff. This continuity enables a more strategic and developmental approach to safety assurance, building on previous audits and recommendations. Introducing a new DP at this stage would require time to re-establish local knowledge and rapport, potentially slowing progress on ongoing improvements. For this reason, we propose to continue with ABPmer for a further cycle of three audits, after which we would consider reviewing the market to ensure continued best value and alignment with evolving industry standards.
- 4.4 When ABPmer was first engaged in 2022, the quotation did not include costs for travel, and over the past three years we have also introduced regular catchups between the Harbour Masters and the Designated Person, which have proven highly beneficial but were not accounted for in the original quotation and have not been charged to Dorset Council. These elements, together with the expected inflationary increase, are now incorporated into the updated proposal. The quoted cost of £13,050 (excluding VAT) for a further three-year engagement represents excellent value for the expertise and assurance provided. James Hannon remains well placed to support Dorset Council's harbours in their continued development, particularly as we prepare for the next PMSC compliance declaration to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in early 2026.
- 4.5 Procurement has been conducted in accordance with Dorset Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The contract value is below the threshold requiring

Cabinet approval. The procurement is considered low-risk and low-value and will be managed within the Place Services Directorate.

Internal procurement guidance for engaging Specialist Professional Services (SPS) has been followed. Due to the low value of the contract and the limited market expertise for this specialist service, it is deemed appropriate to proceed under the CPRs, supported by completion of a PID Light.

- 4.6 In summary, the continued appointment of ABPmer and James Hannon as DP is a logical and beneficial decision that supports our commitment to safe, compliant, and well-managed harbour operations.

5. **Alternative options considered**

Not applicable.

6. **Legal considerations**

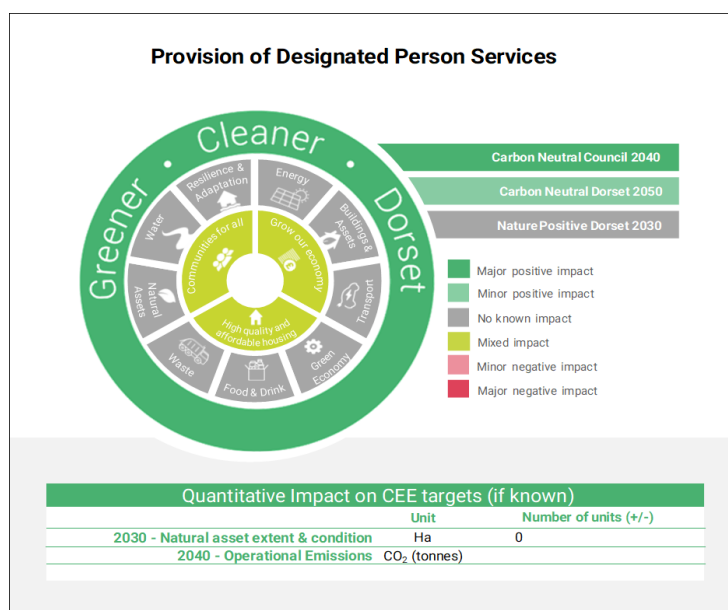
None.

7. **Financial implications**

There are financial considerations associated with maintaining compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), including the provision of Designated Person (DP) services. These costs are managed through the routine Harbours Committee budget-setting and monitoring processes. The cost for the continuation of DP services with ABPmer is £13,050 ex VAT for the next cycle of three audits, one at each harbour, and represents good value for the level of expertise and continuity provided. This investment supports not only statutory compliance but also the ongoing development of our Marine Safety Management Systems and the implementation of industry best practice. As part of our commitment to transparency and value for money, we anticipate reviewing the market for DP services following the completion of this next audit cycle.

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.



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).