

Cabinet

3 March 2026

Bridport (West Bay) Harbour Walls Stabilisation & Property Works

For Decision

Cabinet Members:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Cllr R Biggs, Property & Assets and Economic Growth

Local Councillor(s): Cllr Bridget Bolwell, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Sarah Williams

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Jack Wiltshire, Corporate Director Highways & Engineering

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Report status: Part Exempt Para 3

1. Executive summary

The idyllic harbour at Westbay is a key visitor attraction and central point for the local community. Located on Dorset's famous Jurassic Coast, the area strengthens the local economy with a predominant maritime and visitor focus.

Dorset Council is responsible for maintaining the harbour walls at West Bay. Walls A and B, which form the western and southern sides of the inner harbour, have deteriorated significantly, and Wall B has already failed. This has created safety risks, affected access and contributed to movement in nearby Council buildings.

Project costs are shown in exempt Appendix 1. The spend since 2023 has enabled the first phase of ground stabilisation work to be completed. This paper seeks approval to restore structural strength to Wall B, raise its height to reinstate its flood defence function, and stabilise wall A through ground stabilisation.

The condition of Wall B has also highlighted the declining state of the Harbour Master's office and adjacent public toilets. Following the repairs to the harbour

walls, the paper seeks Cabinet's support to investigate a series of options for the council owned buildings.

Both elements are presented together to support a coordinated approach to investment, with further transformation of the public space aligned to the Strategic Asset Management Plan to shape the final proposals.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place to agree a specification for required works, procurement and award of contracts for harbour wall repairs up to a maximum spend (shown in Appendix 1), following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services and the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommend investigating a series of options for the council owned buildings that have been affected by the localised ground movement.

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

- 3.1 Delegating authority for the overall harbour wall repair works will ensure that essential stabilisation and repair activity can proceed in a coordinated and efficient manner, maintaining the safety, functionality and resilience of key harbour infrastructure. Consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services and the Section 151 Officer will provide appropriate oversight and financial assurance.
- 3.2 The full options for the related buildings cannot be suitably assessed until the works to the walls have been completed. The options for the buildings will need to be investigated, with a subsequent report presented to Cabinet if further substantial works are required.

4. **The report**

4.1 West Bay Harbour Walls

Location and function

Walls A and B form the western and southern sides of the West Bay inner harbour and are critical infrastructure for the Council's commercial harbour activity, local business operations, tourism and flood defence. Located directly behind Wall B are several council owned assets, including trading kiosks, public toilets and the Harbour Master's office.



Failure and temporary stabilisation

Wall A requires urgent maintenance, while Wall B is in extremely poor condition with no remaining design life. Wall B is also too low to provide effective flood defence, increasing the risk of inundation to nearby businesses and properties during storm events. Further deterioration would require closure of the kiosks and the Harbour Master's office until repairs could be completed.

For public safety, barriers have been installed around the failed sections, restricting access for visitors and limiting access to moored vessels. The damaged footway and temporary measures also detract from the setting of the Grade II listed harbour and negatively affect local trade. If permanent works are not delivered before further failure occurs, the wall and adjacent footway may be lost, necessitating full reconstruction, business closures and significantly increased cost and timescales.

Poor condition and main construction elements

The remedial scheme uses innovative methods suitable for weakened structures that cannot withstand traditional construction techniques, while retaining historic features wherever possible. Remaining works include restoring structural strength to Wall B and raising its height to reinstate its flood defence function, along with additional void filling and ground stabilisation behind Wall A. The chosen methods minimise new materials, vehicle movements and noise, supporting a sustainable and neighbour friendly approach.

4.2 Harbour Offices and Toilets

A series of options for the Harbour Master's office and public toilet block will be investigated once the stabilisation works have been completed. These options will consider improvements to the public space aligned with the Strategic Asset Management Plan, ensuring proposals integrate with the wider vision for West Bay.

5 Alternative options considered

5.1 West Bay Harbour Walls

13 options for remediation were considered and weighted for viability (including cost, time to construct, historic impact, environmental impact, noise, and lifespan). The proposed scheme demonstrates the optimal engineering solutions for construction delivery.

6 Legal considerations

6.1 West Bay Harbour Walls

Works will be undertaken in accordance with relevant licensing, environmental and marine regulatory frameworks. No additional legal issues have been identified.

6.2 Harbour Master's Office and Public Toilets

The investigation of alternative options will need to consider planning permission, compliance with building regulations, accessibility standards and marine licensing considerations where applicable. No other legal concerns are identified at this stage.

7. Financial implications

7.1 Financial implications are identified in Appendix 1 (exempt).

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

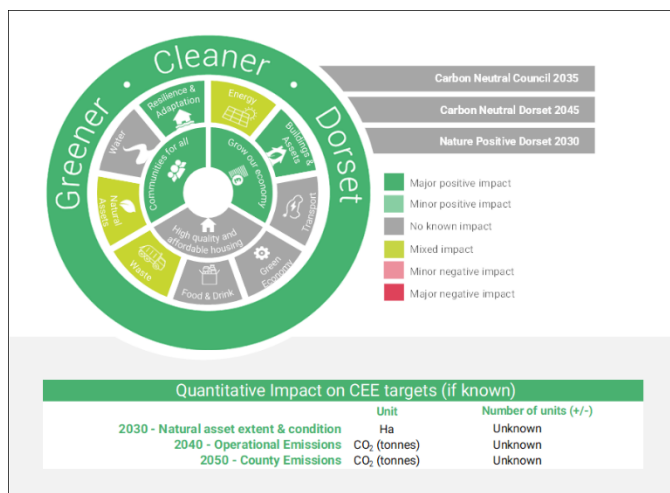
7.1 West Bay Harbour Walls

The design retains as much existing material as possible to minimise waste, vehicle movements and use of new materials. All works are done with Environment Agency and Marine Management Organisation scrutiny.

7.2 Harbour Master's Office and Public Toilets

Investigation of the possible options will consider opportunities to improve energy efficiency, reduce operational carbon and incorporate sustainable design measures.

7.3 Climate Wheel



The proposal will have major positive impacts on the resilience and adaptation of the locality and, thereby, the proximal buildings and assets. This impact is immediate, but should also be considered significant in the context of the growing risks associated with sea level rises.^[1] Strengthened resilience is in turn expected to have major positive economic and community impacts. The energy and waste impacts are noted as mixed due to the unavoidable use of resources during construction, but efforts will be made to mitigate these impacts through the construction and design approaches for the repairs and new assets. The natural assets element is also noted as mixed due to the proximity of Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC and Chesil and the Fleet SAC, but as noted all works will be undertaken with EA and MMO scrutiny.

Footnote 1. Met Office projections of local changes in sea level (relative to a 1981-2000 baseline) are 18cm (2030s), 29cm (2050s) and 48cm (2080s) in its 'central' scenario, and up to 26cm (2030s), 47cm (2050s) and 91cm (2080s) in its 'high impact' scenario. Projections are made relative to emissions levels rather than global temperatures as sea levels will continue to rise long after temperatures stabilise. There may be a greater than 10% chance of rises outside these ranges, and the Met Office is clear that it cannot rule out substantial further rises associated with ice sheet instability not represented in the projections. The full range of Met Office projections is available at: [Sea Level Rise - Projections \(Local Authority\) v1 | The Met Office climate data portal](#). A factsheet on sea level rise and storm surges is available at: [ukcp18-fact-sheet-sea-level-rise-and-storm-surge.pdf](#).

9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 West Bay Harbour Walls

Restoring the walls to a safe and functional condition will significantly improve movement and accessibility around the harbour, reinstating safe access to moored vessels and reducing risks associated with floodwater exposure.

9.2 Harbour Master's Office and Public Toilets

Wellbeing and health implications will need to be considered as part of the investigation of future options.

10. **Other implications**

10.1 N/a

11. **Risk implications**

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

12. **Equalities**

12.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be completed for the series of options considered for the Harbour Master's office and associated buildings.

13. **Appendices**

13.2 See Appendix 1, exempt appendix detailing cost estimates

14. **Background papers**

14.1 N/a

15 **Report sign-off**

15.1 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)