.

Harbours Advisory Committee

23 September 2026

Harbour Budget Monitoring Report 2026-27

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 Councils Harbours Manager, James Radcliffe, Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master, Claire Connolly, Weymouth Harbour Business Manager
Email: ed.carter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk James.radcliffe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk claire.connolly@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2021, Local Legislation

Report status: Public Choose an item.

Executive summary

1. The purpose of the report is report is to set out the current budget forecasts and reserve balances for Dorset Councils Harbours for 2026/27. The financial summaries are given in the appendices.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

2.1 That the Harbours Advisory Group note the 2026/27 budget monitoring figures and reserve balances for Dorset Councils harbours as at the end July 2026.

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

3.1 The Dorset Council Harbours Strategy and Business Plan provide comprehensive five year financial and investment framework that guides the future allocation and use of harbour budgets.

3.2 Overall, Dorset Council's harbours are performing well, with Weymouth forecast to exceed its budgeted surplus, Lyme Regis remaining on track for a balanced position, and Bridport forecasting a reduced but still positive surplus.

.

Cost pressures are being actively managed, and reserve balances continue to support investment in harbour infrastructure and future strategic priorities.

3.3 Strategic goal number 4 of the harbour strategy is to maintain a balanced budget while building the capacity for ongoing investment in the harbours. The overarching aim is for Dorset's harbours to become financially self-sufficient, with the ability to manage and reinvest reserves to support strategic aims.

3.3 Regular budget monitoring and reporting to the Harbours Advisory Committee plays a key role in managing financial risks. This process ensures that income is reviewed against expectations and that any potential under or overspending is identified and addressed promptly.

4. **Bridport Harbour:**

4.1 Bridport Harbour budget forecast figures are given at Appendix 1; there is a budgeted surplus of £90,400. The current forecast is that this surplus will decrease to £71,807.

4.2 The vacant Harbour Mechanic post has resulted in salary savings; it has also contributed to lower than anticipated income due to the loss of revenue-generating activities linked to the role. The long-term future of the post remains uncertain and will be addressed as part of the next round of budget setting.

4.3 Premises-related costs are currently showing an overspend, largely attributable to the installation of three quayside davits. However, as the project is eligible for 75% fisheries grant funding, the associated income is included within the forecast and mitigates the overall budget impact.

4.4 There are also some minor overspends relating to Legal Costs and Business Rates.

4.5 There is a reduction in income relating to the vacant mechanic post.

4.6 Car park income is forecast to be below budget, reflecting lower income levels compared with the previous year.

4.7 Mooring and Boat Storage Fees have been forecast to match last year's actual income, resulting in a minor shortfall on budget.

4.8 Income from shop and fuel sales are currently on track to achieve budget expectations.

.

5 **Lyme Regis Harbour**:

5.1 Lyme Harbour budget forecast figures are given at Appendix 2.

5.2 Expenditure on seasonal staff is currently lower than anticipated and this saving has been reflected in the forecast.

5.3 Additional costs relating to business rates have arisen during the year and are reflected in the forecast.

5.4 Fuel expenditure is currently forecast to exceed budget; however, this is offset by the associated income generated from fuel sales.

5.5 Income from licences is forecast to be below budget. Improved data is now available, which will assist in refining future forecasts and ensuring budgets more accurately reflect actual income levels.

5.6 There remains a requirement to deliver a balanced budget, and any emerging cost pressures will continue to be closely monitored and managed to achieve a cost-neutral position.

6 Weymouth Harbour:

6.1 Weymouth Harbour budget forecast figures are given at Appendix 3.

6.2 Weymouth Harbour budget was originally set to deliver a year-end surplus of £603,300. The current forecast indicates an increase to this surplus to £675,607.

6.3 Income: overall £157,184 favourable

6.4 Marina berthing income is currently forecast to be slightly below budget. Annual berthing income is expected to fall short of budget expectations; however, this has been partially offset by the continued growth in demand for short-term and seasonal berthing. Income from shorter-term lets continues to perform well and is forecast to exceed budget. As a result, overall, there is adverse variance against the marina berthing income budget with a shortfall of 1.6%.

6.5 Income from recreational visitor overnight berthing is currently forecast to be slightly below budget, this reflects the variability in visitor numbers experienced throughout the season.

.

6.6 This shortfall is offset within the wider visitor leisure income streams by a strong performance from both slipway usage and water sports permit with both income streams outperforming budget expectations.

6.7 Combined income from these activities represents a favourable variance of approximately 1.2%.

6.8 Income generated by existing and new income streams at the commercial area is improving. Although the number of visiting vessels using the Fish Landing Quay is lower than last year, this is primarily due to one regular visitor now occupying a permanent mooring. Associated income such as overnight berthing, short-stay fees and use of the catch store are all performing ahead of budget and making a positive contribution to the commercial area's financial position.

6.9 There is new income from fuel sales, business continues to improve with the facility being used by both annual berth holders and visiting vessels.

6.10 A review of operating licences and associated berthing arrangements has resulted in a reduction in income. The review was undertaken to ensure greater consistency and fairness across licence fees. This has given operators better flexibility in berthing arrangements.

6.11 Income from harbour-owned car parks was expected to be below budget, with allowances made within the forecast for the anticipated loss of revenue resulting from the partial closure of the Pavilion car park. However, current projections indicate that car park income will exceed those forecasts.

6.12 Expenditure overall £84,877 adverse

6.13 Pay related costs are higher than budgeted due to the re-evaluation of two established posts.

6.14 Increases have been applied to a number of budget areas to better reflect actual costs, based on last year’s outturn. These include insurance and vehicle maintenance recharges.

6.15 Parking expenditure has also been increased to align more closely with last year’s outturn. This ensures consistency with previous costs and more accurately reflects the expenditure now known to the service.

6.16 Energy costs continue to be closely monitored. Whilst the overall utilities budget is currently forecast to achieve a small favourable variance, electricity costs remain under pressure due to a number of known issues. Work is

.

ongoing with relevant officers and service providers to resolve these matters and identify opportunities to reduce the associated costs.

6.17 The electrical supply installed as part of the regeneration project continues to attract significant fixed charges that are disproportionate to the harbour's operational requirements. Discussions with Assets and Property remain ongoing to identify a long-term solution and explore opportunities to remove or reduce this cost burden within the harbour budget.

6.18 Electricity consumption within the commercial area remains high due to the ongoing Walls F&G works. These additional costs are being recharged to the contractor and therefore do not represent a direct cost pressure to the harbour.

6.19 A water leak in the commercial area during the previous financial year resulted in water charges being incorrectly billed. The subsequent credits and reissued invoices have impacted the current year's accounts. Whilst this does not represent a saving, it is expected to result in water costs being below budget for the year.

6.20 In other areas of the harbour, the water supplier has identified a number of faulty meters and installed replacement meters where required. As a result, water consumption that was previously unrecorded is now being accurately measured and billed, leading to increased costs in some budget areas.

6.21 The new facilities at the commercial area are generating additional income, there are also increased operational costs through ongoing maintenance and servicing commitments.

7 Reserves Balances and Asset Management Plans

7.1 Budgeted surpluses for all three harbours go into designated reserves. Any extra surplus at year-end will also be added to these reserves. Decisions on how to use the additional funds will be made at year-end based on priorities and financial needs.

7.2 Reserves balances are committed to delivering a programme of works aimed maintaining and improving harbour facilities. These investments are essential to protect income streams and support the strategic priorities outlined in the Dorset Harbours Strategy and Business Plan.

7.3 Both Bridport and Weymouth reserves spend include works associated with the Business Plan and Development and Improvement projects.

.

7.4 Bridport’s opening reserve balance is £282,494. Of this reserve, there are further costs associated with the dredging relating to the storm damage. It is planned that this will be funded from Emergency Flood Funds.

7.5 Lyme Regis does not currently have a balance in reserves.

7.6 The reserve balance for Weymouth is forecast to be £2.6 million. This is split into several separate reserves detailed in the financial plan at appendix 3.

7.7 Whilst reserves are currently healthy for Weymouth, over the next few years, several costly projects are scheduled as part of the business plan. Weymouth Harbour has extensive infrastructure that is expensive to maintain and replace so it is essential to recognise that these funds are required to support this level of work.

8 Financial Implications

The report covers harbour budgets. The summary information is presented under the standard corporate headings. Dorset Council has outlined its financial plans for Bridport, Lyme Regis, and Weymouth Harbours for the 2026/27 financial year, with a focus on maintaining safe, sustainable, and economically viable operations. Revenue adjustments and any cost pressures have been considered when setting forecasts.

The harbours accounts form part of the Councils overall Statement of Accounts, which is considered and approved by the Audit Committee.

9 Legal considerations

This report has been reviewed and signed off by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, confirming compliance with relevant legal and financial regulations. All proposed fees and use of reserves are in line with the Council’s statutory powers and financial governance requirements.

10 Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

The Harbours’ budgets funds items that have implications for sustainability and climate change. In utilising future budgets every effort will be made where possible to consider how carbon output can be minimised and operations made more sustainable.

11 Well-being and health implications

The harbour budget supports safe, well-maintained facilities that contribute to the well-being of harbour users, including local fishermen, recreational boaters, and visitors. Continued investment in infrastructure and services helps promote a safe working environment and supports the economic and social vitality of coastal communities.

12 12 Other implications

Harbour issues are subject to regular consultation with customers, the Harbour Consultative Group and the Harbours Advisory Group.

13 Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

14 Equalities

There are no equalities implications arising from this report

15 Appendices

Appendix 1 Bridport Harbour Financial Summary

Appendix 2 Lyme Regis Harbour Financial Summary

Appendix 3 Weymouth Harbour Financial Summary

16 Background papers

None

17 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).