

DORSET COUNCIL HARBOURS CONSULTATIVE GROUPS

Terms of Reference

(rev June 2025)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Dorset Council Harbours Consultative Groups (the Consultative Groups) are comprised of representatives of local organisations and individuals with an interest in the Harbours. Group members are committed to working together with Dorset Council's Harbours Advisory Committee to ensure the best use is made of the Harbours for the benefit of the harbour users, the local community, visitors to the Dorset Coast and to also ensure the Harbours' long-term future.
- 1.2 The three Consultative Groups, one for each of the three harbours: Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Regis will form the primary route for all consultations by Dorset Council on substantial matters that affect the current operation of the harbours and their long-term future. The aim is to give harbour users and the local community the opportunity to influence policy decisions affecting the harbours.
- 1.3 The Harbours Advisory Committee and Duty Holder acknowledges the role of the Consultative Groups and will take note of their views, as they relate to the operations of the harbours.
- 1.4 The Harbours are defined as follows (see Figures 1-3 in Appendix 1).

Weymouth Harbour –The area below the level of high water included within a line drawn from a point on the shoreline at Nothe Fort (position 50° 36.42'N, 02° 26.6'W) in a 090.0 degrees (true) direction to the north-east corner of the dockyard port of Portland (position 50° 36.42:N, 02°23 .88'W) and thence in a 343.5 degrees (true) direction for 1.675 nautical miles to the shoreline (position 50°38.01'N, 02°24.60'W); and then following the level of high water around the coast of Weymouth Bay and up the River Wey as far as Westham Embankment (position 50° 36.71 'N, 02° 27.39'W) (beneath Westham Bridge) (but not including Westham Bridge) and then in a straight line across Westham Embankment to the opposite bank of the River Wey (position 50° 36.71 'N, 02° 27.49'W) and then following the level of high water down the River Wey and around the coast to a point on the shoreline at Nothe Fort (position 50° 36.42'N, 02° 26.6'W); such area shown shaded blue on the harbour limits plan.

Bridport Harbour – the geographical limits defined by a semi-circle of 1,000 feet (304.88m) radius, centred on the pier ends, the water area between and landward of the pier heads and shown shaded blue on the Bridport Harbour Limits Plan (Appendix 1 fig. 2).

Lyme Regis Harbour – the geographical limits as shown shaded blue on the Lyme Regis Harbours Limits Plan (Appendix 1 fig. 3)

2. ROLE OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUPS

- To be the primary consultative bodies on all matters that substantially affect the management, maintenance, improvement, conservation, protection, and regulation of the harbours

- To highlight safety issues with harbour users and promote safety policy and improvements onshore and afloat
- To make recommendations to the Harbours Advisory Committee and Harbour Masters on the operation of the harbours
- To co-ordinate consultation and community involvement in the development of the harbours
- To provide an opportunity for the sharing of information between the harbour management and the harbour users, local community and visitors
- To provide a channel of communication on urgent issues to the Harbours Advisory Committee and Harbour Masters

The advice and views of the Consultative Groups will be taken into consideration, but all decisions will rest with the Harbour Authority, and its authorised officers.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Weymouth

The Weymouth Consultative Group shall consist of **twelve representatives** invited from the following organisations and harbour interest groups:

- (a) **two** Councillors shall be appointed, one nominated by Weymouth Town Council and one a member of the Harbours Advisory Committee, to represent their respective Council interests.
- (b) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the training and education schools including the Sea Cadet Training Centre, Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre (WOEC) and Royal Yachting Association (RYA) schools.
- (c) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Clubs of Weymouth to represent the interest of the Clubs using the Harbour including sailing, rowing, angling and any other leisure clubs with vessels.
- (d) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Commercial Fishermen using the Harbour.
- (e) **one** to represent the Charter Boat Associations in the harbour including both dive and fishing charters.
- (f) **one** to represent the Leisure Weymouth Beach Users including swimmers, board and kite sailors, personal watercraft users and paddle-boarders.
- (g) **one** to represent commercial passenger carrying vessels interests in the harbour including trip boats, mackerel boats, rowing boats and pedaloes.
- (h) **one** to represent the interests of the boat owners using Council owned Inner Harbour non-commercial moorings including chain and sinker moorings.
- (i) **one** to represent the interests of the Boatfolk marina.
- (j) **one**, to represent the Harbour Traders encompassing all shoreside traders alongside the harbour, or regularly employed in the harbour.
- (k) **one** to represent the RNLI.

3.2 Bridport

The Bridport Consultative Group shall consist of **eleven representatives** invited from the following organisations and harbour interest groups:

- a) **two** Councillors shall be appointed, one nominated by Bridport Town Council and one a member of the Harbours Advisory Committee, to represent their respective Council interests.
- b) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Bridport fishermen's association to represent commercial fishermen
- c) **one** to represent commercial passenger carrying vessels interests in the harbour including trip boats and recreational fishing boats
- d) **one** to represent the interests of the boat owners using non-commercial moorings
- e) **one** to represent West Bay traders/businesses
- f) **one** to represent the residents of West Bay and the community interests in the harbour
- g) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Bridport Gig Rowing Club
- h) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Heritage Coast Canoe Club (HCCC)
- i) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the West Bay Sea Angling Club
- j) **one** shall be appointed to represent non-boating water activities such as swimmers, paddle-boarders or kite surfers.

3.3 Lyme Regis

The Lyme Regis Consultative Group shall consist of **twelve representatives** invited from the following organisations and harbour interest groups:

- a) **two** Councillors shall be appointed, one nominated by Lyme Regis Town Council and one a member of the Harbours Advisory Committee, to represent their respective Council interests.
- b) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Sailing Club
- c) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Power Boat Club
- d) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Fisherman's and Boatmen's Association to represent Commercial Fishermen
- e) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Fisherman's and Boatmen's Association to represent Charter Boats/Tripping Boats
- f) **one** shall be appointed to represent RNLI interests in the harbour
- g) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Harbour Traders
- h) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Sea School Trust
- i) **one** to represent the interests of the boat owners using non-commercial moorings
- j) **one** shall be appointed on the nomination of the Lyme Regis Gig Club
- k) **one** shall be appointed to represent non-boating water activities such as swimmers, paddle-boarders or kite surfers.

3.4

The Consultative Groups may propose alternatives to the membership composition of the Group at any time, and this will be subject to approval by the Harbours Advisory Committee and the Cabinet Member for Place Services.

- 3.5 If the Council does not receive a nomination for any reason from any of the organisations mentioned in sections 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3, the Council may, after consulting with other organisations it thinks appropriate, appoint a suitable alternative or none at all. This procedure will also be followed should any of the organisations mentioned in sections 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 cease to exist or the function of the organisation changes significantly.
- 3.6 The Council shall not be obliged to appoint a person who is duly nominated in accordance with the proposed membership for each harbour but may request the body or bodies who made the nomination to nominate another person.
- 3.7 The term of office of a member of a Consultative Group shall be three years from the date of his/her appointment and, on ceasing to hold office, (s)he shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further 3 years only. Members of the Consultative Groups may at any time, by notice in writing to the Council, resign his/her office.
- 3.8 Any nominated member that misses two consecutive meetings without good reason (as determined by the Consultative Group) shall be required to leave the Consultative Group and the nominating body will be asked to nominate a new representative.
- 3.9 Where an organisation sends a representative to fewer than 50% of meetings in any year, the Consultation Group is entitled to review that organisation's membership of the Group and may ask the organisation for an explanation before taking further action.
- 3.10 Members may nominate a substitute to attend the Consultative Group meetings, and where possible, substitutes will be nominated by organisations and user groups at the same time as group member nominations. Where it is necessary to replace a substitute member of the Consultative Group, proposals can be made by members and agreed by the Consultative Group.
- 3.11 The term of office for a substitute member of a Consultative Group will be three years from the date of his/her appointment and, on ceasing to hold office, (s)he shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further 3 years only. Substitute Members of the Consultative Group may at any time, by notice in writing to the Council, resign his/her office. Should a member of the Consultative Group decide to submit their notice, or if they have completed their time on the Consultative Group, it is expected that the substitute member will take their place and an alternate substitute found for the represented organisation.
- 3.12 Following completion of a six-year term on a Consultative Group it may be possible for a former member to re-join the Consultative Group after a period of at least three years has expired. This will be at the discretion of the Cabinet Member for Place Services.
- 3.11 Substitutes when not substituting, and members of the Harbours Advisory Committee are welcome to attend Consultative Group meetings as observers but will have no voting rights. Substitutes will be sent meeting agendas and papers when circulated to Consultative Group members.
- 3.12 The relevant Harbour Master and Head of Service/Service Manager shall attend the Consultative Group meetings and may speak, but not vote on any matters. The Clerk to the respective Town Councils or an alternative officer representative may also attend on the same basis if required.

3.13 The Chairman may invite other people to attend meetings when appropriate to speak on a specific issue.

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

4.1 A chairman and vice-chairman will be appointed from the membership of each Consultative Group for up to the period of their tenure as described in paragraph 3.7. Each Consultative Group shall nominate its own Chairman who shall not be a Councillor. The Chairman shall represent the Consultative Group on the Harbours Advisory Committee as a non-voting member.

4.2 In exceptional circumstances as determined by the Harbours Advisory Committee and Cabinet Member for Place Services, a Consultative Group member's tenure may be extended by up to three years to permit him/her to undertake the role of chairman or vice-chairman if no other member of the Group puts themselves forward for the position of chairman or vice-chairman.

4.3 In the event that a Chairman is not appointed at the time of a scheduled Consultative Group meeting, and no Vice-Chairman is available to act in their place, the relevant Harbour Master may assume the role of acting Chair for the purpose of facilitating the meeting. While the Harbour Master is acting as Chair, no formal votes on recommendations or decisions may take place. This arrangement is intended to enable the meeting to proceed in a functional capacity, ensuring information sharing and discussion.

4.4 If no Chairman is appointed after two consecutive meetings where the Harbour Master has acted as Chair, the matter shall be referred to the Harbours Advisory Committee for further direction, including the possibility of nominating a suitable temporary Chair from within the Group or taking other appropriate steps to restore full functionality to the Group.

5. THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

5.1

- To uphold and promote the purpose of the terms of reference, and to interpret the terms of reference where necessary;
- To preside over meetings of the Consultative Group so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of harbour users and in the interest of the community;
- To act as the representative of the Consultative Group at public events.
- To ensure that the Consultative Group operates according to its agreed working practices and that it is inclusive, transparent and open
- To work with supporting officers to ensure that the Consultative Group is achieving its aims, objectives and targets according to an agreed timetable.

6. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- 6.1 The Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group will meet four times a year, preceding the Harbours Advisory Committee meetings. The Bridport and Lyme Regis Consultative Groups will meet at least twice a year; before and after the summer season and on such other occasions as the chairman may deem appropriate to fulfil the functions of the Consultative Group. Where possible, Consultative Group meetings will be interleaved with those of the Harbours Advisory Committee.
- 6.2 The Consultative Group may appoint working parties, as it considers necessary, to advise the Consultative Group in the discharge of its functions.
- 6.3 The Harbour Master for the relevant harbour in consultation with the relevant Consultative Group Chairman will schedule meetings for the Consultative Groups identifying venues and times for meetings. Dorset Council will provide secretarial support for meetings of the Consultative Groups.

7. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION GROUPS

- 7.1 The Harbour Master for the relevant harbour in consultation with the chairman of the relevant Consultative Group shall draw up meeting agendas. Requests for agenda items will be sent to Consultative Group Members two weeks before meetings with final papers circulated at least one week before meetings. Matters of urgency may be raised without notice at a meeting subject to the chairman's agreement.
- 7.2 Meetings of the Consultative Groups are closed to the press and public and attendance is by chairman's invitation only.
- 7.3 It is recognised that the Consultative Group members may have a vested interest in many matters being discussed by the Group and to exclude them from the debate would be counter-productive. However, in such circumstances the member or their substitutes must declare if they have any pecuniary or personal interest in a matter under discussion. Having declared such an interest, the chairman shall decide whether the representative may vote on the matter if it comes to a vote.
- 7.4 For voting purposes, the Consultative Groups will be quorate with 50% of members present.
- 7.5 Decisions will be made in a democratic manner with all Councillors, organisations and harbour interest groups having an equal vote. Each organisation will have one vote. Observers are not entitled to vote. Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those organisations voting. The chairman will take the vote by a show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting. If there are an equal number of votes for and against, the chairman will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the chairman chooses to exercise a casting vote.
- 7.6 Representatives will be expected to abide by decision of the majority.
- 7.7 Minutes will be taken at all Consultative Group meetings and will be publicly available following approval by the Consultative Group at the following meeting and will be posted on the Dorset Council and Harbour Websites.

8. Code of Conduct for Consultative Group Members

8.1 This Code of Conduct establishes the standards of behaviour expected from all members of the Harbours Consultative Groups. It aims to ensure that members act with integrity, accountability, and respect, thereby fostering public confidence in the Groups' operations.

8.2 Members shall adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, as outlined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

- Selflessness: Act solely in terms of the public interest.
- Integrity: Avoid placing oneself under any obligation that might influence one's work.
- Objectivity: Make decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit.
- Accountability: Be accountable to the public for decisions and actions.
- Openness: Act and take decisions transparently.
- Honesty: Be truthful.
- Leadership: Exhibit these principles in one's own behaviour and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

8.3 Members are expected to:

- Treat all individuals with courtesy and consideration.
- Refrain from any form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information acquired through their role, unless legally obligated to disclose.
- Avoid compromising the impartiality of those who work for or on behalf of the Consultative Groups.
- Not use their position improperly to gain advantage for themselves or others.
- Ensure that any resources provided are used appropriately and not for personal gain.

8.4 Members must declare any personal or financial interests that may conflict with their duties. Such declarations should be made at the earliest opportunity and recorded appropriately.

8.5 Any alleged breaches of this Code will be addressed by the relevant Harbour Master in consultation with the Chair of the Consultative Group. Persistent or serious breaches may result in the member's removal from the Group, subject to the procedures outlined in these Terms of Reference.

APPENDIX 1

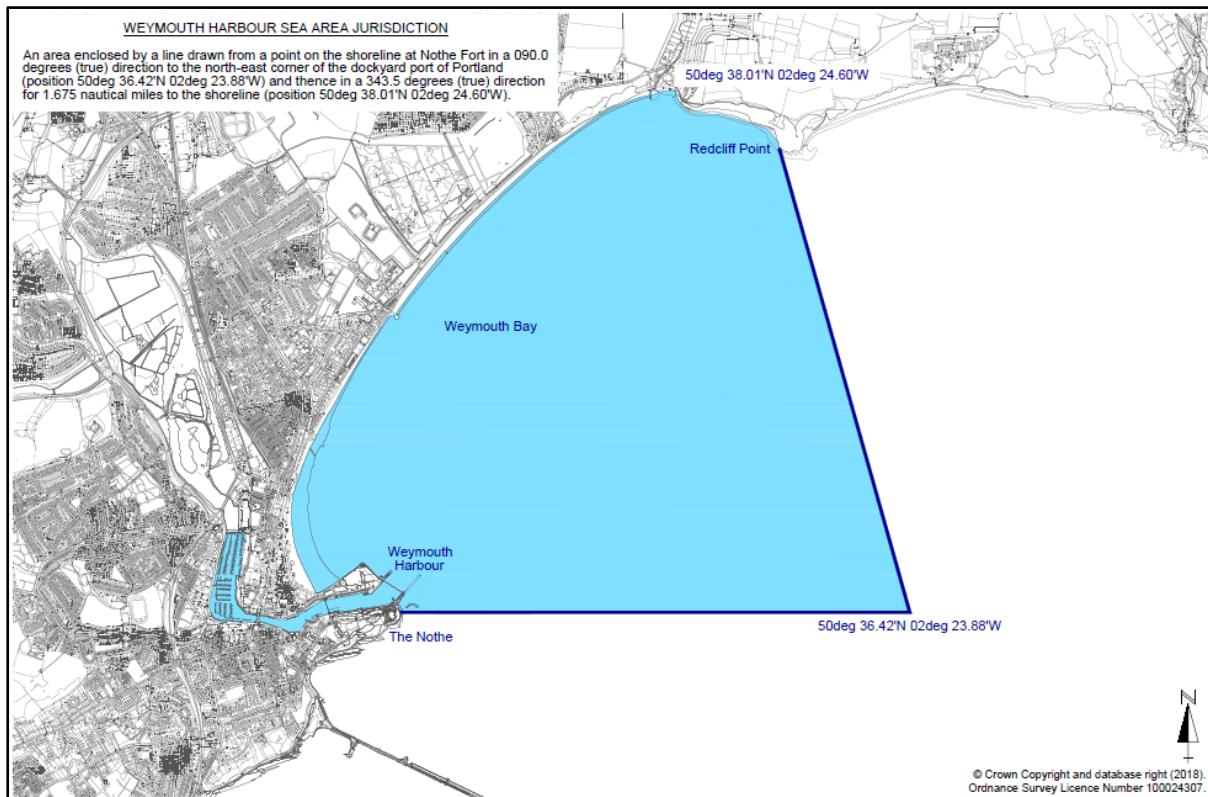


Figure 1: Weymouth Harbour Limits



Figure 2: Bridport Harbour Limits



Figure 3: Lyme Regis Harbour Limits