Dorset Council Harbours
Marine Safety Plan

2026 – 2029

Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis, Weymouth

Introduction

This Marine Safety Plan sets out Dorset Council's commitment to ensuring safe and effective marine operations across its three Statutory Harbour Authority locations: Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis, and Weymouth. The plan aligns with the principles of the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC), which provides a national standard for port safety management, and incorporates guidance from the 'Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations'. It also integrates the individual Marine Safety Management Systems (MSMS) maintained by each harbour, which detail local operational procedures, risk assessments, and compliance measures.

Governance and Accountability

Dorset Council has appointed the Cabinet Member for Place Services, Cllr Jack Jeanes, as the Duty Holder. The Duty Holder, as defined by the PMSC, refers to the individual(s) or corporate board who are individually and collectively accountable for ensuring their organisation complies with the Code, maintains an effective Marine Safety Management System, appoints a designated person, secures appropriate resources, and reports compliance to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency every three years. They cannot delegate this accountability and must uphold legal and regulatory obligations pertaining to marine safety.

The Duty Holder has appointed James Hannon of ABPmer as the Designated Person. The Designated Person, under the PMSC, is an independent appointee tasked with assuring the Duty Holder that the Marine Safety Management System is operating effectively and providing impartial advice on marine safety matters. The Designated Person must possess thorough knowledge of the Code and Guide to Good Practice and have direct access to the Duty Holder to report safety concerns.

The Harbours Advisory Committee plays a central role in the governance of Dorset Council's harbours. It meets quarterly to review safety, operational performance, financial management, environmental, and strategic progress across Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis, and Weymouth. The Committee advises the Duty Holder and ensures that harbour operations remain aligned with the Dorset Council Harbours Strategy and the principles of the PMSC. Each harbour also maintains a Harbour Consultative Group, comprising local stakeholders, user representatives, and community voices. These groups meet regularly to provide feedback, support continuous improvement, and ensure transparency in decision-making.

This Marine Safety Plan is owned by the Duty Holder, supported by the Designated Person, and advised on by the Harbours Advisory Committee. It is reviewed annually to assess progress against objectives and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, operational priorities, or stakeholder feedback. A full review and

republication of the Plan takes place every three years, in line with the PMSC compliance cycle, and the approval and adoption of the Plan, along with notification by the Duty Holder to Dorset Council that the three Harbours are fully compliant with the PMSC.

Dorset Council's status as Statutory Harbour Authority over its harbours is established through Harbour Revision Orders, which provide the legal framework for the regulation and management of marine operations. Weymouth Harbour operates under the Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2021, which modernised its governance and operational powers in line with the PMSC. Bridport (West Bay) and Lyme Regis Harbours are governed by the Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Revision Order 2026. These Orders enable Dorset Council to make General Directions, enforce safety and environmental regulations, and ensure the safe and efficient use of harbour facilities. They form the statutory basis for the Council's Marine Safety Management Systems and support its compliance with national standards.

Policy

Dorset Council is committed to the safe, effective, and environmentally responsible operation of its three Statutory Harbour Authority locations.

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the PMSC, and the principles of good governance, Dorset Council will ensure that:

- All harbour and associated marine operations will be conducted in a manner that protects the safety and health of harbour users, employees, contractors, and the public, while minimising adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.
- Harbour operations will be governed by a Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) that is risk-based, regularly reviewed, and aligned with national standards and best practice guidance, including the PMSC and the Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations.
- Regular consultation is conducted with stakeholders through established Harbour Consultative Groups and wider engagement on significant programmes, projects, and policy changes.
- Dorset Council Harbours operate within a strategic framework set out in the Harbours Strategy, in which a key aim is to achieve operational financial self-sufficiency. Financial sustainability is essential to maintaining safe infrastructure, delivering statutory functions, and enabling long-term investment in harbour facilities. The Council will continue to seek external funding where appropriate, particularly for major infrastructure improvements

and coastal defence projects, while ensuring that core operations remain resilient and compliant with safety standards.

- Harbour operations will contribute to Dorset Council's wider environmental commitments, including its Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy, through responsible resource use, pollution prevention, and habitat protection.

Further details on Dorset Council's overarching policies can be found on the Dorset Council Website.

Navigation-specific policies, procedures, notices, and directions are available via:

- Bridport (West Bay) Harbour
- Lyme Regis Harbour
- Weymouth Harbour

Standing Objectives for Marine Operations

Improvement Plan

To achieve continuous improvement in marine safety, an improvement plan has been created which sets out marine safety objectives. The progress of this plan will be reported annually to the Harbours Advisory Committee and Duty Holder.

Each objective is assigned a set of actions and outcomes that when complete will be used to evidence achievement of that objective. To facilitate this, four specific roles/responsibilities have been identified for each action using a RACI Matrix:

- ***R**esponsible:* People or stakeholders who do the work. They must complete the action or objective or make the decision. Several people can be jointly Responsible.
- ***A**ccountable:* Person or stakeholder who is the "owner" of the work. He or she must sign off or approve when the action, objective or decision is complete.
- ***C**onsulted:* People or stakeholders who might need to give input before the action can be completed and signed off on.
- ***I**nformed:* People or stakeholders who might need to be updated on progress or decisions, but they do not need to be formally consulted, nor do they contribute directly to the task or decision.

Definitions

HAC	Harbours Advisory Committee
HCG	Harbours Consultative Group
MCA	Maritime & Coastguard Agency
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MAIB	Marine Accident Investigation Branch
EA	Environment Agency
UKHO	United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
AHM	Assistant Harbour Master
Stakeholders	Individuals or groups, such as users, regulators, local communities, and commercial partners, who are affected by or have an interest in the port's operations and development.

Objective	Action	Outcome	RACI
1. Plan for and Respond to Emergencies	Conduct two-yearly Oil Pollution Incident Management Exercises (IME) with Tier 2 contractor and local agencies.	Validated multi-agency response capability.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs, Harbour Staff **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Adler & Allan **I:** MCA, EA, Duty Holder, HAC
	Review and update Emergency Plans as part of annual MSMS review & audit schedule.	Emergency protocols remain current and effective.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Duty Holder **C:** Designated Person **I:** HAC, Harbour Staff, MCA, EA
	Establish mutual aid agreements with neighbouring ports for shared emergency resources.	Enhanced resilience and resource availability.	**R:** Harbour Masters **A:** Harbour Master of each port **C:** Neighbouring Ports **I:** MCA, EA, Adler & Allan, Duty Holder, HAC
2. Conservancy: Provide a Safe and Navigable Harbour	Maintain and monitor Aids to Navigation to meet IALA standards.	Reliable navigation aids and compliance.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Duty Holder **C:** Trinity House **I:** Designated Person, HAC
	Conduct annual hydrographic surveys and publish results.	Safe access and updated seabed data.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** UKHO **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Designated Person, Harbour Stakeholders
	Issue timely Notices to Mariners and maintain local port information.	Harbour users informed of changes and hazards.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Master **C:** Harbour Staff, Harbour Stakeholders **I:** MCA, UKHO, Harbour Stakeholders, Designated Person
3. Training and Capability	Ensure all marine staff, Duty Holder, and HAC members hold current and appropriate qualifications and certifications.	Competent and qualified personnel across all harbours and their governance.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff, Designated Person **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Maintain a live training matrix and conduct annual reviews.	Up-to-date record of staff competencies and training needs.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Designated Person **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Support CPD through internal and external training opportunities.	Staff development aligned with operational needs.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders

4. Resilience	Ensure adequate staffing levels year-round including seasonal support.	Operational continuity and reduced service disruption.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Deliver approved asset management plan and report on risks of critical assets.	Reliable equipment and infrastructure.	**R:** Harbours Masters, AHMs, Harbour Staff **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Maintain survey and inspection regime for critical harbour infrastructure.	Timely identification of maintenance needs and assurance of infrastructure integrity to support safe harbour operations.	**R:** Harbours Masters, AHMs, Harbour Staff **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
5. Incident & Accident Reporting and Investigation	Maintain effective incident and accident reporting system.	All incidents are consistently recorded, tracked, and accessible for analysis and audit, supporting transparency and continuous safety improvement.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Designated Person, DC Legal **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Investigate all marine incidents within 30 days and report all major incidents to the Duty Holder within 24 hours.	Timely and thorough incident analysis and review.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Duty Holder, Designated Person **I:** HAC, Harbour Stakeholders, MCA, MAIB
	Monitor incident trends and update MSMS accordingly.	Improved safety through proactive risk management.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Designated Person **I:** Duty Holder, HAC
	Share lessons learned with harbour users and staff.	Increased awareness and reduced recurrence of incidents.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Staff **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
6. Port Marine Safety Code Review and Auditing	Conduct annual external audit of MSMS.	Verified compliance with PMSC.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Duty Holder **C:** Designated Person **I:** MCA, HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Review Safety Plan every three years.	Updated and relevant safety planning.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Duty Holder **C:** Designated Person **I:** HAC, Harbour Stakeholders
	Review port risk assessments annually.	Comprehensive understanding of operational risks.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Duty Holder **C:** Designated Person **I:** HAC, Harbour Stakeholders

7. Engage with Stakeholders	Hold regular Harbour Consultative Group (stakeholder) meetings.	Stakeholder feedback informs harbour operations.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Stakeholders **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Designated Person, Harbour Staff
	Maintain active Harbour Consultative Group relationships.	Regular dialogue with representative user groups.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs, Harbour Staff **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Harbour Stakeholders **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Designated Person, Harbour Staff
8. Review Legislation and Powers	Implement Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Revision Order 2026.	Modernised statutory powers and governance.	**R:** Harbour Master **A:** Duty Holder **C:** MMO, DC Legal **I:** HAC, Harbour Stakeholders, Harbour Staff
	Review General Directions and update as needed.	Effective regulation of harbour activities.	**R:** Harbour Masters **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Duty Holder, HAC, Designated Person, DC Legal, Statutory Consultees **I:** Harbour Staff, Harbour Stakeholders
9. Enforce Regulations	Maintain an enforcement capability to take appropriate action in response to irresponsible activity within the harbour and carry out annual audit of these activities.	Improved compliance and reduced incidents.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs, Harbour Staff **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Duty Holder, HAC, Designated Person, Harbour Staff **I:** Harbour Stakeholders
	Ensure commercial vessels meet coding and safety standards.	Safe and compliant commercial operations.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** MCA, Designated Person **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Staff, Harbour Stakeholders
	Review enforcement policies annually.	Consistent and fair application of regulations.	**R:** Harbour Masters, AHMs **A:** Harbour Masters **C:** Designated Person, DC Legal **I:** Duty Holder, HAC, Harbour Staff, Harbour Stakeholders

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