



Lara Moore
Ashfords LLP
(by email only)

Our reference:
HRO/2020/00004
HRO/2025/00001

26 January 2026

Dear Ms Moore

**The Harbours Act 1964
The Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay) and Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2025**

1. The Marine Management Organisation (“the MMO”) informs you that consideration has been given to the application for Lyme Regis and Bridport (West Bay) and Weymouth Harbour Revision Order (“the Order”) for which you applied on behalf of Dorset Council (“the applicant”), under Section 14 of the Harbours Act 1964 (“the Act”).

Summary of Decision

2. The MMO has authorised the making of the Order with amendments and modifications not affecting the character of the Order which it considers necessary and appropriate.
3. The Order grants the applicant modernised powers for general and special directions and provides clarification of the harbour limits for Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay) and Weymouth Harbours (together “the Harbours”) for the efficient and economical operation, maintenance and improvement of the Harbours.

Context

4. The applicant is Dorset Council, the statutory harbour authority responsible for the Harbours.
5. The applicant is responsible for the administration, maintenance, and improvement of the Harbours.
6. The Harbours are located on the Dorset coastline, in the south of England.
7. The Harbours are used by recreational vessels and local fishing boats.
8. The applicant conducted a review of their local legislation and identified a need to modernise their powers as the existing provisions applying to the Harbours were



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fragmented, complex and in some cases no longer fit for purpose. The existing harbour limits for Lyme Regis were also unclear. The Order will clearly define the limits for the Harbours.

- The Order is sought to achieve various objects specified in Schedule 2 to the Act, which are listed in Annex II to this letter.

Application procedure

- This section explains the application procedure for two Harbour Revision Order (HRO) applications submitted on behalf of the applicant. Both applications were submitted individually, but have been amalgamated into the same HRO, on request of the applicant. Details of the MMO's consideration of this request can be found below in the MMO consideration section of this letter.

Lyme Regis and Bridport (West Bay) HRO application procedure

- On 8 July 2020 an application for the Lyme Regis and Bridport (West Bay) HRO was submitted to the MMO by Ashfords LLP on behalf of the applicant.
- Notice of the application for this HRO was advertised in the London Gazette on 26 January 2023 as well as in the Dorset Echo on 26 January 2023 and 2 February 2023.
- MMO consulted the following organisations on this HRO, their responses are summarised below:

Organisation	Response received and actions
British Ports Association ("BPA")	The BPA supported the application.
Chamber of Shipping	No response was received.
The Crown Estate ("TCE")	No response was received.
Department for Transport ("DfT")	DfT queried why Lyme Regis would need a marine licence for dredging, but Bridport did not. The MMO clarified that Bridport already had the power to undertake dredging under existing harbour legislation, but Lyme Regis does not.
Dorset Council ("DC")	DC had no objections to the application.
Health and Safety Executive	No response was received.
Maritime and Coastguard Agency ("MCA")	MCA had no objections to the application.
Royal Yachting Association ("RYA")	The RYA objected to the powers of the harbour master regarding dealing with unserviceable vessels. Following amendments to the Order, the RYA withdrew their objection.
Trinity House ("TH")	TH did not object to the application but requested the harbour limits be expressed in the WGS84 coordinate format. The harbour limits were then amended by the applicant to satisfy TH.
UK Major Ports Group "UKMPG"	No response was received.

Weymouth HRO application procedure

14. An application for the Weymouth HRO was submitted to the MMO by Ashfords LLP on 6 January 2025 on behalf of the applicant.
15. Notice of the application for this HRO was advertised in the London Gazette on 20 June 2025 as well as in the Dorset Echo on 20 June 2025 and 27 June 2025.
16. MMO consulted the following organisations on this HRO, their responses are summarised below:

Organisation	Response received and actions
British Ports Association (“BPA”)	The BPA supported the application.
Chamber of Shipping	No response was received.
The Crown Estate (“TCE”)	TCE had no objections to the application.
Department for Transport (“DfT”)	No response was received.
Dorset Council (“DC”)	DC had no objections to the application.
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (“MCA”)	MCA had no objections to the application.
Royal Yachting Association (“RYA”)	No response was received.
Trinity House (“TH”)	TH had no objections to the application.
UK Major Ports Group “UKMPG	No response was received.

The Health and Safety Executive were not consulted on the Weymouth application. They had written to the MMO separately to state that they no longer wished to be consulted on harbour order applications.

Public representations

17. No public representations were received within the statutory 42-day period provided for in Schedule 3 to the Act for either HRO application.

MMO consideration

Request to amalgamate the Lyme Regis and Bridport HRO with the Weymouth HRO

18. This section considers the amalgamation of both HROs. Consideration of each individual application is in the relevant sections below.
19. The MMO received a request from the applicant to amalgamate the proposed Lyme Regis and Bridport HRO with the proposed Weymouth HRO. Both applications were submitted by the same applicant, and the Lyme Regis and Bridport HRO, as originally submitted, also proposed an amendment to existing legislation which applies to Weymouth harbour.

20. The proposed Weymouth harbour order contained only one provision which was not a 'standard' provision which appears in every HRO, for example the interpretation section.
21. Both orders were consulted on in accordance with the Act, and no objections were received to either application. There are no outstanding consultation issues for either application.
22. The MMO considered that the Act allows for modifications to be made after an application is submitted and before the order is made. Paragraph 21(1) of Schedule 3 of the Act provides

"21(1)Where the Secretary of State proposes to make the order applied for with modifications which appear to him substantially to affect the character of the order he—
(a)shall take such steps as appear to him to be sufficient and reasonably practicable for informing the applicant and other persons likely to be concerned, and
(b)shall not make the order ... until such period for consideration of, and comment upon, the proposed modifications by the applicant and those other persons as he thinks reasonable has expired."

23. The MMO does not consider that the amalgamated order introduces substantive changes. Both orders have been consulted on in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and no objections were received to either order. The MMO therefore does not consider that there needs to be a further consultation or consideration period for the amalgamated order.
24. The MMO considers that it is appropriate to amalgamate both orders and accepted the applicant's request. This was a case specific decision, based on the reasons outlined above.
25. Section 14(1) of the Act provides for an order to be made under this section ("a Harbour Revision Order") in relation to a harbour which is being improved, maintained or managed by a harbour authority in the exercise and performance of statutory powers and duties for achieving all or any of the objects set out in Schedule 2 to the Act.
26. By virtue of section 14(2)(a) a Harbour Revision Order may not be made in relation to a harbour unless the MMO is satisfied that an appropriate written application has been made by the authority engaged in improving, maintaining or managing it, or by a person appearing to it to have a substantial interest or body representative of persons appearing to it to have such an interest.
27. By virtue of section 14(2)(b) a Harbour Revision Order shall not be made in relation to a harbour unless the MMO is satisfied that the making of the order is desirable in the interests of securing the improvement, maintenance or management of the harbour in an efficient and economical manner, or of facilitating the efficient and economical transport of goods or passengers by sea or in the interests of the recreational use of sea-going ships.

Consideration of the Lyme Regis and Bridport HRO

28. The MMO discussed the provisions in the Order with the applicant, such as dealing with unserviceable vessels and also updating the provisions and wording to be in line with more recently made Orders.
29. The MMO has considered the application in relation to the South Marine Plan and is content that the application is in accordance with that marine plan.
30. . When the application was submitted, the MMO considered the application in relation to the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC). In April 2025, the DfT published an updated PMSC, entitled Ports & Marine Facilities Safety Code (“the Code”). The MMO reviewed the Code and is satisfied that the application remains consistent with the established safety and operational standards promoted by the PMSC.

Consideration of the Weymouth HRO

31. The MMO has considered the applicant’s request to restrict the application of section 33 of the Harbours Docks and Piers clauses Act 1847, to amend the Open Port Duty so that it does not apply to vessels over 24 metres in length. The applicant would still be able to accept vessels over 24 metres in length at its discretion. This restriction covers all current, frequent users of the harbour.
32. The applicant outlined that activity at Weymouth has shifted towards smaller vessels. Ferry services have not operated from Weymouth since 2015, and the harbour’s physical limitations make it unsuitable for modern ferries, which are significantly larger. Removal of the Open Port Duty would enable the removal of outdated infrastructure and allow the applicant to develop the harbour to meet the needs of current users.
33. The applicant stated that the Harbour Consultative Group met to discuss the proposed removal of the Open Port Duty and endorsed the proposal to apply for the HRO. There were no comments for the applicant to address following consultation, and no public comments received.
34. The MMO has considered the application in relation to the South Marine Plan and is content that the application is in accordance with that marine plan.

MMO’s decision

35. The MMO is satisfied that the Order meets the requirements of section 14(1) and 14(2)(a) of the Act.
36. The MMO is satisfied for the reasons set out by the applicant in their Statement in Support, and summarised above, that the making of the Order (and each provision of the Order) is desirable for the purposes of section 14(2)(a) and (b) of the Act and should be made.
37. The MMO authorises the making of the Order with amendments and modifications which it considers necessary and appropriate but not substantially affecting the character of the Order.

Challenges to decisions

38. Information on the right to challenge this decision is set out in Annex I to this letter.

Yours Sincerely



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Annex I

Right to challenge decisions

Right to challenge orders made under sections 14 and 16 of the Harbours Act 1964

Any person who desires to question the making of the Order on the ground that there was no power to make the Order or that a requirement of the Harbours Act 1964 was not complied with in relation to the Order, may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order becomes operative make an application for the purpose to the High Court or the Court of Session, as the case may be.

A person who thinks they may have grounds for challenging the decision to make the Order is advised to seek legal advice before taking any action.

Annex II

Objects for whose achievement Harbour Revision Orders may be made within the Harbours Act 1964, Schedule 2

Paragraph 3: "Varying or abolishing duties or powers imposed or conferred on the authority by a statutory provision of local application affecting the harbour, being duties or powers imposed or conferred for the purpose of—

- (a) improving, maintaining or managing the harbour;
- (b) marking or lighting the harbour, raising wrecks therein or otherwise making safe the navigation thereof; or
- (c) regulating the carrying on by others of activities relating to the harbour or of activities on harbour land."

Paragraph 4: "Imposing or conferring on the authority, for the purpose aforesaid, duties or powers (including powers to make byelaws), either in addition to, or in substitution for, duties or powers imposed or conferred as mentioned in paragraph 3 above".

Paragraph 6: "Settling (either for all purposes or limited purposes) the limits within which the authority are to have jurisdiction or altering (either for all purposes or for limited purposes) such limits as previously settled."

Paragraph 8A: "Enabling the authority to close part of the harbour or to reduce the facilities available in the harbour."

Paragraph 17: "Any object which, though not falling within any of the foregoing paragraphs, appears to the appropriate Minister to be one the achievement of which will conduce to the efficient functioning of the harbour."