



LYMINGTON HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

Harbour Development Plan 2022 to 2032
Issued: November 2022



LYMINGTON
HARBOUR

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Photo Credit: Tom Morgan



1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, Lymington Harbour Commission (LHC) published its 2020-25 Strategic Plan setting out LHC's positive vision for the future of the harbour and its development and management. A key objective of the plan was to develop, consult and publish a Harbour Development Plan (the Plan).

Between the 4th April and the 26th June 2022, LHC undertook a 12 week public consultation on a draft Harbour Development Plan and Commissioners considered the feedback received to help inform their decision making when finalising the Plan. Commissioners have published¹ a separate document summarising the feedback received and arising conclusions.

This document represents the approved plan which will guide the sustainable development of the harbour for the next 10 years and beyond.

2.0 PLAN OBJECTIVES

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this plan are:

- To optimise the mix of berthing provision to future demand.
- To improve access to the water.
- To improve safety and navigation.
- To make the Bath Road slipway more user friendly and improve safety.
- To enhance the facilities at the commercial quay.
- To take advantage of opportunities to improve harbour infrastructure that arise from the New Forest District Council and the Environment Agency coastal defence strategy for Lymington.
- To put a time line and cost to replace life expired infrastructure.
- To develop the harbour protection scheme at a pace commensurate with ensuring that the harbour remains sheltered.
- To review the funding strategy to facilitate replacement of life expired assets and new projects.
- To reduce impacts on and protect the environment.
- To explore opportunities to enhance and improve the environment.



2.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is a key asset and the harbour is located within or adjacent to important and protected habitats including:

- The Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation.
- The Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area.
- The Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar Site.
- The Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation.
- The Solent and Dorset Special Protection Area.



The harbour is already heavily developed and there is little or no scope to expand mooring areas without impacting on sensitive and protected habitats. Proposed developments are therefore largely confined to reconfiguring existing mooring or developed areas outside of the protected sites.

¹ Summary of Consultation Responses on Draft Harbour Development Plan & Commissioner Conclusions issued November 2022.

3.0 STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF MOORING PROVISION

An objective of the Strategic Plan (2020-2025) was to undertake an evaluation of LHC's mooring infrastructure provision against waiting list and market demand and make recommendations to optimise mooring provision having regard to the objective to improve access and navigation.

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

Figure 1 shows that there is a significant disparity between existing mooring provision and waiting list demand. The analysis shows that:

- 62.3% of waiting list demand for leisure moorings is for walk ashore berths, yet just 24.9% of current mooring supply is walk ashore. It follows that the longest waiting list times are for walk ashore berths. Demand is highest for walk ashore berths for small boats, and in particular the cheaper 'no frills' berths on the Fortuna Pontoon.
- 30.9% of leisure waiting list demand is for sub-tidal (dredged) mid-river moorings/berths. Deep water mid-river mooring/berth supply represents 49.6% of all LHC moorings.
- 6.5% of leisure waiting list demand is for moorings which are restricted through tide (drying) or air draft (bridge). Restricted moorings represent 22.7% of existing mooring supply, hence waiting list times for these berths are much lower, if at all. In many cases, applicants apply for restricted moorings because of the much shorter waiting list than for sub-tidal moorings or walk ashore berths. They are often seen as a transitional option, allowing applicants to get on the water relatively quickly until they have accrued sufficient 'seniority' on a waiting list for a deep water mooring or walk ashore berth. LHC cannot improve access to these moorings as this would require removal of the railway bridge (air draft restriction) or dredging of drying mooring areas which lie within protected habitats.
- Commercial fishing boat berths represent the remaining 2.8% of LHC berth supply.
- There is a shortage of tender berths to service the mid-river moorings. As a result, tender berth areas are very congested and there is a waiting list for tender moorings which is starting to impact on take up of mid-river restricted access moorings in the lower river.
- The shortage of tender berths for servicing mid-river moorings means that LHC have just 6 shore accessible moorings available for dinghy sized boats that are not tenders. These are located upstream of the railway bridge and are tidally and air draft restricted.

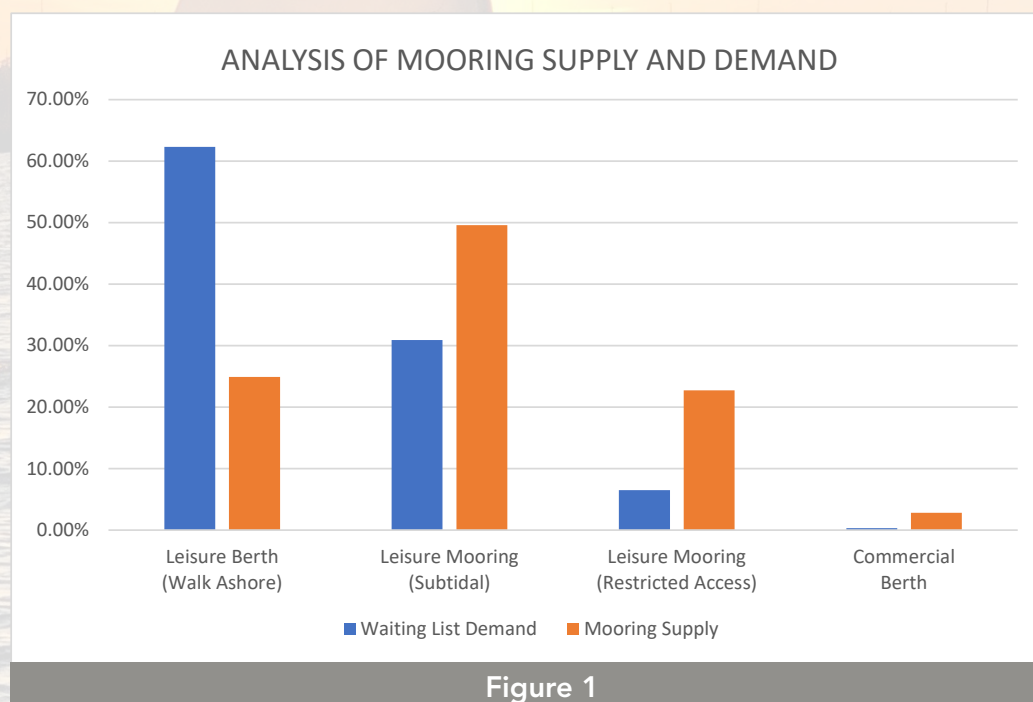


Figure 1

In addition to meeting other objectives, Section 4 incorporates projects that seek to:

- address the significant imbalance between mooring supply and demand in the different mooring categories;
- reduce the demand for tender moorings; and
- make some provision for accessible dinghy (non tender) moorings.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT

The following sections set out details of proposed or planned developments, including infrastructure renewal requirements and environmental enhancement projects. All development projects meet one or more of the objectives set out in Section 2.1.

4.1 REPLACEMENT OF LIFE EXPIRED INFRASTRUCTURE

Figure 2 itemises infrastructure (excludes harbour vessels) which will reach the end of its serviceable life over the next 15 years and will need replacement:

Location	When	Comments
Railside Area (all moorings & mooring piles)	Winter 2022/23	Cost estimate £120k
Aids to Navigation x 8	Winter 2022/23	Cost – £38k
Fortuna Area (all pontoons, pontoon gangway, moorings & mooring piles)	Winter 2026/27	Cost estimate £1,377k (See Section 4.2)
Bath Road Slipway	2029-2032	Cost estimate £228k+ (See Section 4.3)
Dan Bran Pontoon	2035	Cost estimate £2,212k

Figure 2

4.2 FORTUNA MOORING AREA

As noted in Figure 2, the walk ashore pontoon, walk ashore tender pontoon and the mid-river mooring piles and mooring infrastructure are nearing the end of their serviceable life and will need replacing in winter 2026/27.

This presents an opportunity to better align future mooring provision with waiting list demand for walk ashore berths. Figure 3 shows the scheme which has been developed to reconfigure the whole of the Fortuna area to walk ashore berths. In order to maximise the number of berths and keep costs at a

level similar to the existing Fortuna pontoon pricing, the majority of berths will use economy fingers and will continue to be 'no frills'.

Although it is not proposed to provide electricity at the outset, the main pontoon walkways will incorporate service ducting. This will provide LHC with options to support electrification in future, as the boating industry responds to the climate emergency. The extent to which this will be the case given the significant technical challenges, is yet to be determined. However, a pontoon with shore power connection will be a pre-requisite to delivering charging solutions.



Figure 3

This project will:

- Increase walk ashore berths and reduce mid-river moorings thereby addressing the significant disparity between waiting list demand and mooring supply. The table below summarises the changes.

Section 4.2 - Fortuna Mooring Area	Walk Ashore	Mid River Moorings	Total
Existing	78	111	189
New	187**	0	187
Difference	+109	-111	-2

** Includes 6 dedicated moorings for dinghy sized boats (see below).

- Respond to stakeholder demand for lower cost 'no frills' walk ashore berths with an emphasis on boats under 9m.
- Reduce the demand for tender moorings to access mid-river moorings, thereby easing congestion in tender mooring areas and reducing or removing the waiting list for tender berths.
- Release space in the tender mooring area to create 6 walk ashore all tide 'dinghy only' moorings for boats up to 3.6m in length. This will be increased if tender berth capacity exceeds demand.
- Move the tender pontoons further north east into permanently sub-tidal water. This will rectify the existing situation where the pontoon rests on the mud at low tide, creating a slope on the walking surface.
- Provide greater flexibility when allocating berths when compared with river moorings as 'boat to boat' compatibility is not relevant for pontoon moorings.
- Reduce long term maintenance and the work associated with preparing the area for dredging.
- Improve safety of navigation by creating more space in the fairways used to access moorings and reducing the number of tender movements.
- Improve safety of navigation by removing the effects of fairway encroachment caused by fore and aft moorings moving due to wind, tide and ferry drawdown effects.
- Provide an ability to support electrification if the boating industry adopts electric powertrains in response to the climate emergency.

Photo Credit: Simon Nash



Mooring licence allocations to the new walk ashore berths will be prioritised in the following order:

1. Mooring licence holders on the existing Fortuna pontoon at the time of the development.
2. Applicants on the waiting list for a Fortuna Pontoon berth (including those seeking to 'upgrade' from a mid-river mooring) in waiting list seniority order.

Mooring licence holders with boats on the Fortuna mid river moorings that will be discontinued to facilitate this development will be relocated to sub-tidal moorings elsewhere in the river. In the unlikely event that this cannot be immediately accommodated, existing mooring licence holders will be offered a walk ashore mooring in the Fortuna area at no additional charge to their mid-river mooring fee until an alternative mooring becomes available.

4.3 BATH ROAD SLIPWAY

Based on the most recent condition survey, it is estimated that the existing Bath Road slipway will need to be replaced by 2031/32.

Consultation feedback on the 2020-25 Strategic Plan indicated a desire from the principal users of the slipway (Royal Lymington Yacht Club, Lymington Town Sailing Club & RNLI) for improvements to widen the slipway to make the shared use between vehicle and hand launches safer, and to make launching and recovery more 'user friendly'. Commissioners previously agreed to bring this project forward on the

condition and shared understanding that this would be in partnership with the principal organisations that use the slipway with some element of shared financing and a successful joint application for grant funding.

The Commissioners consider that any substantial structural change to the slipway in advance of the Environment Agency's published strategy to improve sea defences between Lymington and Hurst Spit would carry unacceptable financial risk. It is understood that the Environment Agency is publish its strategy in 2024².

Commissioners will now progress discussions and work with the principal user organisations to explore ways to bring forward improvements to the slipway that will continue to facilitate the key objectives. As part of this LHC will engage with partners on developing options and shared financing in order to deliver practical and affordable enhancements. This may include further extension of operational measures such as Club marshalling, supported by temporary slipway closures or restrictions to vehicle launches during organised activities.

In the medium to longer term the Commissioners will continue to engage with principal user groups to work up costed project proposals for structural improvements to the slipway, with a view to undertaking them when sea defence requirements are known and funding has been secured, including with contributions from principal beneficiaries.



Photo Credit: Paul French

² Source – Environment Agency stakeholder group workshop 8th September 2022.

4.4 A ROW (NORTH – SOUTH) MOORINGS

To improve navigation safety, LHC will install a pontoon to replace its 'A Row (North-South)' moorings (highlighted yellow in Figure 4). This will resolve the issue of mooring movement due to the effects of wind and tide which can result in moored boats drifting up to 4m in either direction, thereby reducing navigation space in the main channel and the access fairway to the Berthon Marina and refuelling pontoon.

Converting to a pontoon will also provide greater flexibility when allocating new mooring licences as 'boat to boat' compatibility will no longer need to be taken into account.

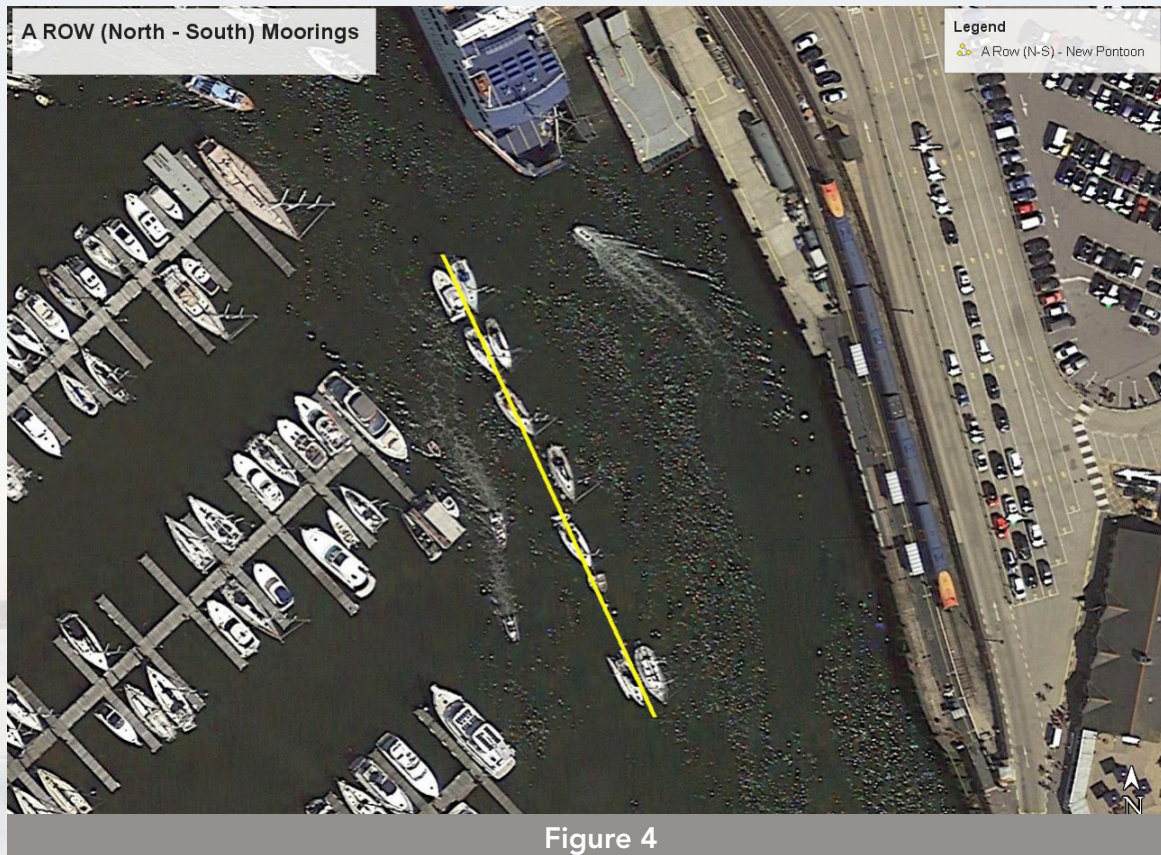


Figure 4

Commissioners understand that in the next few years Berthon Boat Company will be renewing their marina pontoon infrastructure and a logical time to progress will be to coincide with these works. There may also be an opportunity to share plant mobilisation costs.



4.5 COMMERCIAL QUAY UPGRADES

The Commissioners have obtained planning consent for an electric davit on the commercial quay to assist the commercial fishermen to load and unload their catch at all states of tide.

A specification for the davit, ground works and connection to a suitable electrical supply has been completed. Figure 5 shows details.

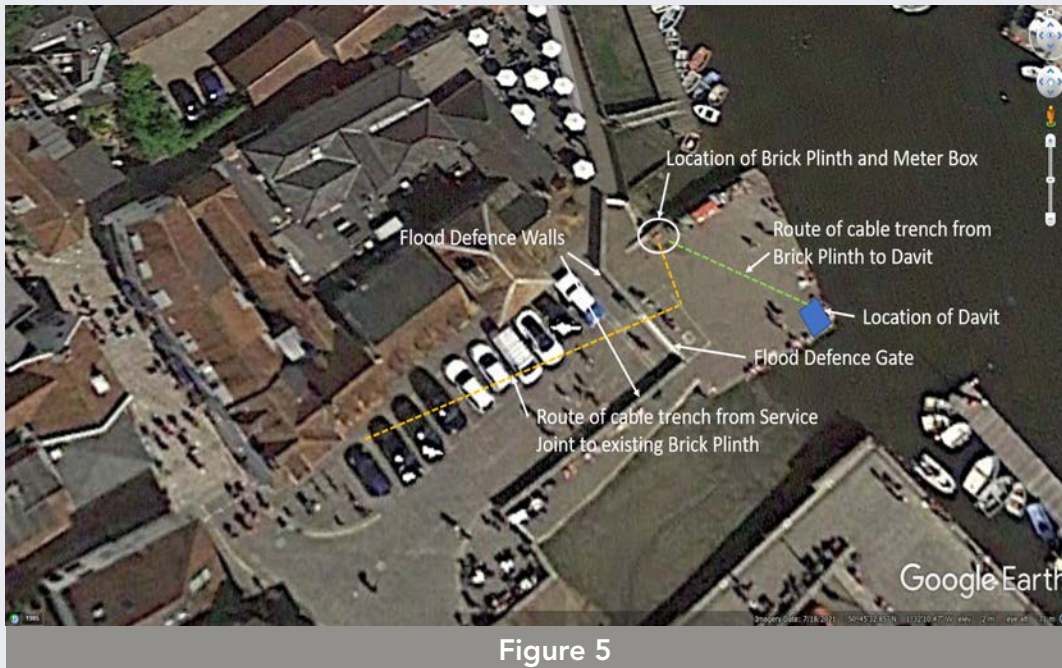


Figure 5

The scheme has been costed at £80,000 to £90,000. The Commissioners consider it important to retain and support a local fishing industry. However, the fishing fleet is small and there is no prospect of securing a commercial return on an investment of this size. The Commissioners will only be able to progress this project if LHC can obtain grant funding to offset part of the cost of provision through the MMO Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (or

similar). Commissioners are actively keeping grant funding options under review and are in a position to move swiftly when a funding opportunity arises.

4.6 OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As noted under Section 2.2, new opportunities for moorings are very limited due to environmental constraints. LHC will progress the following opportunities within the developed 'inner harbour'.

4.6.1 NORTHERN WAVE SCREEN

The northern wave screen that marks the entrance to Horn Reach and provides shelter to the inner harbour has recently been replaced. It has also been raised to cater for predicted sea level rise.

LHC already maintain a pontoon behind the wave screen. This has reached the end of its serviceable life and will need to be renewed. LHC will replace and extend the existing pontoon to create 2 new berths for boats under 6m in length (highlighted pink in Figure 6).

LHC will also install a short section of new pontoon behind the wave screen in the location highlighted yellow in

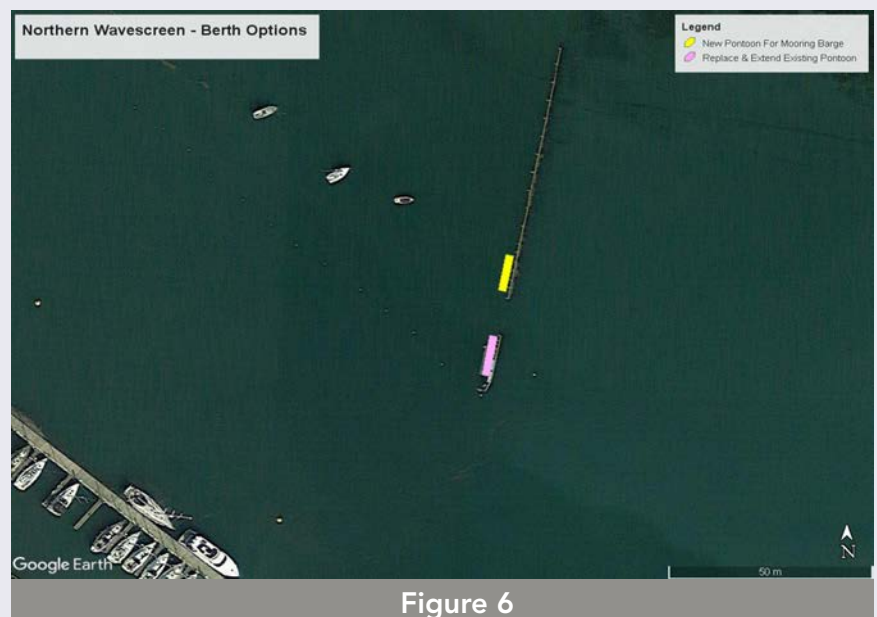


Figure 6

Figure 6 to provide a berth for LHC's mooring barge. This will release 2 berths for boats under 8m in the Town Quay area. The additional leisure berths will initially be allocated for 9 months each year for Long Term Visitor use (priority to applicants from the resident waiting list) because higher revenues are needed to justify the business case for this scheme to progress. For the remaining 3 months each year, the berths will be used to relocate resident boats for dredging. After 10 years, the berths will be allocated as resident berths.

The remainder of the sheltered area behind the northern section of pontoon is designated intertidal habitat and so cannot be developed.

4.6.2 DAN BRAN PONTOON

Improving access to the water is a key objective of LHC's strategic plan and Commissioners are keen to explore options for making better use of underutilised areas with interested partners.

The 'water locked' area between the Dan Bran Pontoon walkway and the public footpath that runs past the Harbour Office (see Figure 7) is underutilised. Lymington Town Sailing Club and Royal Lymington Yacht Club have expressed an interest in using this area for the purpose of

developing greater participation in water based activities. Commissioners will now work with both Clubs and other interested parties to develop proposals for making better use of this area.

4.6.3 REDROW PONTOON & UPSTREAM OF RAILWAY BRIDGE

Commissioners will work with Lymington Amateur Rowing Club to explore if there are opportunities for increasing paddle sports participation, possibly through an expansion of facilities on the pontoon adjacent to their Club house and the Redrow development.



Figure 7



Photo Credit: Royal Lymington Yacht Club

4.7 POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE COASTAL DEFENCE STRATEGY

LHC will monitor development of the Environment Agency's coastal defence strategy that is due to be published in 2024 to ensure that proposals co-ordinate with LHC strategic objectives.

Any requirement to upgrade coastal defences through sheet piling vulnerable areas of wall may create opportunities to increase or reorganise mooring provision through being able to dredge closer to the shore. Particular areas of interest include the seawall between Lymington Yacht Haven (north corner) and Royal Lymington Yacht Club and between Royal Lymington Yacht Club and Berthon Boat Company.

As noted in section 4.3, there will also be a requirement to co-ordinate future slipway development plans with coastal defence requirements.



4.8 HARBOUR PROTECTION BREAKWATERS

In common with other areas of the Solent, over the last century Lymington has been losing the saltmarsh that protects the harbour. This is due to a combination of factors including erosion, and sea level rise. Recognising this, in 2006 Commissioners formed a strategy to protect the harbour through the phased construction and extension of rock breakwaters as saltmarsh recedes. The first two phases were constructed in 2010 and 2014.



LHC have a financial plan in place to fund the next phase of breakwater construction which is kept under review. To inform this plan, every 5 years LHC commission a professional review of saltmarsh erosion rates and breakwater settlement to inform the timing of future phases of breakwater construction.

The most recent report (June 2020) concluded that a reasonable estimate for when the extension to the western breakwater will be required will be within 10 years, but that ultimately this will be informed by harbour operations and a sense that conditions are becoming less than ideal. The existing western breakwater will also require 'topping up' with rock due to predicted settlement.

The eastern breakwater will not need extending for the foreseeable future, albeit noting that its northern end was not completed to its full design height. LHC may seek to resolve this as part of the mobilisation for the western breakwater extension.

Financial forecasts for the next phase of breakwater works have been updated for a 2029 and 2032 construction time line at an estimated cost of £4.50m to £4.90m.

4.9 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (BENEFICIAL USE)

LHC will continue to beneficially use mud dredged from the river by placing it in strategic locations on the edge of the saltmarsh with the aim of slowing down the rate at which saltmarsh is eroded.

While the technique currently being used has proven a cost-effective way of raising the height of intertidal mud in front of saltmarsh to help shelter the marsh behind from the erosive effects of waves and tides, the technique does not enable the mud to be placed high enough in the tidal frame to allow saltmarsh to establish.

LHC are in the process of submitting a marine licence application for a trial that will involve moving mud placed using the existing technique higher up the tidal frame to reach the optimum height required for new saltmarsh to develop. Commissioners are working with a partner (Land and Water/Earth Change) who have manufactured equipment for this purpose and are seeking to undertake a 'proof of concept' trial.

If consent is granted and the trial is successful, it offers the opportunity for large scale saltmarsh restoration projects and the potential for third party funding. If new saltmarsh can be successfully created, it offers benefits for carbon and nitrate sequestration, valuable additional habitat, and the potential to delay or prevent the need for future phases of breakwater construction.



Photo Credit: Roger Bell

5.0 FUNDING STRATEGY

5.1 HARBOUR PROTECTION (BREAKWATERS)

It is LHC policy to continue to fund the cost building breakwaters from revenues derived from the Harbour Protection Levy (HPL). The HPL is charged to all LHC mooring licence holders, visitors to LHC moorings, berth holders in the private marinas, Wightlink Ltd and all annual dry sailing launching permits. Taking account of the most recent financial forecasts, until further notice the HPL will increase annually by 3% or the increase in the CPIH³ in October of the preceding year, whichever is higher.

³ Consumer Prices Index with Housing (measure of inflation published monthly by the Office for National Statistics).

5.2 OTHER HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Other harbour development, and the costs associated with running the harbour and meeting LHC's environmental objectives, are funded by statutory harbour dues or commercial revenues from the provision of optional services, principally mooring facilities. Fees are reviewed annually to take account of inflationary pressures and other circumstances.

For certain developments, including environmental enhancement projects, LHC may be able to secure grant or third party funding to offset part or all of the cost of provision. We will seek to take advantage of those opportunities when they arise.

Section 4.1 shows that LHC will need to replace a significant proportion of its waterside infrastructure over the next 15 years. In addition to renewing life expired infrastructure, LHC will also incur significant maintenance expenditure.

In order to operate with commercial prudence, provide a level of return to fund existing activities as well as new investments, and to allow for an appropriate level of reserves for contingencies and risks, LHC will need to raise the level of income it generates from the provision of mooring services.

In order to inform where that extra income should be raised from, and to ensure fairness, LHC undertook a detailed analysis of the income contribution from all mooring areas on the river. This shows that: -

- Income derived from walk ashore resident berths covers the cost of provision and is at a level to fund future asset replacement and make a contribution to reserves and harbour investment.
- Income derived from mid-river resident moorings, and in-particular sub tidal dredged moorings does not cover the cost of provision. Analysis shows that over the course of the asset lifespan, income generated from mid-river sub tidal (dredged) moorings will only cover half the cost of provision.
- Income derived from visitor berths and moorings covers the cost of provision and is at a level to fund future asset replacement and make a contribution to reserves and harbour investment.

The analysis shows that not only are LHC's mid-river sub tidal resident moorings substantially under-priced in relation to meeting the cost of provision, but they are also priced considerably lower than the local harbour authority market average⁴ charges for comparable moorings.

Commissioners have therefore concluded that mooring licence fees for sub tidal mid river resident moorings must be increased to cover the full cost of provision by FY 2031/32. In order to mitigate the impact on mooring licence holders, this will be achieved by phased annual increases as set out in the table below.

Year	Increase in mid-river sub-tidal (dredged) mooring / berth fees
FY 2024/25 to FY 2031/32 inclusive	Annual real terms increase of 7.2% ⁵ per annum plus the increase applied for inflation

As set out in the consultation document, it was originally intended that mid river sub-tidal mooring fees would cover the cost of provision by FY 2030/31, with implementation commencing in April 2023. However, Commissioners have determined that in light of the current (November 2022) exceptional economic circumstances and very high inflation, a 'one off' 12-month deferral of the implementation of the real terms increase will apply. The annual review of fees and dues for inflation will still apply.

To a lesser extent mooring fees for mid-river drying/restricted access moorings also do not cover the full cost of provision, although they make up a smaller percentage of LHC's moorings. Charges for restricted moorings are broadly in line with other harbours, excluding Chichester where prices are considerably higher.

Given some of these moorings have in the past not had a waiting list and have at times been difficult to fill, LHC do not propose to increase charges for these 'entry level' moorings beyond annual adjustments for inflationary pressures.

⁴ Average harbour authority market price derived from Beaulieu, Chichester, Cowes, Yarmouth, Poole and Hamble sub tidal mid river mooring fees in July 2022. For boats between 5m - 13m in length, the local market average price for a comparable mooring is between 89.7% and 170.9% more expensive than at Lymington excluding the Harbour Protection Levy (HPL). If the HPL is taken into account, the local market average price is between 57.1% and 127.7% more than at Lymington for a comparable mooring.

⁵ The 7.2% per annum increase is the combined effect of the increase in the mooring fee element plus harbour dues, but excludes the Harbour Protection Levy.



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Harbour Operations Manager: **Colin Freeman**
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