

Lyme Regis Cobb Stabilisation Scheme

(Phase V: Environmental Improvement Scheme)

Press release 13th Sept 2023: Inflationary pressures impact on Cobb stabilisation funding

The project team managing the Cobb Stabilisation Scheme are exploring additional funding options as rising inflation has meant there is a need to add to the £3million budget.

The original scheme was budgeted for £3 million, of which the Environment Agency has provided £2.5million and Dorset Council £500k to fund the stabilisation of the Grade One Listed Cobb harbour, which acts as a breakwater for the town of Lyme Regis, protecting property from flooding and coastal erosion. However, due to inflation and the rising costs of construction works, the budget is not sufficient to carry out the works at the present scale. It is expected that the scheme will cost at least £4.5million.

Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Service Manager, Matt Penny, will update the Dorset Council Harbours Committee on the 20th September informing them of the situation. The project team are drawing up a range of additional funding options and Dorset Council and its partners remain committed to delivering the project – with several viable funding options on the horizon. It is not known at this present stage whether this will mean a delay to the project.

The Cobb itself is being routinely monitored by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) team for damage. The outer wall was recently closed to the public due to wave damage blowing out mortar. If the FCERM team assessed there was any danger to the public, the Cobb would be temporarily closed.

Q&A's update 16th October 2023:

What's the latest update with the funding after the required increase?

The project team are drawing up a range of additional funding options they could explore.

How long has the Cobb needed repair?

The Cobb always requires regular maintenance, as it is an ancient grade 1 listed structure located within a marine environment. We started developing this work well ahead of the need to intervene with urgent repairs.

How difficult is this final stage of the development and what is the updated timeframe for this work?

The construction delivery is technically challenging due to the exposed location, plus the heritage and environmental designations associated with The Cobb and surrounding seabed. Construction is currently due to start in summer 2025, but it is not known at this stage whether this will be delayed, or the project reduced in scope.

Can you explain a little more on the "low-level concrete toe foundation"? What exactly is the plan to reinforce and strengthen the Cobb wall?

The toe-foundation work is not a confirmed design at this point but is a potential option. It will help reduce the scour and undermining that the Cobb currently suffers. Final design plans are not complete, so we cannot comment further on potential final scheme plans.

What are the plans to minimise public concern/disruption with this final phase?

The project team will be working closely with commercial and recreational users of the Cobb and the wider public to help minimise any disruption. A commercial and recreational users survey is live until 18 October 2023 which will help us understand how and when commercial and recreational users access the Cobb, providing useful data to help minimise any disruption in the future. Further consultation events will take place in due course.

How long was the Cobb closed for in July due to storm repair and what specific repair work was it?

The Cobb's main causeway remained open to the public, but the upper wall was closed on the 30 March and reopened on 27 July 2023. Works were carried out to repair lost and loose mortar due to wave impact.

Can you tell me any history surrounding the wall? When do you think it was built?

You can read about the history of the Cobb here:

<https://www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk/collection/sea-and-the-cobb/>

Are you still confident in the completion of this project?

Dorset Council and its partners remain committed to delivering the project and remain confident it will be completed, with several viable funding options on the horizon.