



Dart Harbour



STRATEGY

UPDATED 2023

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1.0 INTRO

1.1 Introduction from Chair of the Board

Welcome to the Dart Harbour strategic plan.

We, the Dart Harbour & Navigation Authority, exist to serve our stakeholders, both present and future. Our strategy aims to address their wants and needs, now and for the decades ahead.

We have consulted widely and this document is the result of input from many different organisations and individuals. It has been shaped through a considerable amount of hard work and debate led by the Harbour Master and his team. It is a live document which will be re-issued regularly and we welcome comment and contributions which can be incorporated in future versions.

You will see that our immediate focus is on Stability, Safety, Communication and Stewardship of the river we all care about so deeply. I believe we now have the right Board, Harbour Master and Team to fulfil our obligations, achieve our strategic objectives and deliver our aspirations.

I am extremely grateful to everyone who has contributed to the document. I commend it to you.

1.2 Comment from Harbour Master/CEO

I am delighted to add my welcome to this strategy. As Harbour Master and CEO of Dart Harbour, I consider it my duty to be steward of this place that we all love so much, constantly protecting and improving it for the future. A popular and busy port, nestling in the heart of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it can be a difficult balancing act, but as a trust port, it is our job to listen to all of our stakeholders and then deliver a harbour that meets their needs. This document will help me and my dedicated team to do that, setting out a clear guide on how we should operate, and how we should invest and develop the harbour.

1.3 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to summarise what Dart Harbour is working towards and the way we intend to achieve these goals over both the long and short term. This is important as it provides focus internally, and gives our stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback and guidance on these topics. Each year we will report our progress against this strategy, and communicate our priorities for the following year during the annual meeting.

1.4 Overview and structure of this document

This document is divided into three parts:

Part One Background. The first part describes the background and context within which Dart Harbour exists. This information is relatively stable, and is derived from Dart Harbour's establishment by act of Parliament in 1975 and constitutional arrangements prescribed by statutory instrument in 2002. Due consideration is also given to other guidelines provided by the Department for Transport among other Acts and agencies including the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000; Section 85) which sets out Dart Harbour's responsibilities with regard to the South Devon AONB within which Dart Harbour is located¹. This section also includes information relating to the way Dart Harbour operates and engages with stakeholders.

Part Two Long Term Vision. The second part of the document describes Dart Harbour's long term vision, goals and direction of travel. By its nature, this section includes a number of broad principles as well as aspirational goals which we are committed to achieving whilst recognising that we may not have the resources, capability or technology to achieve within the near term. This section also reflects Dart Harbour's best attempt to balance the needs of our stakeholders in the light of our full responsibilities. This part has therefore been developed with significant input from all our stakeholders and remains subject to ongoing review.

Part Three Short Term Priorities. The third part of this document describes six priorities that Dart Harbour has identified for this year, together with a number of specific objectives. These priorities have been selected based on input from our Long Term Vision, combined with consideration of immediate stakeholder views and the situation facing Dart Harbour at the start of the year. This part of this document will therefore be refreshed on an annual basis.

The reasons for preparing this document in this way are twofold. Firstly, the Board believe it may be helpful for readers to be able to see the background and rationale behind the priorities and actions rather than simply a statement of our intentions. We hope this provides stakeholders with useful information about our future intentions and helps everyone engage with Dart Harbour as desired. Whilst arguably this document may therefore be a little longer and broader than necessary, we hope this increases the transparency and partnership with which Dart Harbour operates.

The second reason for including the 'workings' behind our priorities and actions for this year is that it will make it an easier process to improve and update this document in future years. There is always a balance to be struck between 'perfection' and 'practicality' when creating a strategy, and getting this balance right is not made easier during times of change. We know this document is not perfect, but The Board remains committed to continually improving with the support of our staff and stakeholders over time.

¹ "In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty." Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000; Section 85).

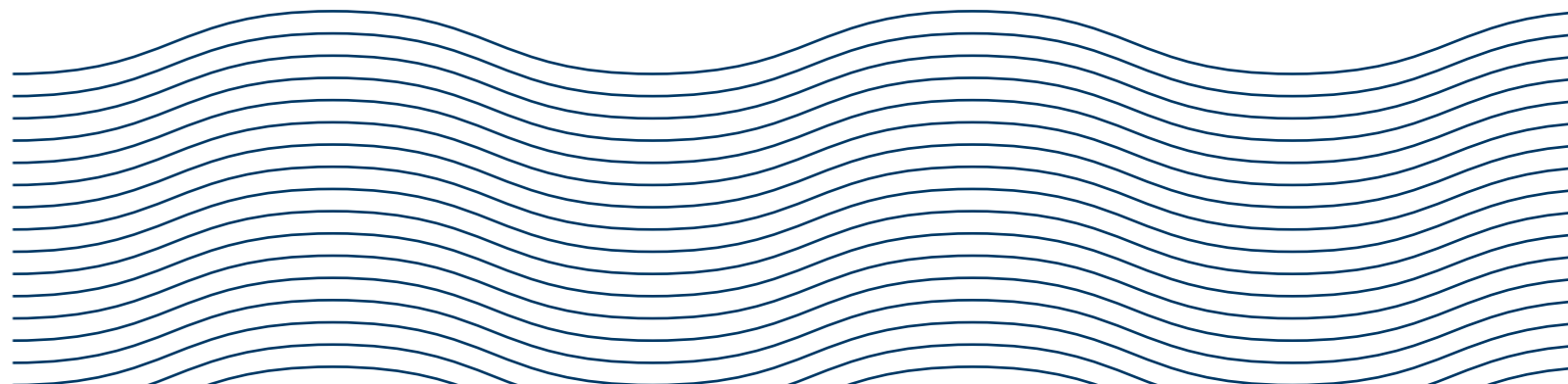


credit: Jack Handley

1.5 How this strategy was developed

The Harbour Master has worked closely with the Board to prepare this document, with support from and input from our stakeholders, including staff. External stakeholder views were initially sought through our formal stakeholder forums, and this was supplemented by input from our annual meeting and an online survey.

Further detail relating to input from the online survey is included within appendix one, along with commentary on the decision to include and/or exclude a number of specific points. Having clarified our responsibilities and long term aspirations, medium and short term objectives were developed based on a consideration of available opportunities and resources.



2.0 PART ONE BACKGROUND

2.1 Our ultimate responsibility

The DfT’s “Good governance guidance for ports” describes a Trust Port as “a valuable asset presently safeguarded by the existing board, whose duty it is to hand it on, in the same or better condition to succeeding generations. This remains the ultimate responsibility of the board, and future generations remain the ultimate stakeholder.”

2.2 Background – What is Dart Harbour?

Dart Harbour was constituted and incorporated by the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority Act 1975 amalgamating the undertakings of the Dart Harbour Commissioners and the River Dart Navigation Commissioners. Dart Harbour’s constitutional arrangements are set out in the Dart Harbour and Navigation Harbour Revision (Constitution) Order 2002.

Dart Harbour’s responsibilities extend from outside the mouth of the river up to the weir at Totnes, and the whole is classified as a ‘Trust Port’. Dart Harbour is mandated to be an ‘Open Port’, that must maintain the ability for ships to discharge both cargo and passengers; a ‘Competent Authority’, that demands the provision of pilotage service as and when it is required; and a designated Local Lighthouse Authority, responsible for the care and maintenance of the navigational aids within the harbour.

The majority of today’s river users are leisure boat owners, and they need moorings and marine services. The growth in this community has fuelled an expansion in the number of marinas and dry storage facilities now available in the harbour. Commercial traffic has been relatively constant with well-established passenger ferry and fishing industries that continue to thrive.

As a Trust Port, Dart Harbour must operate as a business that can fund the provision of the statutory services. However, there are no shareholders and there is no need to generate annual dividends. Rather the harbour is held in Trust for the benefit of the Stakeholders; they are numerous and include all users of the river in whatever capacity, the residents of the communities that live in proximity to the river and all those who have an interest in the Dart.

2.3 Commercial Operations of Dart Harbour

As a statutory harbour authority and trust port, Dart Harbour does not receive external funding and generates income to discharge its statutory duties and serve stakeholders from harbour dues, berthing fees, and other marine services. Any surplus is re-invested in the harbour. Renewing the harbour’s infrastructure requires long term planning. To generate a reliable income Dart Harbour must have a business model that offers a marketable product and makes a sufficient profit to maintain, improve and update that product, and cover the costs of the statutory requirements. Further development of the business model must also take into consideration the complexities of stewardship and the health of the environment.

At present, there is no source of external funding and all income is generated through the collection of harbour dues, berthing fees and other marine services. Any surplus income must be re-invested in the harbour and the process of renewing key pieces of infrastructure needs long-term -planning.

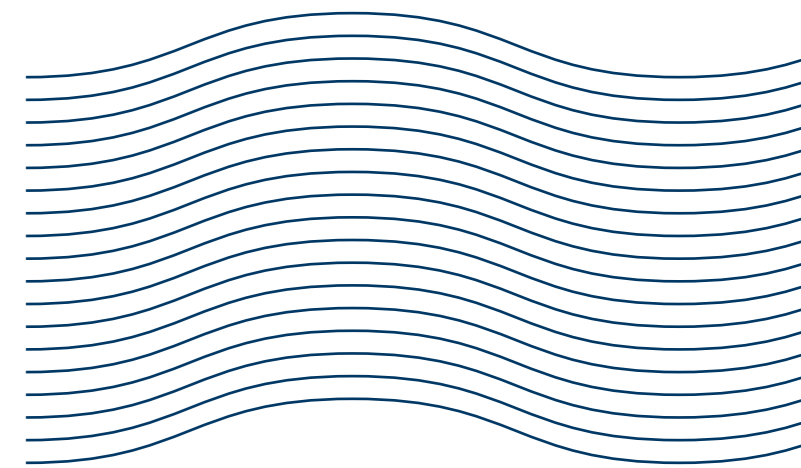
2.4 Our obligations

Integral with the authority to manage the harbour and provide the statutory services, comes responsibility for the care and stewardship of the river. Although there are numerous organisations and authorities who also contribute to, or have an interest in that stewardship, Dart Harbour has a central role.

The vast majority of river users are drawn to the port as a consequence of its inherent beauty and the health of the environment in its broadest sense. There might be a strong argument for denying any further developments on the river or new commercial endeavours, as they would almost certainly have an adverse effect on the environment in one form or another. However, the interests of the local communities might best be served with just such new developments that offer increased employment opportunities and bring more wealth to the region. Therefore, the stewardship of the port is a complex balancing act.

The River Dart is one of five estuaries within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dart Harbour provides an annual stipend to the AONB Office to help fund the existence of its Estuary Officer. An AONB sponsored Steering Group generated the Estuary Management Plan (the current plan runs from 2016 – 2024) and the Dart Harbour and Estuary Biosecurity Plan.

In recent years, as a consequence of initiatives by the Authority, the Dart Estuary Forum has been resurrected and brings together many of the authorities and private individuals with a direct interest in the numerous environmental issues that are of concern. The upper reaches of Dart Harbour have been declared a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), although the MCA have yet to provide guidance regarding its management and the impact that may have on the mandated responsibilities of the Authority. The environment, and principally the aesthetics of the natural vista, is of considerable importance to all the resident communities and the vast majority of the users, residents and visitors, as it is this natural beauty that draws them to the area.



2.5 Stakeholder relationships

Dart Harbour has established four stakeholder groups and seeks to stay abreast and involved in all matters which affect our communities and where Dart Harbour may play a role:

- Commercial Users Group (CUG) – a forum for those with water-based commercial operations.
- Association of Dart River User Clubs (ADRUC) – a forum for representatives from the clubs and associations of leisure and recreational users
- Dart Harbour Communities Group (DHCG) – a forum for representatives of the town and parish councils of communities situated on the banks of the river
- Dart Estuary Forum (DEF) – a forum open to all to debate environmental issues regarding the river

In addition, Dart Harbour communicates through an active website and direct surveys of customers and collects and analyses all feedback received, working to disseminate and share relevant information to the stakeholder groups and other key contributors and also make it available to all interested parties on the website. In the event of proposals for changes to river infrastructure, service levels or operating procedures, our stakeholders will always be informed and/or invited to examine the options and make their views known as appropriate.

3.0 PART TWO LONG TERM VISION

3.1 Mission, Values and Pillars

Our Mission is to manage, protect, and enhance Dart Harbour whilst supporting the local economy and community. This includes...

- Operating Dart Harbour safely as a Trust Port in accordance with the Port Marine Safety Code
- Conserving and enhancing Dart Harbour as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that benefits the local community
- Managing Dart Harbour in a way that balances the needs of all stakeholders

We will pursue our mission in a way that is governed by three values, supported by five strategic pillars. Our Values are: Safety, Teamwork & Accountability, and our Strategic Pillars are: Safety, Stewardship, Stability, Stakeholders & Staff.

Our staff are committed to bringing the values to life in their work, receiving regular feedback and coaching against these areas in addition to any technical supervision. The five strategic pillars underpin our thinking with respect to the setting of long term aspirations and strategic goals.



credit: Jack Handley

Table 1 Dart Harbour Values

SAFETY	TEAMWORK	ACCOUNTABILITY
<p>Our first priority is to keep Dart Harbour safe, both for those afloat and ashore. Safety will always come first in everything we do.</p>	<p>We support one another, creating a positive and inclusive environment, and treating each other with respect.</p>	<p>We take pride in our work, providing a top quality service to our stakeholders whilst protecting the environment and continually looking for ways to improve.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps self up to date with relevant safety measures • Considers the risks in situations before taking action • Follows safety rules and procedures • Remains alert to changes that might compromise safety, adapting plans as necessary • Keeps calm under pressure • Promotes safety as everyone's responsibility • Speaks up and challenges team mates when they appear to be compromising the safety of themselves or others • Responds positively when challenged over the safety of own actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks on the positive side of situations, encouraging and motivating teammates • Pitches in and volunteers for tasks (not waiting to be asked, and not leaving others to do difficult or unpleasant tasks) • Collaborates with others, not working in a silo • Makes colleagues feel welcome and valued • Provides encouragement and practical support to colleagues • Shows respect and empathy to colleagues, being sensitive to others' feelings and providing care and support • Keeps colleagues informed and up to date • Shares knowledge and expertise openly, helping people to learn and improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a 'can-do' approach, working with confidence and taking ownership for getting things done • Deals with issues proactively (not walking past problems) • Plans and organises time effectively • Completes own work to a high standard (doing what you say you will do, satisfying customers, getting things right first time etc) • Treats customers and stakeholders with respect, understanding situations from their point of view • Continually looks for opportunities to learn and develop • Identifies ways of improving efficiency and/or the service provided to stakeholders

Table 2: Dart Harbour Strategic Pillars

SAFETY	To continually improve safety on and around the water, making Dart Harbour a safe place to work and play
STEWARDSHIP	To conserve and enhance Dart Harbour as an Area of Outstanding Natural beauty
STABILITY	To manage the Authority and its' finances prudently, always being solvent and provisioning for the long term
STAKEHOLDERS	To reinvigorate our relationships with our stakeholders, developing processes to support strong, regular and meaningful engagement
STAFF	To build a proud, skilled and motivated Harbour team, committed to Dart Harbour's mission and values

3.2 Strategic commitments and long-term aspirations

Our strategic commitments and long-term aspirations are presented below against each of our five strategic pillars. These commitments and aspirations have been developed with input from stakeholders with consideration of our responsibilities, remit and resources. Commitments reflect responsibilities and more specific priorities we are working towards over the long term and are actively developing plans for. Aspirations reflect things we are looking for ways to work towards, or are subgoals that form part of our aspirations.



credit: Jack Handley

SAFETY	
Definition:	To continually improve safety on and around the water, making Dart Harbour a safe place to work and play
Strategic commitments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To operate Dart Harbour safely as a Trust Port in accordance with the Port Marine Safety Code. 2 To ensure that all infrastructure and equipment, as well as policies and procedures, are fit for purpose and well maintained 3 To help and encourage our customers to use the river in a safe way 4 Ensure the river continues to be safely navigable
Long term aspirations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Continue to deliver a rolling program of infrastructure replacements and upgrades B Continue to update policies, procedures, bylaws and directions in a timely and practical way C Improve the safety of wild swimming and use of small craft on the river D Continually increase the level and accuracy of safety incident reporting E Develop a consistent culture of safety connected with the use of the river within Dart Harbour and across all stakeholders and communities, leading to the continual decrease in safety related incidents

STEWARDSHIP	
Definition:	To conserve and enhance Dart Harbour as an Area of Outstanding Natural beauty
Strategic commitments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To maintain the essential character of the Dart in line with its status as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – both the tranquil unspoiled nature of the estuary, and the bustling ports of Dartmouth and Totnes. 2 To safeguard and improve marine and wildlife habitats for the future. 3 To work towards Net Zero for our own operations 4 To help and encourage our customers to reduce their environmental footprint 5 To maintain and restore the protected features of the MCZ 6 To encourage biodiversity and minimise the impact of invasive species
Long term aspirations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Investment in infrastructure to support customers' use of electric powered boats B Preserve and enhance the estuary's natural carbon stores C Increase the availability and convenience of pump out facilities, and encourage customers to use them. D Continually reduce the amount of waste we create, aiming to reuse or recycle all of our waste, and encouraging our customers to do the same E To keep the estuary free of litter, especially plastics, and to reduce, reuse and recycle the waste we produce and help our customers to do likewise F Be recognised as a leader, instigating and supporting initiatives that reduce contamination, raise water quality within the river, and raise awareness of these issues G Work with the AONB and other partners to actively conserve and enhance the various habitats on the estuary, improving biodiversity, and reducing the impact of non-native species H To manage our moorings mix in a sustainable way, keeping a broadly constant number of residential yacht berths. I Consider the visual impact of our moorings on the environment, for example reducing mooring numbers in some quieter areas, to help them to return to a more natural state, or avoiding development where it would impact iconic views

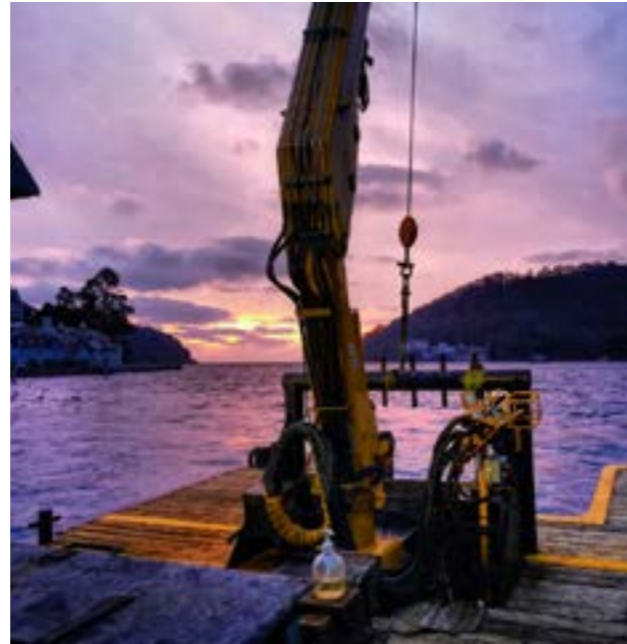
STABILITY	
Definition:	To manage the Authority and its' finances prudently, always being solvent and provisioning for the long term
Strategic commitments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To manage Dart Harbour's finances prudently, always being solvent and provisioning and investing for the long term 2 To achieve exemplary corporate governance 3 To effectively identify and manage risks to the Authority 4 To identify new opportunities to deliver value in support of our mission
Long term aspirations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Maintain high standards of good governance throughout the organisation B Continually improve the competence, commitment and diversity of the Board and its governance processes C Develop fair, proportionate and resilient revenue streams that allow Dart Harbour to meet its responsibilities and achieve its mission D Generate adequate operating financial surpluses E Develop the business with larger vessels (e.g. cruise, superyachts) whilst avoiding negative impacts F Take advantage of opportunities afforded by the creation of Plymouth and South Devon (PASD) Freeport Zone G Take advantage of grant funding opportunities

STAKEHOLDERS	
Definition:	To reinvigorate our relationships with our stakeholders, developing processes to support strong, regular and meaningful engagement
Strategic commitments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To deliver outstanding service to our customers 2 To sustainably develop Dart Harbour to benefit the local economy 3 To ensure that the differing needs of all of our stakeholders are taken into account 4 To maintain, develop and improve the facilities required by our stakeholders 5 To communicate well with our stakeholders and develop the Dart Harbour brand 6 To broaden the appeal of the Dart to a more diverse range of stakeholders 7 To manage and improve our moorings to best meet the needs of our customers, balanced against our other goals. 8 To develop lower-cost options to access to the river
Long term aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Broaden the appeal of Dart Harbour to a wider group of stakeholders B Continue to support existing and new businesses C Produce and deliver a North Embankment plan including double steps, low water landing, scrubbing grid, launching facilities D Ensure that our moorings and other facilities match the requirements of the local community, including better facilities for dayboats, kayaks, canoes and SUPS. E Balance waiting lists by increasing numbers of more popular mooring types, such as larger vessels and pontoon berths, whilst reducing numbers of less popular moorings. F Continue to improve facilities for visitors, including short stay berths. G Ensure adequate capacity for tenders H Ensure that our mix of moorings is appropriate I Provision of toilet / shower facilities J Provision of improved facilities up river, including all-tide access at Stoke Gabriel and improved moorings at Totnes K Ensure that Dart Harbour is accessible to all L Engage with the next generation of stakeholders M Develop a communications strategy to ensure stakeholders are consulted and informed with decisions and developments on the river that affect or interest them N Continually increase the standards of service and satisfaction provided to customers

STAFF	
Definition:	To build a proud, skilled and motivated Harbour team, committed to Dart Harbour's mission and values
Strategic commitments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To manage Dart Harbour's people to the highest standards and be recognised as an employer of choice 2 For the Board and management to support the staff, to enable them to best serve our stakeholders 3 To provide our team with opportunities for development 4 To ensure our staff are provided with the equipment and procedures they need to work effectively 5 To help develop marine skills in the wider community
Long term aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Ensure Dart Harbour remains a place people want to come to work, achieving consistently high levels of staff engagement B Achieve a 'one team' culture of support, inclusion, flexibility and collaboration C Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for staff to perform D Adapt to the new skills required and technologies available of the future E Implement long term resource planning based on the training, development and empowerment of staff F Provide fair, competitive levels of remuneration G Introduce efficient working practices, taking advantage of modern technology

4.0 PART THREE

SHORT TERM PRIORITIES



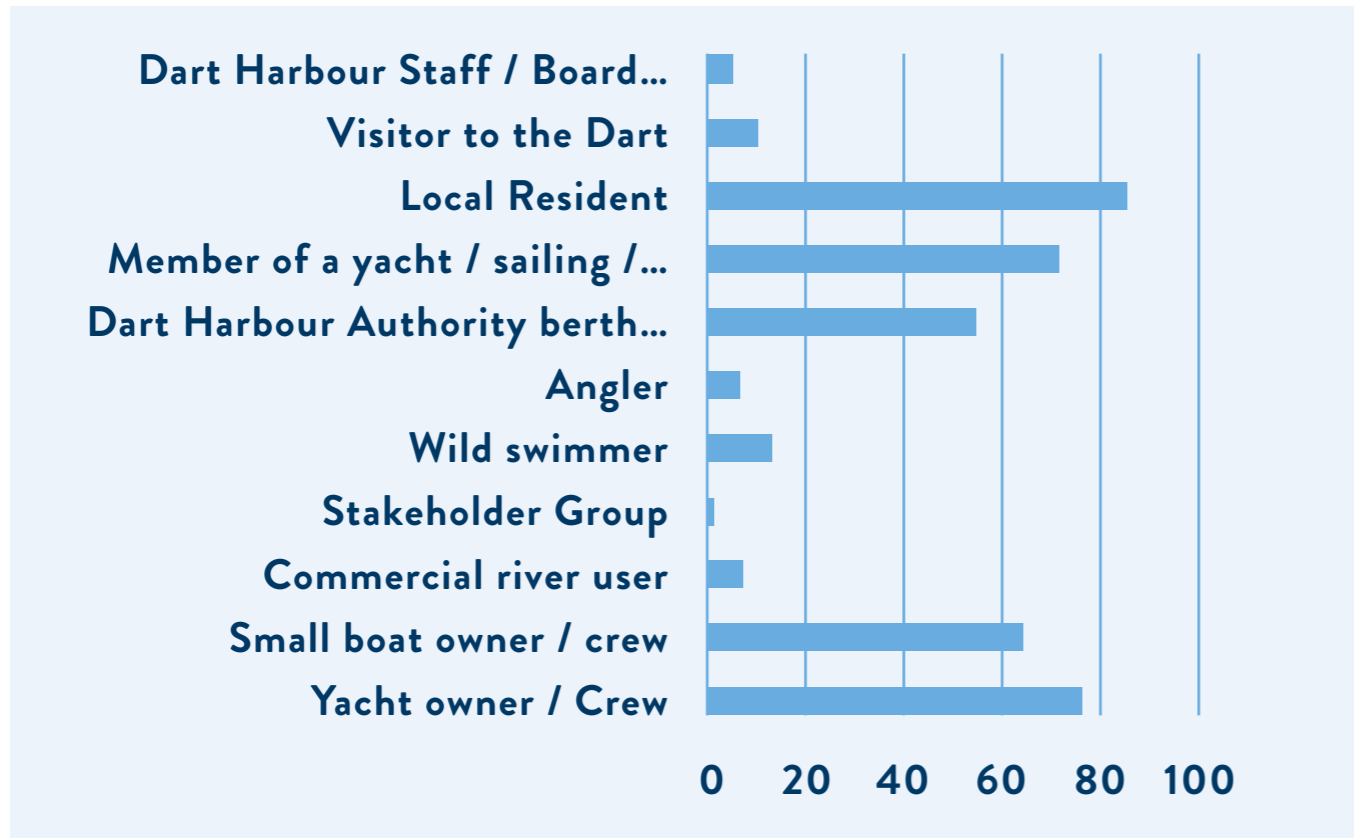
credit: Jack Handley

PRIORITY	OBJECTIVES
Good to great	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New appraisal process in place. 2. Begin work on management development programme. 3. Prepare long-term staff development plan. 4. Back office systems optimisation. 5. Optimise banking processes. 6. Cost base review exercise. 7. Review and finetune dashboard KPIs. 8. Identify and develop new business opportunities. 9. Work towards long term cruise plan – developing facilities, marketing, ensuring maximum benefit to town.
Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Review and update our legislative framework by introducing General Directions to replace Byelaws. 11. Introduce a new drills regime to cover a wider range of scenarios. 12. Develop a new planned maintenance system to cover all assets. 13. Enhance safety for more vulnerable river users – swimmers, paddle sports etc.
Stewardship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Begin Phase II of the Saltmarsh project. 15. Promote and develop decarbonisation of river, both for Dart Harbour and other river users' boats. 16. Progress towards monitoring of inland waterways bathing water. 17. Ensure waste management procedures are optimised, and make progress towards reducing litter in river. 18. Develop plan for phase out of marine toilets on the river. 19. Identify at least one new local marine initiative to champion 20. Enhance the visibility of Dart Harbour's environmental credentials.
Stakeholder engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Increase engagement and understanding of the river amongst young people in the local area. Explore and pilot new methods of engagement. 22. Review facilities and services provided to the fishing community. 23. Increase stakeholder engagement with leisure boating community. 24. Complete mooring policy & masterplan consultation and publication. 25. Develop a plan with partner groups to improve disabled accessibility on the river. 26. Produce and deliver a communications strategy. 27. Encourage customer feedback.
Start to deliver infrastructure plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 28. Deliver double steps upgrade. 29. Begin work on upgrade of LWL pontoon. 30. Work with SGBA to replace Stoke Gabriel Point Pontoon.

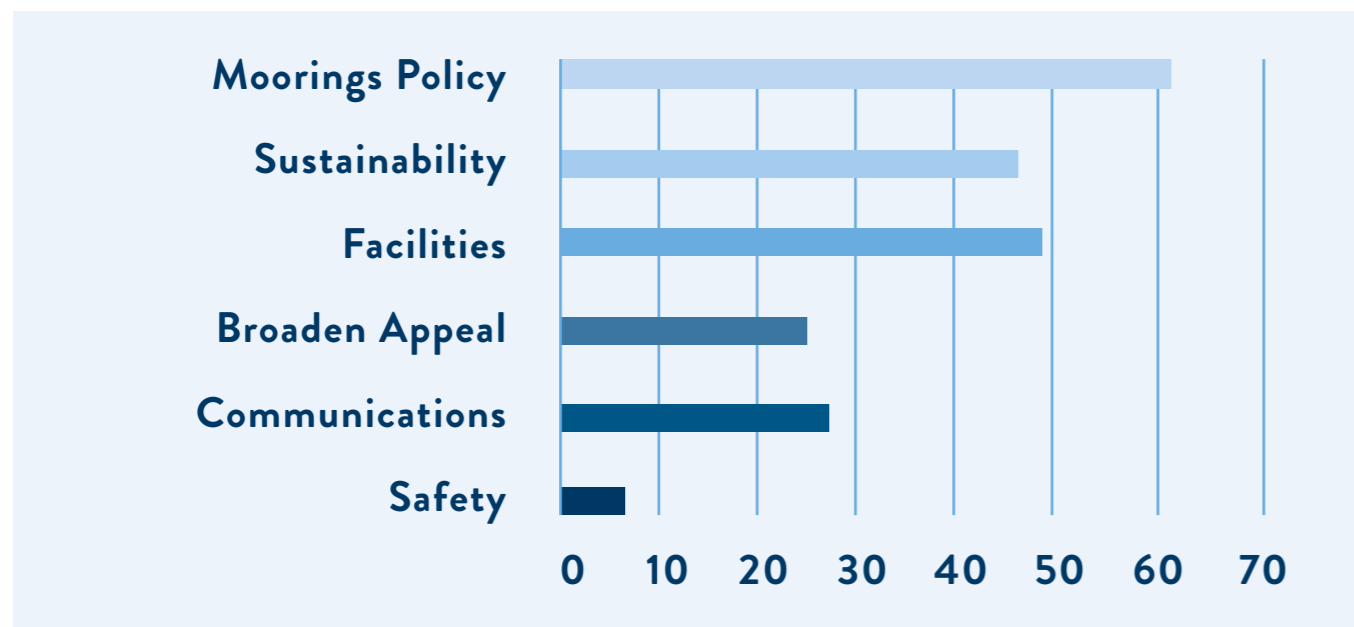
APPENDIX ONE

RESULTS OF 2022 PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

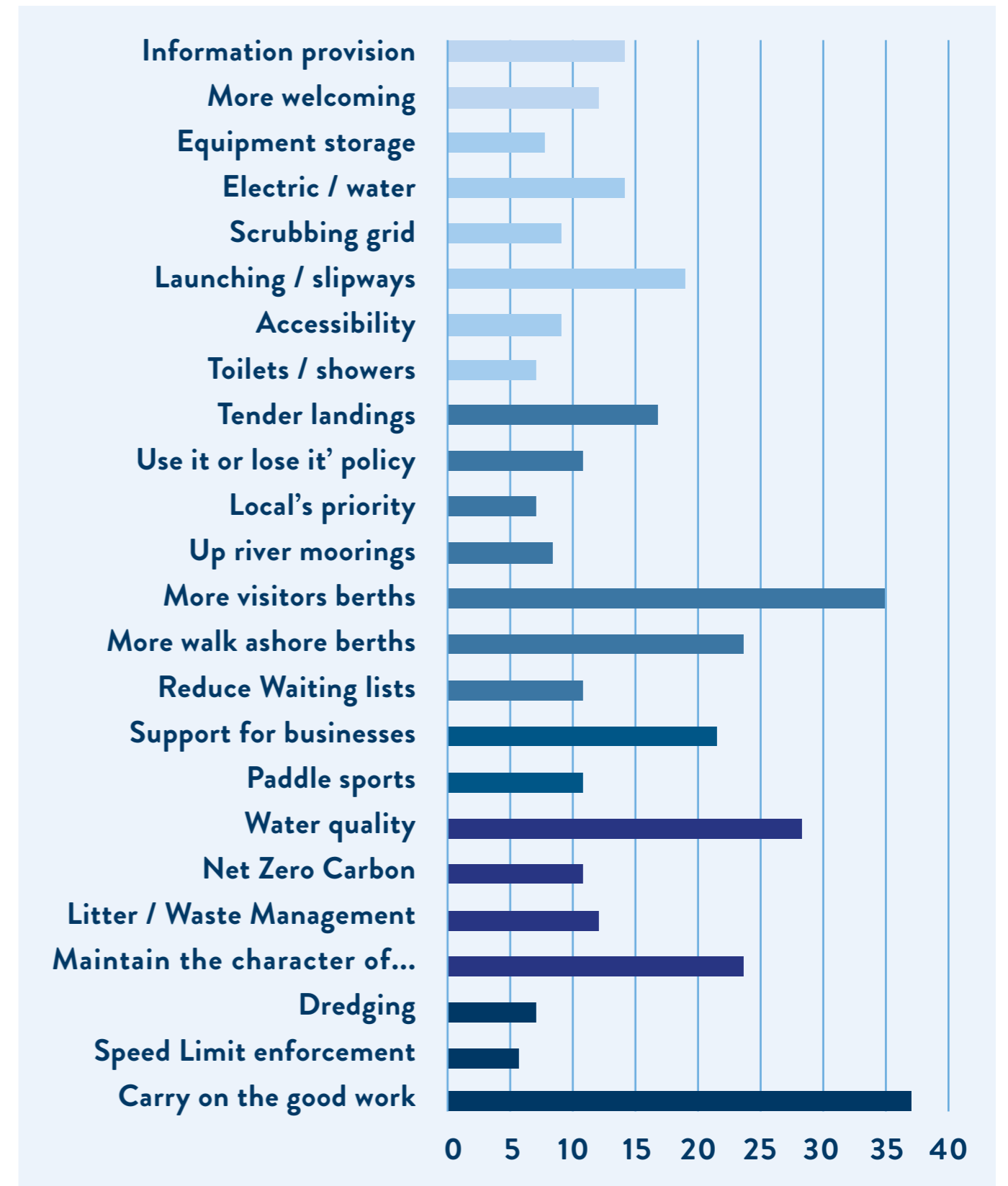
RESPONDENTS



KEY AREAS OF FOCUS



TOP 25 ANSWERS



Ideas not incorporated into this strategy

Our consultation provided a very wide range of priorities and suggestions for inclusion within our strategy. It was apparent, in reading and collating the responses that there appears to be a broad agreement amongst stakeholders about what should be included in our strategy, and so the vast majority of ideas have been incorporated within the strategy, generally within the Strategic Goals and/or within the 2022 priorities and long term aspirations. Some ideas have not been included – generally for one of the following reasons:

Very specific detail. Some suggestions covered very specific issues, which could be considered part of one of the broader points included in the strategy. For clarity, the specific detail has not been included, however the management team will take note of it to assist them in achieving their objectives. An example would be the excellent suggestion to provide cycle parking for customers. Providing this would be part of achieving Strategic Goal 2.4.



credit: Jack Handley

Outside of Dart Harbour's responsibility.

Some suggestions covered areas that Dart Harbour does not control – for example the Boatfloat, South West Water, and individual commercial operators. Others suggested things that Dart Harbour does not have the legal authority to do, such as fining waste water discharges, or which need large quantities of land, which Dart Harbour does not have, such as providing boat trailer storage. These were not included, but where practical, Dart Harbour will pass these suggestions on to the relevant bodies and/or work with them on the suggestions.

Part of the Mooring Policy Review.

There were lots of suggestions regarding the number, type and location of moorings on the Dart. We have incorporated some of the more strategic points into the 'Stakeholders' pillar of the strategy, as well as a broad principle that Dart Harbour will maintain a similar number of residential yacht moorings on the river, however the detail will be included in the next edition of the Moorings Policy, which is currently being reviewed.

Minority opinion.

On a very few issues, opinion was split on whether something was a good or a bad idea. These included encouraging paddlesports and encouraging cruise ships. In both cases, the board has decided to agree with the majority of responders to this and previous surveys in favour of both activities, but will ensure that the concerns of the minority are taken into account, and appropriate mitigation is put in place.

Thank you for reading



Dart Harbour

STRATEGY
2022



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