

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



Question submitted by: Neal Stoneman

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Leader of the Council – Cllr Tudor Evans

To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Council

Date: 26/01/2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Can the Leader explain why no planning permission or listed buildings consent was in place for West Hoe Pier, why work was undertaken at the worst time of year (was closed all summer), and what's the estimated extra cost of repairs, now the pier's been destroyed by lack of planning?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

We always try to plan to avoid storms and bad weather as much as practically possible. Weather events are increasingly more frequent and of greater intensity, making timing works more and more difficult. Procuring work of this type takes time to plan and finance, in addition, work was planned to cause as little disruption to businesses on the waterfront as possible.

The works to the West Hoe Pier were split into two phases, with the first phase planned to take place at the end of the summer and into the autumn for exactly that reason. Unfortunately the volume of material requiring excavation was more than had been anticipated and took additional time to remove from site, this delayed the programme and the timing of pouring concrete. When the first storm hit, the pier was at its most vulnerable point and caused the damage that occurred. The focus then has shifted to recovery and we are working closely with contractors and consultants flexibly and rapidly to mitigate the damage.

Heritage conservation officers were consulted earlier this year on the proposed works to the Pier. Due to the variations in records and the number of past interventions it was agreed that the first phase of work would be carried out without listed building consent and the information gleaned from the initial excavations and investigations would provide more detailed information about the exact nature of the work needed which would then be submitted for consent. The intention was to complete this investigative stage and before phase 2 to make a listed building consent application with the exact nature of the works. This is still the case and we continue to liaise closely with the Heritage Officers.

There has always been an intention to obtain listed building consent. The first phase was exploratory, which was to inform the application prior to works commencing in the second phase.

As some of you may have seen, Plymouth Live contacted Heritage England, who said “Listed Building Consent is not generally required for like-for-like repairs to listed structures. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority, in this case [Plymouth City Council](#), to determine whether consent is required. Swift repairs are needed but Historic England recognises the challenging conditions in which they need to be made.”

The estimated extra costs, due to the storm, is estimated to be £150,000 to £200,000. The main works are funded from an approved capital budget for repairs and maintenance which included suitable contingency allowances for unseen events such as this, therefore the increased costs can be absorbed within that contingency without impacting other projects or budgets.