

Plymouth Sound & Tamar Estuaries Slipway Audit 2016 Report



Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum
c/o Plymouth City Council
Ballard House, West Hoe Road
Plymouth, PL1 3BJ
Published 2017
coastal@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk/tecf

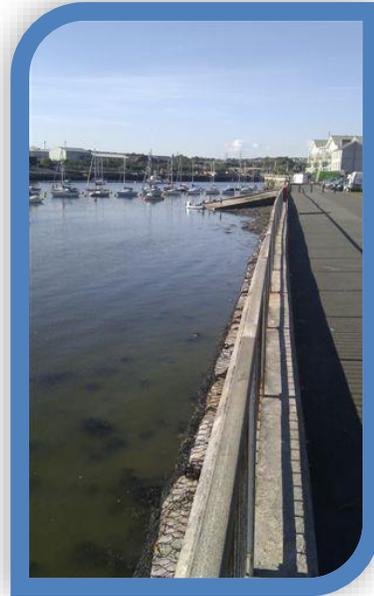
Version	Status	Description	Author
Slipway Audit 2016v1	Draft	Circulated to PPMLC for comment	NIO.
Slipway Audit 2016v2	FINAL	Uploaded to website	NIO

1 Executive Summary

Public slipways are very important as they allow access to tidal waters and vital to everyone who wishes to get on or in the water and even to simply be beside the tidal waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries.

This document provides a record of the key slipways and also audits the public slipways in terms of access, condition, usability and overall assessment.

The document includes some analysis of the various types of slipway and will form an important element of the evidence base to help inform future management of public access to the waters.



2 Contents

1	Executive Summary	2
3	Introduction.....	4
4	Partners	4
5	Slipways and Hards.....	5
6	Objectives	6
7	Methodology	6
8	Acknowledgments	7
9	Results	7
9.1	Ownership	8
9.2	Access	8
9.3	Parking and turning	9
9.4	Condition Assessment	9
9.5	Suitability for vessels	10
9.6	Overall assessment.....	11
10	Conclusions.....	12

Appendix 1: Slipway Audit Forms

Appendix 2: Slipway Audit Maps

Appendix 3: Slipway Audit Photographs



3 Introduction

The waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries are renowned for their natural beauty and diverse marine environments. These assets make the area a great place to live and work and act as a magnet for those wishing to take part in marine based recreation with the waters attracting sailors and divers, rowers and canoeists and kayakers and anglers who all depend on slipways and quays to provide access to the water.

Slipways and quays are critical pieces of infrastructure which enable access to the water for marine recreation. However the presence of slipways is not enough as to be efficient they need to be long enough to enable access to the water at all states of the tide and not just at high water. Landside features are also important such as access roads, parking and the presence or otherwise of toilets and other services.

Plymouth and the surrounding area is seeing considerable development along with a corresponding increase in population. With Plymouth marketing itself as 'Britain's first Ocean City', there is an expectation that many of the new residents will be predisposed to marine recreation and so there will be a corresponding increase in demand for access to the water.

The Tamar Estuary Consultative Forum (TECF) consists of the relevant local authorities, harbor authorities, NGOs and key landowners who collectively manage the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries. In order to do this effectively they are committed to sharing key information amongst their members and work collaboratively to ensure the sustainable management of the waters in such a way as to provide economic and social benefits whilst protecting the key environmental features.

The slipways and quays of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries were last audited by the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum in 1998, when 49 slipways and quays were surveyed in the document "An Audit of public access to the Tamar estuaries". This report therefore brings this information up to date and goes further in assessing their condition, suitability for different types of craft and then goes on to provide an overall assessment.

4 Partners

Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum is a partnership consisting of the key relevant authorities who are collectively responsible for managing the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries. Membership is given in the following table.

Table 1: TECF Membership

Associated British Ports Cattewater Harbour Commissioners Cornwall Council Cornwall IFCA Devon and Severn IFCA Devon County Council Duchy of Cornwall Environment Agency	Historic England Marine Management Organisation Natural England Plymouth City Council Queen's Harbour Master South Hams District Council Sutton Harbour Holdings Tamar Valley Service West Devon Borough Council
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

5 Slipways and Hards

This document focuses on 'public slipways and hards'. These are not clearly defined but a broad definition has been used elsewhere which would be where the general public may launch craft through right, permission or custom, over the foreshore into tidal waters" (Hampshire County Council 2013).

Public hards and slipways are critical because they allow everyone to gain access to tidal waters, regardless of their ability to pay. As described earlier, they can be used for many different reasons including marine recreation and leisure purposes, exercise, boat maintenance and fishing. They are also important for cultural reasons and waterfront scenes have long been a subject for artists, writers and poets.

Public slipways and hards have an important role as greenspace in the city and in the rural districts and they can be registered as a town or village green. To do this they must qualify by meeting the usage guidelines as set out in the Commons Act 2006, this means that they must have been used by individuals for exercise or recreation or for lawfully carrying out sports or pastimes for over 20 years (www.gov.uk/guidance/town-and-village-greens-how-to-register)

Many of the slipways in Plymouth City Council's ownership are included within the Plymouth City Council Act 1987, which sets out the responsibilities of the council in relation to piers docks and wharves in its ownership. These include:

- Saltash Passage, slipways and embankments;
- Pottery Quay and Tamar Canal Wharves
- North Corner Quay and Landing Stage
- Mutton Cove, Harbour and Jetty
- Richmond Walk, slipway, steps , embankment, boat park
- Stonehouse Stpes
- West Hoe Harbour and Pier
- Pebbleside Pier
- West Pier, Commercial Wharf, Phoenix Wharf, Baltic Wharf (Elphinstone) and Fishers Nose;
- Hooe Quay
- Oreston Slipway and Embankment.

There are many more access points to the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries with numerous private quays, jetties and wharves along the banks of the estuary. The historical mining which took place in Devon and Cornwall has left a legacy of numerous harbours in the upper estuaries whilst some private dwellings with waterfront access also have their own private facilities. These have not been included in the audit as they have no relevance for public access. Also, as the Ministry of Defence consolidate their estate and withdraw from some of their waterfront sites, some key slipways may well become available. However, since the disposal of their land is focusing on disposal to economic uses, these sites have not been included as there is currently no opportunity for public use.

6 Objectives

The Slipway Audit 2016 has the following objectives:

- Update the information provided in the 1998 Audit and provide a photographic record;
- Map all the public slipways as well as the key private slipways which are usable by the public.
- Assess the public slipways and include a condition assessment.
- Categorise all public slipways in order to describe their suitability for different levels of use.
- Produce a comprehensive GIS database for use by the key relevant authorities.

7 Methodology

Each slipway was visited and photographed and information was collected on the structure of the slipway, and how usable the structure is at various states of tide, as well as access and suitability of the ramp for launching along with a condition assessment.

Information was also collected on the public amenities including parking, lighting, toilets and water and refuse facilities. This time it was decided not to collect information on public telephones as mobile phone coverage is so much more extensive than it was back in 1998 that public phones are virtually superfluous. Information for those with mobility impairments was also updated.

Finally, an assessment was undertaken of access, parking, condition and suitability for various craft which resulted in an overall assessment, as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Description of Categories

Access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Good easy access, wide roads, suitable for large trailered boats; 2) Medium access, some narrow roads in places, suitable for small – medium sized trailered boats. 3) Poor access, roads are very narrow, access by vehicle very difficult or impossible, only suitable for hand carried craft.
Parking & Turning areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Parking nearby for at least 6 vehicles or more with trailers. Nice wide turning areas.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Parking for a couple of vehicles with small trailers. Turning areas are compact. 3) No suitable parking nearby or turning areas non-existent or very tight.
Condition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Good condition, surface is stable and easy to use. 2) Medium condition, some maintenance would be useful, but usable in current state. 3) Condition very poor, use is impossible or difficult given the condition of the slipway.
Suitability for craft – maximum size	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Large trailered craft, eg 20' yachts or large ribs. 2) Small to medium trailered craft – dinghys, ribs, jetskis etc. 3) Portable craft only eg canoes and kayaks.
Overall assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Regional or nationally importance slipway – with easy access, good facilities, suitable for range of craft and plenty of car parking. 2) Of city / district importance – key access point, with good but restricted parking, and suitable for range of craft. 3) Locally important slipway – access is poor, with limited parking, but is important for the local area. 4) Portable craft only eg canoes and kayaks – with hardly any carparking.

In addition to the public slipways, there are also a large number of private slipways and quays within the study area. These have not generally been included unless they are available for use by the public by prior arrangement.

8 Acknowledgments

The audit would not have been possible without the help of the Tamar Valley Service who provided funding as well as an army of willing volunteers who went out, surveyed the slipways, provided the photos and sent on all their data for which we are extremely grateful.

Thanks must also go to Richard Shepherd-Jones and Beth McGauran, two undergraduates from Plymouth University who carried out the slipways for audits for a number of sites around Plymouth.

9 Results

The audit of all 62 slipways is provided in Appendix 1: Slipway Audit Data, Appendix 2 provides maps of the locations of all sites and Appendix 3 contains a photographic record of the public sites.

The results are summarized as follows:

9.1 Ownership

Category	Freq
Private	12
Public	50
Total	62

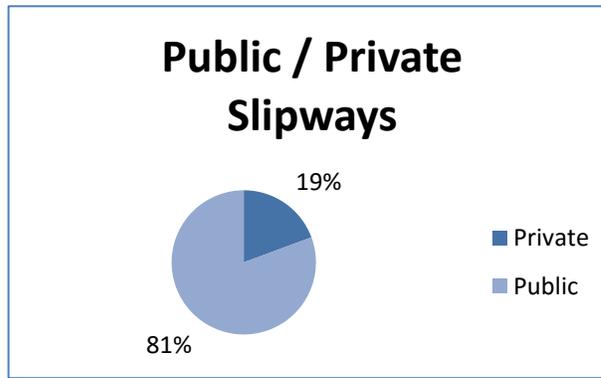


Figure 1: Pie chart showing Private/ Public Slipways

9.2 Access

Description	Freq
1. Good easy access, wide roads, suitable for large trailered boats	8
2. Medium access, some narrow roads in places, suitable for small – medium sized trailered boats.	27
3. Poor access, roads are very narrow, access by vehicle very difficult or impossible, only suitable for hand carried craft.	15
Total	49

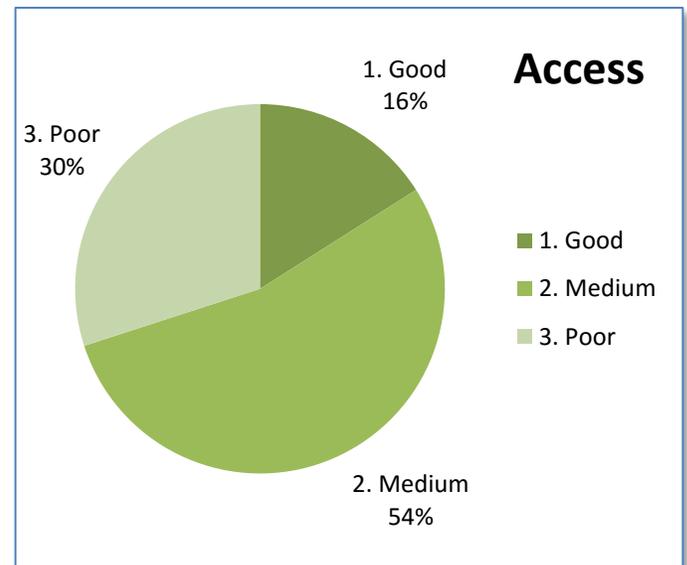


Figure 2: Pie chart showing Access categories (public only)

9.3 Parking and turning

Code	Description	Freq
1. Limited	Parking nearby for at least 6 vehicles or more with trailers. Nice wide turning areas.	18
2. Very limited	Parking for a couple of vehicles with small trailers. Turning areas are compact.	11
3. None	No suitable parking nearby or turning areas non-existent or very tight.	21
Total		50

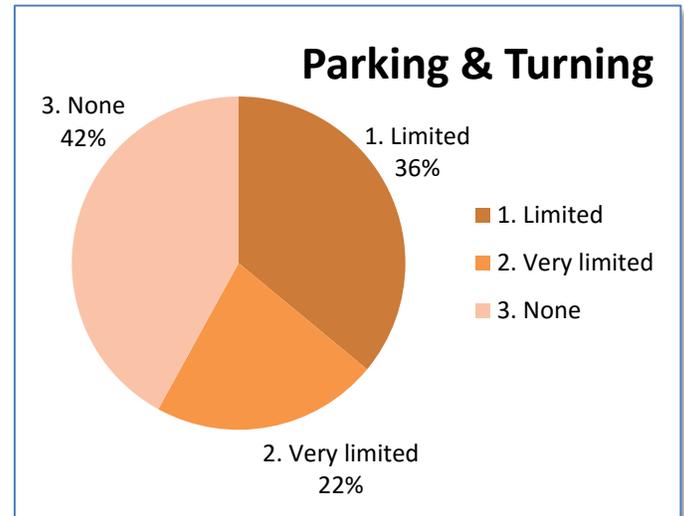


Figure 3: Parking and Turning assessment (public only)

9.4 Condition Assessment

Description	Freq
1. Good condition, surface is stable and easy to use.	22
2. Medium condition, some maintenance would be useful, but usable in current state.	18
3. Condition very poor, use is impossible or difficult given the condition of the slipway.	10
Total	50

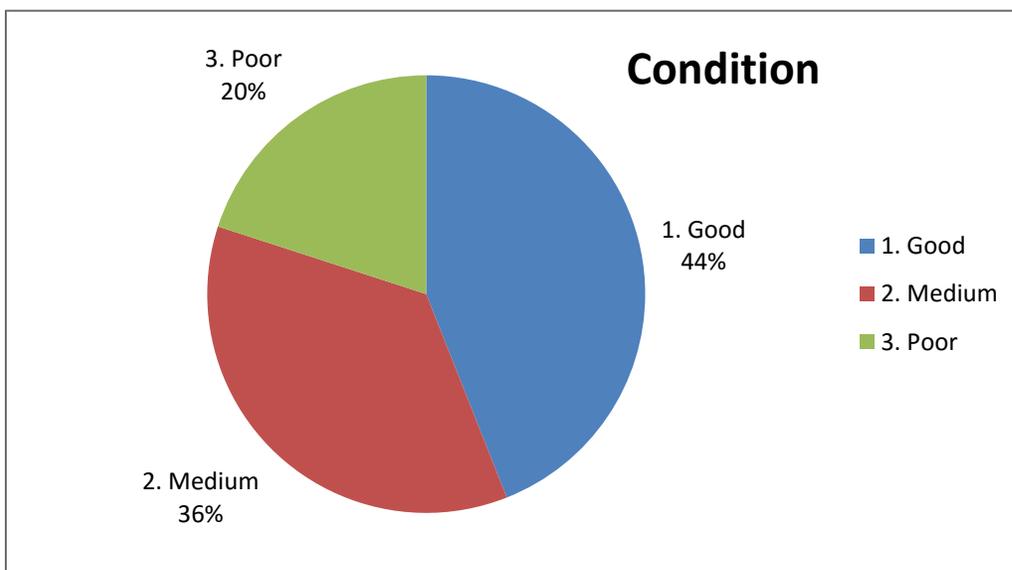


Figure 4: Condition assessment (public only)

9.5 Suitability for vessels

Description	Freq
1. Large trailered craft, eg 20' yachts or large ribs.	9
2. Small to medium trailered craft – dinghys, ribs, jetskis etc.	21
3. Portable craft only eg canoes and kayaks.	20
Total	50

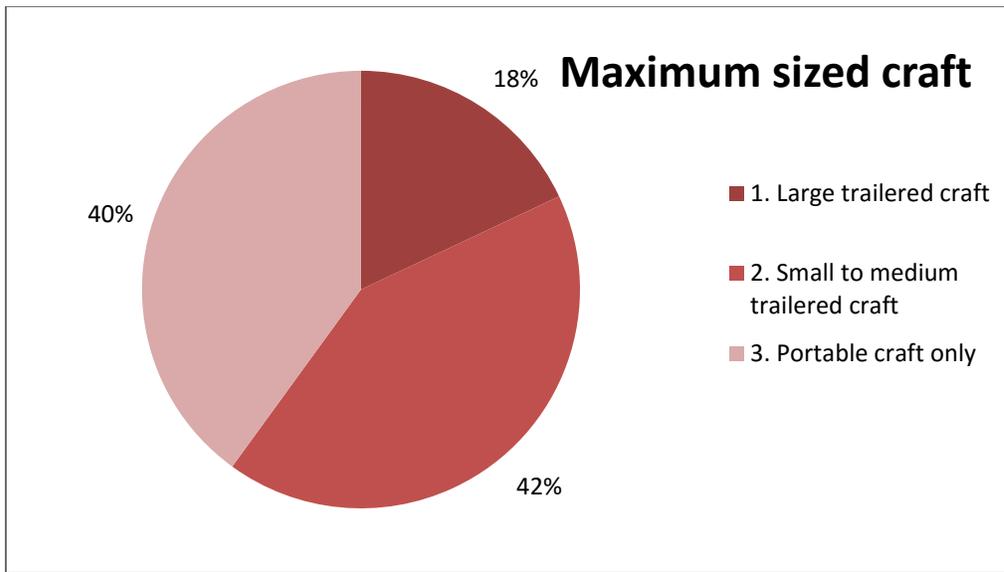


Figure 5: Suitability for different types of vessels (public only)

9.6 Overall assessment

Name	Description	Freq
1. Regional / National	Easy access, good facilities, suitable for range of craft and plenty of car parking.	0
2. City / District	Key access point, with good but restricted parking, and suitable for range of craft	12
3. Locally important	Poor access, with limited parking, but is important for the local area.	22
4. Portable craft only	Portable craft only eg canoes and kayaks – with hardly any carparking.	12
5. Other	No evidence of use	4
Total		50

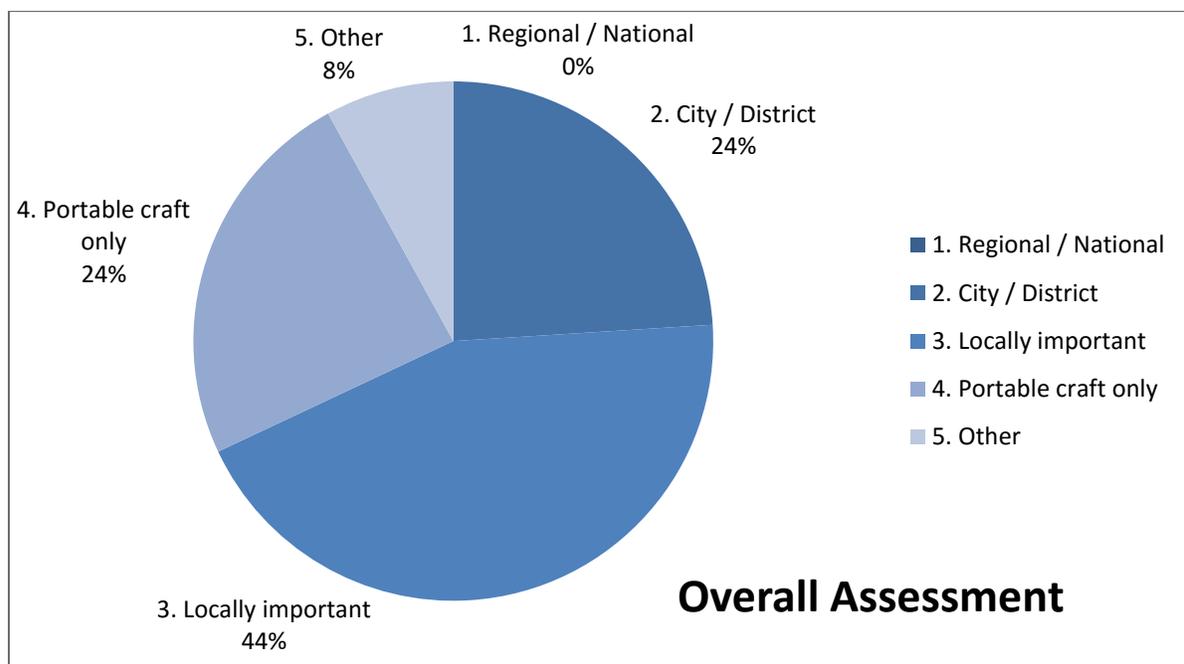


Figure 6: Overall assessment (public only)

10 Conclusions

The audit has highlighted a number of key characteristics and issues relating to the public slipways of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries as follows:

- There are 50 public slipways in the Plymouth Sound, Tamar Estuaries and the Yealm;
- The area is characterized by narrow lanes in the rural areas and narrow access roads in the cities, meaning that access for vehicles pulling trailers is challenging at best and impossible at worst.
- Parking is also difficult with only 36% of public slipways having parking for six or more cars nearby. This limits the use of the sites given that most users will need to leave a car and trailer if they are out for a sail.
- The condition of the slipways is generally at an acceptable level with only 18% in poor condition.
- Most public slipways are really only suitable for portable craft or small to medium trailered craft, with just 18% suitable for large vessels.
- The city does not have any public slipways that have sufficient facilities to be classified as of Regional or National standard and they generally fail on account of accessibility and parking facilities.
- 24% of slipways are of city / district standard, with the vast majority of sites (44%) being of local standard. 24% are constrained to such a level that they are really only suitable for portable craft.
- There are large sections of the coast that do not have any access to the water and these include the upper Tamar, particularly in West Devon, and also within the city centre. There is also very limited access in the Yealm.
- End.