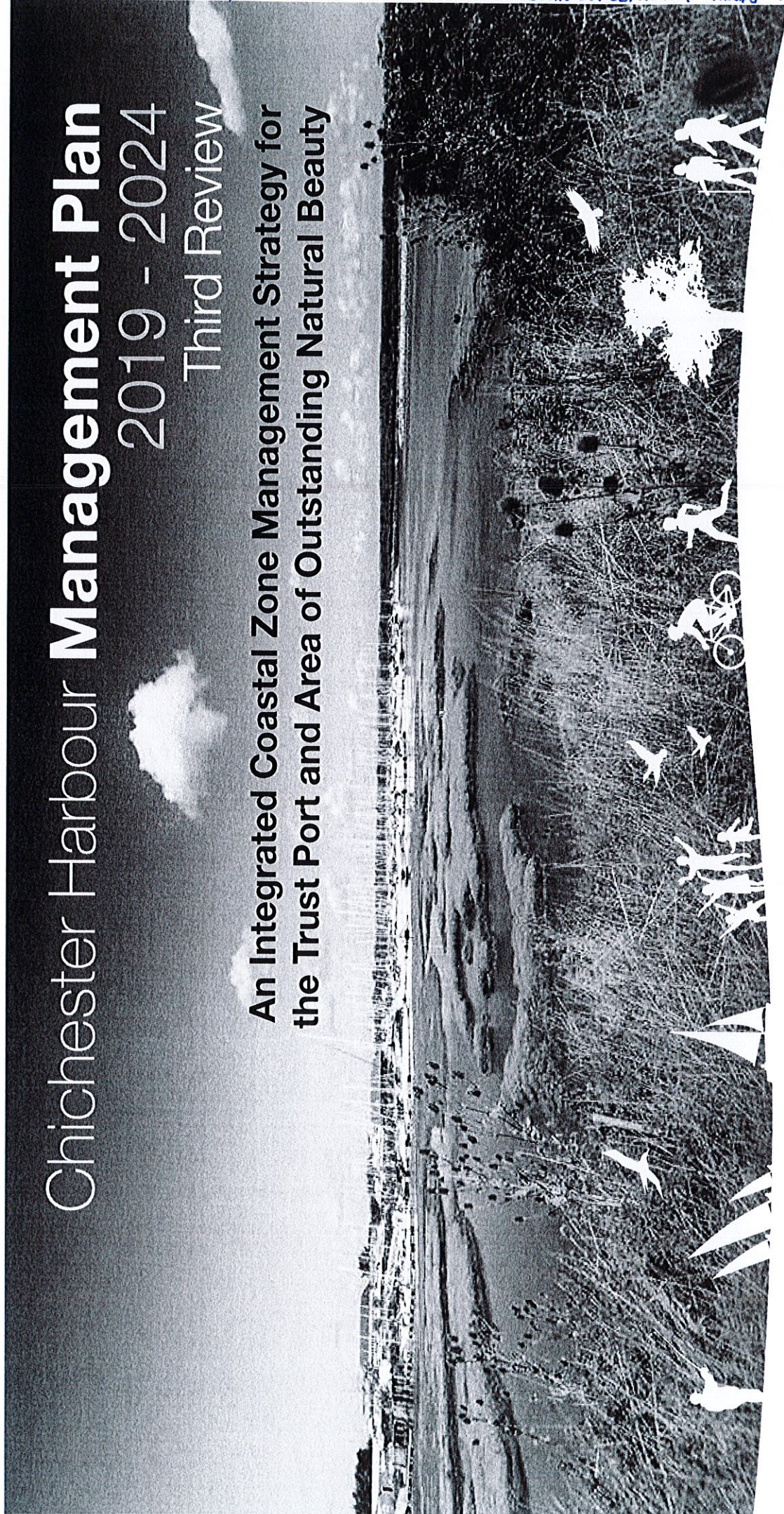


Chichester Harbour Management Plan

2019 - 2024

Third Review

**An Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for
the Trust Port and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



Chichester
Harbour
Conservancy

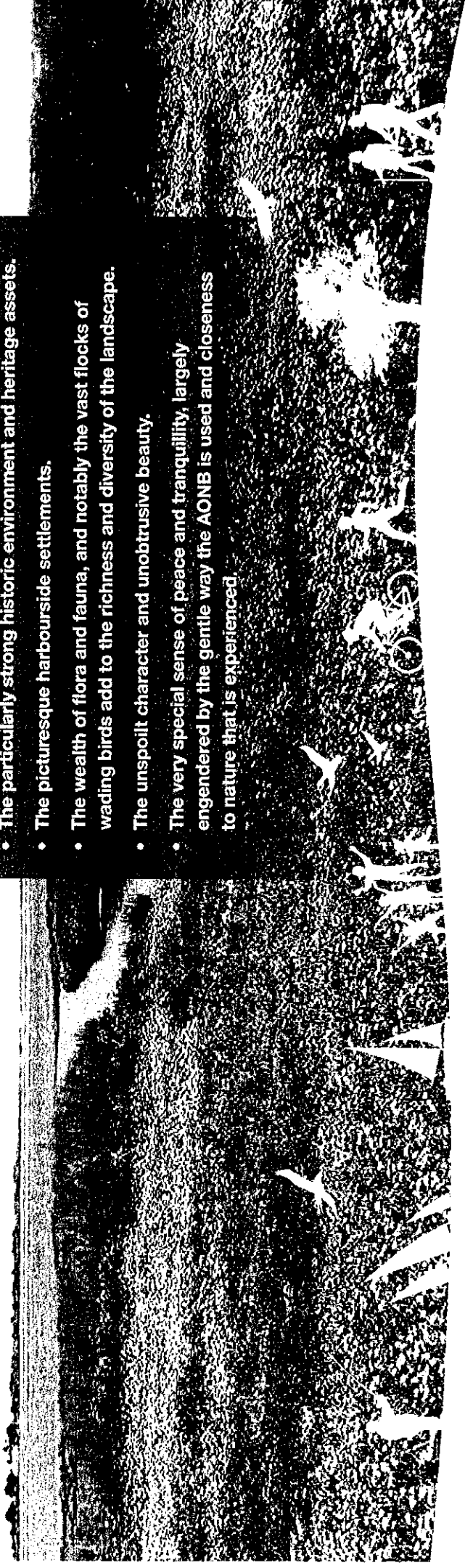
Enjoying, Protecting, Enhancing

The Special Qualities of Chichester Harbour

Chichester Harbour was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1964. The reason it meets the criteria for the designation is because the landscape has a number of exceptional features, called special qualities. When these are considered in combination, they collectively define what is distinctive and significant about Chichester Harbour compared with other parts of the countryside. The Landscape Character Assessment, refreshed in 2019 and available to download from the Conservancy's website, describes in detail the landscape of Chichester Harbour.

The 10 special qualities are in no particular order and they should be read as an integrated set.

- The unique blend of land and sea – especially the combination of expanses of open waters, narrow inlets and intimate creeks.
- The frequently wooded shoreline.
- The flatness of the landform, unusual among AONBs, accentuates the significance of sea and tide and of distant landmarks across land and water.
- The open water of the central area of the Harbour.
- The overall sense of wilderness within the seascape.
- The particularly strong historic environment and heritage assets.
- The picturesque harbourside settlements.
- The wealth of flora and fauna, and notably the vast flocks of wading birds add to the richness and diversity of the landscape.
- The unspoilt character and unobtrusive beauty.
- The very special sense of peace and tranquillity, largely engendered by the gentle way the AONB is used and closeness to nature that is experienced.



Protecting the Special Qualities

For many years, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and its partners have looked after these special qualities so they can safely pass from one generation to the next while being conserved and enhanced and consistent with the range of environmental designations.

The combination of pressures outlined in the following tables demonstrates that Chichester Harbour needs to be actively managed. The management measures being taken by Chichester Harbour Conservancy and its partners are crucial for the long-term protection of the AONB.



THREATS

- In 2013, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projected that global sea levels would rise between 0.53 metres and 0.98 metres by 2100.
- If this is correct it would have a dramatic impact on Chichester Harbour, most likely affecting the sailing clubs, coastal footpaths, harbourside buildings and dwellings, lowland farming and network infrastructure (roads, power supplies, telephone lines, etc.).
- The length of natural coastline in the Harbour is decreasing as a greater number of hard shoreline defences are installed. This causes coastal squeeze - the loss of saltmarsh habitat - and affects the natural setting of the AONB.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Working closely with Local Planning Authorities to protect the AONB, using the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plans, the Chichester Harbour Management Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Working with universities and the Environment Agency to understand better the impacts of climate change.
- Encouraging measures to mitigate the rate at which climate change will take place, such as small-scale renewable energy and the use of electric vehicles.
- Working closely with the Highways Authorities, landowners and Natural England to protect the footpath network, including the England Coast Path.
- Planning ahead to rollback footpaths where they may be entirely lost to coastal erosion.
- Deploying Volunteer Rangers (Harbour Watch) to regularly assess the condition of footpaths and shoreline defences.
- Advising anyone considering installing or replacing shoreline defences to take account of the Chichester Harbour 'Sustainable Shorelines: General Guidance' document.
- Ongoing species research to monitor change of habitats and wildlife.
- Working with tourism providers to manage increases in the number of visitors.
- Adapting and/or improving existing buildings and other infrastructure to prepare for flash flooding and storm events.



Policy 1 Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape

The distinctive landscape character of Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will continue to be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

An 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) is a landscape with the highest level of protection in UK law. The Chichester Harbour AONB landscape is characterised by open water, intertidal mud and sand, saltmarshes, shingle beaches, sand dunes, woodlands, meadows and grasslands, ponds and streams, coastal grazing marsh, reed beds, hedgerows, trees, ditches and farmland. Collectively, this is known as the **natural capital** of Chichester Harbour. The natural capital either directly or indirectly brings value to people and the country by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, wood, recreation and protection from some natural hazards.

The Harbour's coastline is made-up by distinctive tidal channels, leading to numerous inlets and rythes that criss-cross expanses of saltmarsh and mudflats. The shoreline is fringed by wind-sculpted oaks and scrub, with open agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows. Historic coastal villages are defined by centuries of maritime association, and in the flat landscape, the vertical elements of church spires and old mills are important parts of its character. The low-lying coastal plain landscape is framed against the backdrop of the South Downs.

The dynamic landscape of Chichester Harbour is constantly changing in response to human activities and natural processes. Agriculture has developed; settlements have changed in both their appearance and extent; road traffic has increased and the industries associated with the Harbour have changed. Natural events and storm surges have also had a significant visual impact, for example on the sand dunes of East Head.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- Changes in landscape due to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.
- Incremental urbanisation of the countryside, both inside and directly outside the AONB.
- Loss of farmland hedgerows and trees.
- Land sold for development rather than bestowed in its natural beauty for the benefit of future generations.
- Installation of hard shoreline defences reduces the naturalness of the Harbour.
- Unauthorised developments not in keeping with the landscape character.
- Unprotected land between Chichester Harbour and South Downs subject to increasing development pressure.
- Detrimental impact on landscape of over-ground network infrastructure, particularly utility poles.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Chichester Harbour Federation
- Chichester Harbour Trust
- Chichester Ship Canal Trust
- East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group
- Environment Agency
- Farmers
- Friends of Chichester Harbour
- Individual Residents
- Landowners
- Local Authorities
- National Association of AONBs
- Natural England
- Parish Councils
- Residents Associations
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Universities

Actions to be taken by Chichester Harbour Conservancy:

- 1.1 To prepare and publish a new Chichester Harbour Landscape Character Assessment.
- 1.2 To understand better the likely short, medium, and long-term impacts of climate change on the landscape of Chichester Harbour.
- 1.3 To prepare and publish a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Chichester Harbour.
- 1.4 To prepare and publish a report on the natural capital of Chichester Harbour.
- 1.5 To identify key viewpoints that visually demonstrate the AONB and thereafter to take annual fixed photography from those viewpoints, to help monitor future landscape changes.
- 1.6 In partnership with the Friends of Chichester Harbour, to deploy Volunteer Rangers (Conservation) to plant trees and lay hedgerows to help enhance the natural landscape.
- 1.7 To prepare and publish an updated State of the AONB Report in 2024.

Actions to be taken by other stakeholders:

- 1.8 To support Chichester Harbour Trust to acquire new sites in the Harbour to provide long-term environmental protection.
- 1.9 To investigate opportunities for new landscape-scale conservation projects, including the creation of new environmental corridors between Chichester Harbour and the South Downs, and along the Chichester Ship Canal.
- 1.10 To utilise the planning system to help conserve the landscape and its setting.
- 1.11 To protect the historic and iconic views from the AONB towards Chichester Cathedral, to and from Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve, and to and from the South Downs.
- 1.12 To utilise the 'Sustainable Shorelines: General Guidance' document when considering repairing, replacing or strengthening shoreline defences, informing people about the issue of coastal squeeze.
- 1.13 To remove hard shoreline defences where they are no longer needed in consultation with relevant coastal protection authorities.



- 1.14 To proactively plan and rollback coastal footpaths, rather than lose them altogether through the gradual process of erosion.
- 1.15 To support activities that raise awareness of the AONB designation and the value of the landscape.
- 1.16 Wherever feasible in the AONB, to install all new utility cables underground.
- 1.17 To install electric vehicle charging points around Chichester Harbour.

Policy 2 Development Management

All development in Chichester Harbour will continue to conserve and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and be consistent with all other designations. Determinations on applications for planning permission and forms of consent will be consistent with the relevant policies of the relevant adopted Local Plan. Development outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but sufficiently close to the boundary, will not detrimentally impact the character and setting of the protected landscape. Mitigation for recreational disturbance will be sought for all new developments for dwellings within 5.6 kilometres of the Special Protection Area.

Nationally protected landscapes have unique characteristics which make them attractive places to live, work and spend leisure time. This has led to pressure to increase the size of settlements, to infill within Settlement Policy Areas and, increasingly, to the construction of more substantial dwellings. This trend has become a dominant force in changing the landscape. Local Planning Authorities need to ensure that all new developments do not erode the special qualities that make Chichester Harbour an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Increased instances of recreational disturbance in Chichester Harbour, as a result of new developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Special Protection Area, is a serious concern and is further considered in Policy 8, Thriving Wildlife.

The relatively small size of Chichester Harbour has generally precluded any large developments inside the AONB in recent years, although this has resulted in added pressure on the land directly outside the AONB, which affects the character and setting. Urban extensions around Apuldrum, Fishbourne, Bosham, Chidham & Hambrook, Southbourne, Emsworth and Hayling Island, could potentially lead to the loss of the distinctive identity of associated smaller settlements, the erosion of rural character and the loss of open views into and out of the AONB.

Local communities have a key role to play in the planning process. Their involvement in the development of Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements is seen as important in identifying local needs and local design and these documents offer useful guidance in the planning process within the AONB. The Itchenor, West Wittering, Bosham, Emsworth, Northney and Tye and Langstone Village Design Statements have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents. Most villages within the AONB also have Neighbourhood Plans, which have considerable weight in the planning process. In 2017 the Joint Chichester Harbour AONB Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by the Local Planning Authorities, which provides design guidance for the AONB.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy is a non-statutory consultee within the planning system. The Conservancy has an established Planning Committee, and employs a Principal Planning Officer, to appraise new planning applications within or directly adjacent to the AONB, and to co-ordinate the Conservancy's response to strategic planning consultations. Recommendations to the respective Local Planning Authority are guided by the Management Plan and the Planning Principles. It is hoped that local communities will also use the Management Plan and Planning Principles as tools to respond to planning applications.



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- As a non-statutory consultee, Chichester Harbour Conservancy has limited control over development in the AONB.
- The national requirement to build new houses is putting pressure on the environment, particularly in South East England.
- There will be an increase in recreational disturbance as a direct consequence of new housing developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Special Protection Area.
- New developments put increased pressure on the finite capacity of Waste Water Treatment Works.
- Land outside the AONB and close to the boundary does not have the same level of protection, yet new developments in the zone of influence can damage the character and setting of the AONB.
- There is a trend for existing large dwellings on the waterfront of the Harbour to be excessively rebuilt with a greater footprint and silhouette.
- There are occasional new dwellings built that are out of character in the neighbourhood.
- One of the few derelict sites in the AONB is at Burnes Shipyard (Bosham), and there is one long-term building site on the fringe of the AONB, at Yacht Haven (Hayling Island).
- The number of greenhouses in and around the AONB contribute towards the high levels of light pollution at night.
- Major developments inside the AONB, or sufficiently close to the boundary of the AONB, could have a significant detrimental impact on the protected landscape.
- Breaches of planning law have resulted in ongoing enforcement cases, which can damage the landscape of the AONB.
- The shortage of affordable housing in Chichester Harbour.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

- Bird Aware Solent
- British Marine
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Chichester Harbour Federation
- Chichester Harbour Trust
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Individual Residents
- Local Authorities
- Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- Natural England
- Parish Councils
- Residents Associations
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Southern Water

Actions to be taken by Chichester Harbour Conservancy:

- 2.1 To appraise and respond to all planning applications in and directly around the AONB.
- 2.2 To offer a pre-application advice service.
- 2.3 To respond to national and local planning consultations.
- 2.4 To participate in all hearings, public inquiries and examinations in public that affect Chichester Harbour.

Actions to be taken by other stakeholders:

- 2.5 To utilise the planning system to conserve and enhance the AONB (Local Planning Authorities).
- 2.6 To offer a pre-application advice service (Local Planning Authorities, Natural England, etc.).
- 2.7 To take enforcement action where there are breaches of planning law (Local Planning Authorities).
- 2.8 To take enforcement action where there are breaches of statutory consents / permits (Environment Agency, Historic England, etc.).
- 2.9 To work to alleviate traffic congestion around Chichester Harbour.
- 2.10 To utilise the Management Plan to inform local responses to planning applications (parish councils, residents associations, etc.).

