

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Three Harbours Strategy 2024-2028 – Consultation Response

1. Contacts

Report Author:

Tom Day – Environmental Strategy Manager
Telephone: 01243 534854 E-mail: tday@chichester.gov.uk

Cabinet Member:

Jonathan Brown – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Strategy
Telephone: 01243 514034 E-mail: jbrown@chichester.gov.uk

2. Executive Summary

The Three Harbours Strategy sets out an integrated approach to nature recovery and restoration across Chichester, Langstone and Pagham harbours. It sets strategic outputs for 2028, to be delivered across a wide partnership which includes Chichester District Council. The strategy is out to consultation and this report sets out the council's proposed response to that consultation.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the consultation response in Appendix 2 is submitted as the Council's response, subject to any comments made by Environmental Panel members at their meeting on 4 March.**

4. Background

- 4.1 Chichester, Langstone and Pagham harbours face multiple pressures: coastal squeeze, climate change, water quality and habitat loss. Although Chichester Harbour has received most attention so far due to its condition assessment as unfavourable declining, these issues are common to all three harbours. Originating at a leaders' summit in 2021, the Three Harbours partnership has been preparing a draft strategy for 2024 to 2028 in order to coordinate action and maximise opportunities for recovery. The Strategy is now out to consultation (see Appendix 1) and this report sets out our proposed response to, and endorsement of the Strategy.

5. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 5.1 The main outcome to be achieved is the long-term recovery and protection of the three harbours as thriving ecosystems.
- 5.2 The delivery of the strategy outputs will be monitored and reported on through the partnership. The harbours are also monitored by Natural England for their

conservation status and by the Environment Agency for water quality. Ultimately achieving favourable conservation status for the Special Protection Areas is the measure of success.

- 5.3 The document identifies why a co-ordinating strategy is needed. It states: “The Solent is a hot spot for restoration activity with a vast array of projects and initiatives, tackling various issues from different angles. But as a result, the effort to mitigate these numerous threats and pressures is fragmented and not sufficiently joined up. No single organisation has a full view of the activity taking place. There are conflicting priorities as to how the land should be used to meet different needs. Without an overarching strategy and ability to prioritise activity, agreeing an integrated plan for recovery would be difficult and opportunities are not being realised to best effect.”

6. Proposal

- 6.1 The consultation runs until 15 March. The questions and proposed responses are contained in Appendix 2.
- 6.2 As a partner in the Strategy preparation, we have participated in workshops that have helped to develop the document. The consultation focuses on the 2028 outputs and the year one plan. Partners are being asked to identify where we can offer specific support to the development of those outputs, funding opportunities and areas for strengthening as well as identifying any missing, duplicating or conflicting elements.
- 6.3 The main impacts for our wildlife and community will be in the delivery of the outputs and the development of detailed action plans and projects according to funding availability.
- 6.4 The proposed response includes an overall endorsement of the aims and objectives of the Strategy. It also identifies outputs where we have a role in supporting or delivering outputs (Q2). These will have some resource implications. Currently participation is managed within existing staff resource. This is expected to continue, albeit with some new resource (0.5FTE) to be considered by Council at its meeting on 27 February to support development of a CDC biodiversity strategy which this partnership will form a key component of. Joint working across the public sector and co-ordination of work in the manner proposed by the Strategy will be important to achieving maximum benefit from limited staff resources.

7. Alternatives Considered

- 7.1 There is always an option not to respond and to rely on our previous input to the strategy development. However, it is important to give formal recognition of the strategy, endorsement of its aims and some more detailed feedback on our role in the future development of the partnership’s work programme.

8. Resource and Legal Implications

- 8.1 As a consultation response this report has no legal or resource implications. The wider implications of participating in the partnership are covered in paragraph 6.4 above.

9. Consultation

9.1 The Environment Panel considered this report at its meeting on 4 March. The panel's comments will be reported verbally. The consultation on the Solent Forum website is open to any relevant organisation but is not aimed at individual members of the public.

10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

10.1 The corporate risks are considered to be minor. They are mainly reputational, but the extensive partnership membership and participative nature of the Strategy development to date will mitigate this.

10.2 As with any high-level strategy there is a risk of under delivery, especially given the scale of the challenges facing the natural environment. However, without a joined-up approach this risk is greater.

11. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation Delivery of the projects that come from or align with the strategy will have positive outcomes in due course, but responding to the consultation by itself will not have significant impact by itself.		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X
Other (please specify)		X

12. Appendices

12.1 Three Harbours Strategy 2024-2028 draft for consultation.

12.2 Draft CDC Consultation response.

13. Background Papers

None