

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

5 March 2024

Public Question and Answers Sheet

Question from Simon Oakley:

The geographical scope of the draft Three Harbours Strategy (CDC 5 March 2024 Cabinet Agenda item 11) is outlined on page 25 of that document.

It appears its Eastern extent extends into parts of the Aldingbourne Rife catchment, which does not feed into Pagham Harbour. It does not include the whole of the proposed Easternmost Strategic Wildlife Corridor (SWC) within CDC's Proposed Submission Local Plan, part of whose object is to ecologically link the SDNP with Pagham Harbour. The text on page 25 of the draft Strategy indicates the scope is aligned with the area studied in the natural capital baseline conducted by NatCap in 2022 on behalf of the partnership.

Could you advise as to the rationale for parts of the Aldingbourne Rife Catchment being within, and part of the Eastern SWC being outside, the scope of this strategy and the NatCap study area?

Response from Cllr Brown:

Thank you for your question, The Strategy area is intended to cover the surface water catchments of the three harbours (excluding the South Downs National Park). The map on page 115 of the agenda pack is not particularly high resolution but I have asked officers to check it against the Environment Agency catchment maps and the eastern boundary does appear to follow the eastern edge of the Aldingbourne Rife catchment. There does seem to be a minor discrepancy near the junction of the A27 and the A285.

However, the strategy is high level and across a wide range of partners whose operational boundaries and areas of focus vary considerably. Nothing in the Strategy document would prevent us or any other partner bringing forward a project that overlapped with, but did not exactly align with, the catchment area mapped. The Strategic Wildlife Corridors project is an example of that. The easternmost corridor route is based on terrestrial ecology across the landscape, not the protection of the harbours (the driver for this strategy), but instead to allow for ecological connection.

The focus of the strategy is ecological recovery of the harbour protected sites and that is why hydrological connections rather than terrestrial habitat networks underpin the area of focus. The inclusion of the easternmost strategic corridor would mean that a substantial portion of the Aldingbourne rife would then be included in the strategy area.