

Overall Character

These Character Areas lie in the south west of the county to the south and south west of Chichester. The internationally and nationally important areas of Chichester and Pagham harbours are distinctive for their enclosed expanses of marine water, tidal mudflat, shingle, marsh, wetland scrub and small creeks. Chichester Harbour differs from Pagham Harbour because of its larger size and greater diversity, with numerous inlets and its more wooded shoreline and clusters of harbour side settlement, boatyards, marinas and yachts. When approaching Chichester Harbour by land, the sight of masts glimpsed through the fields creates a sense of anticipation of the coastal edge. In contrast, views in to Pagham Harbour are dominated by vast tidal mudflats and fringing marsh vegetation enclosed to the south by open shingle banks. Large parts of these areas have been reclaimed from the sea, and remain below the current high spring tide level. Whilst traffic and recreational activities reduce tranquillity in some parts, there are also significant areas of Chichester and Pagham Harbours which have a tranquil character and retain a sense of remoteness.

Key Characteristics

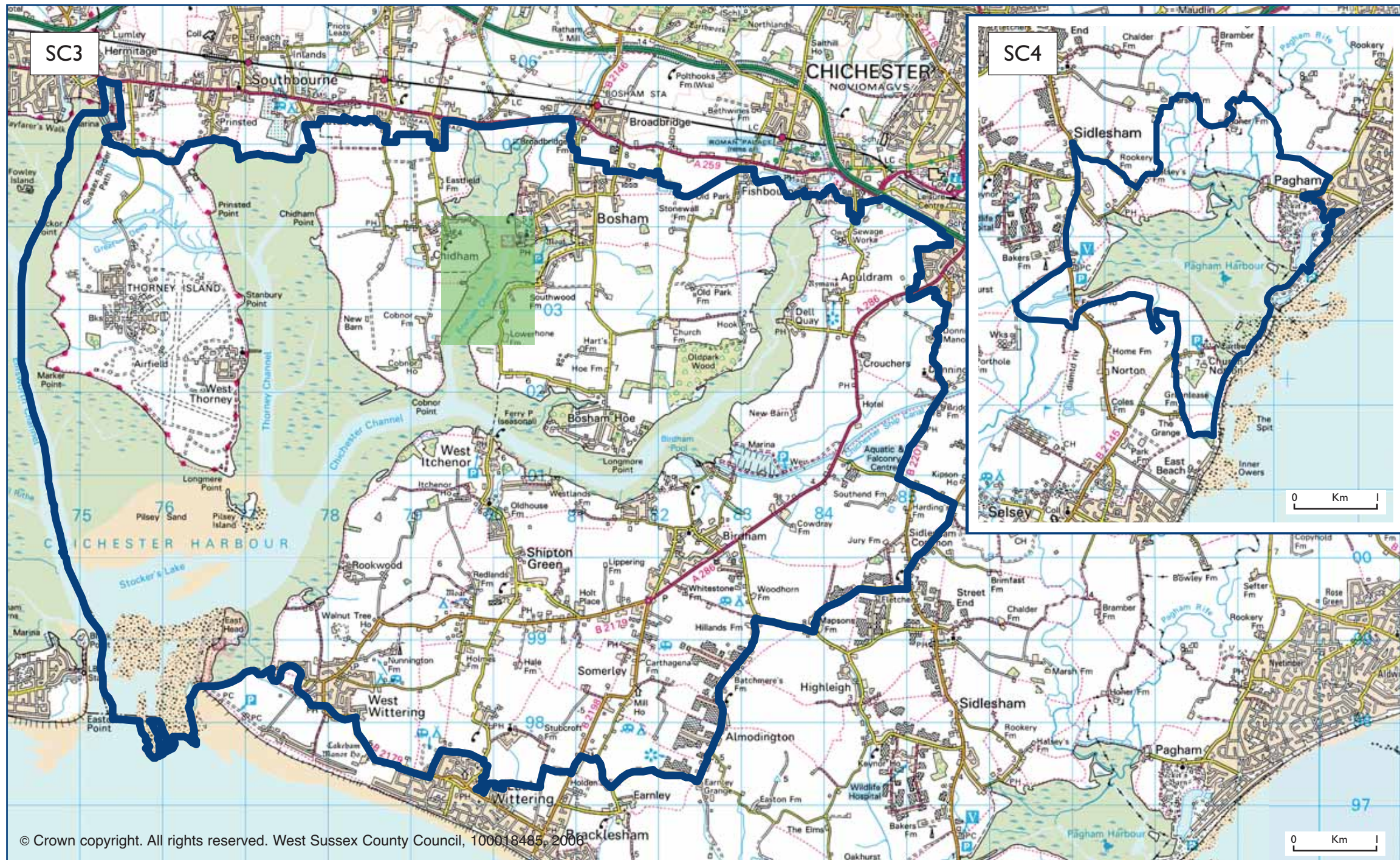
- Enclosed natural harbours of marine water, tidal mudflats and saltmarsh with small inlets and creeks.
- Contrast with the surrounding open agricultural land.
- Localised presence of woodland, for example, Old Park Wood, Bosham and Church Norton Wood.
- Noise of birds, waves and masts.
- Distinctive historic features include oyster beds, earthworks, old sea defences, quays, and boatyards.
- Rich range of habitats at the harbour edges including mudflats, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, reedbeds, sand dunes, shingle banks.
- Areas of unimproved grassland concentrated on their edges.
- Wind-shaped trees and scrub.
- Attractive harbourside settlements and early medieval flint churches such as at Bosham and Pagham.
- Landscapes of great wildlife importance.

Chichester Harbour and Pagham Harbour

South Coast Plain

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

Chichester and Pagham Harbours and the Manhood Peninsula (BI) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Character Assessment** (November 2003).



Historic Features

- Sea inlets which form the natural harbours of Chichester and Pagham are particularly important for their Roman and earlier prehistoric remains, from a time when sea level may have been up to 6 metres lower than at present.
- Harbours were equally important in medieval times: Bosham features on the Bayeux Tapestry, and at Church Norton, said to be the site of the pre-Conquest Cathedral, an earthwork castle was constructed in early Norman times.
- Early medieval flint churches at Bosham and Pagham.
- Oyster beds.
- Wooden quays.
- Traditional boatyards.
- Harbourside field patterns mainly the result of 18th and 19th century Parliamentary Enclosure.
- WWII remains at Thorney Island, bombing decoy at Pagham Harbour.

Biodiversity

- Both Chichester and Pagham Harbours are designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention as they attract large flocks of wading birds and wildfowl.
- Mosaic of inter-tidal mud and adjacent habitats of saltmarsh, reed bed, sand dune, shingle bank, grassland and broadleaved semi-natural woodland supports a wide range of species of limited distribution.
- Chichester Harbour is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has therefore been recognised as a landscape of national importance.
- Pagham Harbour and areas within Chichester Harbour (Nutborne Marshes, Pilsey Island and Eames Farm) are Local Nature Reserves and so managed for their wildlife importance.
- Occasional oak woodlands extending to the shoreline, for example, Old Park Wood, Bosham.

Change - Key Issues

- Gradual reduction of the tree and hedgerow cover especially on the Chichester Harbour peninsulas.
- Gradual reduction of bordering grassland and scrub.
- Pressures for harbourside development, particularly the intensification of existing plots and introduction of suburban form, styles and materials.
- Active recreational pressure and seasonal visitor pressure, including marina expansion and development and demand of more water sports facilities.
- Traffic generation resulting in erosion of rural lanes and loss of tranquillity.
- Climate change may increase the risk of storm surges and storminess with associated flooding and consequent impacts on inter-tidal habitats, increasing pressure for possibly insensitive coastal defences.
- Management and possible realignment of sea defences due to predicted sea level rises will have significant implications for landscape over the coming decades.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Increasing noise due to traffic and recreational activity eroding tranquillity.
- Inappropriate harbourside development. Settlement character of the area as a whole is mixed, with both traditional harbourside settlements and villages contrasting with more recently developed holiday and residential estates.
- Coastal strand line litter.
- Seasonal and weekend visitor pressure.
- Relationship of views between the harbours and surrounding hinterland.
- Managed retreat of the coastline may be particularly influential in the future, providing opportunities for creation of new coastal and inter-tidal habitats and could result in a more naturally functioning landscape.



St. Wilfrid's Chapel - Church Norton



Pagham Harbour

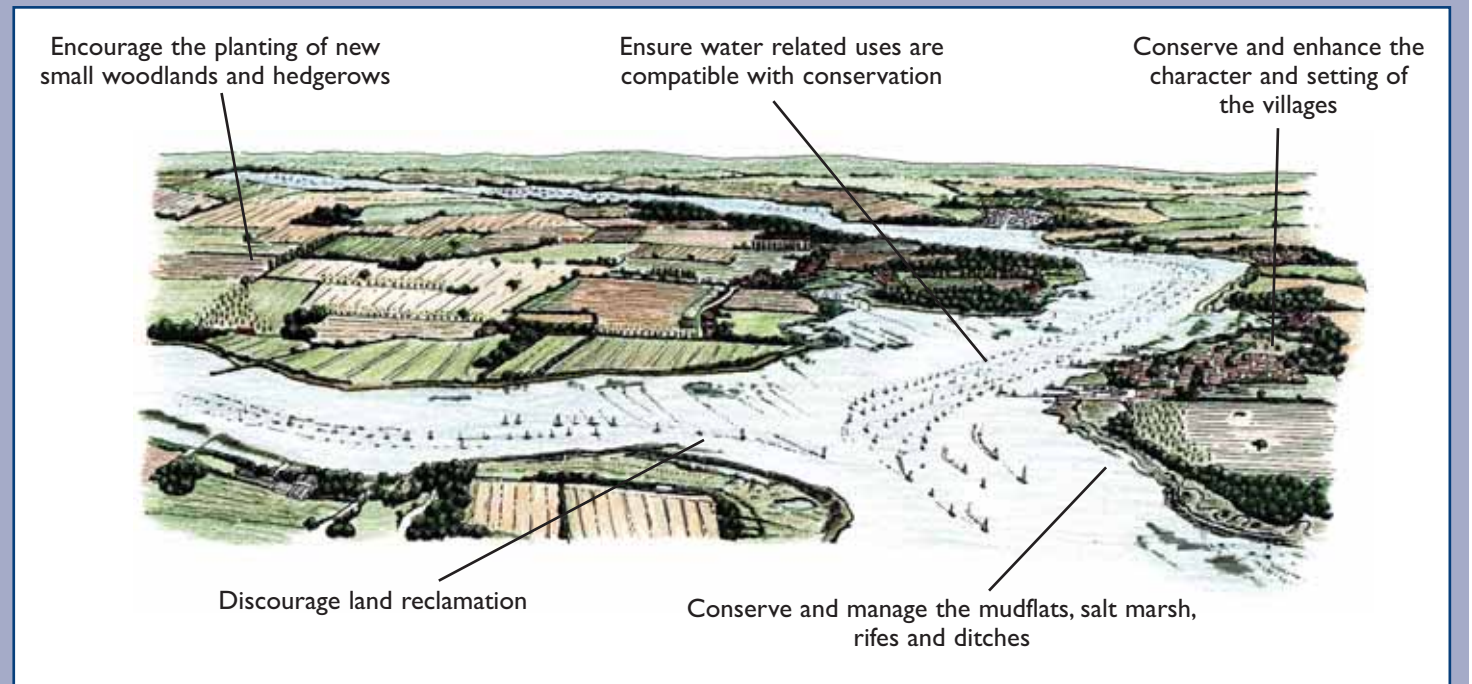


Chichester Harbour - West Wittering



Bosham Channel

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve existing area of tranquil character.

- Maintain key views and vistas around the harbours.
- Maintain the historic character of the area including old oyster beds, historic sea defences, traditional boatyards.
- Conserve and manage the diverse existing natural landscape features, including mudflats, salt marsh, sand dunes, shingle banks, woodland, rifes and ditches.
- Assess options for Harbour coastal management in a comprehensive way, reflecting the dynamic and interdependent processes of coastal erosion and deposition. Where practicable, favour 'softer' coastal management solutions such as coastal retreat or seek sympathetic design of any engineered defences.
- Conserve and enhance the character and setting of the villages.
- Conserve and enhance harbourside wooded settings and avoid the introduction of suburban styles, forms and materials. Carry out a colour and design study for new and existing harbourside buildings.
- Discourage land reclamation.
- Ensure that water related uses are compatible with conservation considerations.
- Restrict visitor access to sensitive areas.
- Encourage farmers to enter into Stewardship Schemes where appropriate.
- Encourage measures to reduce litter.
- Strengthen the existing landscape framework through hedgerow and native tree planting, especially around settlements on Chichester Harbour peninsulas and to the north of Chichester Yacht Basin.
- Encourage the planting of new small woodlands (approximately one hectare or less) and hedgerows behind the waters edge.
- Maintain existing hedgerows and strengthen the wider network through hedgerow restoration.
- Promote the control of growth along the waters edge of alien plants such as Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*), green algae and *Sargassum* seaweed, which restrict the development of endemic saltmarsh plants.
- Maintain, restore and enhance floodplain woodland and associated species, including native black poplar, where appropriate.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment, June 2005.
- Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004-2009.
- Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2007-2012.
- South Downs Shoreline Management Plan - Beachy Head to Selsey Bill (under review).
- Black Poplar Species Action Plan for Sussex, June 2005.