



Socio-Economic Impact of business activity in sensitive maritime environments in the Channel region

A Case Study of Chichester Harbour, West Sussex

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

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If you have any questions, or would like more information about this project, or any of the work conducted through the CAMIS project, please contact Dr Emma McKinley on e.mckinley@chi.ac.uk, or go to the CAMIS website: <https://camis.arcmanche.eu/home/>

Executive Summary

This research was undertaken as part of the Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy (CAMIS) Project; an INTERREG IV A funded project which aimed to develop an integrated maritime strategy for the Channel region. The project involved 19 partner organisations across northern France and southern England working across 6 project strands to develop an effective strategy for use of the common maritime and marine resources in the region.

Within the Channel region, there are a number of ecologically sensitive marine environments, such as estuaries, harbours and bays, which as well as being environmentally significant areas, support a diverse range of business activities. This diversity of use and range of stakeholders operating within an area can result in conflicting priorities, making developing an effective, holistic and balanced management plan challenging for local government bodies. Through case study research, this study aimed to examine how businesses operating within the boundaries of an ecologically sensitive environment, such as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), perceive their relationship with their environment, and how they could be supported in a way that encourages business development, while protecting and maintaining sensitive ecosystems and valuable resources.

Chichester Harbour, West Sussex, in South East England, is an example of where an area adorned with a range of environmental designations, in particular its recognition as an AONB, supports a diverse and active business community. Throughout the research, the aim was to identify actions and future initiatives that would support the businesses operating within the area, while balanced management plans that protect and maintain environmental integrity continue to be developed for the Harbour. Priority actions for the Harbour area identified by stakeholders as a result of the research process included:

- Formation of a Chichester Harbour Business Association/ Enterprise Network/ Cluster to support businesses in the area,
- Development and promotion of a Chichester Harbour Brand that could be used to support collaborative marketing of the businesses operating in the Harbour, as well as advertising the Harbour as an attractive destination for businesses and other

investment, and information and education for visitors and tourists...(we may run into trouble for “attracting tourists” as we have rec. disturbance issues)

- Implementation of an integrated, sustainable transport network around the Harbour. It is recommended that this transport network would have a green agenda, and should ideally include new infrastructure developments such as: a ferry service operating across the Harbour mouth to connect East and West, improved parking/ park and ride facilities around the Harbour, and the development of a connected cycle path around the Harbour and AONB.
- Formation of an annual Chichester Harbour Festival to promote business in the area, with a particular focus on attracting marine recreational businesses to, and informing and educating general public and visitors about, the area.
- Encouraging improved relationships with existing bodies and associations to ensure there is a collective approach to the future development of the Harbour.

Taking the findings of the research into consideration, a number of recommendations were generated which would be applied to both the local area bordering Chichester Harbour, but also to the wider Channel region. These include:

- Efforts should be made to increase the level of awareness of the valuable role SMEs across the Channel region play within their local communities. Often, as seen by this research, SMEs dominate local markets and contribute significantly to local and regional economies. However, because of their size, they often lack the resources to promote their own interests in the face of more powerful residential lobbies that have little personal interest in the sustainability of local economies. As such they require additional support and recognition, if they are to continue contributing positively to the social and economic well-being of their local communities.
- Establishing local business clusters and associations, working with the Chambers of Commerce and local authorities, would allow common goals and challenges to be identified, encourage collaborative approaches to marketing, promotion and general business activity, with multiple benefits for the local communities. In the case of

Chichester Harbour, it has been recommended that a Chichester Harbour Business Association be formed to support local businesses, with strong links to existing support infrastructure provided by local authorities and other trade associations.

- Encouraging communication and collaboration between businesses and local authorities and Conservancy to ensure positive relationships between stakeholders are formed. By working together, a collaborative future can be achieved, ensuring both socio-economic and environmental sustainability.
- Engaging in meaningful dialogue with businesses in an area, through meetings, e-networks and newsletters is vital to ensuring appropriate business support is provided. Working in this way allows all stakeholders to contribute to the identification of key priorities for an area, identifying common goals and issues. For example, businesses in the Chichester Harbour area stressed the importance of developing a regional brand/ standard of quality, and the formation of a sustainable transport network.
- It is also suggested that businesses in the Harbour area could benefit from building relationships and encouraging collaboration across the Channel region, learning from similar businesses operating on the French coasts. For example, Chichester Harbour could draw on some of the recommendations made during the CAMIS Marina 2020 research (McKinley, 2013).

1. INTRODUCTION

This research has been undertaken as part of the INTERREG (France (Channel) - England) IV A Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy (CAMIS) project. The CAMIS project is a 4 year project, running since 2009, with 19 partner organisations across the region, working to further understanding and develop an integrated maritime strategy for the Channel region.

Within the boundaries of ecologically sensitive maritime environments such as small inlets, estuaries and natural harbours there are often a variety of different stakeholders that have a broad range of requirements in terms of their economic expectations and their use of the harbour and its surrounding area. This complexity results in the creation of different and sometimes, conflicting objectives. The consequence of this from a strategic perspective is an apparent lack of focus and initiative development. Equally it tends to create a tension with and between the different stakeholders as well as competition for valuable resources.

Under ideal circumstances, there would be a common understanding of the purpose of local authorities and conservation agencies based on the core principles to protect and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, whilst maintaining social and economic vitality.

The project aims to evaluate the socio-economic influence of businesses operating in an area of ecological sensitivity, feeding into the development of effective planning strategies for these areas, ensuring a balance between business growth and environmental protection. By having a better understanding of the importance of businesses in this type of area, it is hoped that managers can support economic growth through improving the understanding of how their activities impact on the area in the context of job provision, growth and development opportunities and support for local businesses, support for recreational and leisure activity within the area and engagement with the wider community. The objectives of the project are to:

1. Identify the current businesses within the region and the activities linked to Chichester Harbour, developing an evidence base that can inform future planning and management strategies.
2. Identify the issues affecting the environment looking for similarities between causes

3. Recommend future research that will identify sustainable solutions to challenges identified by stakeholders, including restrictions on planning and development, environmental legislation within the AONB and support for local business growth and development.
4. Evaluate the opportunity for the development of a local/ regional cluster, bringing stakeholders together to generate a collaborative and strategic vision for their future development.

1.1. Setting the Scene: Evidence from existing policy

In recent years, marine governance has undertaken something of an evolution, moving away from the traditional, top down, sector led management of marine resources and embracing a more integrated and holistic approach. Coastal areas have come under increasing pressure from a range of resource uses, coupled with historically ineffectual management strategies (Barker, 2005; Cicin-Sain and Knecht, 1998) where activities were considered in isolation (Hull, 2013). Increasingly governance strategies are working to develop an ecosystem based approach to managing coastal resources, using a more democratic and collaborative style of decision making (Hull, 2013).

This move has been supported by policy development on both a European and national scale, with the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2007) and the UK's Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) and Marine Policy Statement (2011) all taking the view that sustainable management of marine resources encompasses socio-economic and environmental factors. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that management and planning for marine and coastal resources on a regional and local level must also take this type of holistic approach, with local authorities encouraging development and economic growth as a way of supporting coastal communities. Directly linked to this is the 2012 EU Blue Growth Strategy which identifies both maritime industries, and business activities within coastal communities, as a tool for economic regeneration at a time when financial recovery is a key priority across Europe.

1.2. Business and Environmental Sustainability: Conflict or Cooperation?

In recent years, there has been an increasing call for businesses to become more environmentally aware, with business strategies now including considerable efforts to ensure sustainability, in both a socio-economic and environmental context (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002; Vernon et al., 2003; Revell et al., 2007; Orlitzky et al., 2011). As mentioned earlier, ecologically sensitive marine environments often support a diverse range of users and stakeholders. This diversity, while of considerable value to the local community, can prove to be a challenge in terms of implementing management plans, often resulting in conflict between users due to competition for resources. On the whole, research has shown there to be a very genuine need for businesses to take appropriate measures to increase awareness of sustainability issues and, indeed, to integrate these into their business practices (Jenkins, 2009; Vernon, et al., 2003; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002). In coastal areas, where communities often experience a number of challenges, including a lack of investment, an aging population and other symptoms of degradation (Barker, 2005;), the focus should increasingly be on the need for sustainable development as a way of engendering community regeneration (Vernon et al., 2003). In response to these challenges, local authorities and policy makers are increasingly attempting to take a three pronged approach to encourage sustainability within communities (illustrated in Figure 1).

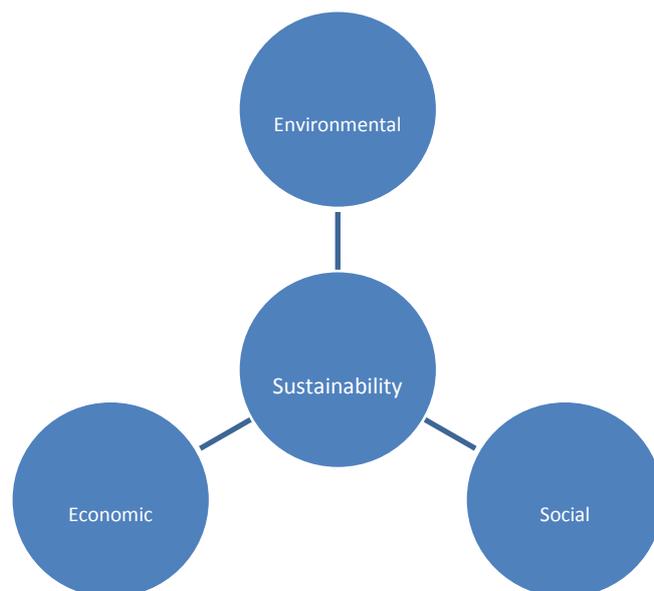


Figure 1: Three dimensions of sustainability (Adapted from Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002).

As a general rule, the response from businesses to the demand for increasingly sustainable business practices has been mixed, with larger companies often more able to implement necessary changes than SMEs (Vernon et al., 2003; Revell et al., 2007). SMEs comprise the majority of business activity within coastal communities, and their smaller scale and limited resources means that they may not have the capacity to meet sustainability goals in the same way as their larger counterparts, without additional support from policy makers and local authorities. A move towards more integration across marine and coastal governance could, in theory, support businesses within coastal communities, with decision makers able to develop policies that conserve the environment whilst also fostering business growth (Barker, 2005).

The case study site for this research is an example of where support for local businesses and management of marine resources is inextricably linked, and therefore, an integrated approach to management and development of the area is required. Chichester Harbour supports a diverse range of business activities and is situated on a highly designated part of the coastline in southern England.

1.3. Chichester Harbour AONB

Chichester Harbour is managed by Chichester Harbour Conservancy which was established by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Act in 1971 (CHC, 2013). The Harbour Conservancy is bound to “conserve, maintain and improve” the Harbour and the surrounding area for recreation, leisure, nature conservation and the responsibilities associated with the Harbour being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Harbour was designated as an AONB in 1964 (CHC, 2013) and, in addition, the Harbour also includes areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), RAMSAR sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), as well as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The Chichester Harbour AONB is 74km²: the smallest AONB area in the south east, crossing the boundaries of land, marine and coastal. As well as being an area of significant ecological importance, Chichester Harbour is intensively used, supporting a diverse range of business activities, including agriculture, maritime industries (particularly recreational boating and boatyards), fishing and tourism (CHC, 2013; CHC, 2008). In addition to a thriving and diverse business community, Chichester Harbour exhibits a complex political structure, with two County Councils (West Sussex County

Council and Hampshire County Council), one District Council (Chichester District Council), and a Borough Council (Havant Borough Council) involved in the management of the region. With such a diverse range of activities taking place in an ecologically sensitive area, it is important that the management of Chichester Harbour reduces conflicts between resource uses and ensures activities are balanced. The Conservancy acts as the managers of the Harbour and bases its management on four key principles:

- 1) Sustainable stewardship of the Harbour,
- 2) Integration of activities and management across marine and terrestrial boundaries,
- 3) A positive, proactive approach to management,
- 4) The need to achieve balance across the activities in the Harbour.

The Chichester Harbour Management Plan 2009-2014 aims to deliver on these four points, working to ensure there is balance between the activities of the people who live and work in the Harbour, and ensuring the long-term integrity of the ecologically important species and ecosystems supported by the Harbour (CHC, 2008). Indeed, the Plan states that it will work to support the local community and economy by “supporting the economic and social needs of the local communities where they are consistent with Chichester Harbour AONB’s landscape and nature conservation designations” (CHC, 2008; p.19). In spite of this commitment to supporting local businesses, historically, there has been limited promotion of Chichester Harbour as a commercial space due the uncertainty surrounding the Harbour’s capacity to support an increased level of activity and/or development (CHC, 2008). However, in a time when businesses and both local and national government are striving to help communities recover from the economic downturn of 2008, support for local businesses is a growing priority for Chichester Harbour Conservancy.

Given the location of the case study site, it is expected that the majority of businesses within the area will be SMEs, employing less than 250 people, with many being micro-businesses. Earlier research has found that, although previously considered a homogeneous sector in terms of their size and behaviour, the SME ‘sector’ is more commonly made up of a vast range of businesses operating in numerous economic settings (Jenkins, 2009). This

disparity can result in a fragmented collective of businesses, exhibiting limited connectivity across the local area, which could be a possible challenge for businesses in Chichester Harbour.

The study aims to evaluate current business activity in the Chichester Harbour region, engaging with stakeholders to develop an understanding of their awareness of their surrounding environment. Additionally, the study examines the relationship between businesses and their environment, and identifies possible mechanisms through which economic growth and development can be supported in the area. Finally, the research looked at how the Harbour Conservancy support companies, while meeting their environmental and managerial obligations.

2. METHODOLOGY

The project had multiple phases:

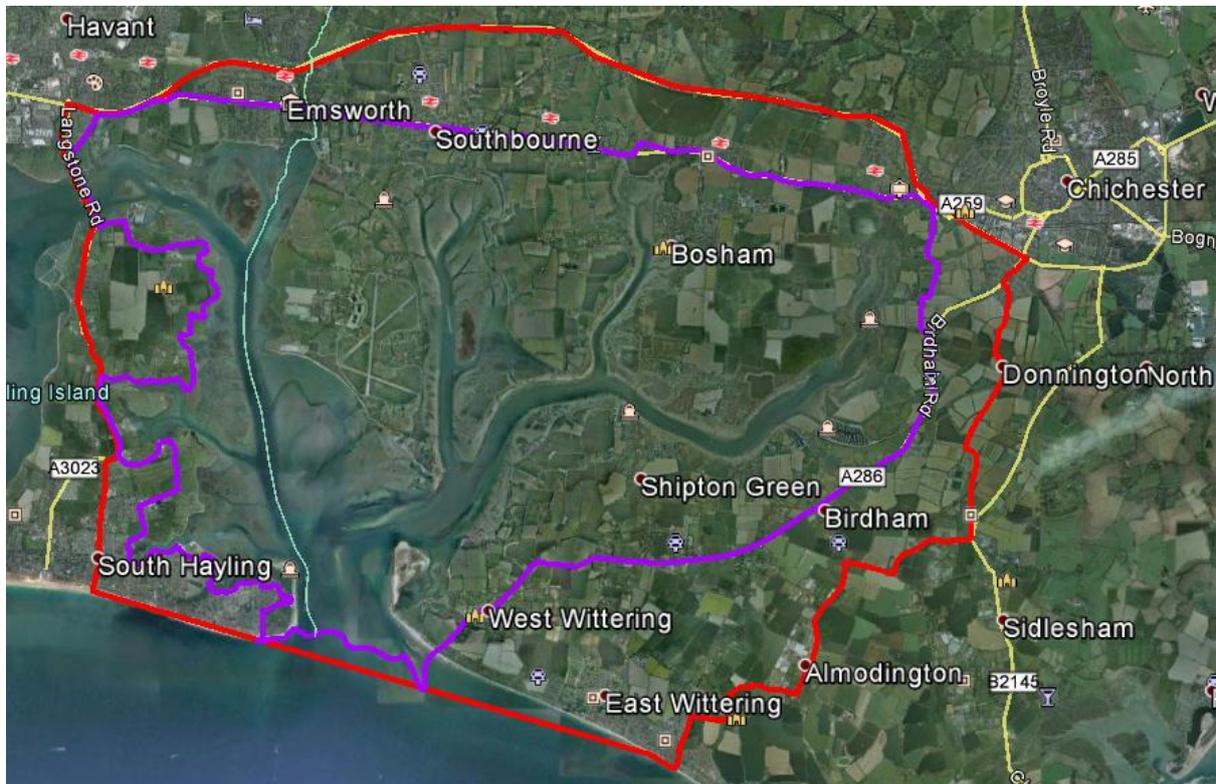
- 1) Development of a comprehensive database used to evaluate the business activity in the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and surrounding area (September 2013).
- 2) Engagement with relevant stakeholders through an in-depth interview and questionnaire schedule (October and November 2013).
- 3) Business event and workshop in November 2013

2.1 Evaluating Business Activity within Chichester Harbour AONB

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the case study site, a comprehensive database was created with support from West Sussex County Council (WSSCC). This database identifies the majority of business activities currently in operation in the Chichester Harbour region, providing a detailed record of the types of businesses in the region, where they were located, annual turnover, number of employees and contact details for each company. Figure 1 presents a map of the case study area, including the AONB boundaries as well as the boundaries of the area of socio-economic influence thought to impact Chichester

Harbour (CHC, 2013, pers.comm). The boundaries were used as geographical limitations for creation of the database.

Figure 1: Map of the case study site of Chichester Harbour (purple line is the boundary of the AONB, and red line is the boundary of the area of socio-economic influence).



2.2. Stakeholder Interview and Questionnaire Schedule

Where possible, stakeholders were invited to participate in an interview schedule, either face-to-face or over the telephone. Analysis of the database highlighted some information gaps in terms of contact details for businesses, making organisation of interviews with every company difficult.

Semi-structured interviews were used throughout allowing interviews to be flexible. This allowed any potential points of interest to be discussed within the interview process and aided the development of a more complete view of the sector. Where only an address was found for a company, a self-completion questionnaire was sent to the registered company address, inviting the recipient to engage with the research either through the questionnaire or by contacting the research team to arrange an interview. It should be noted that as a

result of the mixed methods approach to data collection, different data analysis techniques were used with the results collated to give a comprehensive view of business activity in the area. A copy of both the interview schedule questions and the online questionnaire are included in the Appendices.

2.3. Chichester Harbour Business Event

In addition to the questionnaire and interview schedules, stakeholders from around the Harbour area were invited to attend a business event, held at Chichester Yacht Club, on November 6th 2013. The event was attended by 40 delegates, representing Chichester Harbour Conservancy, local authorities, various business sectors, and the University of Chichester. The event was an opportunity for businesses to engage in an intensive workshop process to support the development of a vision for Chichester Harbour in the future. This took a four phase approach:

- A) Delegates were provided with a future scenario of the Harbour in 2018, and asked to consider how their business had achieved success and sustainability on an individual basis, taking into account factors such as infrastructure, business support, engagement with the local community and relationships with the local authorities.
- B) Delegates were asked to share and discuss their individual ideas within small groups
- C) Each group was asked to create a summary slide around one of 4 themes: communications, infrastructure, organisation and sustainability. These summaries were presented back to the larger group.
- D) Each group was asked to identify their top three priorities for action in the Chichester Harbour.

The observations made through these workshop sessions were used to supplement the information gathered through the questionnaires and interviews, and aided the development of the recommendations discussed in Section 4.

2.4. Data analysis

The quantitative data was analysed using basic descriptive statistics allowing key trends and common themes within the interviews to be identified. In contrast, the qualitative data collected through the interviews and the open-ended sections of the questionnaire were analysed using content analysis and data reduction techniques. Verbatim transcripts of the interviews were prepared by the researcher, as recommended by Gillham (2000), minimising the risk of misinterpretation and mistakes within the data analysis process. As recommended with qualitative data analysis, content analysis was conducted through the identification of themes and the application of coding to the data, allowing key trends and observations to be identified (Gillham, 2000; Dance et al, 1998; Jones, 2007; Creswell, 2009).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Evaluation of Business Activity in Chichester Harbour

The first phase of the research was to create a detailed database of all business activity within the Chichester Harbour area, using the AONB boundaries and the region of socio-economic influence as geographical limits. The database was created with support from WSCC, and identified almost 4000 companies currently in operation within the case study site. The spread of these companies across the case study site is illustrated in Figure 2. There were approximately 700 businesses identified as operating within the AONB boundaries, with over 3000 operational within the additional region of socio-economic influence. Although the majority of these companies are SMEs (businesses employing less than 250 people), they support over 12,000 employees and have an annual turnover of approximately £2.4 billion across a range of sectors¹. It should be noted that some companies that lie just outside the area of socio-economic influence have been included as a result of their close proximity to boundaries.

¹ The database was developed by West Sussex County Council/ Bureau Van Dijke. It should be noted that business information that collated may have included national data, rather than regional data, for company turnover and employee numbers.

Figure 2: Map presenting the businesses currently operating within the Chichester Harbour AONB boundaries, and within the area of socio-economic influence (blue indicates companies identified in the search for companies within the AONB boundaries and pink indicates those within the area of socio-economic influence. In some instances, one marker represents more than one business as they have been mapped according to post code).



The database included SIC code information which was used to evaluate the range of business activities, showing there to be over fifty types of business activity currently operational in the region. Given that one of the objectives of the research was to use an improved understanding of business activities to foster support for businesses in a region of ecological importance, it was decided that evaluation of the database should focus on those businesses that are most linked to their position within the Harbour boundaries. Ten categories of businesses were identified as having the most immediate connection to the Harbour i.e. those who could not operate as successfully in another location. By focusing on these activities, it is hoped to help Chichester Harbour Conservancy develop planning strategies through which they can support sustainable business growth and development in

their constituency. Table 1 presents a profile of the various business categories currently active within the case study site, clearly illustrating the importance of business activity, as a whole, within Chichester Harbour in terms of the annual contribution to the wider economy and employment opportunities.

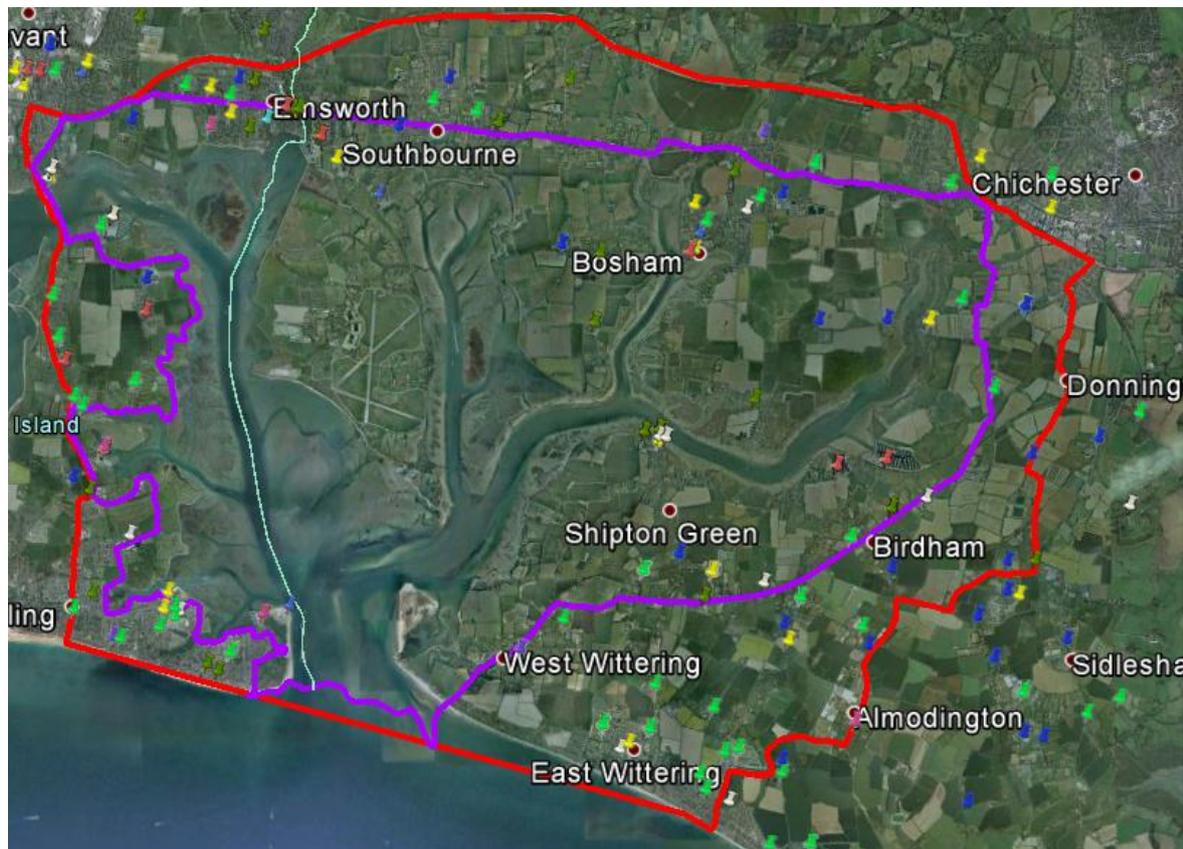
Table 1: Profile of business activities currently operating in the Chichester Harbour region (where possible annual turnover from 2012 and number of employees has been provided, * gives the number of businesses each figure relates to)

Category of Business Activity	Number of businesses	Annual turnover (approx.)	Number of employees
Agriculture	37	£45.7m*6 companies	542*5 companies
Fishing and Aquaculture	3	£1.3m*1 company	n/a
Boat Builders	47	£26m *21 companies	337 *20 companies
Education and Training	8	£212,000 *3 companies	6 *3 companies
Holiday Accommodation	61	£8.2m*33 companies	262 *31companies
Marine Engineers	11	£1.02m *7 companies	15 *7 companies
Marine services	16	£1.07m *4 companies	14 *4 companies
Science and the Environment	3	£371,000 *1 company	n/a
Sport and Recreation	30	£2.4m *9 companies	19 *5 companies
Water based Transport	27	£31.7m *19 companies	427 *18 companies

***It should be noted that, due to information gaps, the total annual turnover figures are not representative of all activity in each sector. However, it is likely that the data is for the larger businesses operating in the area, so therefore provides an indication of the true scale of the economic contribution of these activities. It should also be noted that these categories relate to any business that could be operating within this sector, and may include supporting businesses**

Figure 3: Distribution of relevant business activities in the Chichester Harbour region

(Key – Dark Blue: Aquaculture, White: Marine Science and Environment, Pink: Water Based Transport, Bright Green: Holiday Accommodation Yellow: Agriculture, Orange: Marine Services, Purple: Marine Engineers; Dark Green: sport and Recreation, Turquoise: Education and Training)



3.2. Analysis and synthesis of data

Given the mixed methods approach to data collection, the basic results are presented here, with the following sections presenting a synthesis of the collated results from the questionnaires, interviews and the stakeholder workshop event.

3.2.1. Analysis of the questionnaire and interview schedules

In total, 36 businesses participated in this phase of data collection, either through telephone interviews or through completion of the short questionnaire (a response rate of approximately 11% from a sample of 316 targeted businesses). All of the companies that responded were SMEs (less than 250 employees), with 61% operating as micro-businesses (less than 5 employees). The results of the interviews and questionnaires have been collated to give a more representative view of business activity within the Harbour. Where necessary, quotes have been included to support the findings; quotes are not attributed to

any individual and are used to support a consensual view, rather than the viewpoint of one respondent.

3.2.1.1. Perceived Value of Chichester Harbour

One of the key objectives of the research was to ascertain the level of value placed upon the Chichester Harbour as a business location. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of their position within the Harbour (1 being of low importance, 5 being of high importance); analysis of the results showed that over 63% rated the importance of the Harbour to their business as being very high (a rating of 5). Only 13% (5 companies) considered the location to be of low value to their businesses. This observation was supported by comments made throughout the interviews, with interviewees suggesting that the Harbour was *“100% important”, “It’s essential to the business”* and that *“being situated in the heart of the AONB is very important to us”*. Clearly locating a business within Chichester Harbour is perceived to have benefits for businesses, and that a level of intrinsic value is associated with the location.

3.2.1.2. Business Impact on the Harbour

In addition to creating a better understanding of how businesses perceived the added value of being located in Chichester Harbour, it was also necessary to establish how businesses in the area might interact with the Harbour, and what impacts they may have on the area. From the data collected, it appeared that most businesses in the area employ staff from the local area, with the majority of employees (97%) travelling no further than 30 miles to work, and over 50% travelling less than 5 miles. In terms of suppliers, distance varied across the businesses although there was a sense that using local sources and suppliers was preferable to most businesses, with one interviewee stating that their business *“tries to use local suppliers where possible, but a lot of the materials that we need are not available locally”*. However, it should be noted that fewer than 28% of businesses indicated that their suppliers were more than 100 miles from their business. While some companies require specialist suppliers, it is likely that local supply chains could be developed to reduce the travel time and cost for a number of companies operating in the area. The geographical

distribution of customers varied between businesses, although it should be noted that only 11% of customers were based locally.

Additionally, participating businesses were asked to indicate the level of consideration given to the Harbour environment as part of their day-to-day operation. Again, this varied depending on the business type, with some businesses more aware of their potential impacts on the Harbour environment, and recent changes to legislation that may have an influence on how their business operates; approximately 20% of participants rated their consideration of the environment as being low, however, more than 70% of participants rated their consideration as being between 3 and 5, indicating a relatively high level of consideration given to the Harbour environment.

Businesses appear to have some level of representation across the Harbour, through engagement with groups such as the Chichester Harbour Board, volunteering in some way, attending local meetings and using local websites to keep informed about changes and developments in the area (100% of respondents indicated an involvement of some form)². Other examples included personal involvement in maintaining local pathways, membership of Chichester Harbour Trust and running trips across the Harbour. This activity with the Harbour suggests that businesses are aware of opportunities for engagement with wider management processes in the area, again highlighting connection between the surrounding area and the businesses. This infers a sense of value connected with being located in the Harbour, as mentioned above, and will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.

3.2.1.3. Business Development and potential support requirements

A major component of the research was to identify how businesses operating in the area could be better supported to encourage economic growth and development of the wider area.

Participating businesses were asked to indicate whether they have plans to grow/ extend/ develop their business in any way in the future, with just over 50% of participating

² It should be noted that it is individuals who are involved in the Harbour in some way will be more likely to respond to the survey – provides an element of self-selection for participation in the survey.

businesses suggesting they would be interested in growing their business. In order to have an understanding of the factors influencing growth in the area, businesses were asked to comment on barriers impacting business development. The factors considered to be barriers to development included:

- Legislation: 11% of respondents indicated that the various planning and environmental legislations implemented within the Harbour area have made development of their businesses difficult. There was a feeling that local authorities and residents do not understand the value of business activity within the Harbour, with one interviewee stating that *“residents don’t appreciate our aims; to them redevelopment is (detrimental) development of the Harbour”*, suggesting that development or expansion of any nature is likely to come up against objections.
- Customer demand/ market conditions: 11% of companies involved in the survey element of the research suggested that customer demand for their products and services is limited. It was suggested that this was likely due to recent financial constraints, but also due to a lack of awareness of businesses operating within the Harbour. For example, businesses in Birdham Pool commented on the lack of signage directing people to the area, meaning people are unaware of businesses, which was thought to have a direct impact on customer numbers.
- Economy: 13.8% of participants cited the recent economic downturn, financial cutbacks and the need for funding as being a significant barrier to their capacity to develop and grow their businesses, with one interviewee stating that they do *“not have the financial background to expand”*.
- Other issues: In addition to these main categories of barriers, other issues cited as impacting the development potential in the Harbour included: a lack of resources in terms of access to a skilled workforce, and training opportunities; issues associated with limited space and the impact of this on the carrying capacity of businesses, ; and finally, competition from other businesses in the Harbour area being a limiting factor.

3.2.2. Developing a vision for Chichester Harbour: Priorities and Challenges

As part of the stakeholder event, delegates were asked to develop a collaborative vision for Chichester Harbour, using the information and ideas gathered throughout the process to highlight key priorities and potential challenges impacting the region. Individuals were asked to discuss their personal ideas with the larger group, generating a 'wish list' on which development of the Harbour area businesses could be based. Using this process, the research has generated a list of key actions that were viewed as supporting business and the Harbour in general. These are presented below:

- Formation of a Chichester Harbour Business Association/ Enterprise Network/ Cluster to support businesses in the area,
- Development and promotion of a Chichester Harbour Brand that could be used to support collaborative marketing of the businesses operating in the Harbour, as well as advertising the Harbour as an attractive destination for tourists, businesses and other investment,
- Implementation of an integrated, sustainable transport network around the Harbour. It is recommended that this transport network would have a green agenda, and would include new infrastructure such as: a ferry service operating across the Harbour mouth to connect East and West³, improved parking/ park and ride facilities around the Harbour, and the development of a connected cycle path around the Harbour and AONB.
- Formation of an annual Chichester Harbour Festival to promote business in the area, with a particular focus on attracting marine recreational users and tourists to the area.
- Finally, it was also commented that a priority for the area would be to engender improved relationships with existing bodies and associations to ensure there a collective approach to the future development of the Harbour.

³ It should be noted that the development of a ferry service across the Harbour would face some practical difficulties in terms of appropriate access points and infrastructure development.

While a number of priorities have been identified for the region, it is important to note that acting on these priorities would face some challenges. For example, the formation of a Chichester Harbour Business Association would require the identification of a suitable leading body, identification and inclusion of members, identification of common goals (although these are beginning to be identified through this research), and funding for initial activities, with a view to creating a self-sustaining Association, supported by its members. Funding and identifying a leader/ assigning ownership for each of these priority actions is the greatest challenge to their successful implementation; however, the formation of a Chichester Harbour Business Association would be the first step, and could be the launch pad for the other initiatives suggested by stakeholders. While it is acknowledged that there would be challenges, these are far outweighed by the benefits that these actions would have for both the businesses in the area, and the wider communities of the Harbour. Additionally, it should be noted that there are clearly challenges surrounding public awareness of business activity in the Harbour, and a lack of understanding of the value Chichester Harbour can have as an asset to the local communities it supports. There has been a historical lack of support for business development across the Harbour, which appears to be partially due to a lack of residents' understanding of the socio-economic benefits associated with a thriving business community, even within areas of outstanding beauty and ecological importance.

It should be noted that priorities were identified as the action points with the most value to the businesses in the local area by stakeholders attending the Chichester Harbour Business Event in November 2013 , with the greatest potential of being a 'quick win' for the Harbour. There was a sense that in order to continue developing business activity in Chichester Harbour, businesses need to see some positive steps in terms of supporting and promoting them, both locally and further afield.

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be noted that the Chichester Harbour Management Plan 2009-2014 identifies a lack of coordination and cooperation between local businesses as one of the primary challenges facing businesses in the area (CHC, 2008). The Plan suggests that by working together, businesses could identify opportunities for joint funding applications, engage in collaborative marketing strategies, and link existing infrastructure for the mutual benefit of multiple companies. This call for better collaboration and cooperation between businesses in the area is mirrored by the findings of the current research project, with participating businesses expressing a clear interest in collaborative approaches to business in the Harbour. Through analysis of the research, it is clear that there are a number of ways in which Chichester Harbour could move towards the future; these findings have been categorised into themes and are discussed below.

4.1. Vision for Chichester Harbour

Throughout the research, one of the aims was to develop an ideal vision for how businesses operating in Chichester Harbour could work together to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future. This vision is presented below, based on the recommendations developed through stakeholder engagement and represents an ideal scenario, encompassing actions that stakeholders would like to see in the future.

A Vision for Chichester Harbour

- Efforts should be made to increase public and business awareness of the value of the Harbour to the surrounding communities,
- As part of this, signage, information provision and interpretation boards around the AONB should be improved to enhance visitor and community understanding of the Harbour environment,
- Transport links within and around the Harbour should be improved, including the development of a connected cycle path, new/ improved existing park and ride facilities and a ferry service across the Harbour.
- The development of a Chichester Harbour Brand that can be associated with a certain level of success and quality of standard, improving the reputation of the businesses operating within the area.
- The Harbour should work with relevant bodies to lobby for improved broadband provision for both businesses and residences in the area,
- Efforts should be made to support young people in the diverse range of businesses operating within the Harbour. This could be achieved through the identification of apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- Links with existing bodies should be improved, including the Havant Business Association, local Chambers of Commerce, and Visit Chichester, as a way of raising the profile of the area and creating a greater sense of identity.
- Green business practices should be encouraged within those businesses operating in the AONB and wider Harbour area to ensure businesses are achieving both socio-economic and environmental sustainability.
- The businesses within the Harbour should work together on a collaborative annual Chichester Harbour Festival that promotes a range of activities on the water, promoting local businesses and raising the profile of the area as a whole.

4.3. Recommendations

Taking the priorities identified into consideration, a number of recommendations have been made as to how this 'vision' could be achieved. These are outlined in the section below.

4.3.1. Recommendations for Businesses

➤ *Development of a Chichester Harbour Business Association/ cluster*

The research found the local businesses would welcome a higher level of collaboration and an improved relationship with local trade associations and local authorities. Given that, it is the recommendation of this research that Chichester Harbour Conservancy investigates the potential for developing a Chichester Harbour Cluster. A cluster of this type could encourage improved collaboration among neighbouring businesses, encouraging businesses to promote each other, raising the visibility and profile of Chichester Harbour as a whole.

➤ *Improve awareness of collaborative opportunities within the Harbour area*

Previous research has shown that effective collaboration can foster both competition and success within member business by enhancing and improving existing supply chains, identifying ways of reducing costs and increasing revenue, and by highlighting new market opportunities for companies (Porter, 1998; Robins, 2011; McKinley, 2013). This evaluation of business activity has shown that there would be interest in increasing the level of local collaborative around the Harbour, supporting the development of more effective local supply chains. It also recognises that whilst there is some element of local competition, the real challenge is compete on a wider regional and national scale and develop market opportunities for all. This sort of activity could be supported by the development of a Chichester Harbour Business Association as outlined above.

➤ *Improving business awareness of 'green' opportunities*

From the research, it became evident that, while businesses appeared to be aware of the importance of the environment, and are adhering to the environmental legislation applicable to their company, little emphasis was put on the **value** of the environment to businesses in the area. For certain companies, being located in an Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty could be considered a significant asset and is something that businesses should promote to open new market opportunities for their business, with a particular focus on customers with high levels of environmental awareness.

4.3.2. Recommendations for Local Authorities and Policy Makers

➤ *Improving Local Government awareness of the value of SME businesses in Chichester Harbour*

As evident from the research, the majority of businesses operating within the Chichester Harbour area are SMEs. These small to medium sized businesses have been shown to make a significant contribution to community regeneration, adding to both local and regional socio-economic value. Given the dominance of SMEs, it is recommended that the Local Authorities in the area ensure they have a thorough understanding of the various sectors, and have an awareness of the business support required by these companies to encourage sustainable development.

➤ *Support and engage with a Chichester Harbour Business Association*

Following analysis of the research, it is clear that businesses in the area consider a business cluster to be something that would benefit them, and the wider community. It is the recommendation of this research that such a cluster would need, and indeed benefit, from the involvement of local authorities. This would ensure positive relationships were built between businesses and local authorities, encourage improved understanding regarding planning and legislation and support a positive and more collaborative approach to development of Chichester Harbour businesses.

➤ *Support the development of an integrated, green transport network*

A central theme throughout the research was the importance of establishing an integrated transport network around Chichester Harbour, in particular favouring sustainable and green transport opportunities. Infrastructure development of this nature would require support of local authorities, particularly in terms of funding and planning permission; however, this type of development would have far reaching benefits and could ease pressure on existing

infrastructure, addressing issues with traffic congestion and encouraging individuals to make more 'green' transport decisions.

4.3.3. Recommendations across the Channel and EU policy

While this study focused on a local case study in South east England, the findings from the research could be applicable in areas with similar characteristics across the Channel region, drawing on some of the work carried out earlier in the CAMIS project.

- Efforts should be made to increase the level of awareness of the valuable role SMEs across the Channel region play within their local communities. Often, as seen by this research, SMEs dominate local markets and contribute significantly to local and regional economies. However, because of their size, they often lack the resources necessary for development and require additional support, if they are to continue contributing positively.
- Establishing local business clusters and associations, working with the Chambers of Commerce and local authorities, would allow common goals and challenges to be identified, encourage collaborative approaches to marketing, promotion and general business activity, with multiple benefits for the local communities.
- Encouraging communication and collaboration between businesses and local authorities to ensure positive relationships between stakeholders are formed. By working together, a collaborative future can be achieved, ensuring both socio-economic and environmental sustainability.
- Engaging in meaningful dialogue with businesses in an area, through meetings, e-networks and newsletters is vital to ensuring appropriate business support is provided.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Businesses within Chichester Harbour, have a clear understanding of the value the Harbour brings to their enterprise, and therefore, understand, that it is within their interest to ensure the natural resources and the environment of the Harbour are managed effectively and sustainably. It was evident from the research, that businesses operating in the harbour are aware of the intrinsic value of their location, and understand that the success of their businesses is inherently linked to the natural resources provided by the Harbour. They recognise the value of collaboration and the need to create an effective lobby to ensure social and economic sustainability of the communities in which they operate. There is a willingness to engage through a Chichester Harbour business association and a view that momentum should not be lost through inaction.

The research showed that, while businesses would welcome additional support from the Harbour Conservancy and other local authority bodies, there was a general consensus that one of the long-term priorities for the area has to be the maintenance and protection of the Harbour itself.

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