



Invitation to Quote

SPECIFICATION FOR THE PREPARATION OF A TECHNICAL REPORT RELATING TO LAND AT CHALKDOCK MARSH, WEST ITCHENOR, CHICHESTER HARBOUR.

To review the potential options for the future of footpath WEI-1 at Chalkdock Marsh, West Itchenor with the overall aim to re-naturalise the coastline and maintain recreational access for the next 75 years.

Opening Date: 1200pm on Monday 24 November 2025.

Closing Date: 1200pm on Monday 8 December 2025.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At 74km², Chichester Harbour is the largest natural estuary in southeast England, straddling the boundary between Hampshire and West Sussex. Chichester Harbour is a National Landscape, with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), a RAMSAR site and a Special Protection Area (SPA). It is also part of the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and there are a range of Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (in Hampshire), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (in West Sussex) and sites of historical importance. Due to its high environmental value, it is quite rightly, a protected landscape.
- 1.2 Natural England published a Condition Review of Chichester Harbour Sites in 2021 (NERR090). Since the state of nature is deteriorating, the main Chichester Harbour SSSI was classified as in 'unfavourable declining' condition, due to loss of saltmarsh and its poor condition. A key contributing factor to this loss are hard sea defences causing coastal squeeze, preventing natural coastal processes by restricting sediment supply and gradually destroying the intertidal habitat.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5535304204419072>
- 1.3 The Chichester Harbour Protection & Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN) partnership comprises of Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Coastal Partners, Southern Water, the RSPB, the Sussex Inland Fisheries & Conservation Authority and the Three Harbours Partnership.
- 1.4 The CHaPRoN partnership is driving forward an exciting programme of work to restore the SSSI back to favourable condition. This includes projects to restore natural coastal processes within the harbour and create new saltmarsh, a UK priority habitat. The nature recovery work will contribute to the ambitions of

Defra's Environment Improvement Plan 2023, and the target to bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework>

- 1.5 The impacts of climate change are being observed around the harbour, with rising sea levels, increased storminess and extreme weather events. These changes are impacting intertidal habitats, sea defences, coastal footpaths, and causing isolated flooding events. The harbour needs to adapt and mitigate for the impacts of climate change. This includes creating space for intertidal and coastal habitat, re-naturalising sections of the coastline, whilst also ensuring coastal access is maintained into the future for the public to enjoy.

2.0 Location

- 2.1 The location of the area is Chalkdock Marsh and the adjacent surrounding area at West Itchenor. Figure 1 shows maps of the location.



Figure 1: Maps to show location of project site including Chalkdock Marsh, West Itchenor BUDS trial, footpath WEI-1, Park Copse and Birch Copse.

- 2.2 Chalkdock Marsh is a regulated tidal exchange (RTE) saltmarsh habitat creation site behind a low lying vegetated shingle ridge at West Itchenor. The site was initially established in 2000 and saltmarsh habitat has evolved successfully over the past 25 years. The site is approximately 3 hectares and the project scheme involved the installation of one sluice with a standard 6 inch pipe.

<https://www.omreg.net/query-database/10-chalkdock-marsh/>

- 2.3 North-east of Chalkdock Marsh lies the site of the West Itchenor Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediment (BUDS) trial. This trial piloted a pioneering technique to raise the elevation of the upper foreshore with dredged sediment to restore saltmarsh habitat. The first phase of the trial was delivered in February/March 2023, raising an area of 0.26ha of upper foreshore above Mean High Water Neaps. Pioneer saltmarsh species have successfully started to colonise the higher elevations. We are seeking to carry out a second phase of this project in 2026/27.

<https://www.conservancy.co.uk/nature-recovery/projects/saltmarsh-restoration-trial-project-west-itchenor/>

- 2.4 Footpath WEI-1 (Footpath 1), part of the King Charles III England Coast Path, runs along the northern edge of Chalkdock Marsh. The footpath is gradually being eroded by natural processes and increasingly floods at high spring tides becoming impassable. Maintaining access is increasingly challenging.
- 2.5 The current route of this footpath acts as a divide between the BUDS trial site, existing patches of saltmarsh along the foreshore and Chalkdock Marsh. Pressure from human trampling is suppressing saltmarsh growth over an increasingly wider area. This is decreasing saltmarsh habitat resilience within the location.
- 2.6 Along the north-west section of the footpath lies a low-lying sea defence made from old concrete (Figure 2). This provides limited protection at the site as it is frequently over-topped with a spring high tide and is also exacerbating coastal squeeze.



Figure 2: Old defences concrete sea defences at Chalkdock Marsh.

- 2.7 Behind Chalkdock Marsh lies two areas of ancient woodland, Park Copse and Birch Copse. Figure 3 shows the location of the designated woodland areas. Ancient woodland is another priority habitat that is an important part of the landscape character.



Figure 3. Map to show location of the Ancient Woodland behind Chalkdock Marsh (Park Copse and Birch Copse) (Taken from Magic Maps).

- 2.8 Chichester Harbour Conservancy, on behalf of the CHaPRoN partnership, is inviting quotes to produce a Technical Report to assess the options for re-routing the coastal footpath at Chalkdock Marsh to maintain a safe and viable public right of way for the future. Re-naturalising the coastline at this location will help to enable natural processes to shape the coastal habitat, seeking to maximise the saltmarsh creation opportunity and increase habitat resilience.

3.0 The Purpose of the Report

- 3.1 The ultimate aims of the Technical Report are to assess options to:

- i. 'Re-naturalise' the section of the coastline at Chalkdock Marsh, West Itchenor, in light of sea level rise, the progressive erosion and flooding of the coastal path, and challenges in maintaining safe access.
- ii. Enable natural processes to take their course and shape coastal habitat, seeking to maximise saltmarsh creation potential and establish connectivity between existing saltmarsh along the foreshore, the West Itchenor BUDs trial site and Chalkdock Marsh, increasing habitat resilience.
- iii. Maintain and enhance long-term access along footpath WEI-1 at West Itchenor, part of the King Charles III England Coast Path, by rolling back the footpath and subsequently helping to reduce trampling pressures long-term on the saltmarsh habitat.

- 3.2 The Technical Report will need to consider the following:

- i. A current site walkover. The condition and accessibility of the current section of footpath WEI-1 north of Chalkdock Marsh, the state of the adjacent saltmarsh, and the potential future impact of high tide surges and sea level rise. Specialist insight into the ecological value of the area.

- ii. The topography of the site and potential flood risk to the surrounding area with projected sea-level rise.
- iii. The options for the future of the footpath at this location. Summary advantages and disadvantages for each option, as well as identifying key issues and constraints, uncertainties and any required further investigations, likely costings of each option.
- iv. Consideration of removing the old concrete defences in place along footpath WEI-1. Advantages and disadvantages. Feasibility of removal.

Then for the preferred option (the recommendation), to consider:

- v. Route and construction specifications to meet the required standards of the King Charles III England Coast Path.
 - vi. Accessibility for wheelchairs, pushchairs and buggies and the potential benefit of extending the length of the accessible path from West Itchenor.
 - vii. Estimated costs for implementation.
- 3.3 The Technical Report must be structured to inform discussion with the landowner, West Sussex County Council as the Highways Authority and other stakeholders, guide the next development phase and ultimately make a recommendation for the future course of action for the project site.
- 4.0 Audiences for the Technical Report**
- 4.1 The primary customer for this Technical Report will be Chichester Harbour Conservancy, supported by the Environment Agency as the funder.
- 4.2 Other important recipients of the Technical Report include key stakeholders in Chichester Harbour, such as, but not limited to:
- The landowner
 - Natural England
 - West Sussex County Council (Highways Authority)
 - West Itchenor Parish Council
 - The Itchenor Society
 - Chichester District Council (Local Planning Authority)
 - Coastal Partners
- 4.3 In the interests of transparency, the Technical Report will be published and in the public domain upon completion, except for anything therein deemed to be commercially sensitive, which may be redacted prior to publication.

5.0 About Chichester Harbour Conservancy

5.1 Chichester Harbour Conservancy was established by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Act of 1971. The Act recognised the single geographical entity of the Harbour and brought together responsibilities for managing the natural environment and the safe running of the harbour as the Statutory Harbour Authority.

5.2 Chichester Harbour Conservancy has two functions.

21.– (1) It shall be the function of the Conservancy, subject to the provisions of this Act, to take such steps from time to time as to them seem meet for the conservancy, maintenance and improvement of–

(a) The harbour, for the use of pleasure craft and such other vessels as may seek to use the same;

(b) The amenity area, for the occupation of leisure and recreation and the conservation of nature;

and the facilities (including, in relation to the harbour, navigational facilities) afforded respectively therein or in connection therewith.

(2) In the fulfilment of the function with which they are charged by subsection (1) of this section, the Conservancy shall have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside and of avoiding interference with fisheries.

6.0 Project Specification

6.1 The successful consultant will research and prepare a report with an Executive Summary, and structured sections that deliver the requirements of the specification.

6.2 Although this is principally a desk-based assignment, consultants should allow 1 or 2 days for site visits as required.

6.3 Consultants will need to budget for:

- An introductory meeting in December.
- Site visits (expected 1 or 2 days).
- Virtual meetings with coastal experts as required.
- Desktop analysis of the site, in the context of sea level rise projections.
- The submission of the first draft of the Technical Report by 16 February 2026.
- Consideration of feedback on the first draft.
- Submission of the final Technical Report by 31 March 2026.

6.3 The above deadlines must be adhered to. Consultants that knowingly cannot deliver within this timeframe should not bid for the work.

6.4 Structure of the Technical Report (approx. 40-50 sides of A4)

With expected and indicative page weightings:

- 1) Executive Summary (to be completed last)
- 2) Introduction and explain need for the project (5%)
- 3) Explain the science and sea level rise data (10%)
- 4) Site walkover description (10%)
- 5) Legal and policy implications (10%)
- 6) Options for the future of the footpath at this location (10%)
- 7) Detailed analysis of the rollback options for the footpath, maximising accessibility, vantage points, screening options, interpretation, benches, etc. (30%)
- 8) Maximising the potential for re-naturalising the frontage at Chalkdock Marsh (15%)
- 9) Overall Recommendations (10%)

6.5 Whilst it is a Technical Report, the author(s) should strive for the use of plain English wherever possible.

7.0 The Role of the Consultants

7.1 The consultants will be expected to carry out the tasks identified below:

- Advise Chichester Harbour Conservancy on their plan for the Technical Report and how they propose to go about undertaking the work.
- Produce a draft first report by 16 February 2026.
- Liaise with the Project Manager (Sarah Chatfield, CHaPRoN Manager) and other officers from Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Environment Agency as required, including face-to-face and virtual meetings.
- Provide progress reports at regular intervals and the final Technical Report on-time and on-budget.

8.0 The Role of Chichester Harbour Conservancy

8.1 The following relevant documents will be available for consideration on Chichester Harbour Conservancy's website.

- Chichester Harbour National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 Incorporating the Amenity Area & Harbour (available 01/12/25).
- Landscape Character Assessment (2019) .

Please see www.conservancy.co.uk for details.

- 8.2 Staff from Chichester Harbour Conservancy will be available for a site visit with the appointed contractor to discuss the project requirements.
- 8.3 Free parking will be provided within the Itchenor Car Park to support site visits.
- 8.4 Chichester Harbour Conservancy will assist the consultant with introductions to third parties where required, e.g. government agencies and partners.

9.0 Structure of Submissions

- 9.1 The proposal must detail the following. Submissions must not exceed 8 pages (16 sides) of A4 using Arial font size 11 excluding CVs and two examples of previous conservation/access work.

Section 1: The reasons for your interest in the project, your track record in the field, with examples, and two appended references.

Section 2: The approach you propose to take in conducting the work, including methodology and a weekly work schedule (Jan-Mar 2026).

Section 3: Your CV and those of anyone else involved in the project, indicating who will be undertaking which roles, and two examples of previous conservation/access work.

Section 4: Overall price and how you have calculated that sum.

Section 5: Any standard terms and conditions of your own (not assessed).

Section 6: Evidence of Public Liability Insurance (not assessed).

- 9.2 Quotations should show an overall price together with a day-rate. A breakdown of the quotation fee is expected to be clear.
- 9.3 The appointed consultant will undertake the work. It will not be sub-let to a third party.
- 9.4 In summary, the timetable for the project is as follows:
- Brief issued to potential consultants – 24 November 2025.
 - Submissions to be returned by 1200pm – Monday 8 December 2025.
 - Contract to be awarded – w/c 15 December 2025.
 - Submission of first draft report – 16 February 2026.
 - Submission of final report – 31 March 2026.

10.0 Awarding of Contract

- 10.1 Chichester Harbour Conservancy will sift the submissions based on Sections 1, 2, 3. A list of competent suppliers will be created, i.e. the organisations that we feel can fulfil this brief based on the information provided.
- 10.2 Bids that are deemed to be unfeasible, or with incomplete information, will be sifted out.
- 10.3 From that competent suppliers list, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Environment Agency will determine the submission best suited to fulfil the brief overall.

11.0 Submission of Clarification Questions

- 11.1 Sarah Chatfield, CHaPRoN Manager will be the lead contact for this project, with Dr Richard Austin, Director of Conservation as the secondary contact.
- 11.2 Please contact Sarah Chatfield by email with any questions you may have. The deadline for doing so is 1200pm on Monday 1 December 2025. In the interests of fairness, any questions arising after this date and time will not be answered.
- 11.3 Guided site visits with staff from Chichester Harbour Conservancy during the bidding process will not be possible.
- 11.4 The budget for the Technical Report will not be published.

12.0 Submissions

- 12.1 Submissions should be submitted by 1200pm on Monday 8 December 2025 in electronic format to:
sarah.chatfield@conservancy.co.uk and richard.austin@conservancy.co.uk
- 12.2 Please quote “Chalkdock Technical Report” in the email subject line.
- 12.3 Submissions received after the deadline will not normally be considered.

ENDS