

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL – PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON
DATE OF DECISION:	8 JUNE 2023
REPORT OF:	CLLR SAVAGE CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - 2022/23

CONTACT DETAILS

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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

From October 2022 to March 2023 the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook evidence gathering sessions as they conducted the Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton inquiry. The final report, approved by the Inquiry Panel in April 2023, is attached as Appendix 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) are requested to consider, and approve, the final report of the Inquiry Panel and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is recommended to consider and approve the final report of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.
	(ii)	To delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to approve any minor amendments arising from considerations raised at the Committee's meeting on 8 June 2023.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	In accordance with the Council's constitution, this Committee must approve the final report of a scrutiny inquiry before it is referred to the Executive for consideration and further action.
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2.	Not applicable.
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3.	The OSMC, at its meeting in September 2022, requested that the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertake an inquiry focussing on protecting, preserving and promoting the River Itchen in Southampton.
4.	The set objectives of the inquiry were:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To identify the various different users and uses of the River Itchen in Southampton and the challenges this presents. b. To understand existing plans and opportunities to address the identified challenges. c. To identify good practice being employed to protect, preserve and promote urban rivers elsewhere. d. To identify what initiatives and approaches could work well in Southampton to protect, preserve and promote the River Itchen.
5.	The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook the inquiry over 6 evidence gathering meetings and received information from a wide variety of organisations. This included Wessex Rivers Trust, Natural England, The Environment Agency, Southern Water, ABP, Ocean Infinity, MDL Marinas, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Business South, British Canoeing, Glasgow City Council, Thames21 and Solent Forum.
6.	Evidence was also provided by Southampton City Council officers representing various departments and from numerous voluntary, community and recreational groups who are passionate about the River Itchen in Southampton.
7.	The final report contains a number of recommendations designed to improve the protection, preservation and promotion of the River Itchen in Southampton. The conclusions and recommendations are summarised in Appendix 2.
8.	The Committee needs to consider whether the report adequately responds to the inquiry objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference shown within the attached report.
9.	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee procedure rules within the constitution require that within two months of the date of this committee approving a final inquiry report, the Executive will consider the report and submit a formal response to the recommendations contained within them. If this Committee is minded to accept the final report, then the document will be presented to the Executive on 13 June 2023 for further action.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u>	
10.	In practice any future resource implications arising from this review will be dependent upon whether, and how, each individual recommendation within the Inquiry report is progressed by the Executive. More detailed work will need to be undertaken by the Executive in considering its response to each of the recommendations set out in the Inquiry report.
11.	During the Inquiry a number of potential sources of funding were identified that could help to deliver certain recommendations. These include the Nitrogen Neutrality Scheme.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	

12.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.	
Other Legal Implications:		
13.	None	
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS		
14.	If the OSMC decide that the Inquiry report has not met the terms of reference set by the Committee then this may require the Panel to reconvene to address the concerns raised. This would result in a delay in the Executive's response to the recommendations, and, potentially in implementing agreed actions.	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
15.	In the 2022/2030 Corporate Plan, under the goal of 'A proud and resilient city', a key objective is to create cleaner, more attractive, and welcoming green and open spaces, to improve the experience of those living, working, studying and visiting Southampton. Implementing the recommendations within the attached inquiry final report would help to deliver this objective.	
KEY DECISION		No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		None directly as a result of this report
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton Inquiry – Final report	
2.	Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton Inquiry – Conclusions and recommendations	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?		No
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
Other Background Documents		
Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None	