

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton

Thursday, 1st December, 2022
at 5.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

Members

Councillor Savage (Chair)
Councillor Bunday
Councillor Cooper
Councillor Moulton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor White

Contacts

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PUBLIC INFORMATION

Role of Scrutiny Panel Inquiry –

Purpose: In partnership with stakeholders to identify opportunities to protect, preserve and promote the River Itchen in Southampton.

Use of Social Media:- The Council supports the video or audio recording of meetings open to the public, for either live or subsequent broadcast. However, if, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being recorded and to the use of those images and recordings for broadcasting and or/training purposes. The meeting may be recorded by the press or members of the public.

Any person or organisation filming, recording or broadcasting any meeting of the Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them doing so.

Details of the Council's Guidance on the recording of meetings is available on the Council's website.

Southampton: Corporate Plan 2020-2025

sets out the four key outcomes:

- Communities, culture & homes - Celebrating the diversity of cultures within Southampton; enhancing our cultural and historical offer and using these to help transform our communities.
- Green City - Providing a sustainable, clean, healthy and safe environment for everyone. Nurturing green spaces and embracing our waterfront.
- Place shaping - Delivering a city for future generations. Using data, insight and vision to meet the current and future needs of the city.
- Wellbeing - Start well, live well, age well, die well; working with other partners and other services to make sure that customers get the right help at the right time

Public Representations

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting about any report on the agenda for the meeting in which they have a relevant interest.

Smoking policy – the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

MOBILE TELEPHONES:- Please switch your mobile telephones or other IT to silent whilst in the meeting.

Fire Procedure – in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

Access – access is available for the disabled. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

Dates of Meetings: Municipal Year 2022/2023

6 October 2022
17 November 2022
1 December 2022
19 January 2023
16 February 2023
2 March 2023
20 April 2023

CONDUCT OF MEETING

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Committee are contained in the Council's Constitution.

Business to be discussed

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

Rules of Procedure

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Quorum

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 2.

Disclosure of Interests

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "personal" or "prejudicial" interests they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

Personal Interests

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a personal interest in any matter

- (i) if the matter relates to an interest in the Member's register of interests; or
- (ii) if a decision upon a matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting to a greater extent than other Council Tax payers, ratepayers and inhabitants of the District, the wellbeing or financial position of himself or herself, a relative or a friend or:-
 - (a) any employment or business carried on by such person;
 - (b) any person who employs or has appointed such a person, any firm in which such a person is a partner, or any company of which such a person is a director;
 - (c) any corporate body in which such a person has a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or
 - (d) any body listed in Article 14(a) to (e) in which such a person holds a position of general control or management.

A Member must disclose a personal interest.

Continued/.....

Prejudicial Interests

Having identified a personal interest, a Member must consider whether a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably think that the interest was so significant and particular that it could prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. If that is the case, the interest must be regarded as "prejudicial" and the Member must disclose the interest and withdraw from the meeting room during discussion on the item.

It should be noted that a prejudicial interest may apply to part or the whole of an item.

Where there are a series of inter-related financial or resource matters, with a limited resource available, under consideration a prejudicial interest in one matter relating to that resource may lead to a member being excluded from considering the other matters relating to that same limited resource.

There are some limited exceptions.

Note: Members are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or his staff in Democratic Services if they have any problems or concerns in relation to the above.

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

AGENDA

Agendas and papers are now available online at
www.southampton.gov.uk/council/meeting-papers

1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Council's Code of Conduct, Members to disclose any personal or pecuniary interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

NOTE: Members are reminded that, where applicable, they must complete the appropriate form recording details of any such interests and hand it to the Democratic Support Officer.

3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST

Members are invited to declare any prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

5 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)

(Pages 1 - 6)

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

7 PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON - THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER

(Pages 7 - 16)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager outlining the focus of the third meeting of the inquiry and requesting that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors Savage (Chair), Bunday, Cooper, Moulton (Vice-Chair) and White

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON - THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager detailing the issues concerning the environment of the River Itchen in Southampton.

The Panel received the following representations:

Graham Horton, Thames Solent Team Manager, Natural England summarised the key issues about the ecology of the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- The River Itchen is an important asset for people, wildlife and the economy.
- In recognition of its national and international importance its environment is highly protected by several pieces of legislation including - Site of Special Scientific Interest; Special Protection Area (significant bird populations); Special Area of Conservation (Maritime habitats); Ramsar site (Globally significant wetlands). This legislation places a requirement upon public bodies to consider impacts when permitting activities.
- Like many tidal rivers it has a long history of human use and a strong contrast between tidal and non-tidal stretches.
- Above Woodmill; the Itchen is a classic example of a chalk river: clear water, high biodiversity & globally rare. Below Woodmill; its more industrial, more modified but still important.
- Tidal part of the Itchen includes mudflat and saltmarsh habitats; Overwintering birds, including brent geese; Breeding birds such as terns; and migratory fish: salmon, trout.
- Non-tidal part of the Itchen provides classic chalk river habitats with lots of invertebrates – dragonflies and important fish species.
- Like many rivers and estuaries in the Solent (and England) the Itchen is facing a number of threats including population pressure, pollution pressure, climate change leading to droughts and rising sea levels, and invasive species.
- England Coastal Path is nearing completion which provides additional opportunities to access blue/green spaces and reconnect with the coastline and the health benefits that come with this (the higher the quality of the nature the better the health benefits).

- The Itchen could accommodate increased recreational pressures - if well managed - opportunity to increase access provision, build a stronger relationship with 'place' and with the natural environment.
- Opportunities for rewilding and biodiversity recovery – Oyster reefs in the Itchen would help to improve water quality. Pilot schemes in River Hamble and IoW. Natural England is working with universities and are ready to scale this up with potential for this to be funded in Southampton through nitrogen neutrality schemes.
- To develop sustainably, access to the water should be encouraged and integrated into new developments; water usage needs to be reduced in new developments; green developments – trees, amenity grasslands and nature areas need to be incorporated.
- The Council's Nitrogen Mitigation Policy Statement is welcomed. The Council could choose to go further, beyond nitrogen neutral and require developments to be nitrogen positive.

Dr David Rumble, CEO Wessex Rivers Trust, summarised the key issues about water quality in the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- The importance of considering the catchment as a whole, the long timescales and the spatial scale involved.
- Pollution sources affecting the tidal Itchen – Largely rural: Agriculture (70-75% of nitrogen in the Itchen comes from agriculture), land based activities. Largely urban: Maritime activities, landfill leaching, airborne pollutants, wastewater treatment works. Urban & rural: Private sewage / septic tanks, surface drains and highways.
- Pollution types affecting the tidal Itchen – Largely rural: Pesticides, fine sediment, organic waste. Largely urban: Particulates, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, pathogens, plastics, emerging chemicals, persistent synthetics. Urban & rural: Nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus).
- Water Framework Directive Ecological Status: River Itchen 'Good', Southampton Water 'Moderate' (due to 'nitrates') as measured by the Environment Agency.
- Water Framework Directive Chemical Status - River Itchen 'Fail' (due to UPBTs - Ubiquitous Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxic substances), Southampton Water 'Fail' (due to UPBTs). If UPBTs are excluded: River Itchen is 'Good', Southampton Water is 'Moderate' due to Tributyltin (found in anti-fouling paints used to prevent biofouling on boat hulls).
- The challenge for Southampton is can we aim for higher than good regarding the Water Framework Directive Ecological Status? The bar is relatively low.
- What the Council can do – Planning system is key to overcoming a number of pollution challenges; a properly maintained and designed highways infrastructure would also help to deliver an improvement in water quality.
- Partnership forums or management boards – Catchment Partnerships exist to bring together sectors. Dr Rumble is Chair of the Test & Itchen Catchment Partnership. The Solent Forum also exists. No specific forum for the River Itchen in Southampton.

David Murphy, Wastewater Strategy Manager, and Andrew Adams, Catchment Planning Manager, Southern Water together summarised the key issues about the

environmental challenges of drainage and wastewater management which impact the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- Wastewater Systems in the Test and Itchen Catchment - 31 wastewater systems; 31 treatment works; 301 wastewater pumping stations; 4571km sewers; 93% homes connected.
- In Southampton 3 wastewater systems – Portswood, Woolston and Millbrook
- Portswood WTW system - Population c. 80,000; 585 km sewer; 19 pumping stations; 7 storm overflows; Storm tank volume 3549 m³ - Flow in excess of storm tank volume discharged to Itchen
- Woolston WTW system - Population c. 70,000; 534 km sewer; 10 pumping stations; 1 storm overflow; Storm tank volume 1723 m³ - Flow in excess of storm tank volume discharged to Itchen.
- Millbrook system - Population 140,000; 3 storm overflows; Treated flows discharge to River Test.
- More combined sewers carrying wastewater and rainwater in Portswood than Woolston or Millbrook, where separate sewers exist. Most urban areas have more combined sewers than Southampton.
- Southern Water planned investment to 2025 in excess of £25m – Portswood increasing storm tank capacity from 3549m³ to 5556m³; Woolston Increasing flow to full treatment (FFT) from 427 l/s to 520 l/s; Increasing storm tank capacity from 1723m³ to 6723m³; Regional programme of pumping station refurbishment based on site criticality and performance.
- Detail available in Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan at <https://southernwater.co.uk/dwmp>
- In Portswood up to 90% of flow arriving during a storm is rainwater, mainly from roof and road run-off. Across the network, during heavy storms the rainwater, combined with the wastewater can exceed the capacity of the storm tanks. To protect homes and businesses the storm overflows are released into the River Itchen. The storm overflow includes silt, sewage and other contaminants.
- Storm overflows - In total there are 15 storm overflows in the wastewater systems discharging to the River Itchen: 9 from the Portswood network (linked to pumping stations) 0 from the Woolston network; 4 from Millbrook network; Plus storm overflows from Portswood WTW and Woolston WTW. Of these currently 3 spill more frequently than the new DEFRA requirements.
- 11 spills from overflows from 2017 to 2019 in Portswood. 60% are caused by blockages. Southern Water employs a Fats, Oils and Greases (FOG) and Unflushables team to educate & investigate where blockages regularly occur.
- Surface Water Outfalls - 50 outfalls from public surface water sewers discharge to the River Itchen. All operate every time it rains. Discharge rainwater from roofs and roads to the river. Not monitored. Likely to be other outfalls from highway drains. Misconnections from homes is a source of pollution into surface water sewers and on to the Itchen. Southern Water are working with SCC when properties are found to be misconnected to system.
- There are broadly 3 main types of intervention to reduce flooding and storm overflow use – 1) Source control (removing and slowing the flow of

rainwater) 2) Optimisation of existing infrastructure 3) Build bigger infrastructure.

- Sustainable drainage solutions such as permeable paving and soakways, green roofs, swales and wetlands, rain gardens and water butts are the best way to remove water, slow it down & reduce flooding and storm overflow use. The more rainwater kept out of combined sewers the more wastewater can be kept in during heavy rainfall.
- Southern Water is encouraging new developments to be designed with sustainable drainage solutions to slow the flow and treat water at source.
- Southern Water provides near real-time information about storm release activity near coastal bathing waters through Beachbuoy tool. There are plans to improve the app to make the information more user friendly and extend it to inland waters such as the River Itchen. The Panel expressed their desire for this to happen as soon as possible, via the Beachbuoy tool or through other communication outlets.

Lindsay McCulloch, Natural Environment Manager, Southampton City Council used Chessel Bay as a case study and summarised the key issues of water quality, pollution and ecology and potential solutions as:

- Chessel Bay is the last undeveloped section of the tidal river in Southampton. It is an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designated site. It was the first LNR in Southampton in 1989.
- A popular recreation spot with high ecological value providing diverse and complex habitats supporting overwintering birds, salmon, otter and seals.
- Chessel Bay faces a number of problems – litter, pollution (waste from business, industrial material, water quality), disturbance and anti-social behaviour.
- SCC is working with the Environment Agency, Natural England, University of Southampton and Nurdle to remove debris, including plastic nurdles, from Chessel Bay. A recent clean up using Nurdle's technology removed 600kg of micro-plastic from Chessel Bay. Prof Malcolm Hudson is analysing the findings, support has been provided by Surfers Against Sewage, but more plastic has arrived. A full scale clean up is planned early next year.
- 3 large plastics companies in Southampton are regulated by the Environment Agency, a number of smaller businesses are not regulated. SIVA have invested significant resources to improve processes to reduce plastic pollution in the Itchen. Polystar are improving their processes.
- Solutions include working with the University of Southampton and Citizen Science to better understand the impacts; encouraging and supporting local action (welcome support from Friends of Chessel Bay); work to change attitudes and encourage people to value the environment.
- Partnership working is key, bringing businesses and interest groups together. The Environment Agency referenced in their evidence, building on the success of the work in Chessel Bay, that they are now looking to support the development of a much larger 'preventing plastic pollution' partnership project that will aim to clean up plastic pollution across the wider River Itchen Estuary, as well as help reduce the amount of plastic

entering the environment in the first place through engagement with local communities and businesses.

- Linked to this, an accreditation scheme for businesses that respect the river could help to control locally produced waste and pollution.
- When planning new developments in Southampton environmental impacts need to be factored in from the start, retrofitting is extremely hard. Biodiversity net gain will be required for development moving forward.
- That a strong policy basis has been developed to provide biodiversity enhancements in the draft local plan, including green infrastructure and green

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DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
SUBJECT:	PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON – THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER
DATE OF DECISION:	1 DECEMBER 2022
REPORT OF:	SCRUTINY MANAGER

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Director of Legal and Business Services	
	Name:	Richard Ivory	Tel: 023 8083 2794
	E-mail	Richard.ivory@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Scrutiny Manager	
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	E-mail	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

In accordance with the inquiry plan, for the third meeting of the ‘Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton Inquiry’ the Panel will be considering the following issues:

- The economic importance of the River Itchen, including:
 - Understanding the economic contribution the River Itchen makes to the Southampton economy
 - River Itchen - Future developments proposed / planned and how the developing local plan will shape this development
 - The potential for water taxis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	To enable the Panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the review process.
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
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2.	None.
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)
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3.	At the third meeting of the inquiry the Panel will be considering the economic importance of the River Itchen to Southampton’s economy. Findings from the
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	<p>River Itchen Survey, that was conducted prior to the inaugural inquiry meeting and is attached as Appendix 1, identified that 17% of respondents considered increased use of the river to support economic growth to be an improvement that they would like to happen to the River Itchen in Southampton.</p>
4.	<p>To develop the Panel's understanding of the economic contribution the River Itchen currently makes to the Southampton economy, the following guests have been invited to the meeting:</p> <p>Steve Masters, Harbour Master - Port of Southampton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Masters is employed by Associated British Ports (ABP), the statutory harbour authority for the Port of Southampton which includes all of Southampton Water and the River Itchen up to Woodmill. The Harbour Master has been asked to provide an overview of ship movements on the tidal River Itchen and to outline ABPs approach to removing wrecks which was identified by 48% of respondents to the survey as being a development or improvement that they would you like to happen to the River Itchen in Southampton. <p>Matthew Hill, Economic Development Operations Manager, Southampton City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew Hill has been asked to provide a brief overview of the economic activity currently associated with the River Itchen in Southampton.
5.	<p>To develop the Panel's understanding of future developments proposed / planned by the River Itchen and how the developing local plan will shape this development, the following guests have been invited to the meeting:</p> <p>Graham Tuck, Planning Policy Group Leader and Amber Trueman, Strategic Planning Manager, Southampton City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham and Amber have been invited to deliver a presentation outlining how the proposals within the draft local plan will shape developments in and around the River Itchen. The draft local plan can be viewed via the following link: Southampton City Vision - documents library <p>Matthew Hill, Economic Development Operations Manager, Southampton City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew Hill will update the Panel on the master planning for future development at one of the key waterfront areas identified for significant development, Itchen Riverside.
6.	<p>To develop the Panel's understanding of the potential for water taxis to operate on the River Itchen, the following guest has been invited to the meeting:</p> <p>Andy Tourell, Head of Sustainable Logistics, Ocean Infinity</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the UK a number of towns and cities have water taxis, buses or ferries. Andy Tourell will outline for the Panel a vision of water taxis connecting communities in Southampton utilising the River Itchen.
7.	<p>To contribute to the discussion the following representatives have been invited to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leigh-Sara Timberlake – Group CEO, Business South Group Ltd Gavin Hall - Chair of Planning & Transport Business Strategy Group, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce Tim Mayer – Sales and Marketing Director, MDL Marinas
8.	The invited guests will take questions from the Panel relating to the evidence provided. Copies of any presentations will be made available to the Panel.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue/Property/Other

9. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

10. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Other Legal Implications:

11. None

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

12. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

13. None

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Analysis of the River Itchen Survey

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (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 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.	Southampton City Vision Local Plan - Draft Plan with Options (southampton.gov.uk)

River Itchen Inquiry Survey Report

Full results summary

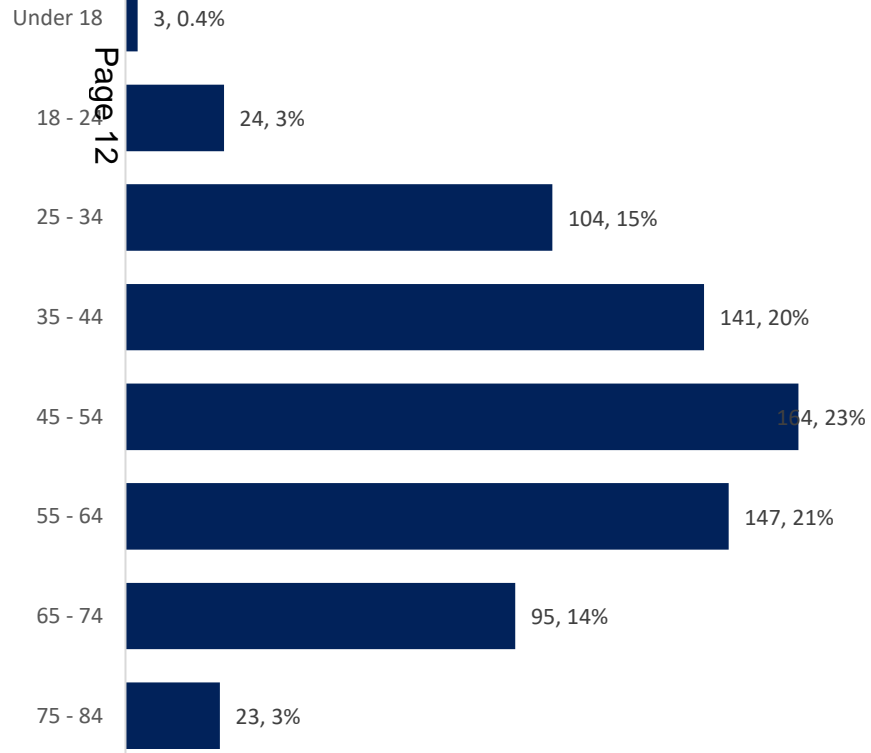
Data, Intelligence & Insight Team – November 2022

Respondents

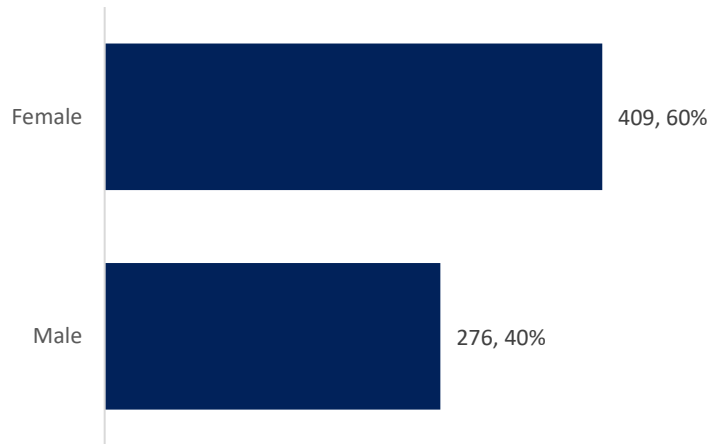
This survey ran between 20 September 2022 and 03 October 2022.

Total respondents: 728

Age:



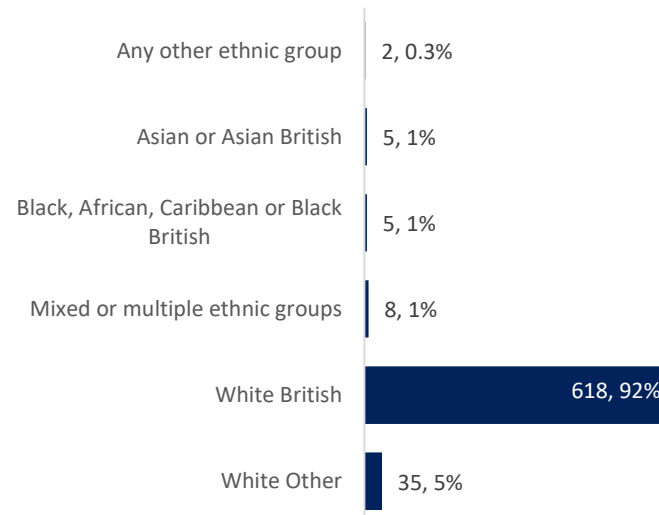
Sex:



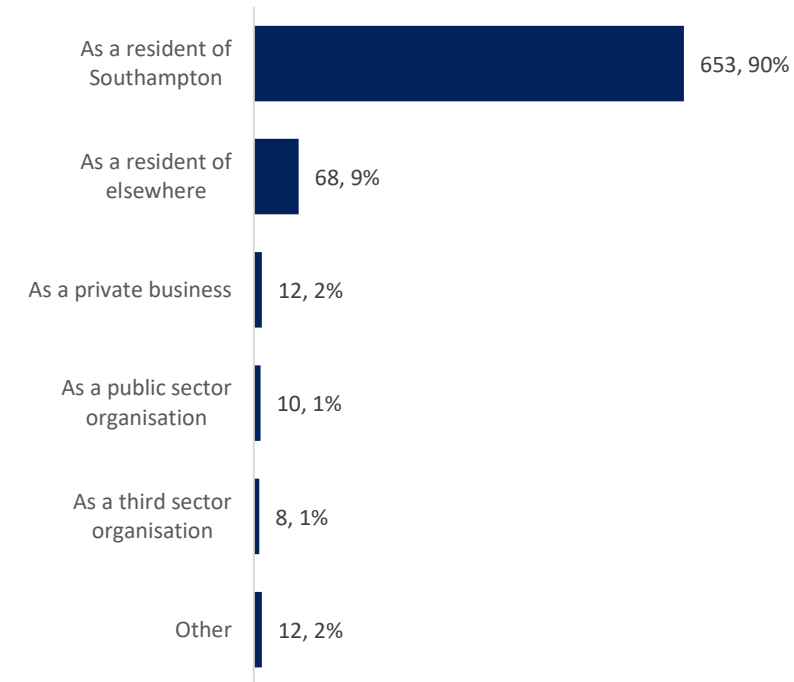
Disability:



Ethnicity:



Interest in the survey:





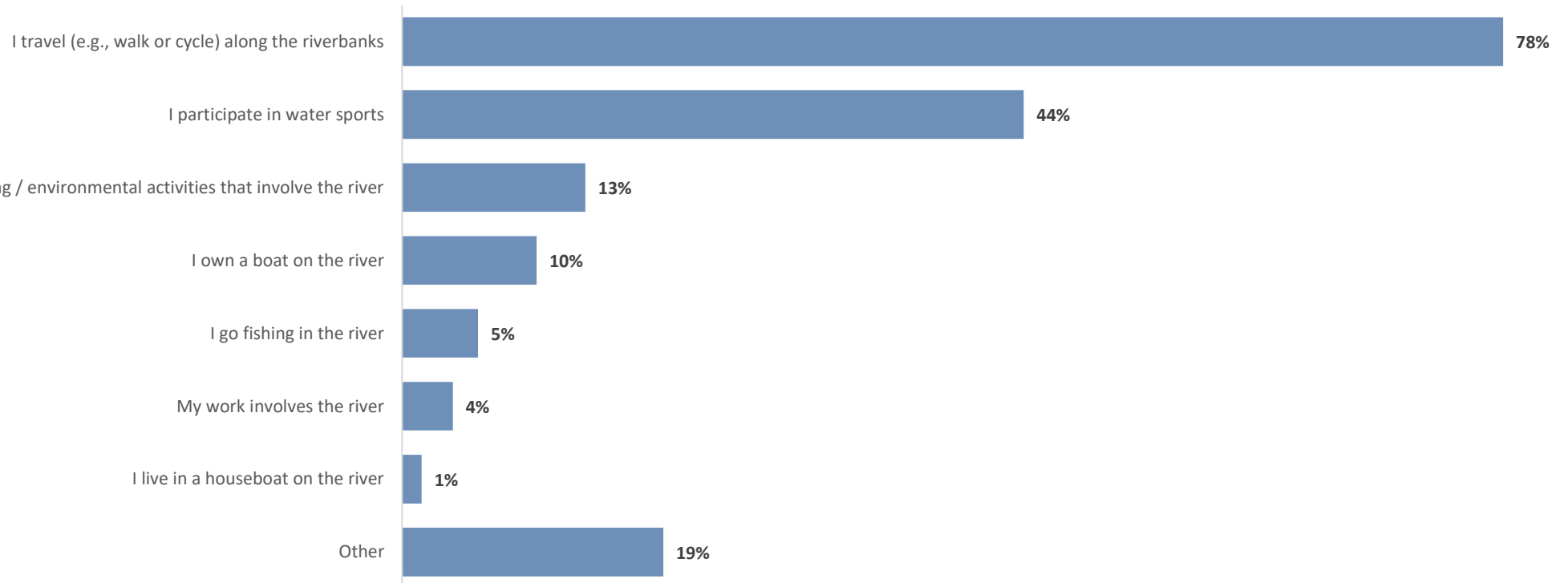
- Key findings:**
- The majority of respondents use the River Itchen to travel along the riverbanks (78%)
 - Just under half of respondents also selected that they participate in water sports on the river (44%)

The detail:

Question: How do you use the River Itchen in Southampton?

Overall:

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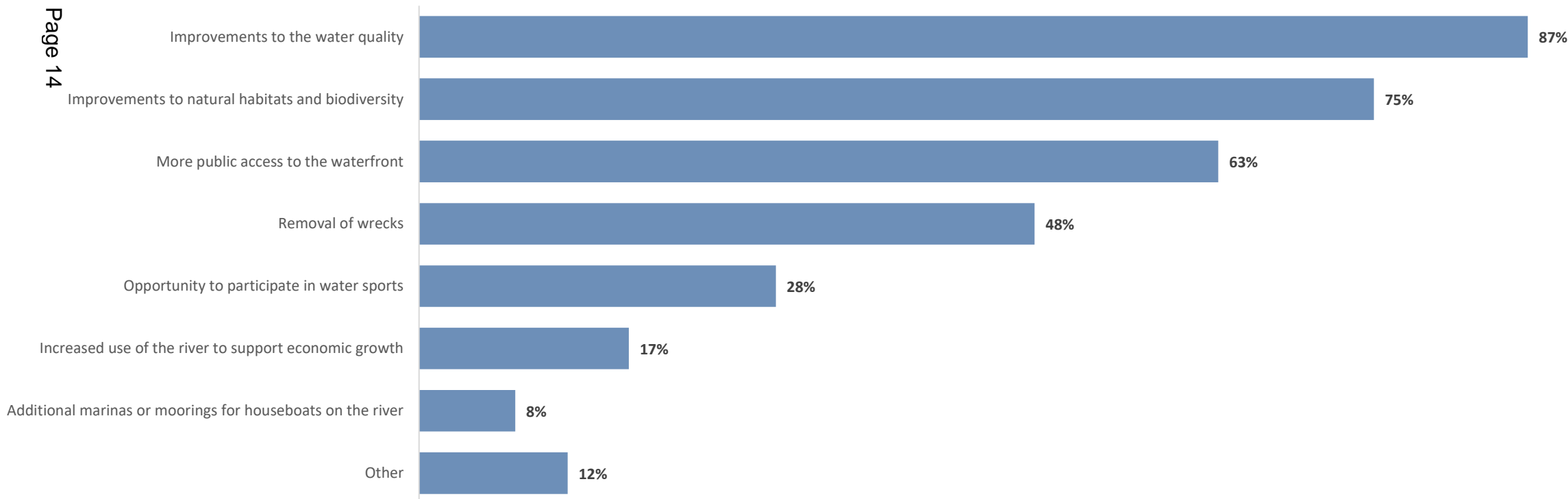
Key findings: • Respondents selected that their top development or improvement to the River Itchen was improvements to water quality (87%), followed by improvements to natural habitats and biodiversity (75%)

The detail:

Question: What developments or improvements would you like to happen to the River Itchen in Southampton?

Overall:

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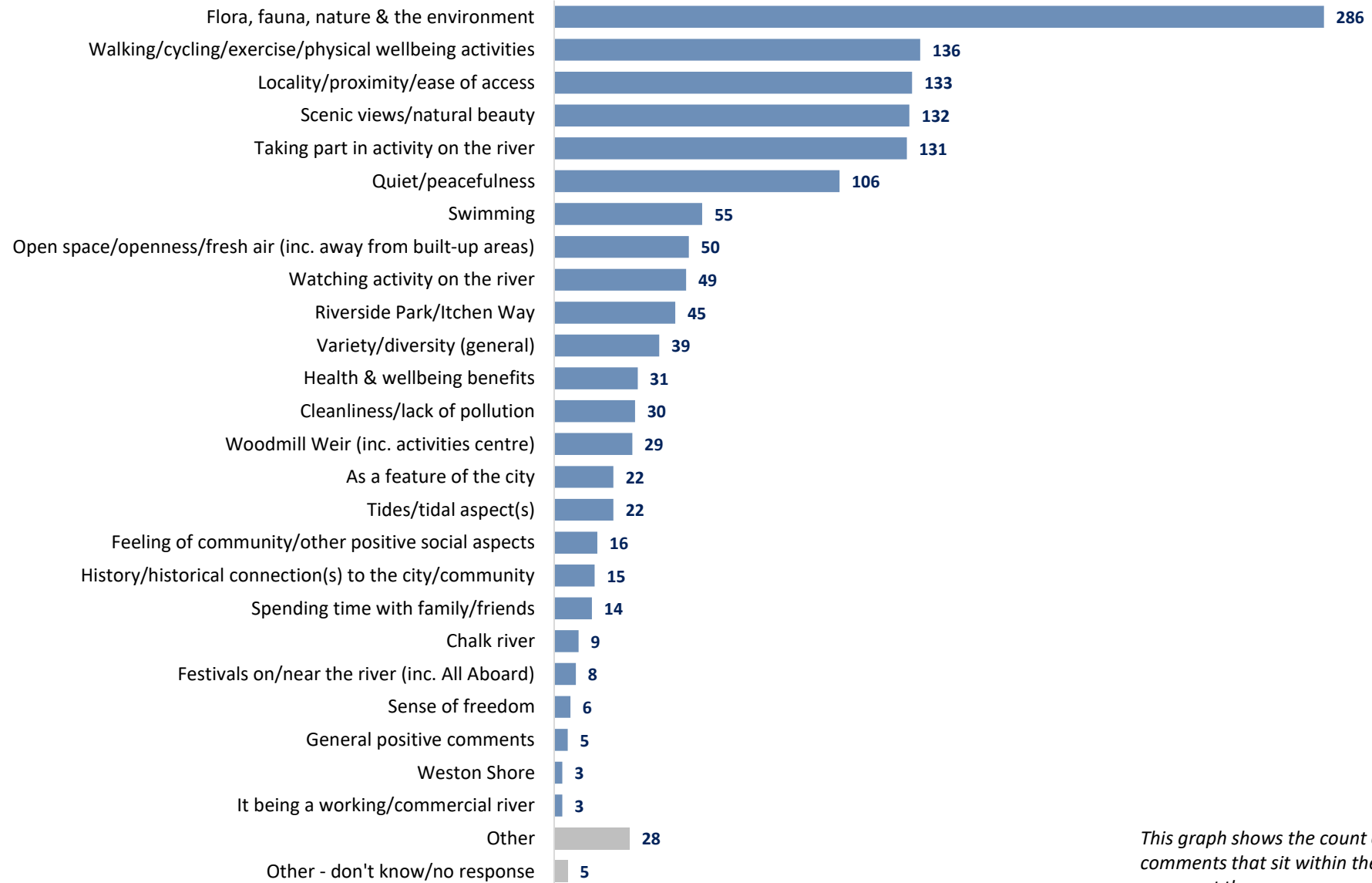




Enjoying the River Itchen

What do you enjoy most about the River Itchen in Southampton? *(free-text question)*

No. comments
683



This graph shows the count of the number of comments that sit within the described comment theme.

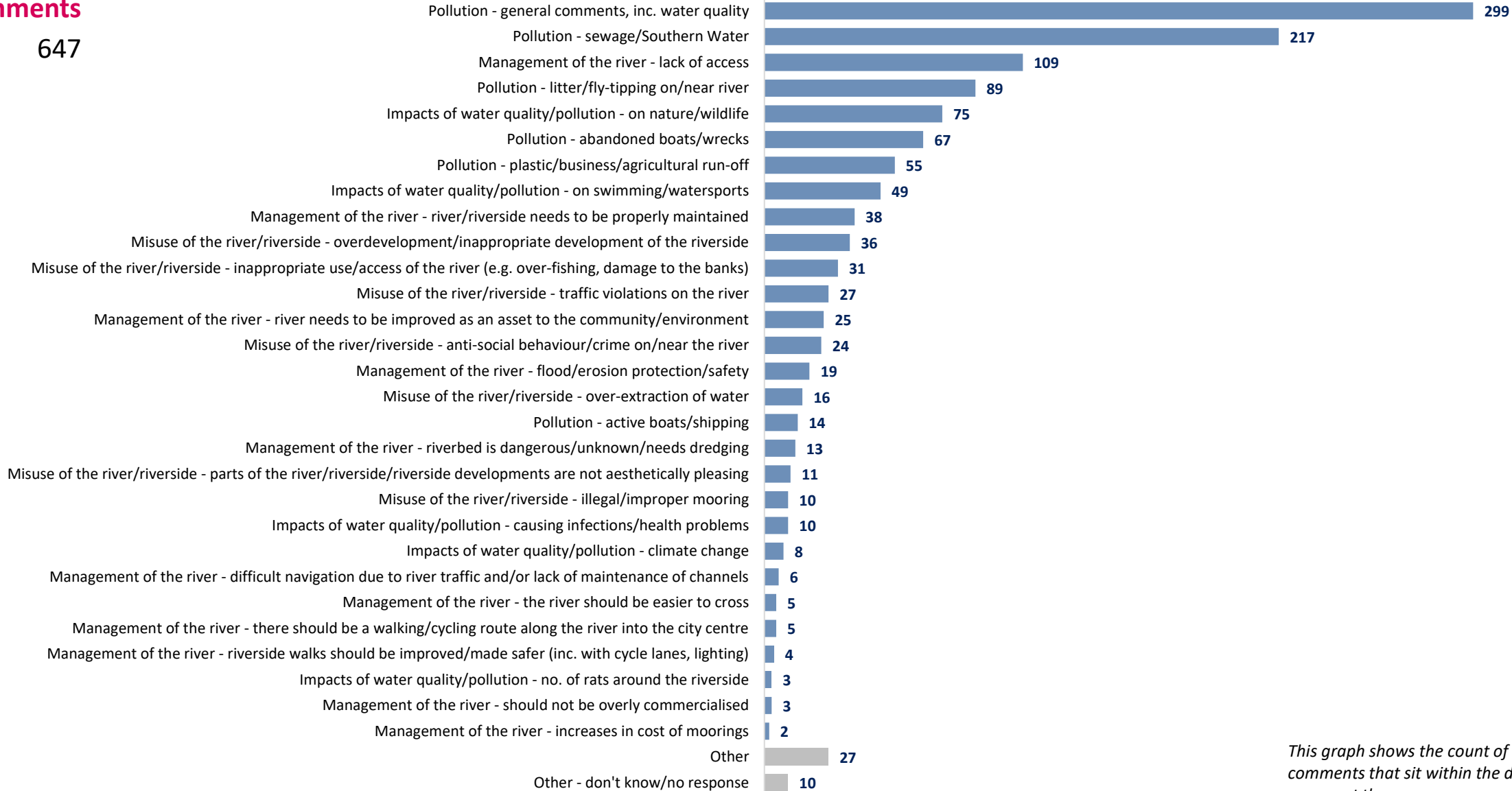


Concerns about the River Itchen

What concerns, if any, do you have about the River Itchen in Southampton? (free-text question)

No. comments
647

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This graph shows the count of the number of comments that sit within the described comment theme.