

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

Thursday, 2nd March, 2023  
at 5.30 pm

## **PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING**

Conference Room 3 and 4 - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

### **Members**

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

### **Contacts**

Democratic Support Officer  
Melanie Morley  
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### **Scrutiny Manager**

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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](http://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 - 4)

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2023 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

### **7 PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON - EXPLORING GOOD PRACTICE** (Pages 5 - 8)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager outlining the focus of the sixth 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.

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2023

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Present: Councillors Savage (Chair), T Bunday, Cooper, and White

Attended by hybrid: Councillor Moulton (Vice-Chair)

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

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

12. **PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN  
SOUTHAMPTON - HOW CAN MORE PEOPLE ENJOY THE RIVER?**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager detailing the issues concerning how more people could enjoy the River Itchen in Southampton.

The Panel received the following representations:

Lindsay McCulloch, Natural Environment Manager, Southampton City Council summarised the key issues about public access to the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- Riverside and recreational access to the River Itchen in Southampton ranges from excellent to non-existent.
- A notable trend is that river access reduces as you travel closer to the mouth of the estuary due to a combination of physical constraints and the historical economic uses of the river. Most economic activity has been on the west bank where land is flatter. This leaves legacy spaces for recreational access.
- Along the river open spaces occur where land is not suitable, or is no longer suitable, for commercial use. Large areas of informal green spaces exist above Woodmill that are ideal for walking and cycling.
- The east bank includes Riverside Park, a parcel of land at Bitterne Manor (the site of Clausentum), Chessel Bay and Peartree Green (that has no direct access to the river but has excellent views).
- The west bank has very limited open spaces. Small areas at Janaway Gardens and Pettinger Gardens exist and open space is to be provided at the Meridian Waterside development.
- There are about 2.5 km of footpath access through Riverside Park on the east bank, however, beyond that the footpaths move away from the river with only 380m of riverside footpath access before reaching Jurd's Lake at the mouth of the estuary.
- There are only 940m of waterside footpaths along the west bank of the river.
- The boardwalk at Bevois Valley demonstrates what can be achieved when stakeholders collaborate. The RIFAS scheme also offers the potential for additional and enhanced access to the west bank.

- There is an aspiration to develop additional waterfront access. The draft local plan states that - 'Waterfront public access to and along the city's distinctive waterfront will be enhanced wherever possible.'
- Tools exist to deliver this through planning policy and development control. There is a balance between economic interests, community aspirations for waterfront access, and reducing the impact on biodiversity and ecology. If Southampton City Council leaders provide a strong message that waterfront access is a priority it will provide a clearer steer to officers when making decisions.

Graham Linecar, Secretary of Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society (SCAPPS) summarised the key issues about recreation, community use and access to the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- The benefit for physical health and mental well-being of being in 'green' surroundings is now widely appreciated and recognised. Such benefit is enhanced when the 'green' is complimented by the 'blue', with green spaces alongside water.
- The River Itchen is taken for granted but gives Southampton a sense of place and identity.
- Along the River Itchen more places where people can enjoy being by the river should be found with not just access but also the space and opportunity to sit and enjoy being there.
- Stretches most used are continuous routes; paths that connect from one place to another. Care and maintenance matters. High quality landscaping and regular maintenance encourages use. The more people using a path, the less the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.
- There are several riverfront green spaces which are not connected and are not part of a continuous route. Although perhaps known and used by local communities awareness of these sites should be improved. In some cases it is not immediately obvious if it is a public or private space, and means of access is hidden away. Signing could help show links from one to another to encourage more use, and there is scope for Friends' Groups to become active in care and maintenance.
- SCAPPS welcomes and supports the draft Local Plan policy of requiring public access to the waterfront and ask that is not interpreted as requiring only a narrow riverfront pedestrian walkway; it needs also to include soft and hard landscaping creating an attractive place for dawdling, for sitting and for enjoying looking-out across the river.
- There are seven public slipways on the River Itchen where you can carry in and launch small craft and not all of them are well-maintained. Other places are not formally designated which can give rise to issues with vehicles wanting access, for example at Woodmill.

Clive Aylett, 25th Southampton Sea Scouts with the permission of the Chair informed the Panel that the public hard near to St Mary's Football Stadium was currently not accessible due to the dumping of rubbish and that Crosshouse Hard, a key point for accessing the water, was in need of remedial works.



Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager, Southampton City Council summarised the key issues about the important contribution played by voluntary groups in supporting the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- The various friends groups and other voluntary organisations play a vital role in the management of the river by removing litter, maintaining infrastructure, supporting flora and fauna and providing information and raising awareness.
- The numerous events organised in, on and alongside the river drive engagement and interest in the River Itchen.
- Issues relating to the need for maintenance and concerns about water pollution were raised by the friends of groups as issues that required addressing.
- Seed funding from Southampton Airport's £100,000 Community Fund could help to fund a number of initiatives.

James Hives, National Club Development Manager, British Canoeing summarised the key issues about recreation on the River Itchen in Southampton as:

- There are over twenty clubs, groups and organisations concerned with the River Itchen.
- Feedback sought for this meeting estimated that 20,000 people are active on the River Itchen.
- The River Itchen currently divides the city of Southampton geographically and is seen as dirty. However, it could be a link as a blue thread joining the communities of the city and enabling better health, environment, and cohesion as it flows through the city.
- There are multiple events that happen on the river each year bringing visitors to the city, and many businesses in the city catering to the water sports market, however this is not reflected across the city council.
- The concerns around the flood alleviation scheme and not seeing the river as part of Riverside Park have and are causing events to be moved from the city or downscaled. Over recent years opportunities such as a proposed regional White Water Paddling Venue have been lost whilst Bristol has built facilities such as the Amphitheatre to bring people to the water's edge and host events on the water.
- There are now several studies showing a link between blue space and improved health. St Denys Sailing and Rowing Club are working with SWAC to broaden the appeal of water sports to those communities who might not otherwise access the water and in Portsmouth, British Canoeing are working with Street Games to identify community hubs to improve mental health and increase participation in Paulsgrove. In Nottingham and Leicester water based Social Prescribing Schemes are flourishing, bringing different communities to the water.
- Southampton has strong sporting success across water sports, with representation in 2022 from Southampton Clubs in GB teams for sailing, rowing, kayak sprint and beach rowing. To enable these individuals to achieve there needs to be a thriving competitive grass routes scheme behind them.
- People along the river care about it, act as its eyes and ears, care for it and clean it. The recent launch of the Paddlers Code as a water based version of

the Countryside code is fast being taken up by other parts of the water sports community, and programmes such as the RYA's Green Blue or the British Canoeing Clear Access Clear Waters Campaign are looking to engage people in caring and looking after the river.

- Sewage leaks have increased fears that the river is not a healthy or pleasant spot to spend time on and around.
- The lack of toilet facilities in Riverside Park and elsewhere highlight some of the infrastructure issues around the river. The steps at Coalporters, the slipway at Crosshouse, and the "beach" at Woodmill have all been raised. In addition, the porous state of the banks upstream reduces the flow on the river and combined with the Monks Brook weir washing away at Woodmill is increasing the silting up of the river including the historic salmon pool that is important for both fishing and white-water paddling.
- Concerns have been raised about the design of the flood alleviation scheme making it difficult to access the water and the reduction in riverside parking making running events more difficult.
- Overall there is a feeling that the river and its users are a blind spot to the city, with actions being focused around land based areas and objectives such as the parks rather than the river flowing through them. A wider feeling is a lack of support for recreation be that Southampton residents not being eligible for the Hampshire Talented Athlete Scheme or the impression that clubs based at the sports centre are treated differently to those on the river being built into the Active Nation SLA, with clubs not knowing how to develop.
- Both Bournemouth and Portsmouth have blue space strategies, enabling a city-wide approach to their water. Recent examples of this proving successful are the developing British Canoeing links with Street Games in Paulsgrove, Portsmouth or the hosting of the National Beach Rowing Championships in Bournemouth. A Strategy for the River Itchen or Southampton's blue space would help to focus attention and draw together the possible developments on the river. This may also help programmes such as social prescribing to take route on the river.
- If the river had an identity such as a park or any other open space in the city there would be systems and organisations to manage the river and a mechanism of finding out who was responsible for it and who to contact.
- There is a proposal for creation of a users' group to facilitate the various clubs and organisations to engage with the council and port authority to help develop the river and its surroundings. This could create opportunities such as a river length big paddle clean up, or a mass row or paddle to the boat show.

Bill Baynes, Chairman of Southampton Sea Angling Club, with the permission of the Chair informed the panel about the lack of access to the river for anglers. They are being prohibited from fishing in places where the waterfront is owned by private companies and fear that, with more waterfront development planned, the river could be a no fishing zone. The need to include consideration of additional activities in the planning process when considering waterfront access for new developments was identified as a mechanism to protect access to the water for anglers moving forward.

# Agenda Item 7

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE RIVER ITCHEN IN SOUTHAMPTON – EXPLORING GOOD PRACTICE
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	2 MARCH 2023
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SCRUTINY MANAGER

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mike Harris</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 2882</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mike.harris@southampton.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mark Pirnie</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 3886</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk</b>	

<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
None	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
In accordance with the inquiry plan, for the sixth meeting of the ‘Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton Inquiry’ the Panel will be considering examples of good practice being employed to protect, preserve and promote urban rivers in the UK.	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
	(i) The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
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.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
2.	None.
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
3.	At the sixth, and final evidence gathering meeting of the inquiry, the Panel will be considering examples where urban areas have sought to address the challenges that have been raised through the inquiry relating to protecting, preserving and promoting rivers.
4.	The following guests have been invited to the meeting to provide the Panel with examples of best practice and to outline different approaches that can be employed:

- **Debbie Leach - Chief Executive Officer at Thames21**

Thames21 developed from a partnership programme supported by Keep Britain Tidy, the Port of London Authority, the Environment Agency, Thames Water, British Waterways, The Corporation of London and 19 local authorities. The charity is now independent and is funded by a wide variety of charitable trusts, companies and public funding.

Thames21, like Wessex Rivers Trust, is a member of The Rivers Trust and acts as the voice for London's waterways, working with communities to improve rivers and canals for people and wildlife. Thames21 mobilises thousands of volunteers every year to clean and green the capital's 400 mile network of waterways.

Thames21 aims to transform neglected waterways into areas that everyone can use and enjoy, by using innovative and tailored community approaches. It has a growing and diverse programme of water improvement projects across London. These projects are outlined in the [Thames21 - 5 Year Plan](#)

- **Lindsay Pratt - Principal Planner, Development and Regeneration Services at Glasgow City Council**

The River Clyde extends from South Lanarkshire to the Firth of Clyde, and Glasgow is the largest conurbation within the river catchment area. In Glasgow the river is particularly urban in character and has a long history of being actively managed for industry. It is now facing significant change due to recent and proposed development, including investment through the City Deal Waterfront and West End programme.

The future evolution and development of the River Corridor is inseparable from the impacts of climate change on the river and the city, particularly the risk of increased flooding.

In 2020 Glasgow City Council published a Strategic Development Framework (SDF) that sets out a vision for the River Clyde Development Corridor for the next 30 years. It shows how the successful regeneration of the River Corridor will support a critical mass of people and activity, and create a well-connected, vibrant place. The SDF supports a variety of economic, environmental and social outcomes along the River Corridor, recognising the Clyde as the City's largest area of continuous open space, and the most significant element of the urban green and blue network in the City Region.

[River Clyde Development Corridor - Strategic Development Framework](#)

- **Karen McHugh - Solent Forum Manager**

The Solent coastline is around 241 miles long on the mainland between Selsey Bill and Hurst Spit, and includes Chichester, Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours, Southampton Water and the tidal extent of the main rivers, including the River Itchen.

The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area.

	<p>For thousands of years the Solent has fulfilled a vital role as a waterway for shipping, maritime trading, fishing and more recently recreation.</p> <p>Like other coastal zones in the UK, the Solent has a highly complex system of planning and management due to the different regulatory systems across the land-sea divide and the wide range of authorities and agencies involved. There is a correspondingly large number of plans, strategies and other initiatives around the Solent, produced by a range of organisations for different purposes and covering different areas and timescales.</p> <p>The Solent Forum was established in December 1992, in order to develop a greater understanding among the authorities and agencies involved in planning and management in the Solent area, and to assist and influence them in carrying out their functions. The Forum does not have any executive powers and its members have no voting rights.</p> <p><a href="#">Solent Forum Infographic</a></p>
5.	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**

6. None

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

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

**Other Legal Implications:**

8. None

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9. None

**POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

10. None

**KEY DECISION?** No

**WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:** None

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices**

1. None

**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
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
<b>Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>		
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>		<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	<a href="#">Thames21 - 5 Year Plan</a>	
2.	<a href="#">River Clyde Development Corridor - Strategic Development Framework</a>	