

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 6 October 2022

Introduction to the inquiry, context and background

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 6th October, 2022, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

Itchen in the City – Dr David Rumble, Chief Executive Officer, Wessex Rivers Trust

- A presentation was delivered by Dr Rumble, outlining the importance of the River Itchen and its significance to Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The River Itchen is a globally important river due to it being a spring fed chalk stream and has Special Area Conservation status.
 - The chalk acts as a sponge and the water entering the river now may have fallen as rain 40 to 50 years ago. Therefore, whatever was applied to the land in the catchment area then is now feeding into the river.
 - Geology, hydrology and ecology - Due to the steady flow, clear alkaline water and stable temperature, the river is an ideal habitat for specific plants and animals.
 - The chalk stream is home to a species of Atlantic Salmon who are born in the Itchen, travel to the coast of Greenland, before returning to spawn in the Itchen.
 - Tidal zones are characterised by soft mud flats that are rich feeding grounds for birds – The Solent is a Special Protected Area for bird life and acts as a nursery for commercially important species such as Bass.
 - Industrialisation, including the creation of Woodmill, re-engineered the Itchen, impacting the ecology, creating an abrupt transition from the fluvial (freshwater) to the tidal (saline) river.
 - The River Test, also a chalk stream, has not been built up in the same way as the Itchen. The Itchen used to be like the Test and it is possible to recreate these habitats on the Itchen once again.
 - The Itchen is of value to people and communities – It connects people. Communities used to have their backs to the river, it was polluted and unloved, now we face the river, we value it and want to be and live beside it.
 - The Itchen benefits people's health and wellbeing
 - People live on the river and lives are lost in the river
 - The river is of importance to the local economy – Boatyards, marinas, auxiliary industries, aggregates rely on the Itchen and many are located beside it. These industries provide employment, create wealth and interact with the natural environment (reference was made to the wrecks).
 - Water quality is a real concern. Pollutants contaminate the river through the watercourses, from highways run off, to fertilisers and pesticides, as well as directly into the river in the form of sewage from water treatment works or from industrial activity and littering.
 - This impacts the ecology and is a problem for recreational users. Developers are now required to offset nitrates entering the river for new developments.

- Climate change is impacting the Itchen. Drought is an issue, and water is extracted upstream to provide for our increasing demands. The Itchen corridor is also a flood risk zone.
- If the climate trends continue over the next 40 years winners and losers will emerge. New species will be attracted to the Itchen in Southampton but overall net losses to the diversity and the ecology are expected.

The River Itchen in context – Sam Foulds, Flood Risk Management Team Leader & Cara Brims, Flood Risk Officer, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Sam Foulds and Cara Brims providing an overview of key issues such as ownership, responsibilities, uses and legislation relating to the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The River Itchen is fed by multiple smaller river catchments. Water is received from a large area of Hampshire. Activities across this catchment area impact on the River Itchen in Southampton.
 - Land based activities can influence water quality as runoff from buildings and roads, collected by surface water sewers and highway drains, is directed to watercourses. This runoff is typically not treated.
 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) work with nature to slow the flow and recharge the ground at the point rain falls. SuDS could help with reducing the number of combined sewer overflows and improving the quality of highway runoff. They are a feature of new developments but not highway projects.
 - The Crown Estate own and manage the majority of the foreshore (area between mean high water and mean low water marks) and the bed of the estuary.
 - The majority of land adjacent to the River Itchen is privately owned by multiple individual landowners for commercial, industrial and residential use.
 - Southampton City Council own areas of land along the River Itchen and small areas of mudflat.
 - There is no single organisation that oversees the management of all watercourses, estuaries or bodies of water. Different organisations and landowners have different roles and responsibilities.
 - Key organisations include: Southampton City Council, Environment Agency, Southern Water, Associated British Ports, Riparian Landowners, The Crown Estate, Marine Management Organisation, Natural England.
 - Lots of Directives, Acts and Regulations cover the River Itchen, covering water, the environment, biodiversity, drainage and flooding.
 - The Council and other organisations have several visions, plans, frameworks and strategies which cover different aspects of the River Itchen. There is no Council plan that looks directly at the River Itchen.

Findings from recent community surveys – Rose Nicole, Co-founder of Respect the River Campaign and Co-ordinator of Friends of Chessel Bay Nature Reserve and Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager at SCC

- Rose Nicole, a volunteer and local contact for Friends of Chessel Bay informed the Panel of key issues raised when canvassing views on the River Itchen.
- Chessel Bay, Southampton's first Local Nature Reserve was designated by the City Council in 1989. It is the longest stretch of undeveloped shoreline in the lower Itchen - a peaceful, secluded haven for wildlife in a busy city.

- Litter is a significant problem - Everything and anything comes into the Bay. From many thousands of plastic pellets (nurdles from local plastic factories) to huge concrete encased polystyrene blocks - plus everything in between.
- At community clean-ups, hard-working volunteers give up a big chunk of their Saturdays to rid the Bay of rubbish. With support from City Council officers, typically a ton of rubbish is removed.
- The Respect the River Campaign was formed following the publication of the Southampton Nurdle report in 2020 when Rose and Bob Reeve, Community Campaigns Officer with the City Council, visited businesses, leisure providers and residents around the tidal Itchen.
- There was a lot of overlap between their original concerns, for example on plastic pollution – but additional concerns emerged as people living, working or exercising on or near the river talked to them. The big over-arching concern was sewage.
- A presentation was delivered by Mark Pirnie highlighting findings from a survey of people’s views about the River Itchen in Southampton
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The survey, hosted on the Council’s website, ran from 21 September to 3rd October and asked 5 questions.
 - In total 728 responses were received. 90% were from Southampton residents
 - Detailed analysis of all the comments received is not yet available but it will be reported at various meetings of the Panel.
 - Results from a question asking how people use the river have been provided. Not surprisingly travelling along the riverbanks (walking, cycling) was the most popular response.
 - The only other question where analysis has been undertaken asked about developments / improvements that respondents would like to happen to the river. The options that received the greatest number of responses were improvements to water quality and natural habitats, followed by improving access to the waterfront.

Conclusions from meeting:

- The River Itchen is a globally important river and of significant ecological interest.
- The River Itchen is fed by multiple smaller river catchments. Activities across this catchment area impact on the River Itchen in Southampton.
- It supports a number of industries and activities that provide employment and contribute to the Southampton economy and wellbeing of the population.
- It is a valued community asset but issues related to ownership, governance and responsibility are complicated.
- The interconnected eco-system is being impacted by climate change and pollution. Land based activities can also influence water quality.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) could help with reducing the number of combined sewer overflows and improving the quality of highway runoff. They are a feature of new developments but not highway projects
- There is no plan specifically focused on the River Itchen in Southampton.

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 17 November 2022

The River Environment

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 17th November, 2022, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

River Itchen: Importance, opportunities and threats – Graham Horton, Thames Solent Team Manager, Natural England

- A presentation was delivered by Graham Horton, outlining the environmental significance of the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - 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.

River Itchen in Southampton: Water Quality & Sources of Pollution – Dr David Rumble, Chief Executive, Wessex Rivers Trust

- A presentation was delivered by Dr Rumble providing an overview of the water quality in the River Itchen in Southampton and the sources of pollution.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - 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.

River Itchen and Southern Water – Andrew Adams, Catchment Planning Manager and David Murphy, Wastewater Strategy Manager, Southern Water

- A presentation was delivered by Andrew Adams, Catchment Planning Manager and David Murphy, Wastewater Strategy Manager informing the Panel of the infrastructure, investment plans and proposals to reduce spills from storm overflows.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - 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.

Chessel Bay Local Nature Reserve – Lindsay McCulloch, Natural Environment Manager, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Lindsay McCulloch, providing a case study on Chessel Bay Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - 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.
 - We have developed a strong policy basis to provide biodiversity enhancements in the draft local plan, including green infrastructure and green grid approaches, but these need to be implemented. They will help to reduce and slow the run-off and pollution.
 - People want to be by the river. They will pay a premium for it. Let's make it a high quality environment.

Conclusions from meeting:

- The River Itchen is a globally important river and of significant ecological interest. In recognition of its importance its environment is highly protected.
- Access to water and green spaces has health benefits, enables people to reconnect with the coastline and nature. Opportunities to increase access to the Itchen should be encouraged if done sustainably and sympathetically.
- 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.
- The Environment Agencies Water Framework Directive Ecological Status for the River Itchen is 'Good'. The bar however is relatively low and numerous pollutants are present in the river emanating from a number of sources, including storm overflows.
- Welcome investment is planned for Southampton's wastewater infrastructure designed to reduce spills into the Itchen; some large scale manufacturers are improving their processes to reduce pollution into the Itchen; the Environment Agency are working with farmers to support environmentally friendly farming that doesn't damage water quality; marinas are taking action to reduce the impact of marinas on the environment; and, work with partners and volunteers to reduce plastic waste from entering the water and to clean up plastic and litter from pollution hot spots, including Chessel Bay, is gaining traction.
- However, more can be done to improve water quality, encourage biodiversity, support a co-ordinated response and keep residents informed. These include:
 - Oyster reefs in the Itchen would help to improve water quality
 - Building sustainable drainage solutions into developments and highway projects, alongside the use of new gully technology to limit harmful chemicals from the highways entering the watercourse, will help to reduce and slow the run-off and pollution.
 - An accreditation scheme for businesses that respect the river could help to control locally produced waste and pollution.
 - A River Itchen Forum could help to bring key stakeholders together to address the challenges.
 - Improved real time communication from Southern Water about pollution spills into the River Itchen, via the Beachbuoy tool or through other communication outlets, would help users make informed decisions about entering the river.

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 1 December 2022

The economic importance of the River Itchen to Southampton

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 1st December, 2022, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

River Itchen: Vessel movements and wreck clearance – Steve Masters, Harbour Master, ABP Port of Southampton

- A presentation was delivered by Steve Masters, outlining the trend in vessel movements on the River Itchen and the wreck clearance programme.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Total commercial vessel movements recorded on the River Itchen via Southampton VTS (Vessel Tracking Service) – 3,844 (2021), 3,238 (2020), 3,905 (2019). (Movements all south of the Northam Bridge)
 - Increasing propensity for vessels being abandoned. There is no requirement to register vessel ownership. So many vessels operate across the Solent it would be challenging to keep a local register of vessels.
 - Responsibility for clearance of abandoned vessels lies with land-owners where the vessel is located.
 - Over the past 18 months, nearly 70 wrecked, abandoned or illegally moored vessels have been removed by ABP and either sold or scrapped depending on their condition.
 - ABP has invested over £500,000 in this project so far, and will continue to do more in 2023, whilst also undertaking increased patrols of river moorings to manage and prevent illegal mooring in the future. Live aboard vessels present the biggest problem.
 - ‘Policing’ the rules on the river is difficult due to the various land owners and responsible organisations.
 - ABP would welcome additional commercial development of the river, including an increase in moorings that are properly managed. This would limit illegal mooring and improve the appearance of the river.
 - The Panel were supportive of the approach by ABP to wreck clearance and welcomed the plans for further clearance activity in 2023.

The economic value of the River Itchen – Matthew Hill & Paulina Piotrowski, Economic Development Operations Managers, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Matthew Hill and Paulina Piotrowski providing an overview of the industry and businesses operating by the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The city has a long history associated with the marine industry which includes the internationally significant port and port related activities, the Southampton Marine and Maritime Institute and Oceanography Centre, and a wide range of other marine industries including boat building and repair and yacht marinas. The sector depends on the limited number of sites which have access to the waterfront. It is important that these sites are safeguarded for marine uses to support the success and growth of the marine sector, including hi-tech and skilled marine activities.
 - Itchen Riverside area is home to a diverse range of businesses and many local marine companies and institutions. Estimate that there are between 500-550 businesses in the immediate area.
 - Business sectors represented along the Itchen in Southampton include marinas and Southampton Dry Stack; marine and marine aggregates; manufacturing; sports and leisure; and HE, FE and training institutions.

- Significant challenge is recruitment and training for the marine and maritime sector in Southampton and the Solent region. Action is required to develop a skilled workforce now, and in the future, to enable these sectors to prosper.
- The Local Skills and Improvement Plan, led by the Chamber of Commerce is important and part of the solution. Business South are lobbying for changes to the Apprenticeship Levy to increase flexibility and to help people to relocate to work in maritime and marine industries.
- Co-ordinated by the Maritime and Transport Action Group, funded by the Solent LEP, ambassadors are going to schools to talk about the opportunities available in these sectors, especially with the creation of the Freeport and the anticipated 16,000 additional jobs.
- A collaborative approach to addressing the skills challenge is required including British Marine (based in Southampton), Solent Freeport, business representative organisations, the City Council and through working with existing marine and maritime businesses.

The Draft Local Plan and the River Itchen – Graham Tuck, Planning Policy Group Leader & Amber Trueman, Strategic Planning Manager, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Graham Tuck and Amber Trueman outlining how the draft Local Plan could impact the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan and Minerals and Waste Plan will guide planning applications for new development and will shape the city as a place to 2040 and beyond.
 - Key policies / delivery issues in the emerging Local Plan relevant to the River Itchen include – Mineral and waste wharves; Key transport connections; Strategic flood defences (RIFAS) and Environmental protection / enhancement; Potential release of some industrial sites.
 - The Plan includes Waterfront Development Principles within a Waterfront Policy. The overarching criteria is to ensure the creation of a distinctive waterfront experience.
 - The Waterfront Policy requires all development proposals within waterfront areas to ensure accessibility for all; Work towards creating continuous waterfront walkways, cycleways and public spaces (keen to marry up with the coastal footpath); Create or enhance safe and attractive links to and from the waterfront; Preserve and enhance views of the water and from the water; Encourage a more distinctive and interesting skyline; Be well-designed, attractive, safe and comprise high-quality materials; Ensure appropriate, functional land use which is sensitive to the character and context of the area; Not damage business interests of waterfront employment sites, compromise safety or conflict with biodiversity or flood risk policies.
 - The Waterfront Policy supports marine leisure activities by safeguarding public hard (7 in total); Supporting proposals for marine leisure development and waterside recreation, provided there is no unacceptable conflict with water users; Restricts development on private waterside open space to private shore-based facilities and pontoons only.
 - The Plan references 5 waterfront development areas – Ocean Village, Centenary Quay, Itchen Riverside, Weston Shore and Town Quay. 4 of 5, including the 3 sites on the River Itchen, have site-specific policies providing clear expectations for future development, ensuring positive change which fits with overall strategic aims for the city.

- The largest of the development areas is the Itchen Riverside. The site currently plays a vital role supporting nearly 100 marine and industrial businesses plus water sports activities. It includes a number of key waterfront regeneration sites, open space opportunities and residential areas. These include an opportunity for leisure-led regeneration linked to the football stadium and improved links to city centre and other waterfront areas.
- The site includes nationally recognised Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), important habitats and ecosystems and requires flood alleviation works – RIFAS – that will not prevent future development.
- The consultation period for the Draft Local Plan concludes on 3 January 2023. To inform the final Local Plan and the Minerals and Waste Plan the Panel raised with the Strategic Planning Managers the following issues:
 1. The potential for an obligation for significant waterfront developments to have a docking station to facilitate the development of water taxi services.
 2. The potential to remove the safeguarding from the scrap metal site on Princes Wharf to help encourage relocation of the business to a suitable site.
 3. To consider the approach employed by Plymouth City Council to identify a financial value on the blue and green spaces to help aid decision making.
 4. To consider whether including a blue grid alongside the proposed green grid in the local plan to reflect the value of the water in the city.

Master-planning in the City: Itchen Riverside – Matthew Hill & Paulina Piotrowski, Economic Development Operations Managers, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Matthew Hill & Paulina Piotrowski informing the Panel of the approach to master-planning with a focus on Itchen Riverside.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The Council has refreshed its approach to master-planning.
 - The approach will lead to the establishment of new internal and external governance to manage the master-planning programme and ensure long term cross-party ownership and external stakeholder support.
 - Activity will include in-depth consultation and engagement to ensure it takes people/communities with us.
 - Initial focus for master-planning includes Itchen Riverside - Development Brief on Gas Holder site – Britannia Road, Stadium, Waterfront & Aggregate Wharves, Drivers Wharf - Development Brief.

Southampton’s Blue Highway – Andy Tourell, Head of Sustainable Logistics, Ocean Infinity

- A presentation was delivered by Andy Tourell informing the Panel of Ocean Infinity’s vision for a Southampton based water-borne travel and transport network.
- Ocean Infinity currently employ about 70 people at their Woolston site and are a big part of re-imagining the maritime industry in the Solent region.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The vision is a zero-carbon, water-borne, travel and transport network, connecting communities and delivering solutions against local priorities.
 - Our waterways, which include the River Itchen, River Test, River Hamble, Southampton Water and the wider Solent present an opportunity to implement a city-scale “blue highway network” enhancing connectivity between our communities, open spaces, the city centre, the port, employment and education hubs.

- Initially, delivering a proof of concept service across the River Itchen, it is anticipated that the network would gradually expand along the Itchen before serving communities along both sides of Southampton Water, ultimately connecting the region.
- Fitted with zero carbon power and propulsion systems from day 1, there would also be a roadmap to unmanned vessel operation from our remote command and control centre in Woolston.
- Southampton City Council, Solent Transport and ABP Southampton have demonstrated support for the project, we are now building a consortium of partners, spanning local authorities, land owners, developers, operators and the maritime industry, working in a true partnership to bring this compelling project to reality, with an ambition of kicking off this coming year.
- A project, fully integrated with the Local Development Plan, conceived on the banks of the river, proved at the mouth of the river, serving communities along the river can make a significant contribution to protecting, preserving and promoting the River Itchen for years and generations to come.
- The Panel recognised that the proposal could help to create a distinctive waterfront experience in Southampton and would help to enable businesses to connect with their workforce.

Conclusions from meeting:

- The Itchen in Southampton is home to a busy port as well as a diverse range of businesses and is a significant contributor to the Southampton economy. Business sectors represented along the Itchen in Southampton include marinas, marine and marine aggregates, manufacturing, sports and leisure and training institutions.
- The marine sector depends on the limited number of sites which have access to the waterfront. It is important that these sites are safeguarded for marine uses to support the success and growth of the marine sector, including hi-tech and skilled marine activities.
- Future growth and prosperity within the maritime and marine sectors is reliant on overcoming skills and workforce challenges. Work to address this is ongoing with key partners engaged.
- The emerging Local Plan includes Waterfront Development Principles within a Waterfront Policy. The overarching criteria is to ensure the creation of a distinctive waterfront experience.
- The Waterfront Policy requires all development proposals within waterfront areas to work towards creating continuous waterfront walkways, cycleways and public spaces and to avoid damaging business interests of waterfront employment sites, compromise safety or conflict with biodiversity or flood risk policies.
- The draft Local Plan references 5 waterfront development areas, including 3 on the River Itchen - Ocean Village, Centenary Quay and Itchen Riverside. Each area has site-specific policies providing clear expectations for future development.
- The Itchen Waterfront is the largest of these development areas and it includes a number of key waterfront regeneration sites, open space opportunities and opportunity for residential development. This area will be subject to a master-planning process.

- The introduction of a zero-carbon water-borne, travel and transport network, connecting communities could help to create a distinctive waterfront experience in Southampton, enable businesses to connect with their workforce, and could make a significant contribution to protecting, preserving and promoting the River Itchen for years and generations to come.

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 19 January 2023

Flood Risk Management

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 19th January, 2023, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

Flood Risk and the River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS)

- Dave Martin – Flood and Coastal Risk Management Partnership & Strategic Overview Team Leader, New Forest, Test & Itchen, The Environment Agency
- Blake Jones – Project Executive, RIFAS, The Environment Agency
- Sam Foulds – Flood Risk Management Team Leader, Southampton City Council
- Cara Brims – Flood Risk Officer, Southampton City Council

You can check your risk of flooding online - <https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>

- A presentation was delivered by Dave Martin, Blake Jones, Sam Foulds and Cara Brims providing an overview of flood risk management and the RIFAS scheme.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:

The River Itchen Flood Risk: Overview and Flood Risk Approaches

- The key flood risk today is tidal. The Environment Agency are responsible for management of flood risk from Main Rivers and the sea.
- The greatest risk is to the River Itchen west bank as land levels are lower.
- Southampton has a unique tidal pattern with a double high water – this extends the period where high water may occur with a surge. Rainfall and high tide can cause ‘tide locking’ of surface water sewers.
- Southampton has a number of areas that are vulnerable to flooding with a greater than 0.5% chance of flooding in any given year. The city has been very fortunate that a 0.5% event has not occurred.
- There are currently no formal raised flood defences in Southampton. There is currently a mix of engineered high ground, quay walls, low flood walls and embankments of varying condition and standard of protection.
- Where standard of protection is lower than a potential flood level, water is likely to overtop, resulting in flooding to the ground behind.
- Majority of Itchen frontage is privately owned – landowners are responsible for maintenance of assets.

- Through the impact of climate change and rising sea levels vulnerability to tidal flood risk will increase over time – more land areas, property and critical infrastructure will become at risk or experience more regular flooding.
- Greatest increase will be seen in Northam and the City Centre – large areas are flat, low lying and reclaimed land.
- Increased risk includes flood extent (areas impacted) and depths of flooding. By 2120, flood depths during a 0.5% AEP (Annual Exceedance Probability) flood could reach up to 1.8m in some areas.
- Southampton Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2012) – presents options for management of tidal risk on the west bank of the Itchen Estuary. The Strategy will be delivered in stages over time to create a continuous raised flood defence from Woodmill to Redbridge.
- Focus is on areas where risk and need for defences is greatest:
 - Phase 1 – River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS).
 - Phase 2 – Likely to be Woodmill to St Denys.
- There are plans to revisit the Coastal Strategy to include examination of flood risk on the east bank.
- All new development (including change of use) in a present day or future flood risk area must be accompanied by a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- Planning and development applications are reviewed by SCC Flood Risk Management and the Environment Agency. If not demonstrated to be safe, recommendations for refusal are presented to the Local Planning Authority.
- Funding flood defences - Government funds are limited. All defence schemes must present a case to the Government to demonstrate that the benefits (flood damage prevented) outweigh the costs of the scheme. RIFAS has a 1:4 cost benefit ratio.

The River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS): Project Overview

- RIFAS is a flood defence scheme on the west bank of the Itchen Estuary between Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate to just south of the Itchen Bridge.
- A partnership project between SCC (investment and communications) and the Environment Agency (design and construction) with delivery partners JBA Consulting (design), VolkerStevin (construction), Dalcour Maclaren (land agent) and Mott MacDonald (investment team).
- Plans are for the scheme to be delivered in two stages:
 - Phase one (present day) – Construct an interim height wall to provide a 0.5% AEP standard of protection by 2070.
 - Phase two (future, before 2070) – increase the height of the wall to provide a 0.5% AEP standard of protection by 2120.
- This approach enables flexibility in the implementation of future interventions and reduces the immediate impact to business operations with a lower wall height.
- **Estimated scheme cost (January 2022) £85.6m. Confirmed funding £45.5m**
- Construction is provisionally planned to commence in January 2026 and conclude in Sept 2028.
- Funding is being sought from alternative external funding streams to plug the gap. Funding challenges are standard for such projects. If funding is not found consideration will be given to extending the timescales of the project to enable more time for funding to be sought.
- Engagement has been ongoing with landowners and businesses that will be directly affected by the scheme. Engagement will continue to produce the detailed design over the next 3 years.

- The scheme will require planning permission; anyone will have the ability to comment on the application through SCC Planning.

River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS): Environmental Impacts and Enhancements

- Environmental and climate change considerations go hand in hand, and they are at the core of this project - RIFAS carbon forecast is approx. 60% lower compared against the baseline.
- The project includes a biodiversity net-gain target of 20% including whole life cost and climate resilience assessment. A key focus is improving water quality and wildlife and habitats.
- An Environmental opportunities register has been created: 48 opportunities have been identified for consideration including carbon and pollution reduction e.g. bivalves; heritage, public realm and ecological improvements e.g. habitat creation.

River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS): Economic Opportunities for Southampton

- A project objective is to facilitate sustainable growth along the west bank of the River Itchen (which includes parts of the City Centre) for businesses and residential purposes, including access. On completion, the RIFAS will remove the constraint of flood risk to many areas and increase regeneration and development opportunities.
- The RIFAS will seek to improve public access and public realm along the waterfront – Including planned improvements to the Boardwalk and Crosshouse Hard car park.
- To facilitate improvements a bid for ~£15.8m to the Levelling Up Fund was submitted in August 2022. This was unsuccessful but another round, with objectives more aligned to the RIFAS scheme objectives, will commence next year.
- The Council's Flood Risk Team are working closely with Economic Development, Strategic Planning and the Masterplanning Team to align opportunities through RIFAS with the ambition outlined in the emerging City Vision Local Plan.

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Approval Body

- On 10 January 2023 the Government announced that it is committed to the enactment of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 by the end of 2024. This will amend the Water Industry Act 1991 to end the automatic right to drain surface water to a public sewer.
- It will become a requirement for all new developments of more than 1 dwelling house or where the construction area is 100 square meters or more, to include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for managing surface water.
- The primary benefits will include - Reducing surface water entering sewers; less combined sewer overflows; reusing water as a resource; improving habitat biodiversity and water quality; Improving amenity.
- Once enacted, construction work which has drainage implications cannot be commenced unless the drainage system for the work has been approved by the SuDS Approval Body (SCC).

Conclusions from meeting:

- Significant parts of Southampton neighbouring the River Itchen are vulnerable to flooding.

- The greatest risk at present is the west bank as land is lower but, over time, the area vulnerable to flooding is expected to increase and the flood depths could reach 1.8m in places.
- All new development (including change of use) in a present day or future flood risk area must be accompanied by a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- To mitigate flood risks Southampton's focus is on areas where risk and need for defences is greatest: Phase 1 – River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme (RIFAS). Phase 2 – Likely to be Woodmill to St Denys.
- RIFAS is a flood defence scheme on the west bank of the Itchen Estuary between Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate to just south of the Itchen Bridge.
- There is currently a circa £40m funding gap to deliver the scheme. Funding is being sought from alternative external funding streams to plug the gap.
- Environmental impacts and habitat biodiversity have been factored into the plans for RIFAS.
- The RIFAS could help to unlock regeneration of the west bank of the city including Northam and Chapel and enhance access to the waterfront and the public realm.
- A recent Government decision to enact Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 by the end of 2024 could help to reduce the risk of surface water flooding in the city and reduce spills from storm overflows entering the river.

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 16 February 2023

How more people can enjoy the river?

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 16th February, 2023, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

Public Access to the River Itchen in Southampton – Lindsay McCulloch, Natural Environment Manager, SCC

- Riverside and recreational access to the River Itchen in Southampton ranges from excellent to non-existent.
- A notable trend is that access reduces as you travel closer to the mouth of the estuary. This is 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.
- **Open spaces** - 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, cycling etc.
- The east bank enjoys 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.
- **Footpaths** – A similar position exists for footpaths. 2 ½ Km of 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 Jurds Lake at the mouth of the estuary.
- There are only 940m of waterside footpaths along the west bank of the river.
- **Opportunities** – 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.
- **The future** - 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 bio-diversity and ecology. If SCC leaders provide a strong message that waterfront access is a priority it will provide a clearer steer to officers when making decisions.

Recreation, Community Use and Access – Graham Linecar, Secretary of Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society (SCAPPS)

- The benefit for physical health and mental well-being of being in 'green' surroundings is now widely appreciated and recognised. Benefit is enhanced when the 'green' is by 'blue', green spaces alongside water.
- The Itchen is taken for granted but gives the city a sense of place and identity.
- Along the Itchen, try to find more places where people can enjoy being by the river, not just access but 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 then the several riverfront greenspaces which are not connected, are not part of a continuous route. Although perhaps known and used by locals, some seem underused, and look neglected. We need to think about how to heighten awareness of these sites. 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 one to another, to encourage more use, and perhaps 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. We 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 Itchen where you can carry in and launch small craft; not all are well-maintained. Other places are not formally designated (can give rise to issues with vehicles wanting access, eg Woodmill).
- Additional feedback from Clive Aylett - 25th Southampton Sea Scouts, 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.

Celebrating our Community Groups – Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Mark Pirnie, outlining the important contribution played by voluntary groups in supporting the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The various ‘friends of 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 £100k Community Fund could help to fund a number of initiatives.

Recreation on the River Itchen – James Hinves, National Club Development Manager, British Canoeing

- A presentation was delivered by James Hinves, on recreational use of the River Itchen in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - There are over 20 clubs, groups and organisations concerned with the river.
 - Feedback for this meeting estimates that 20,000 people are active on the river.
 - The river currently divides Southampton and is seen as dirty. However, it could be a link, the blue thread joining the communities enabling better health, environment, and cohesion as it flows through the city.
 - **Benefits** - 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 waters edge and host events on the water.
 - There are now several studies showing a link between blue space and improved health, within the city 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 the 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 the river 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 beloved 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.

- **Challenges** – 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.
- **Recommendations** - 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 StreetGames in Paulsgrove, that was drawn together by Portsmouth City Council or the hosting of the National Beach Rowing Championships in Bournemouth. A Strategy for the 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.
- Management of the River as a location such as a park - 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 what and who to contact.
- A proposal that came up several times was that of a users group to facilitate the various clubs and organisations to engage with the council and port 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 / paddle to the boat show.
- Bill Baynes – Chairman of Southampton Sea Angling Club, raised 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 in the planning process additional activities when considering waterfront access for new developments, was identified as a mechanism to protect access to the water for anglers moving forward.

Conclusions from meeting:

- Public access to the River Itchen in Southampton is limited, particularly on the west bank. It is valued by the public, provides benefits for physical health and mental well-being and needs to be cared for and maintained. This includes the public hards.

- The stretches most used are continuous routes, paths that connect from one place to another. There are several riverfront greenspaces which are not connected. We need to think about how to heighten awareness of these sites. Improved signage could help.
- Access to the riverfront has improved in Southampton through developments such as the boardwalk. RIFAS offers the opportunity for further expansion of the waterfront footpath network.
- The draft local plan seeks to enhance waterfront public access wherever possible. To deliver on this ambition the tools available to the Council must be deployed and SCC leaders need to provide a strong message that public access to the waterfront is a priority. This will support officers when making decisions about future developments and balancing economic interests, environmental concerns and community aspirations regarding access.
- Community groups perform a valuable role in the management of the river. There is an opportunity to collaborate through an umbrella group, potentially the Respect the River Campaign, to amplify their voice and enable representation on key forums.
- The scale of recreational use of the River Itchen in Southampton is considerable. Potentially 20,000 people are active on the river.
- Recreational use is an asset to the city economically, socially, improves health and wellbeing, raises the city's profile and enhances its reputation.
- It needs to be celebrated, encouraged to grow and be nurtured.
- A Blue Space strategy would help to focus attention and draw together the possible developments on the river and identify priorities for maintenance and infrastructure improvements.
- The ability of anglers to access the water needs to be a consideration when waterfront access for new developments is determined.
- The £100k Southampton Airport Community Fund could help to fund small scale developments along the river.

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen in Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 2 March 2023

Exploring Good Practice

Presentations referenced below and a recording of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting, Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen in Southampton on Thursday, 2nd March, 2023, 5.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

Summary of information provided:

River Clyde Development Corridor – Lindsay Pratt, Principal Planner, Glasgow City Council

- A presentation was delivered by Lindsay Pratt, providing an overview of the River Clyde Strategic Development Framework. Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The growth and prosperity of Glasgow is intrinsically linked to the River Clyde.

- De-industrialisation and economic contraction impacted on the river corridor and Glasgow City inner-urban core.
- The re-invention of the corridor began in the 1980s, supported by significant investment and in 2005 by the River Clyde Flood Management Strategy which helped unlock the redevelopment of derelict land and created cultural, leisure, educational destinations and employment and housing hubs.
- More recently there has been a shift to a knowledge economy, encouraged by the proximity to Glasgow University.
- The river provides a strong framework for regeneration. Opportunities to promote clusters of related activity but the future of the corridor is inseparable from climate change, particularly risk of flooding. A long-term strategic approach to deliver sustainable development was required that understands flood risks alongside placemaking, and sustainable flood resilient design.
- Wider planning policy context to SDF – National, regional (Clydeside), and Glasgow City Development Plan. River Clyde Corridor SDF is supplementary guidance to the City Plan operating at a larger scale than a masterplan.
- Challenges – Complex issues effecting corridor and growth – Flooding 1:200 year flood event the river would over top quay wall in a number of locations.
- High number of large vacant and derelict sites in prominent locations that impacts on quality of place.
- Quay walls – Investment in repair and maintenance of infrastructure has declined. Impacts on investment opportunities, bio-diversity and flood resilience.
- Poor Connectivity – Barriers, lack of continuous access routes, perceived lack of safety prevent movement along, to and across the river. Clydeside Expressway (dual carriageway) limits access to much of the north of the river.
- Taken a number of years to prepare SDF, shaped by extensive consultation. 3 priorities were identified including - 'Promoting a design-led, placemaking approach to enhance and protect the townscape, heritage and environment of the River Corridor while delivering a well-connected and liveable city.
- The following vision was agreed - *The River Corridor will be a world-class destination, with an accessible waterfront and attractive spaces where people want to spend time. It will be climate-resilient and support a mix of uses. New houses and flats will be linked to existing neighbourhoods. The historic character will be protected and enhanced, while innovative design will help create a distinct identity. It will form part of a wider network of urban waterways, will support continuous walking and cycling routes, and be celebrated as the city's largest, continuous open space.*
- Agreed SDF outcomes match themes in the City Development Plan – A Vibrant River, a Sustainable River, a Connected River, a Green River. They seek to co-ordinate development activity and address the identified challenges.
- The SDF was adopted in 2022. It is providing policy and guidance for applications for developments through the plans design principles and approach.
- The tidal River Clyde Flood Model has been updated enabling better understanding of tidal flood risk to 2100. From this more detailed design guidance has been developed (Designing with water) including core principles but still a requirement for placemaking aspect in designs, not just flood resilient.
- To enable access the design guidance encourages private development proposed for the city centre river corridor to be set back from the rivers edge

to enable walking/cycling routes etc. The distance is not prescribed but 12m is optimum.

- River Activation Programme to stimulate interest and engagement with the river (up to £20k small grants scheme). Ambition to develop a river park.
- The SDF recognises that there are competing interests and the need to balance them. The Plan seeks to find a way forward whereby constraints are overcome.
- Glasgow benefits from City Deal Funding, levelling up funding, vacant and derelict land funding that is funding the River Activation grant funding.
- Viewing the River Clyde as a continuous open space. Glasgow's Open Space Strategy recognises blue and grey space.

Thames 21: Working in partnership with communities and stakeholders to transform rivers – Debbie Leach, Chief Executive, Thames21

- A presentation was delivered by Debbie Leach, outlining the impact an environmental NGO can have on the health and vitality of a river through working in partnership with communities and stakeholders. Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Thames21 developed from a partnership programme supported by Keep Britain Tidy, the Port of London Authority and others in the 1990s.
 - It aims to involve communities in everything that they do.
 - Thames21 has about 7,000 to 8,000 volunteers active each year and they use a range of approaches and activities to encourage and inspire people.
 - This includes a citizen science project training and supporting communities to investigate, better understand and evidence the environmental challenges faced by the river using robust citizen data to influence change.
 - Thames21 engagement structure has various stages from introduce oneself to the river, to value the river, to understand the river, to act on behalf of the river, to sustained action on the river, to lead action to protect the river, to advocate for the wellbeing of the river and its communities.
 - Almost all of Thames21 work is delivered in partnership with other organisations. This includes the 10 Catchment Partnerships that Thames21 host or co-host.
 - There is a need to build relationships with the complex array of stakeholders.
 - Catchment Plans often have close links to local authority objectives. Catchment hosts can be a useful resource for local authorities by helping them with project development, consultation and funding applications.
 - Thames21 works with universities providing volunteers to gather data for research activity.
 - Key relationship is with Thames Water. The lack of investment in assets has created challenges similar to those experienced in the River Itchen. Thames21 volunteers provide evidence to enable Thames Water to respond quickly to issues. Thames21 are influential in encouraging behaviour change and hold Thames Water to account and play a role in working with local communities to bring pollution issues to the water company.
 - In the last 5 years Thames21 has organised 36,000+ volunteering opportunities; Directly engaged 100,000+ people with their local river; Involved 44,000+ children in educational activities; Championed + expanded urban delivery of integrated constructed wetlands; Introduced new web of reedbeds across canalised London water courses; Established Natural Flood Management to protect urban communities; Delivered innovative new

evidencing work on ability of Nature Based Solutions to reduce river pollution;
Led the sector in analysing and using data on road pollution of rivers;
Removed 1000+ tonnes of rubbish from the River Thames alone; Developed nationally accredited technical courses for volunteers.

- Thames21 has recently secured designated bathing water status (DBWS) to 2 sites with 4 more expected to follow. DBWS is an official way of recognising that a body of water (whether a beach, lake, or river) is a popular site for swimming, paddling, and other water-based activities.
- Achieving DBWS means that each year over the "peak bathing season" (May-September), the Environment Agency will test the site for pollutants. For any DBWS sites that don't meet regulatory standards, the EA will investigate the sources of pollution to identify remedial measures. (East Cowes has DBWS).

Solent Forum: Coastal Partnership – Karen McHugh, Solent Forum Manager

- A presentation was delivered by Karen McHugh, describing the work of the Solent Forum coastal partnership. Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The aims of Solent Forum are - To promote, facilitate and support integrated planning and sustainable management of the Solent, and, to provide a broad based consultative forum.
 - It is a multi-sector membership partnership that covers Selsey Bill to the Hampshire/Dorset border. Work is carried out via a business plan.
 - Solent Forum members include local authorities, harbour authorities and numerous other organisations covering environmental, social and business sectors.
 - SCC used to be a forum member, and a member of the Steering Group, but withdrew in 2018. SCC is the only key local authority that is not a member.
 - Solent Forum provides information hubs, as well as delivering a number of projects and events.
 - The key benefit of the forum is to bring together often competing interests to develop a greater understanding of the problems and to determine collective solutions.

Conclusions from meeting:

River Clyde SDF

- There are a number of similarities between the challenges experienced in Glasgow and those outlined in Southampton. The scale is however different.
- Glasgow's clear vision for the development of the River Clyde corridor, supported by a design led placemaking approach, provides a strong basis for the sustainable development of the area.
- The commitment in the SDF to access and connectivity is consistent and is underpinned by the ambition to get people back to the river. This is in recognition of the intrinsic value to Glasgow provided by the city's largest, continuous open space.

Thames21

- Thames21 has a track record of improving rivers across the Thames catchment area and demonstrates what can be achieved by an NGO when it effectively harnesses the power of the community to make a difference.
- The approach to community engagement is sophisticated, co-ordinated and resourced.

- The success of Thames21 demonstrates the importance of establishing and building relationships with stakeholders over time. This has enabled Thames21 to exert influence to champion the Thames and its tributaries.

Solent Forum

- Solent Forum demonstrates the value of stakeholders meeting regularly to discuss collective challenges that cannot be resolved by one organisation acting independently.
- Solent Forum is able to bring together competing interests to develop a greater understanding of the problems and to determine collective solutions.
- SCCs omission from Solent Forum membership is disappointing and limits the influence the Council is able to exert over issues impacting on the city.