



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

06 October 2022 – Meeting 1

# Introduction

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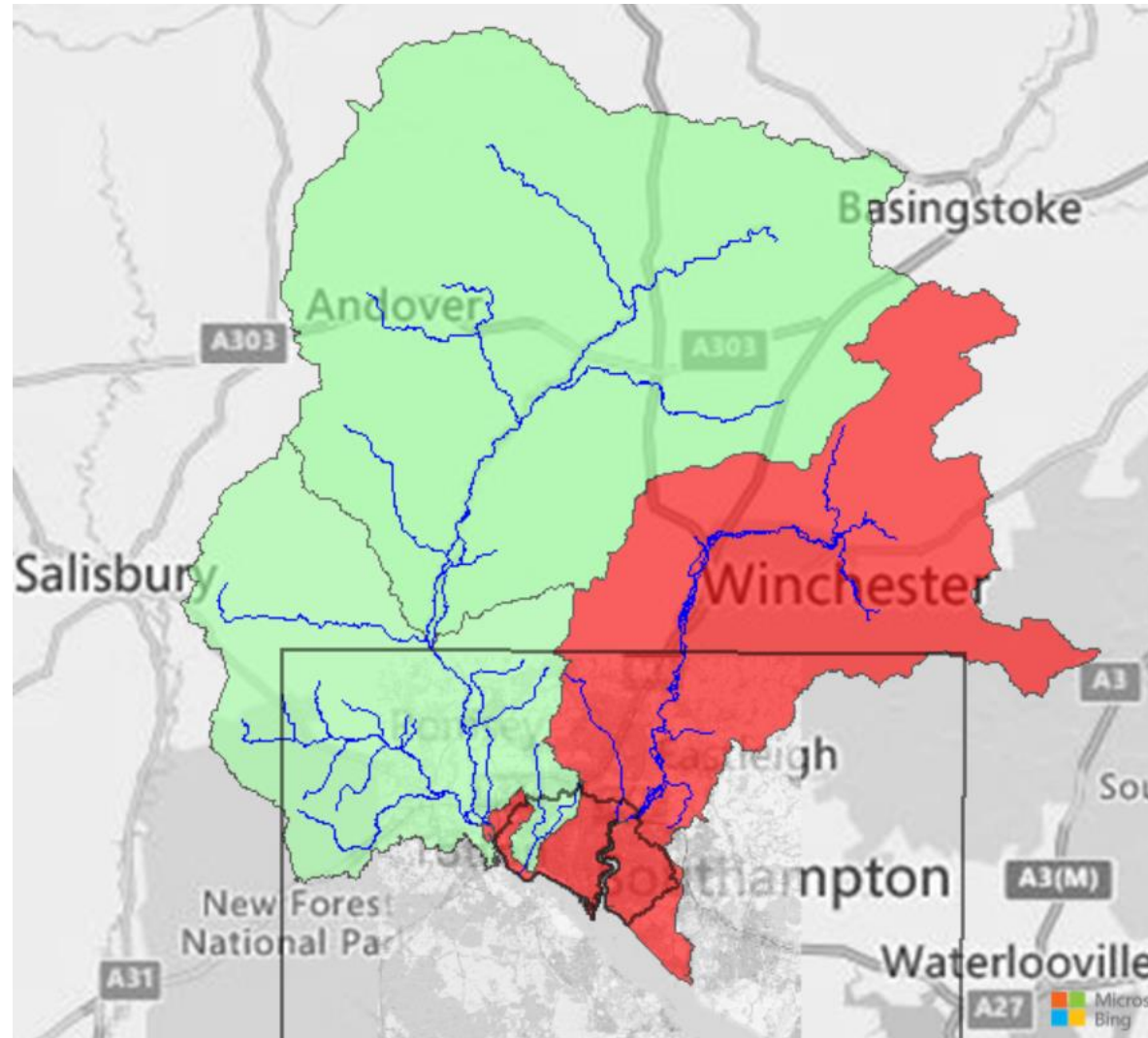
## Meeting 1: Introduction, context and background

- Ownership
- Uses of the river
- Responsibilities
- Rules governing the river

# Context

# Context: River Itchen Catchment

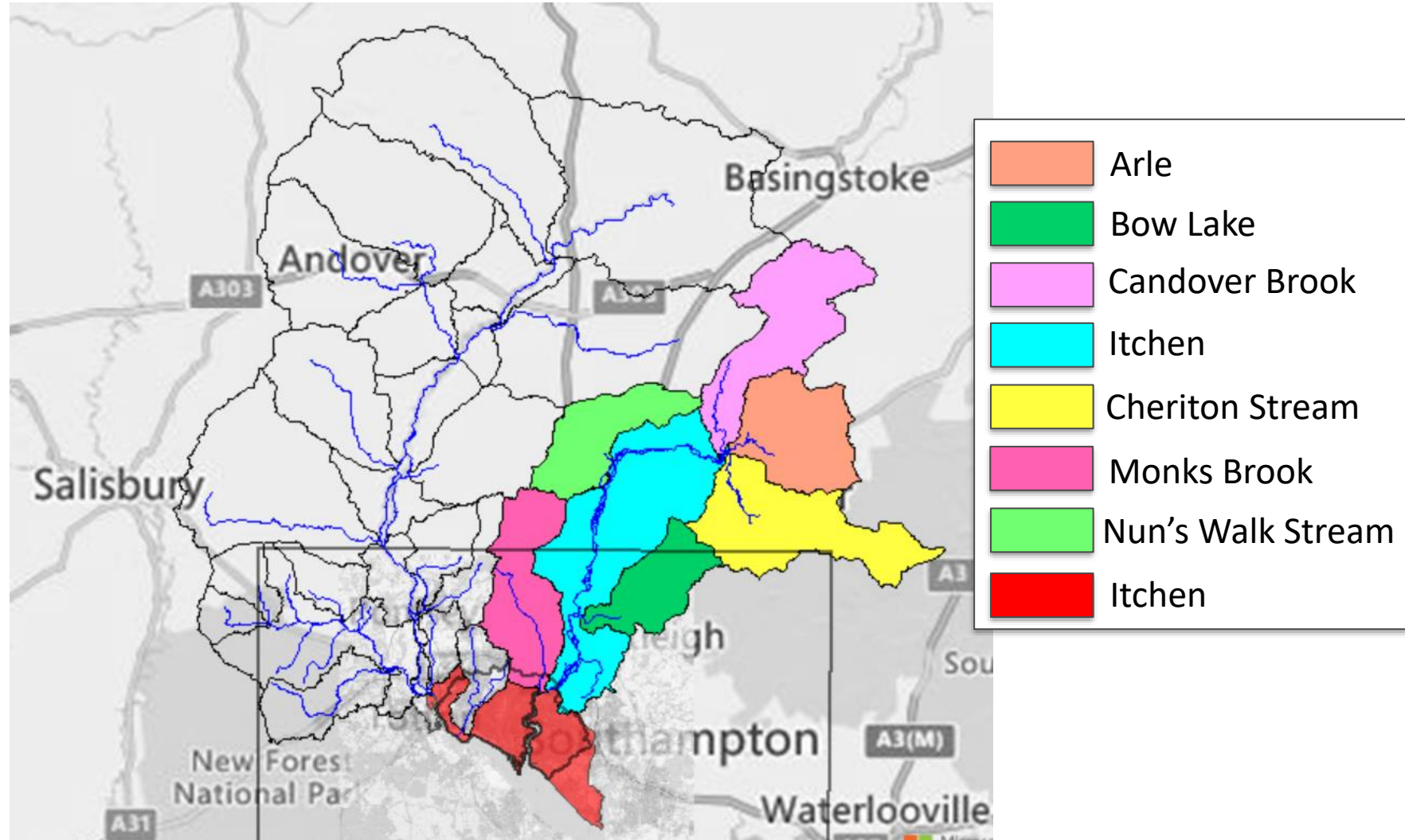
- Southampton is split between two primary river catchments: the River Test and River Itchen.
- Water is received from large areas of Hampshire.
- The rivers are tidal for much of Southampton.



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# Context: River Itchen Sub-Catchments

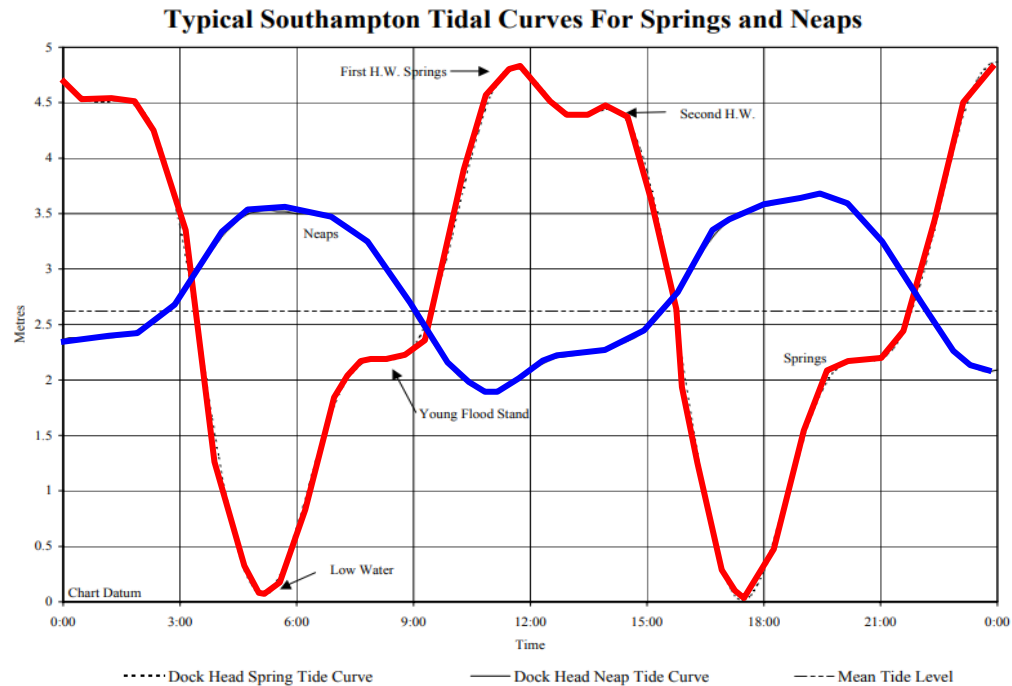
- Both the River Test and River Itchen are formed by multiple smaller river catchments.
- There are 8 tributary catchments feeding the River Itchen.
- In Southampton these are:
  - Monks Brook
  - River Itchen (upstream Woodmill)
  - Itchen Estuary (downstream Woodmill)



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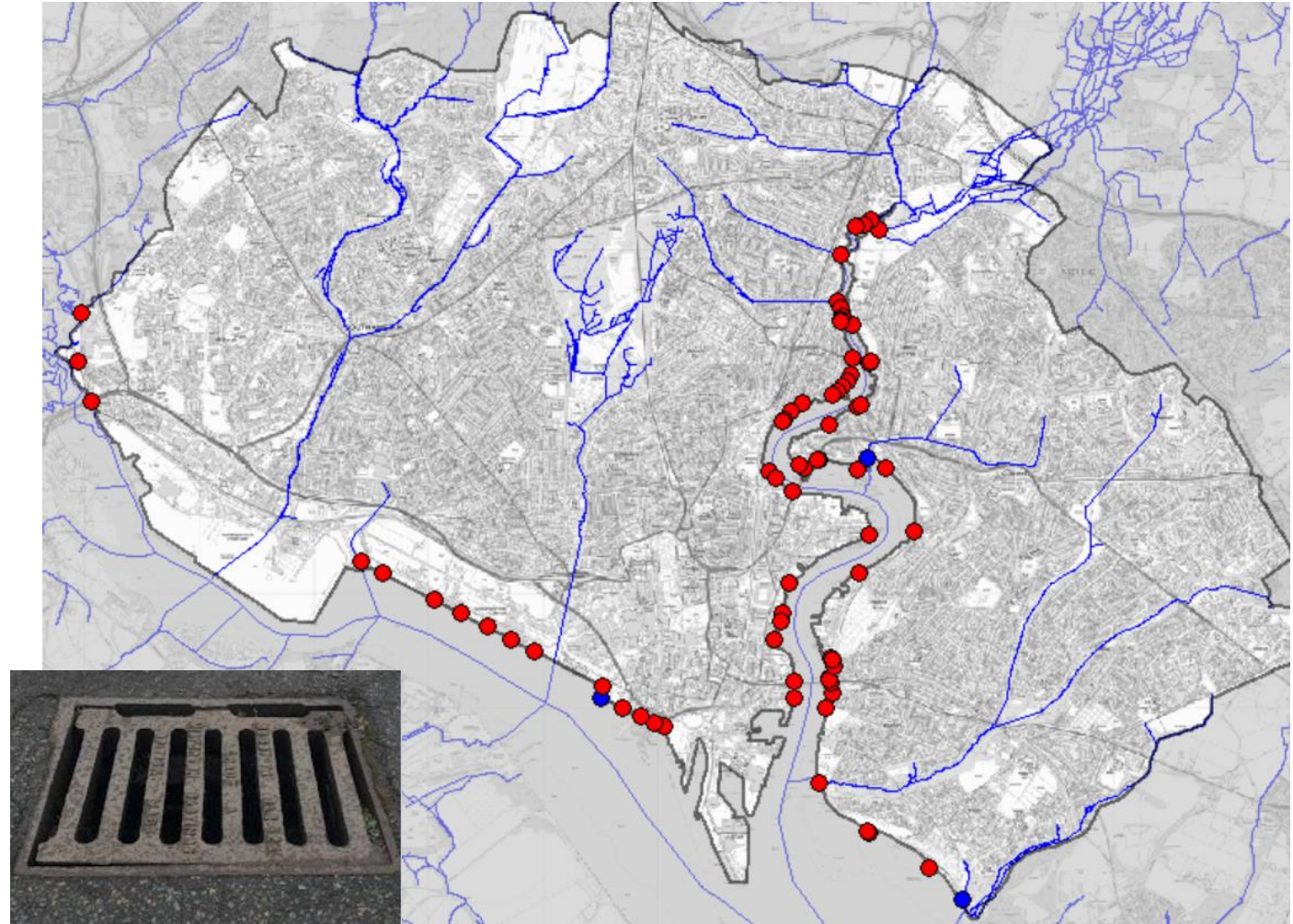
# Context: Fluvial and Tidal Itchen

- Woodmill bridge marks switch between fluvial and tidal Itchen.
- Southampton has a unique tidal system with double high water.
- Tide pattern alternates between springs (red) and neaps (blue).



# Context: Southampton's Watercourses and Drainage

- There are multiple watercourses within Southampton, including some underground.
- Land based activities can influence water quality as runoff from buildings and roads collected by surface water sewers and highway drains and directed to watercourses is typically not treated.
- 74 known surface water outfall locations into the Test and Itchen Estuary – many more private connections.
- Additional combined sewer overflows exist for emergency discharge.



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# Context: Water Quality and SuDS

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) work with nature to slow the flow and recharge the ground at the point rain falls.

Can support improvements to:

- **Water quantity** – reduce water entering underground drainage.
- **Water quality** – filter out sediments, chemicals and litter before water enters a watercourse.
- **Biodiversity** – provides habitat for insects and wildlife within urban setting.
- **Amenity** – visually attractive, helping to green grey spaces.

Could help with:

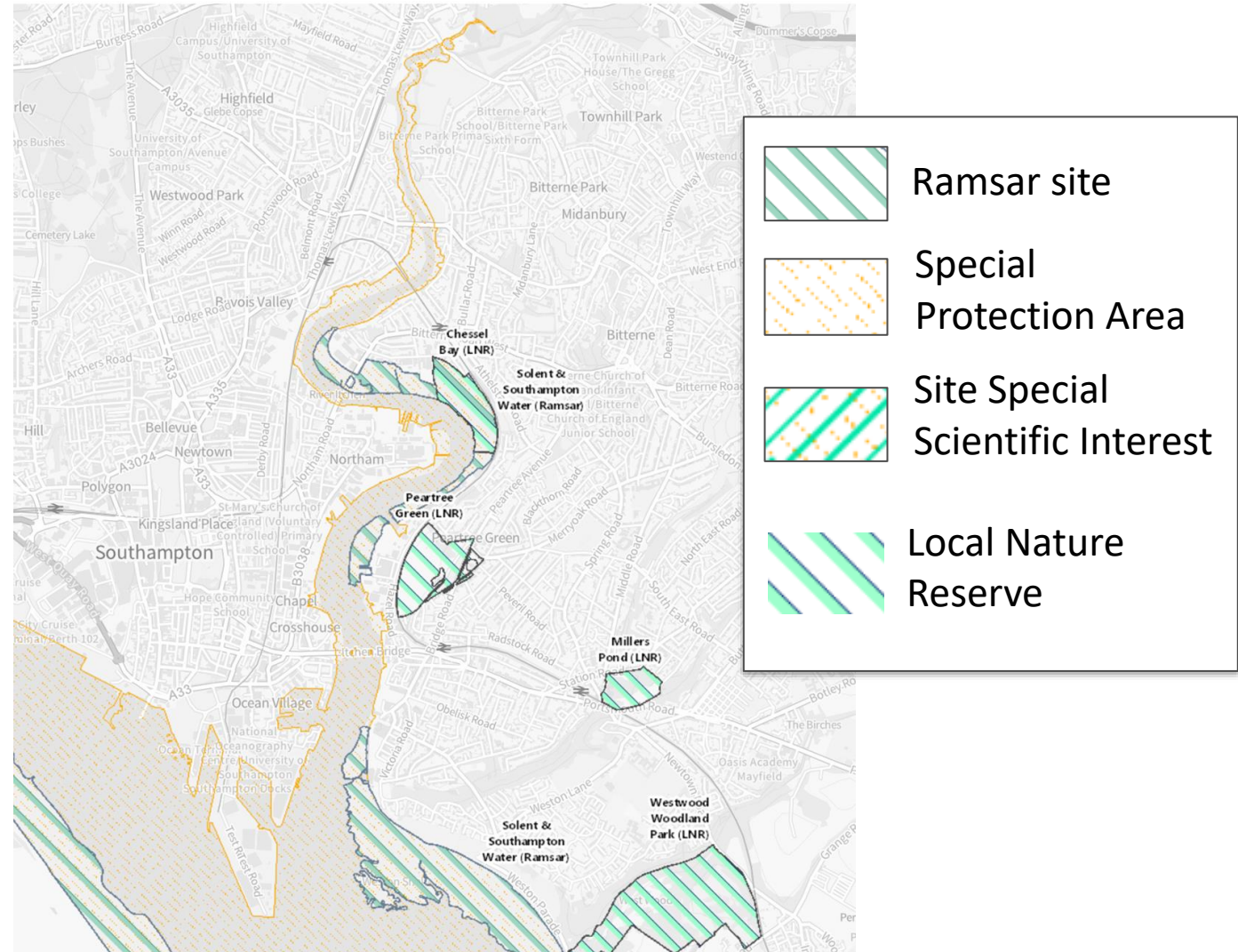
- Reducing number of combined sewer overflows
- Improving quality of highway runoff





# Context: Environmental Designations

- Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - *Internationally important for over-wintering dark-bellied brent geese.*
- Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar
  - *Supports internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl, important breeding gull and tern populations, rare invertebrates and plants.*
- Solent and Southampton Water Special Areas of Protection (SPA)
  - *Regularly used by several species of gull, tern, geese, plover and godwit.*
- Chessel Bay Local Nature Reserve



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# Ownership

# Ownership: The Crown Estate

- **Complex with many different land interests.**
- 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.
- Key roles:
  - Share knowledge and data.
  - Provide licences for extraction of marine sand and gravel.
  - Lease and licence tidal land and seabed for port and harbour infrastructure, moorings and marinas, cables, pipelines and outfalls.

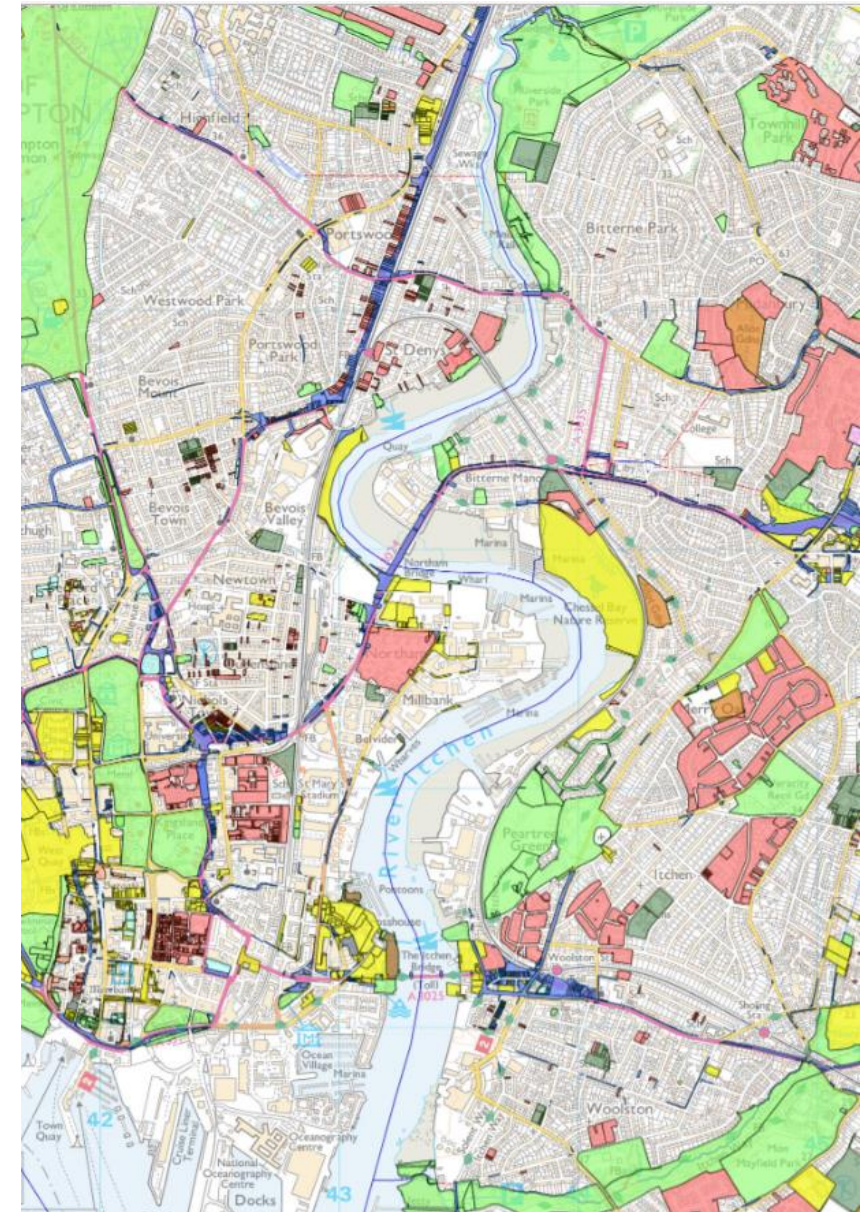


# Ownership: Private

- The majority of land adjacent to the River Itchen is privately owned by multiple individual landowners.
- Key commercial and industrial areas exist in the Lower Itchen to Southampton Water:
  - Aggregate processing and supply
  - Marinas and wharves for boat building, repair and storage
  - Scrap metal processing
- Key areas of residential ownership:
  - Bitterne Park
  - St Denys
  - Meridian Gardens
  - Chapel Riverside
  - Ocean Village
  - Centenary Quay

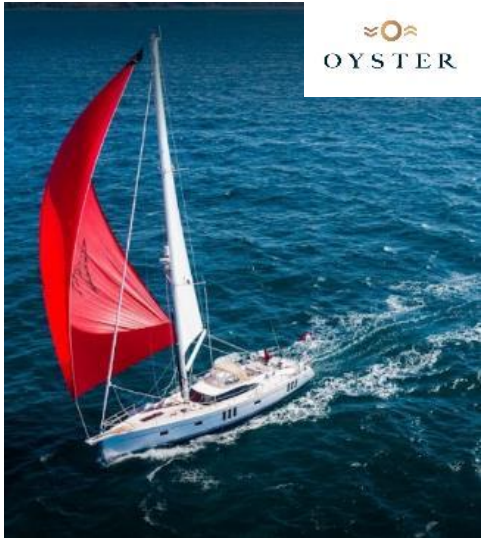
# Ownership: Southampton City Council

- Southampton City Council own small areas of land along the River Itchen and small areas of mudflat.
- Ownership where there is access to the waterside includes:
  - Riverside Park
  - Janaway Gardens
  - Pettinger Gardens
  - Priory Hard (Priory Road)
  - Mudflat along Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate (including the Boardwalk from Horseshoe Bridge to Northam Bridge)
  - Mudflat at Chessel Bay Nature Reserve
  - Crosshouse car park
  - Mudflats at Weston Shore



# Uses of the River

# Uses of the river



A city of opportunity where everyone thrives

# Uses of the river



A city of opportunity where everyone thrives





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A city of opportunity where everyone thrives

# Roles and Responsibilities

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- 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 – e.g. water management and pollution.
- Key organisations include:
  - Southampton City Council
  - Environment Agency
  - Southern Water
  - Associated British Ports
  - Riparian Landowners
  - The Crown Estate
  - Marine Management Organisation
  - Natural England

# Responsibilities: Southampton City Council

- **Planning and Local Plan:**
  - Management of (non-permissible) development (to Low Water Mark).
  - Managing the interface between marine and terrestrial.
  - Develops policy for biodiversity, flooding, sustainable drainage, water quality, water quantity, etc.
- **Lead Local Flood Authority:**
  - Consenting and enforcement powers for ordinary watercourses.
  - Management of flood risk from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.
  - Ensure sustainable drainage is included within all major development applications (benefit to water quantity, quality, biodiversity and amenity)
- **Environmental Health:**
  - Assist in regulation of pollution incidents and contamination.

# Responsibilities: Southampton City Council



- **Ecology and Biodiversity:**
  - Member of Solent Marine Sites management group – for monitoring and protection of internationally designated marine sites for the habitats and species they support.
- **Parks and Open Spaces:**
  - Riparian landowner for watercourses that cross through Southampton’s parks and open spaces.
- **Emergency Planning:**
  - Manage the Coastal Pollution Plan - provides a framework for an effective response to any pollution incident in the Southampton City Council area, based on guidance from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

# Responsibilities: Environment Agency



- Managing the risk of flooding risk from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.
- Responsible for:
  - Regulating major industry and waste
    - Including storm water overflows
  - Treatment of contaminated land
  - Water quality and resources
    - Including abstraction licences for rivers
  - Fisheries
  - Inland river, estuary and harbour navigations
  - Conservation and ecology
- Priorities to:
  - Work with others to manage the use of resources.
  - Increase resilience to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion.
  - Protect and improving water, land and biodiversity.
  - Improve the way they work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth.

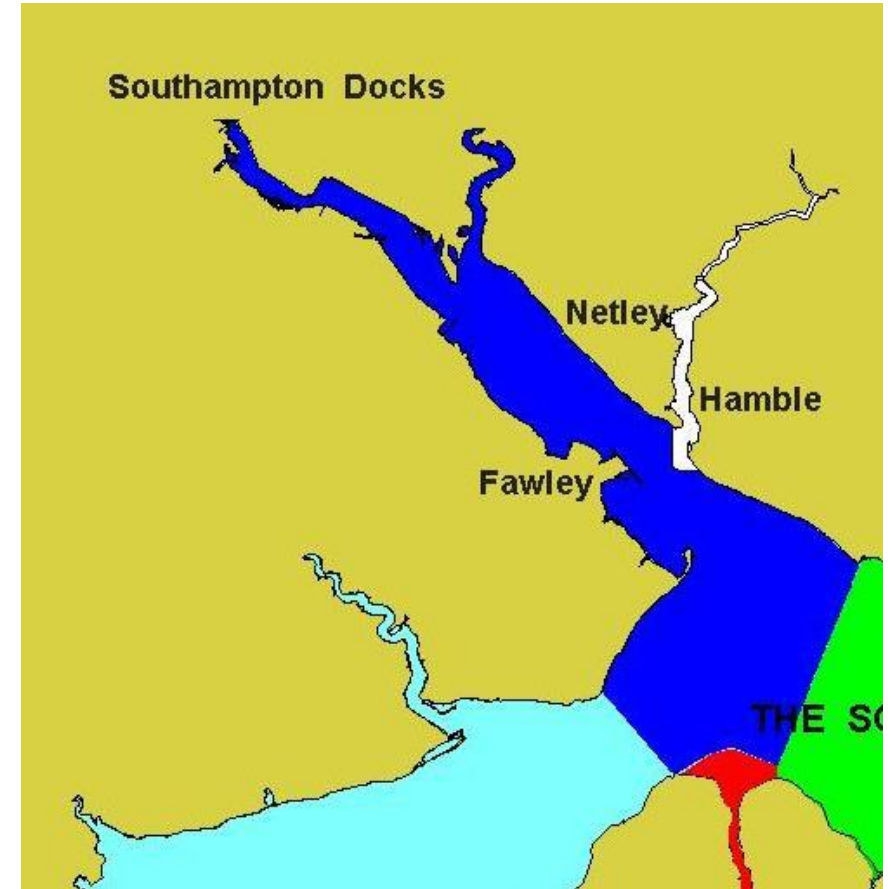
# Responsibilities: Southern Water



- Freshwater and waste water supplier for Southampton.
- Freshwater supply:
  - Southampton East – 52% river abstraction (Test and Itchen), 48% groundwater (chalk aquifer)
  - Southampton West – 100% river abstraction (Test and Itchen)
- Wastewater treatment centres :
  - Millbrook
  - Portswood
  - Woolston
- Responsible for managing storm overflows – discharging excess water during heavy or prolonged rainfall when the network becomes overwhelmed to prevent flooding to property. Water in storm overflows is usually very diluted due to surface water.

# Responsibilities: Associated British Ports

- The Statutory and Competent Harbour Authority for Southampton.
- Manage access restrictions, speeds and general activities within the Harbour Authority area of jurisdiction.
- Key responsibilities:
  - Ensure that the waters are managed efficiently and effectively to maintain navigational safety.
  - Facilitate open use of the port and ensure no damage is caused to the marine environment through port activities.





# Responsibilities: Riparian Landowners

- Those with a watercourse running through, adjacent or under (in a culvert) their land.
- Key responsibilities:
  - Report incidents of flooding, pollution or unusual change in flow of water to the Environment Agency
  - Let water flow naturally
  - Prevent pollution – including disposal of waste water, chemicals, garden waste or anything else that could harm the watercourse.
  - Protect wildlife
- If planning works in or around a watercourse, owner must obtain a Flood Risk Activities Permit from the Environment Agency (if main river) or Ordinary Watercourse Land Drainage Consent from Lead Local Flood Authority (if ordinary watercourse) prior to starting.

# Responsibilities: Marine Management Organisation



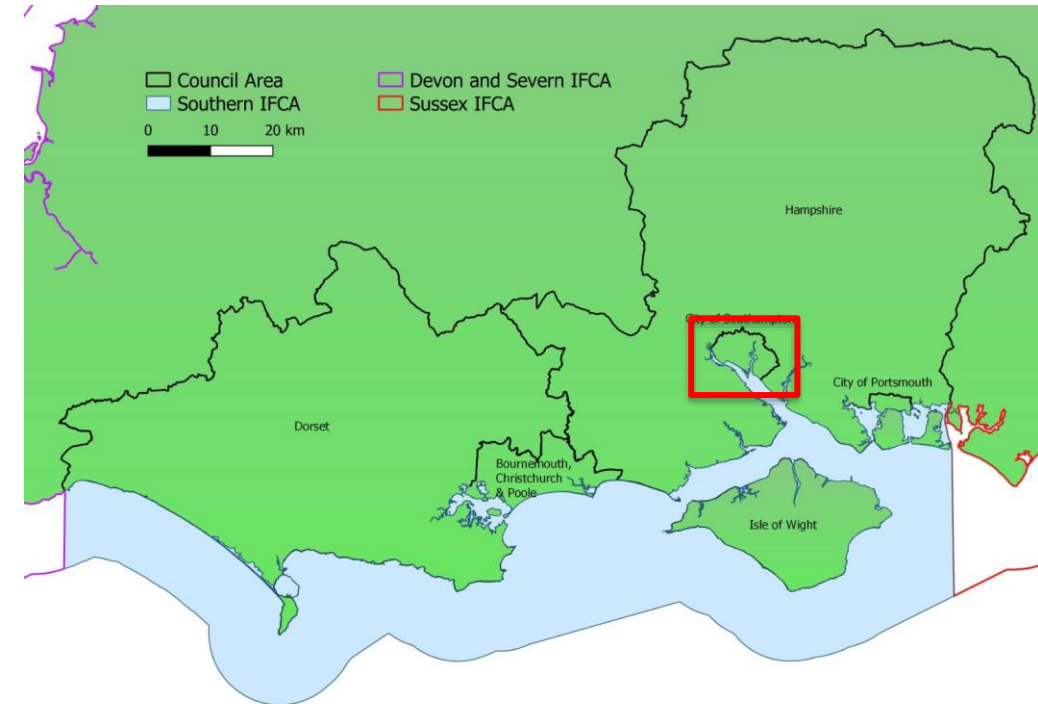
Marine  
Management  
Organisation

- The MMO is responsible for marine licensing in English waters.
- Many activities that take place in and around the sea require a marine licence. An MMO licence will be required for:
  - Construction
  - Dredging
  - Deposit of substance/ object
  - Removal of substance/ object
  - Incineration of substance/ object
  - Sinking of any vessel/ floating container
  - Use of explosives
- They consult:
  - **Natural England** – Responsible for designation of national and international nature conservation sites. Statutory consultee in respect of SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites as well as protected species.
  - **Environment Agency**

# Responsibilities: Southern IFCA

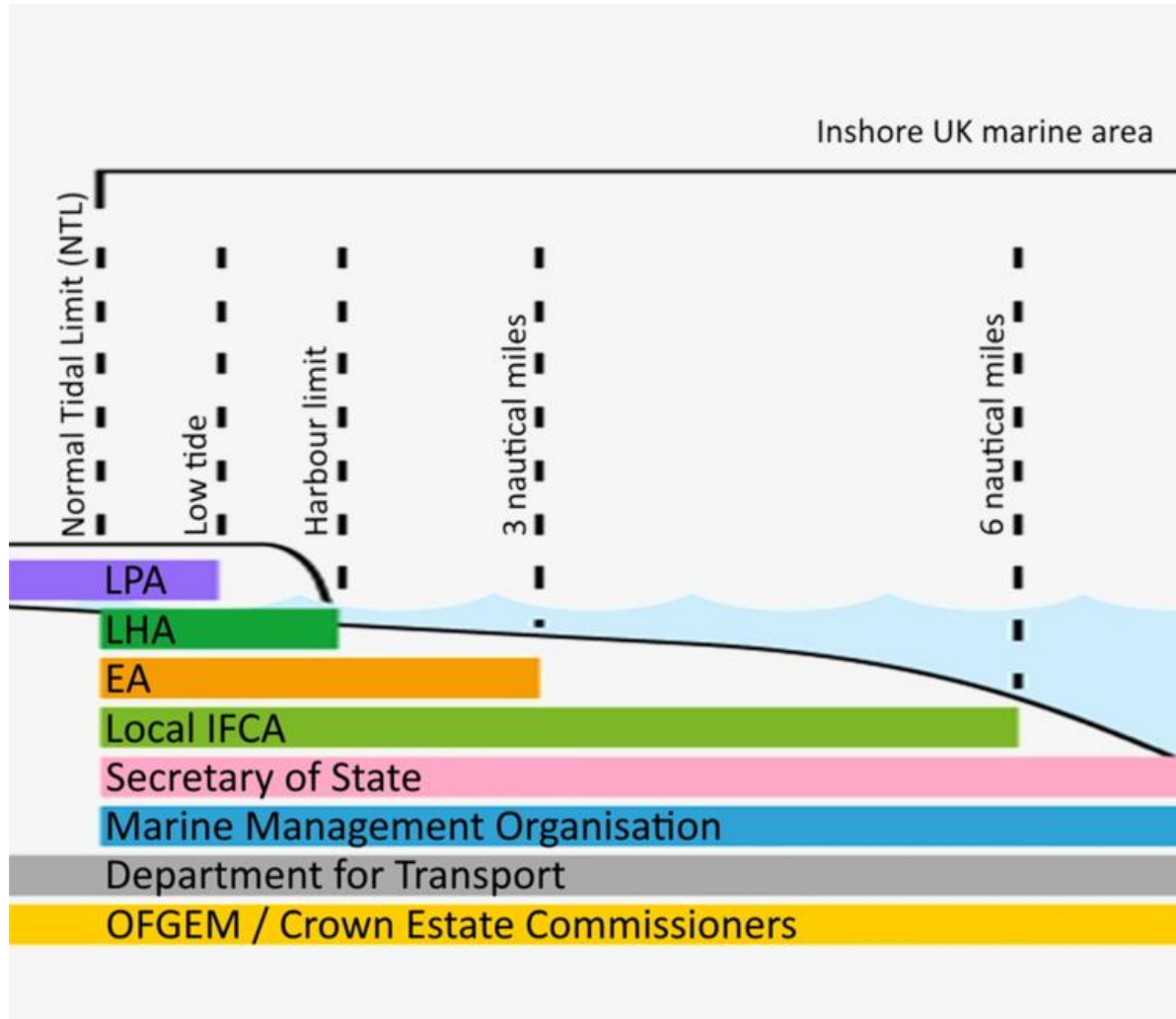


- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.
- They:
  - Manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district.
  - Seek to ensure than the conservation of any MCZ in the district are furthered.



# Rules governing the River

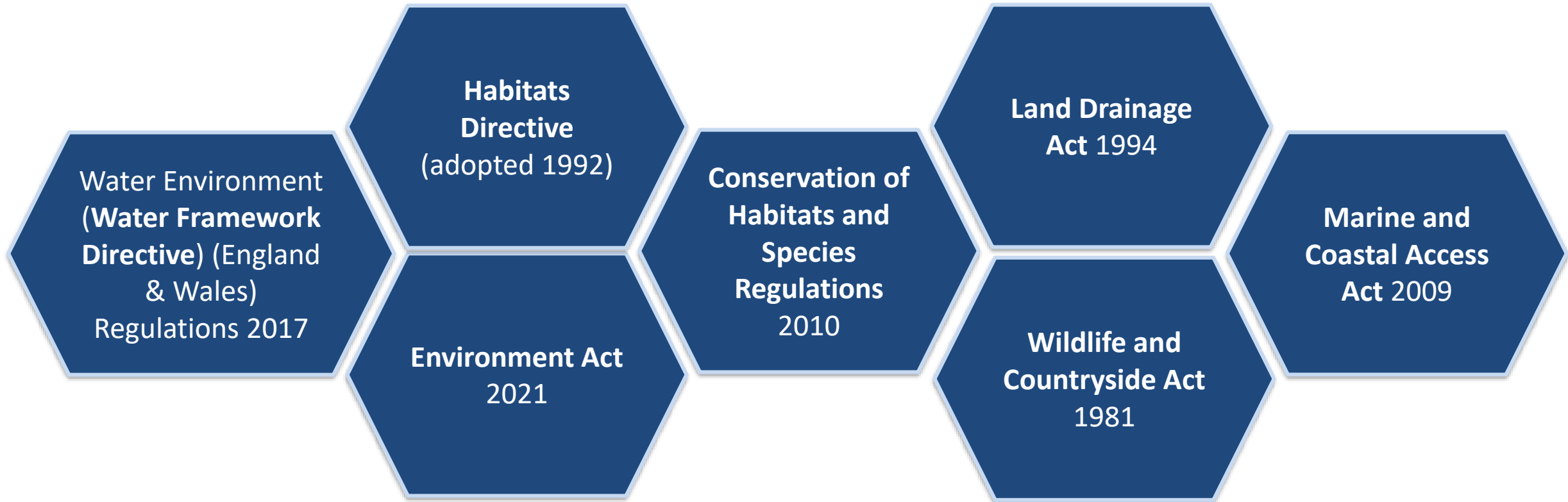
# Rules governing the river



- **LPA** (Planning Permission) - jurisdiction over areas to the low water mark.
- **LHA** (Harbour Works Consent) - jurisdiction within harbour limits.
- **MMO** (consent) – jurisdiction from the mean high water spring tide.
- **EA** (Flood Risk Activities Environmental Permit) for works in or within 8m of a Main River.
- Natural England (Statutory consultee for areas of environmental importance).

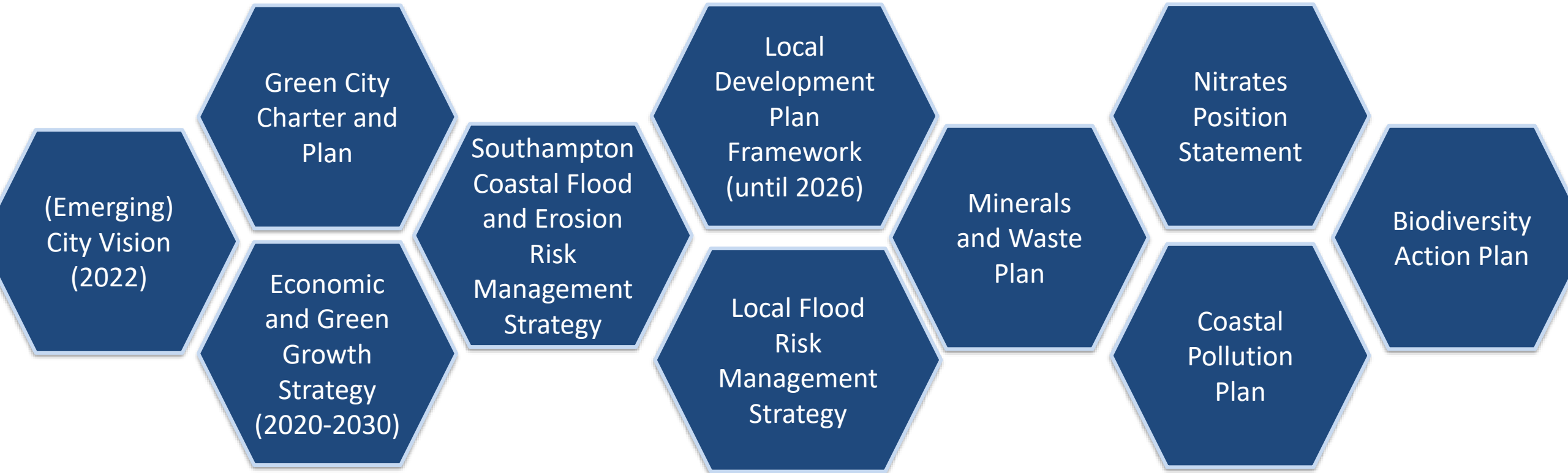
# Rules governing the river

- Lots of Directives, Acts and Regulations which cover the River Itchen, covering water, the environment, biodiversity, drainage and flooding. These include but are not limited to:



# Strategies, Policies and Plans: SCC

- The Council have several visions, plans, frameworks and strategies which cover different aspects of the River Itchen. These include but are not limited to:



# Strategies, Policies and Plans: Wider than SCC

- **Solent European Marine Sites Management Plan** sets out schemes with the primary focus of managing operations and activities taking place within a European marine site, promoting its sustainable use.
- **North Solent Shoreline Management Plan** is a high level, non-statutory, policy document that sets out a framework for the management of over 386km of coastline and coastal defences. Applies one of four management polices to each 'Unit':
  - Hold the Line
  - Advance the Line
  - Managed Realignment
  - No active intervention
- The **Government's 25 Year Environment Plan** sets out its commitment to a comprehensive and long-term approach to protecting and enhancing nature. The wider environment ambition set out in the plan is to leave the environment in a better state than found within a generation.



# Strategies, Policies and Plans: Partners

- **Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plan** – drafted in 2022 for the protection and improvement of the water environment.
- **Environment Agency's Test and Itchen Abstraction Licensing Strategy** – 2019 to manage water resources sustainably.
- **Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)** (in draft for consultation 2022) - long-term investment plans for drainage and wastewater management.
- **MMO South Marine Plan** – 2016 a guide for those who use and regulate the marine area to encourage sustainable development while considering the environment, economy and society.
- **ABP Port of Southampton Master Plan** - 2009-2030 sets out what they consider needs to be done in the interests of the Port and the community it serves, including investment, jobs, environmental and economic sustainability and community.

**Thank You.**