

# FOCUS



Incorporating **Bitterne Park News**

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## LABOUR'S GREEN LIGHT TO MORE FLIGHTS

In a recent debate in Parliament, a Labour Minister dropped the bombshell that Southampton Airport's expansion plans would be welcomed if they meet "local demand". Unfortunately, the Minister failed to explain how this should be judged.

The Minister confirmed that the Government's Airport policy, "identified.. airports such as Southampton as having an important role in the future provision of airport capacity in the south-east." She added that local Councils must take account of the Government's policy when considering airports' expansion plans.

As a result of the Government's policy, operations at Southampton Airport are more likely to be allowed to expand. During the debate, the Minister confirmed that current plans would lead to an increase in passengers from 1.5 million in 2005

to 6 million by 2030. This would result in an increase in flights.

The airport owner BAA held a consultation on its expansion plans in 2005 and expects to publish its final master plan this summer.

Nationally respected campaigner Keith Reed, who lives locally, has been asked by the Bitterne Park Focus team to help run their campaign against unsustainable airport expansion.

Keith who was at the debate in Parliament told Focus, "I went to a relative's funeral at the Church of the Ascension and the service kept being interrupted by planes flying overhead. It's clear that residents' lives are being destroyed by the constant noise. **The Minister must be made to think again and readers can help by signing our petition.**"

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# COUNCIL SERVICES IMPROVE AGAIN

The Independent Audit Commission assessed Southampton Council again this year to see how it was working. The result - it's officially improved again.



Keith Reed checking recycling in Bitterne Park. Officially these services have improved.

The Council was adjudged to be "Three Star" (out of a possible four) and is classified as "a good council improving well." Environmental services which includes waste, planning, roads, pavements, and transport has jumped from a one star rating when Labour controlled the Council to three stars today.

Bitterne Park activist Keith Reed told FOCUS, "Sometimes it is difficult to know how well the council is doing but this official rating puts Southampton in the top three of all Unitary Authorities in the Country. To be fair, this is excellent progress considering the real problems that existed only a few years ago."

# LIB DEMS SET LOW LOW COUNCIL TAX

**After months of hard work, Southampton's Liberal Democrat led Council has managed set the lowest Council Tax increase the city has seen in years.**

There will be a small increase of just 3.89% this year. This is the third year in a row that the Lib Dems have cut tax increases from the massive 18.6% increase set by Labour in its last year in control of the Council. It is also the lowest increase in Hampshire.

**In contrast, Conservative run Hampshire County Council set a 20% higher Council Tax increase of 4.7%.**

The Lib Dem budget, which was supported by Labour, includes savings of over £7 million. Therefore local residents were surprised by the Conservatives' proposals to freeze staff recruitment, which could have led to services for the young and elderly being hit as well as cuts to important environmental services.

Lib Dem Council leader Adrian Vinson told FOCUS, "Hard decisions had to be made, but our budget means we will be able to continue to meet our key commitments to improve roads and pavements, combat anti-social behaviour, protect the most vulnerable and give a fair deal to local Council Tax payers."



Keith Reed at Townhill Junior's - even with a low Council Tax increase local schools remain a priority.



**Riverside Park** - Local Lib Dems have reported the Graffiti in the Park to the Council and asked for it to be cleaned up. (picture left)

**Town Hill Park Play Ground** - Your FOCUS team have been pressing the Council to upgrade local play facilities. (picture right)

**Woodmill Bridge** - Traffic ignoring the road closed signs has been reported to the Council and to the police.



# NO MORE FLIGHTS PETITION

I/We the undersigned call on the Government to review the Aviation White Paper as a matter of urgency, as it looks set to lead to unsustainable expansion (more noise, air pollution, and road traffic) at Southampton Airport, and request that the problems associated with these proposals are addressed in its Progress Report due to be published by the end of 2006.

Name/s:.....

Address:.....

Postcode:.....

Email:.....

Telephone:.....

**RETURN TO: Keith Reed, 21 Khartoum Road, Southampton SO17 1NY**

Please tick here if you would prefer not to be updated on this campaign

**I support your campaign and would like to help by:**

please tick

Delivering leaflets in my road

Collecting petition signatures

Putting up a poster

Making a donation

(Please make cheques payable to "Southampton Liberal Democrats")

Name.....

Address:.....

.....Postcode.....