

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee - 31 January 2023
SUBJECT:	Bathing Water Quality
LEAD OFFICER:	Nat Slade - Group Head of Technical Services
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr David Edwards
WARDS:	Aldwick East & West
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Improving the wellbeing of Arun by working with partners to ensure bathing water quality standards that encourage use of our bathing waters. Supporting our environment to support us by working with partners to manage bathing water quality and prevent pollution. Fulfilling Arun's economic potential, by working with partners to ensure bathing water quality standards that help make the best use of natural assets and help support the local economy.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The working group aims to identify and action the causes of reduced bathing water quality at Bognor Regis Aldwick, thereby helping to improve the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the District.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No additional expenditure has been identified at this stage. Participation in the working group will be met within existing staff resource by reprioritising other work. Additional expenditure may be required to support any action plans that are agreed, including targeted education, improved signage and enforcement. If this cannot be met within existing budgets, then a further report will be made to Committee.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. This report seeks to update the Environment Committee on the results of the bathing water classifications for 2022, and the actions being taken to identify and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2. That the Environment Committee endorse staff participation in the Working Group, as an appropriate mechanism, to identify and address the causes of the reduced bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Following notification of the bathing water classifications for 2022 a working group has been established between Arun District Council, the Environment Agency (EA) and Southern Water, to investigate the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick and to agree an action plan to address these.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. The EA carry out monitoring of the water quality of designated bathing waters (DBW), between May and September each year. DBW are given a classification of Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor, indicating the water quality based on water quality monitoring results over previous years.
- 3.2. Water samples are taken by the EA and provide a point in time indication of quality by looking for bacteria which indicate the presence of faecal contamination. There are a range of potential sources for these bacteria including sewage, livestock, birds and road drainage.
- 3.3. The latest bathing water classifications for 2022 were published on 30 November and are shown in the table below, together with the previous classifications for 2021.

Designated Bathing Water	Classification 2021	Classification 2022
Bognor Regis Aldwick	Good	Poor
Bognor Regis East	Excellent	Good
Felpham	Good	Good
Littlehampton	Good	Good
Middleton-on-sea	Excellent	Excellent
Pagham	Excellent	Excellent

- 3.4. Four out of six of our DBW maintained their previous classifications of Good or Excellent. Two locations have had their classifications reduced. Bognor Regis Aldwick changes from Good to Poor and Bognor Regis East from Excellent to Good.
- 3.5. A classification of Poor means that the water quality results were worse than the standards permitted for a Sufficient classification, indicating higher levels of faecal indicator organisms are being found.
- 3.6. The above classifications will be displayed at each location during next bathing season (May to September), with additional signage at Bognor Regis Aldwick advising against bathing.
- 3.7. A working group has been established following notification of the bathing water classifications for 2022, involving staff from EA, Southern Water and the council, to investigate the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick, and to agree an action plan to address these. This may include consideration of improved signage, potentially offering real-time electronic

display of any advice against bathing when short-term pollution warnings are issued by EA, and the council using enforcement powers to address any wastewater misconnections identified. This is where wastewater for example, from kitchen and bathrooms, has been connected to the surface water sewer, rather than the foul sewer. At present there is no clear linkage between the elevated sample results seen in 2022 and operation of storm overflows for Bognor Regis Aldwick.

- 3.8. A further report will be made to Committee if any expenditure associated with the action plans cannot be met within existing budgets.
- 3.9. An update on any further actions that have occurred will be provided at the Committee meeting, and a further update report will be made to Committee in 2023.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1. Standard consultation carried out with internal service areas.

5. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 5.1. Not to participate in the working group.

6. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1. The report states no additional expenditure is requested. If so, further reports will be submitted to Members. On this basis, no comment is made.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. There are no risk assessment considerations.

8. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 8.1. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 9.1. There are no human resource impacts identified at this stage.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

- 10.1. There is a potential risk of stomach bugs and other illnesses from any open water swimming, as there will always be microorganisms present.
- 10.2. A Poor bathing water classification however indicates higher levels of faecal indicator organisms are being found, which may mean bathers are at a higher risk of becoming ill when using a bathing water classified as poor over those classified as sufficient, good or excellent.
- 10.3. The council provides information on its designated bathing waters, including displaying classification signage at each location, and any advice against swimming issued by EA during the bathing season (May to September), to enable people to make informed decisions about bathing.
- 10.4. Signage will be displayed at Bognor Regis Aldwick advising against bathing for the whole of the bathing season, whilst a Poor bathing water classification is in place.
- 10.5. Actions agreed by the working group will help to improve bathing water quality at Bognor Regis Aldwick, thereby reducing potential health impacts to bathers.

11. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

- 11.1. No direct property and estates impacts have been identified.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

- 12.1. Maintaining bathing water quality standards potentially benefits all residents and visitors, by encouraging use of our beaches and supports the local economy.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

- 13.1. Addressing potential impacts on bathing water quality is also likely to reduce pollution entering the sea and thereby protect the environment.

14. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 14.1. There are no direct adverse impacts for crime and disorder.

15. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

- 15.1. There are no direct adverse impacts for Human Rights.

16.FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

- 16.1. There are no direct adverse impacts for Freedom of Information and Data Protection. Information regarding bathing water classifications and sample results are freely available and published by Defra. Links to public information resources have been provided within the background documents section of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Previous report on Bathing Water Quality reported to the Environment Committee 23 September 2021- [Environment Committee 23 Sep 21](#)

[Bathing Water Quality Overview](#)

[Bathing Water profile Bognor Regis Aldwick](#)

[ADC Bathing Water Quality Media Release 30 November 2022](#)

[Misconnections: an invisible threat to our local waterways \(southernwater.co.uk\)](#)

[Swim healthy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)