

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Environment Committee 15 June 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Bathing Water Quality</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nat Slade - Group Head of Technical Services</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>Aldwick East &amp; West</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:</b> 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.	
<b>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</b> The Bognor Regis (Aldwick) Bathing Water Quality Partnership 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.	
<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</b> Participation in the Partnership Group and any investigations will be met within existing staff resource by reprioritising other work. The £15,000 of additional expenditure required to install the automated signs as per the report below will be met from resource switching from within existing resources.	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks to update the Environment Committee on progress with investigations to identify and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Environment Committee note the progress of the Bognor Regis (Aldwick) Bathing Water Quality Partnership Group and investigations into the Poor bathing water classification at Bognor Regis Aldwick.
- 2.2. That the Environment Committee support the installation of automated bathing water signage at Aldwick, Littlehampton, Felpham, and Bognor Regis East.

### 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report provides an update on the actions taken to investigate and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for the Bognor Regis Aldwick.

### 4. DETAIL

- 4.1. A previous report was provided to the Environment Committee on 31 January 2023, following notification of the change in bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick from the Good to Poor.
- 4.2. At that meeting the Committee resolved for staff and Ward Members for Aldwick East and Aldwick West to participate in a Bathing Water Working Group, working with Southern Water and the Environment Agency (EA) to identify and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification for Bognor Regis Aldwick.
- 4.3. Since the last report to Committee, the working group known as the *Bognor Regis (Aldwick) Bathing Water Quality Partnership Group* has been established and has held two meetings at which Ward Members and Officers have been in attendance. Terms of reference have been established, with the purpose of the Partnership Group being to drive the improvement of the bathing water quality and provide assurance and commitment across the partnership organisations.
- 4.4. The Partnership Group meets quarterly with a rotating chair and limited secretariat provided by the EA. West Sussex County Council (Highways) have also agreed to participate in the Partnership Group. In addition, the Bognor Aldwick Steering Group, has been established and meets monthly to discuss and review the technical details of the investigations being carried out. A report from the Steering Group is provided to each Partnership Group meeting.
- 4.5. At present there is no clear linkage between the elevated sample results seen in 2022 and operation of storm overflows for Bognor Regis Aldwick and initial investigations have been focused on identifying misconnections. This is where wastewater for example, from kitchen and bathrooms, has been connected to the surface water sewer, rather than the foul sewer.
- 4.6. Table 1. below provides a summary of the misconnection investigations completed as of 18 May 2023 – information provided by Southern Water.

Location	Manhole cover lift and look	Cage Monitoring	Sampling	Misconnections
Dark Lane area	34 out of 34 completed	Completed	Fluidion sampling for E.coli ongoing	5 identified, 4 resolved, 1 in progress
Victoria Road area	7 locations completed	Completed	All Ammonia samples returned	None identified

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Silverston Avenue area	38 completed	Completed (12 locations)	All Ammonia samples returned 0ppm  Fluidion sampling ongoing	None identified
Marine Gardens area	5 Locations completed	Completed	All Ammonia samples returned 0ppm  Fluidion sampling to be considered	None identified
Nyewood Lane area	22 completed	Completed	All Ammonia samples returned 0ppm	None identified

- 4.7. Investigations so far have been targeted around five locations, with Southern Water carrying out visual checks and using cage monitoring, supported by targeted sampling to identify potential misconnections.
- 4.8. Ammonia testing is used as an indicator of faecal contamination, whereas Fluidion sampling is an in-situ method for identifying the presence of E. coli. This is a faecal indicator organism and one of the parameters sampled by the EA to determine bathing water classifications, the other being intestinal enterococci.
- 4.9. So far five misconnections have been identified all within the Dark Lane area, four of which have been resolved.
- 4.10. Data on second homes is also being reviewed to determine if further targeted investigations are needed due to occasional and seasonal use of properties, making misconnections less easy to identify.
- 4.11. Work is also being carried out to review mapping information to determine if additional locations should be targeted for similar investigations, and to establish if the catchment includes land in agricultural use.
- 4.12. Routine bathing water samples will continue to be taken by the EA during the bathing season, as part of the bathing water classifications process. DNA analysis will be considered should high results be found and will give further insight into potential sources of contamination. The EA are also planning to carry out outfall sampling during the season.

- 4.13. The Bathing Water Regulations 2013 require Local Authorities, during the bathing season, to display information at each designated bathing water detailing the classification and any advice against swimming. Further, as part of our participation in the short-term pollution risk forecasting (PRF) scheme, additional signage is required to be displayed when a PRF is issued.
- 4.14. PRFs are issued during the season at Aldwick, Littlehampton, Felpham and Bognor Regis East. This currently involves manually displaying signage when a PRF is issued and can mean delays in information being provided to the public due to the time taken to reach each location and post the required signage.
- 4.15. Automated signage would eliminate the need to manually place hand-written signs at each location when a PRF is issued, and mean information and any advice against swimming is available real-time.
- 4.16. Options to provide automated signage for displaying short-term pollution risk forecasts (PRF) are being evaluated. Powered signs can be supplied at a cost of approximately £1,600 per sign (excluding utility connections), with solar signs at approximately £2,500.
- 4.17. It is recommended that automated signage is installed at all four locations where PRFs are received. Southern Water have advised they intend to provide a contribution towards the majority of the costs of signage for two of the locations, the remaining costs will be met from existing budgets.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1. Standard consultation has been carried out with internal service areas.

## **6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 6.1. To install automated signage at Aldwick only. Automated signage will improve the provision of information to the public when a PRF is issued, helping them to make informed decisions about bathing. This would prioritise signage at Aldwick, which is the focus of the Partnership Group, but still require signage to be manually displayed at the three other bathing waters subject to PRF.
- 6.2. Not to install automated signage. This would mean continuing with manual posting of information when PRFs are issued, and delays in information being provided to the public due to the time taken to mobilise staff to manually update signs at the four locations subject to PRF.
- 6.3. Not to continue to participate in the Partnership Group. This would mean the Council has no direct oversight nor is able to contribute to the activities of the Partnership Group, which may mean a less beneficial outcome.

## **7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 7.1. The costs associated with the content of this report are £15,000 and can be met from resource switching from within existing resources.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. By participating in the Partnership Group and contributing to the work being carried out to identify the causes of the Poor bathing water classification, the Council will ensure that best efforts are made to address these concerns.

## **9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER**

- 9.1 There are no legal implications.

## **10.HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

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

## **11.HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT**

- 11.1. There is a potential risk of stomach bugs and other illnesses from any open water swimming, as there will always be microorganisms present.
- 11.2. 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.
- 11.3. 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.
- 11.4. Automated signage will improve the provision of information to the public when a PRF is issued, helping them to make informed decisions about bathing.
- 11.5. 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.
- 11.6. Actions of the Partnership Group will help improve bathing water quality at Bognor Regis Aldwick, thereby reducing potential health impacts to bathers.

## **12.PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT**

- 12.1. Any works required to install and maintain signs will be in consultation with Property & Estates.

### **13.EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE**

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

### **14.CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE**

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

### **15.CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

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

### **16.HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

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

### **17.FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

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

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#### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Report on Bathing Water Quality Report to Environment Committee 31 January 2023  
[Environment Committee 31 January 2023](#)

Bathing water quality at Bognor Regis background  
[Bathing water quality at Bognor Regis](#)

Environment Agency 2023 Bathing Water Profile for Bognor Regis Aldwick  
[Bathing water profile Aldwick](#)

[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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)