

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Environment Committee – 19 March 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Bathing Water Quality</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Karl Roberts – Director Growth</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Cllr 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> There are no financial impacts from the proposals in this report. Funding for an additional automated sign at Pagham has been agreed by Southern Water, in addition to four other signs as previously reported.	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with investigations to identify and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification at 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.

### 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 This report provides an update on the bathing water classification for Bognor Regis (Aldwick) and the actions of the Bathing Water Quality Partnership Group, established to drive the improvement of the bathing water quality and provide assurance and commitment across the partnership organisations.

### 4. DETAIL

4.1 The last report on Bathing Water Quality was made to the Environment Committee on 15 June 2023 and outlined the work already undertaken to investigate and address the causes of the Poor bathing water classification at Bognor Regis Aldwick.

4.2 Since the last report the Bognor Regis (Aldwick) Bathing Water Quality Partnership Group has continued to meet, with further investigations progressed via the technical steering group. These have principally focused on identifying misconnections but have also located and rectified a sewer defect causing potential infiltration to the surface water system, with additional relining works planned. Further sampling has also been conducted and has helped identify more areas for investigation.

4.3 The table below provides an update on the surface water investigations as of 11 January 2024 using 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  Further sampling conducted showing results stable	5 identified and resolved
Silverston Avenue area	37 completed	Completed (12 locations)	Elevated E.coli levels  High ammonia readings upstream to Nelson Road/Crescenta Walk	None identified  Survey upstream being conducted (see below)
Nelson Road/Crescenta Walk area			7 ppm Ammonia	Hole identified in sewer causing infiltration to surface water – patch lining

				completed – September 23  Further lining work commencing 29 January and investigation planned
Marine Gardens area	5 Locations completed	Completed	All Ammonia samples returned 0ppm  Fluidion sampling to be considered  Additional sampling June 2023 – elevated E.coli	None identified
Nyewood Lane area	22 completed	Completed  EA samples detected elevated E.Coli and further cages installed	All Ammonia samples returned 0ppm  Fluidion sampling detected E.Coli (Aug 23) Further targeted sampling required.	None identified  Moving to bottled samples as part of ongoing investigations.
Victoria Road	7 completed  Further lift and look and cage installation planned 2024	Cage monitoring adjacent Park Terrace	Ammonia results returned 0ppm  EA sampling detected elevated E.coli.  Cages and fluidion sampling (August 23) - E.coli detected	Investigations have narrowed location between 2 manholes.  Manhole cover replacement required to facilitate further investigations.

4.4 Investigations have also commenced to consider the potential impact to bathing waters of waste entering road drains, including the potential for toilet waste to be deposited by motorhomes. Whilst there is no direct evidence of motorhomes

using drains in this manner, regular parking in the vicinity of the drains connected to the surface water system has been reported.

- 4.5 Consideration is being given to sampling at potential locations to confirm if contamination is occurring, and the council is also working with Southern Water to implement the principles of the former *yellow fish* campaign to help educate the public about the impact of pollution, with messaging around ‘only rain down the drain’. Many people fail to realise that highway drains connect to the surface water system, which find their way to the sea.
- 4.6 Microbial source tracking of samples collected by the Environment Agency and Southern Water has also been carried out, to help confirm the animal species contributing to microbial contamination of bathing waters. Results are consistent with general findings, chiefly indicating human and seabird markers.
- 4.7 The latest bathing water classifications for 2023 were published on 1 December 2023 and are shown in the table below, with the previous classifications for 2021 and 2022:

<b>Designated Bathing Water</b>	<b>Classification 2021</b>	<b>Classification 2022</b>	<b>Classification 2023</b>
Bognor Regis Aldwick	Good	Poor	Poor
Bognor Regis East	Excellent	Good	Good
Felpham	Good	Good	Good
Littlehampton	Good	Good	Good
Middleton-on-sea	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Pagham	Excellent	Excellent	Good

The classifications for 2023 are based on data from the last four year of sampling carried out by the Environment Agency being 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. There was no classification in 2020 due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Whilst Aldwick has retained its poor classification the bathing water sampling data from 2023 shows improvements, with a reduced bacterial load, and if the classifications were based on a single year of data, this would have been classified as Sufficient. Since the classification process considers four years of data this unfortunately means it will take longer for the improvements made to impact the classification.

- 4.8 The classifications will be displayed at each location during next bathing season (May to September), with signage at Bognor Regis Aldwick also advising against bathing.
- 4.9 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.

- 4.10 PRFs are issued during the season at Aldwick, Littlehampton, Felpham and Bognor Regis East. As reported previously automated electronic signs are being installed at each of these locations to eliminate the need to manually place hand-written signs when a PRF is issued. This means information and any advice against swimming is available real-time.
- 4.11 The Environment Agency have confirmed that Pagham will be added to the PRF forecasting for the 2024 season and funding support for an electronic sign to also be included at this location has been agreed by Southern Water. This means additional information will be available at Pagham in 2024, to help residents and visitors make informed choices about bathing.
- 4.12 Officers also recently met with the local MP to seek his support for improved bathing water and pollution information. By integrating existing data sources to provide a single real-time information source it is hope that the public could be better informed when making decisions about when and where to bathe. It has been recommended that Arun's area be used as a proof of concept for this idea.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 No external consultation was conducted.

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

- 6.1 Not to continue participating in the Partnership and technical steering groups. As Arun is not responsible for bathing water classifications or regulating water pollution it is important that we continue to be part of the partnership and work with external agencies to identify and address the causes of pollution impacting the bathing water.

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

- 7.1 No financial impact as Southern water has funded five signs and officers time is met by existing budgets.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Failure to contribute to the work being undertaken to improve bathing water quality at Aldwick may result in a reduced impact. Officers from Arun can offer local knowledge and expertise to support these investigations and ensure they are more effective.

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

- 9.1 There are no specific legal implications.

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 10.1 There are no direct human resource impacts from the proposals of this report.

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

- 11.1 There are no direct health and safety impacts from the proposals. Inclusion of Pagham in the PRF system will provide additional information to help the public make informed decisions about bathing when water quality may be reduced. Further, the improvements already achieved at Aldwick have led to a reduced bacterial load which reduces potential health impacts to bathers.

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

- 12.1 There are no direct property and estates impacts.

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

- 13.1 There are no direct equalities impacts. Improvements to bathing water quality should encourage use of our beaches by the public and offer positive social and economic value.

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

- 14.1 There are no direct impacts to climate change, however the improvements achieved at Aldwick have reduced potential pollution of the bathing water and have a positive impact on the environment.

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

- 15.1 There are no direct crime and disorder impacts.

## **16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

- 16.1 There are no direct human rights impacts.

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

- 17.1 There are no direct freedom of information or data protection considerations.

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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Job Title: Environmental Health Team Manager

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## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Report on Bathing Water Quality to Environment Committee 15 June 2023

[Environment Committee 15 June 23](#)

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 Waters Annual Classifications 2023 - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)