

Report to:	TOURISM, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnership Investments
Date of Meeting:	21 June 2017

BATHING WATER MANAGEMENT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the delivery of the Council's statutory and other duties in respect of bathing water management. The report provides a brief outline of the various statutory duties including statistics and performance indicators and highlights areas of concerns.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To scrutinise the report, note the performance and highlight any areas for further scrutiny as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report and provide confirmation that the Council is delivering its statutory duties and other responsible duties and actions in respect of bathing water management.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

- 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 The Council has statutory duties as set out in the Bathing Water Directive 2006 (BWD) implemented through the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 (BWR) in respect of its four bathing waters which are, Blackpool South, Blackpool Central, Blackpool North and Bispham.

- 5.2 Following the completion of Bathing Water Management Scrutiny Review in 2013, the Scrutiny Committee is to receive a report on an annual basis, relating to progress on its bathing waters.

5.3 Statutory Duties

- 5.3.1 The Bathing Water Regulations requires Blackpool Council to erect signage at all its bathing waters providing specific details of the bathing water, the quality of the water and any links for the public to enquire at any time during the bathing season about the quality of the water. In addition, the Bathing Water Directive set stricter standards to be adhered to in respect of bathing waters quality compared to previous directives. These stricter standards were imposed following the 2015 bathing season. Blackpool Council responded to the challenges (detailed below in the background information) by forming a Partnership with Wyre, Fylde and Lancashire County Councils, the Environment Agency United Utilities and Keep Britain Tidy to take collective and collaborative action to ensure our Fylde Peninsula Bathing Waters are the best quality possible and meet the stricter standards directed by the Bathing Water Directive.

5.4 Budget Information

- 5.4.1 There is no official funding for the delivery of our statutory duties under the Bathing Water Regulations. However, the Council works proactively with its Partner Organisations in particular the Environment Agency and United Utilities to ensure that any available funding to deliver projects or campaigns is explored and since 2011 Blackpool Council has been successful in obtaining £160,000 from its Partner organisations to ensure that Blackpool and its neighbouring authorities comply with its duties and is proactive in delivery of projects to meet the higher standards set out in the Bathing Water Directive 2006. Unfortunately for 2017/2018 no funding has been provided by partner organisations to deliver projects or campaigns, however officers are currently investigating opportunities for funding.

6.0 What is going well/What is not

6.1 Statutory Duty

6.1.1 Blackpool Council has consistently complied with its duty to erect signage at its four bathing waters, Blackpool South, Blackpool Central Blackpool North and Bispham. The signage provides the relevant information about the sampling point which is used by the Environment agency when they sample. To date, the Council has not received any adverse comments from the Environment Agency regarding its statutory signage.

6.1.2 In addition, Blackpool Council has responded to pollution risk forecasting in order to advise the public against bathing if there is likely to be increased pollution at a bathing water on a set day. This was used

6.2 What has changed

6.2.1 Bathing water predictions in 2011

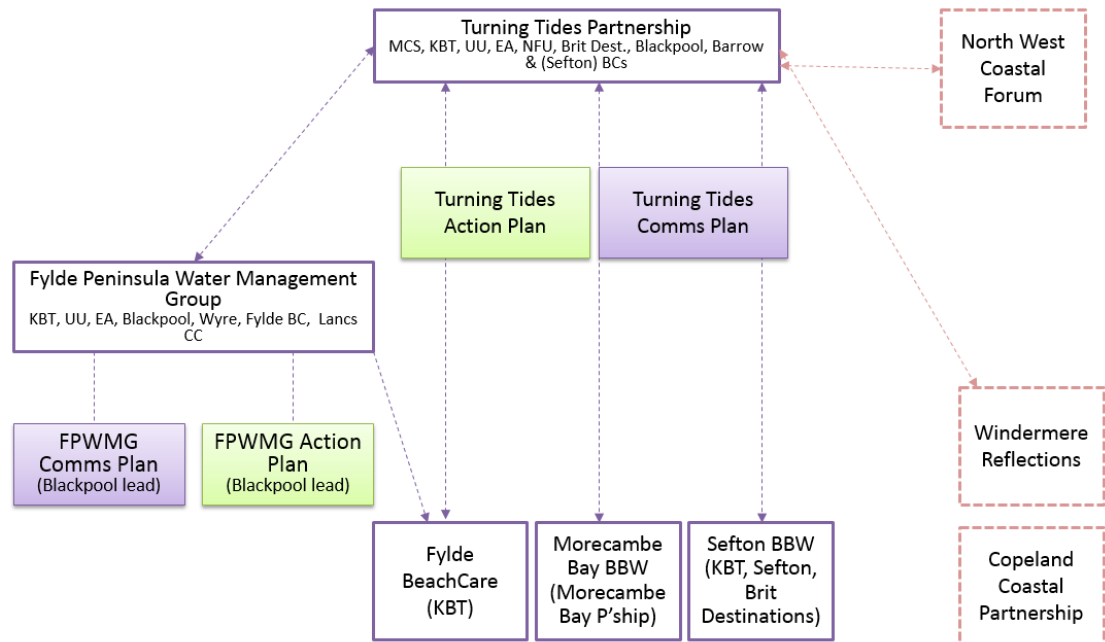
In 2011, it was predicted that seven of the eight bathing waters along the Fylde Peninsula would be poor at the end of the 2015 bathing water season, which would have meant having to erect signage advising against bathing.

In order to ensure Blackpool Council and its partners achieved the best possible results, the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership was formed and the Turning Tides Regional Partnership was formed, as it was recognised that more could be achieved to ensure the messages and campaigns to improve bathing waters by working with the wider region.

6.3 Governance

6.4 The Governance for the partnerships is detailed below:

The Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group have a standing item on its agenda to discuss Bathing Waters Nationally



6.5 Challenges

- 6.5.1 Both the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership and the Regional Partnership agreed the challenges and developed action plans to address these challenges. The challenges are detailed here, but unfortunately it is difficult to apportion source pollution statistics. However, it is agreed that all areas need to be addressed.



6.6 Fylde Peninsula Ten point Action Plan – Update

Measure	Comments	Dates
United Utilities reduce the number of spills from water company assets and reduce flood risk within assets.	United Utilities has completed the Preston Tunnel and the replacement of the long sea outfall at Harrowside. United Utilities is currently constructing a storm water tank at Anchorsholme and has ordered the replacement long sea outfall pipe for Anchorsholme. United Utilities is going to separate surface water at the south of Blackpool and carry out works to take that water out to sea.	The completion date for all United Utilities works is 2020.
Reduce pollution from surface water outfalls and private sewage system.	The Environment Agency has carried out extensive surveys to identify misconnections any pollution from surface water and identified and implemented solutions.	March 2016
Reduce pollution from agricultural land 2 - 10 years.	The Environment Agency is working with farmers in respect of catchment sensitive farming and has delivered extensive improvements with particular emphasis in respect of run off in the rivers Ribble and Wyre. Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) has been working with farmers to improve water quality for over 10 years. In 2016/2017 the dedicated Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFOs) engaged with over 630 farms in the North West, and provided valuable advice on ways in	Annual Review 2016

	<p>which farmers can reduce their impact on water, much of which drains to the North West's Bathing Waters. Catchment Officers offer detailed advice, and bring in experts on Soil Management, Nutrient Planning, and Farm Infrastructure Improvements, to assist and support farmers with taking the next steps.</p>	
Reduce pollution from activities on bathing waters.	<p>Regular beach cleans with volunteers in addition to Council cleaning services. Ban on dogs and campaigns to prevent feeding birds during the bathing season. A bathing water co-ordinators group has been set up to co-ordinate beach management plans.</p>	Ongoing
Work with tourist industry and local business to champion bathing water.	<p>Engagement with local business in particular Merlin to champion and raise awareness also Business Leaders group. Love my beach co-ordinator appointed (Blackpool Council Employee) to promote the Love my beach campaign.</p>	Ongoing
Develop and support community and business initiatives that foster ownership of bathing beaches.	<p>Ongoing with the Love my beach campaign via Keep Britain Tidy Blackpool and Fylde Peninsula have two bathing water Love my beach co-ordinators.</p>	Ongoing
Create 50 hectares of retrofitted sustainable drainage.	<p>A review of the achievability of this action is currently being investigated.</p>	Deleted from the action plan.

Management of surface water from new developments meets current best practice standards.	Planning guidance in draft for Sustainable drainage solutions. Best practice Rigby Road development.	Work is ongoing with Lancashire County Council and utilising experience from other Local Authorities in the preparation of best practice.
Incorporate best practice water efficiency measure in new developments.	Further work with building control to be investigated.	

Turning Tides Action Plan

Measure	Comments	Dates
River basin management plan.	EA and Rivers trusts.	Ongoing
1349 Turning Tides action plan down loads from the web site.		
Work by Blackpool and Defra on adjusting bathing water season lengths.	Complete- review after use.	Closed Defra have identified those bathing waters with reduced samples in season.
Preston tunnel project complete 2014, step change Southport St Annes and St Annes North and Blackpool South and contributed to these water achieving excellent in 2015.	Biennially	January 2016
United Utilities Lancaster city centre March 2015.	Limited relevance to Blackpool, but important for the region.	Complete
United Utilities (UU) Additional storage Fleetwood and optimisation of tunnel system completion ahead of 2015 bathing season.		Complete

Improvement to overflows Wyre estuary completed ahead of 2015 bathing season.		Complete
Pre and post season asset checks and staff briefing and participation in love my beach activities including beach cleans.		Ongoing
Combined Sewer outfall real time warning in place for including Bispham , Blackpool North and Central.		Ongoing
United Utilities coastal model built on river Ribble to improve understanding of potential sources of bacteria.		Complete
United Utilities hosted community at Anchorsholme and Harrowside.	Ongoing- consultation and communication.	Ongoing
Agree catchment sensitive farming at right locations to improve bathing waters.		Ongoing
Information check list for farmers to support bathing water improvements - 280 down loaded from Love my beach web site.	Information on Love My Beach web site.	Ongoing
Bathing water link to basin management workshop in 2015 through NFU and Environment Agency		

Misconnection – connect right links have been promoted across all channels includes 465 downloads from web site.		Ongoing
Love My Beach campaigns www.lovelmybeach.org		
45,891 page views. Most popular ages range 25-34 35% then 18-24 26%. Most popular page is events.		Ongoing
Love my beach download 16279, e.g. education pack, business pack times downloaded.	Funding	Ongoing
Education pledge downloads 757 engaged with campaign.		More work required in education sector.
Full education pack request for education packs via illumination competition 410 entries.		Continue illuminations competition to raise awareness in more schools and education establishments' award.
100 Love My Beach business 571 business pack downloads.		Ongoing
Love my beach have promoted 373 beach clean events and photo competitions for communities, and had 212 entries undertaken successful engagement with catchment partnerships to strengthen understanding of bathing water issues.		Ongoing campaigns

6.7 Results at the end of 2016

- 6.7.1 All of Blackpool's Bathing waters have again passed the Bathing Water Standards with Blackpool South achieving 'excellent' classification for the second year running allowing us to apply to retain the Blue Flag at Blackpool South Bathing Water.

6.8 Short Term Pollution

- 6.8.1 Blackpool Council has engaged with the initiative to apply short term pollution signage at bathing waters when rainfall is expected to be heavy potentially reducing the bathing water quality for short timescales. The advantage is that the public receive additional advice about quality and results can be discounted for providing this advice.

6.9 Awards

- 6.9.1 The results from the 2016 bathing water season mean that Blackpool have again been able to apply for a Blue Flag at Blackpool South along with Seaside Awards for Blackpool Central, Blackpool North and Bispham.
- 6.9.2 Blackpool Council has been recognised Regionally and Nationally by Defra for its attention to the importance of delivery of quality bathing water

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

None

7.0 Legal considerations:

- 7.1 None

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 8.1 Blackpool Council needs to retain the expertise and resource to deliver the statutory duties in respect of bathing waters and ensure it works with its partners in developing and implementing the action plan to maintain the quality of the bathing water.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

- 9.1 None

10.0 Financial considerations:

- 10.1 Funding by partners to Blackpool Council and the Turning Tides Partnership is required to ensure standards continue to be met and campaigns to raise awareness.

11.0 Risk management considerations:

- 11.1 Failure to implement the statutory duties could lead to action from the Environment Agency against Blackpool Council and failure of the bathing water standards resulting in Blackpool having to erect signs advising residents and visitors against bathing in our waters.

12.0 Ethical considerations:

- 12.1 None

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

- 13.1 Blackpool Council chairs both the Turning Tides Partnership and the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership and are now the lead representatives for the Local Government Association (LGA) Coastal Special Interest Group (SIG) at the National Bathing Waters forum which is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency.

14.0 Background papers:

- 14.1 None