

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Clare Nolan- Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnership Investments
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	25 April 2018

## BATHING WATER MANAGEMENT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To provide a basis for the Committee to consider the delivery of the Council's statutory and other duties in respect of bathing water management. The report will provide a brief outline of the various statutory duties including statistics and performance indicators and highlight areas of concerns.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To scrutinise the delivery of the Council's statutory and other responsibilities in relation to bathing water management, note the performance and highlight any areas for further scrutiny.

### 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 BWR 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 BWD 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 BWD.

#### **5.4 Budget Information**

5.4.1 There is no official funding for the delivery of our statutory duties under the BWR. 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. 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 BWD 2006. Unfortunately for 2017/18 and 2018/19 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.

### **6.2 What has changed**

#### **6.2.1 Bathing water predictions in 2011**

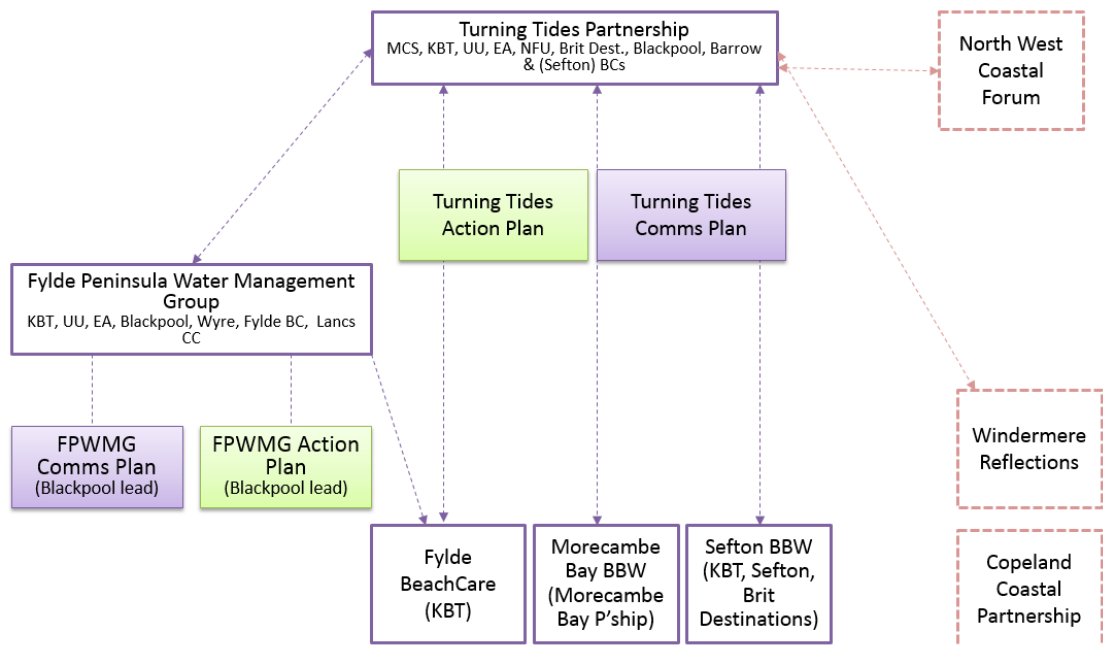
6.2.2 In 2011, it was predicted that seven of the eight bathing waters along the Fylde Peninsula would be poor at the end of the 2015 bathing water season, which would have meant having to erect signage advising against bathing.

6.2.3 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

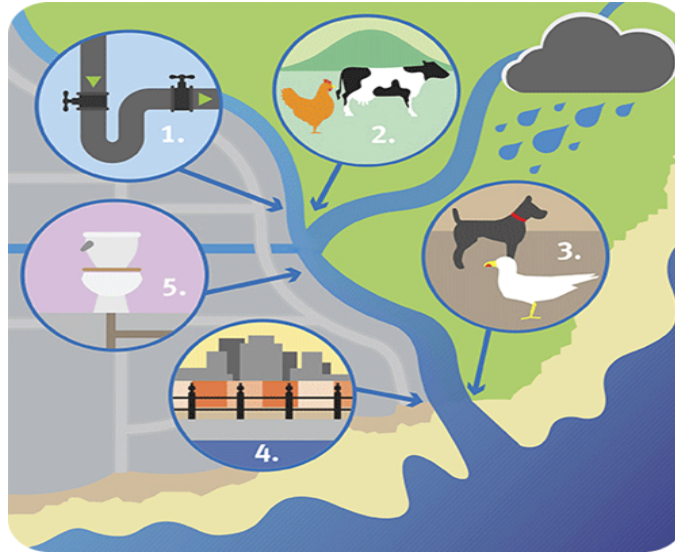
#### 6.3.1 The Governance for the partnerships is detailed below:

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



### 6.4 Challenges

6.4.1 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.



## 6.5 Fylde Peninsula Ten point Action Plan

6.5.1 As reported in previous years Fylde Peninsula Partners continue to meet the majority of planned actions. However one of the original actions is now obsolete and cannot be achieved.

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 has constructed a storm water tank at Anchorsholme and work to install the long sea outfall at Anchorsholme will be complete in 2019. United Utilities separation of surface water at the south of Blackpool will be complete at the end of April 2018	The completion date for all UU 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	March 2016

	implemented solutions.	
Reduce pollution from agricultural land 2 - 10 years.	<p>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 2017/18 the dedicated Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFOs) engaged with over 630 farms in the North West, and provided valuable advice on ways in 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>	Annual Review 2016
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. In particular the emphasis in 2018 will be to address the pollution from birds at Blackpool North bathing water which could be at risk if this is not addressed. Practical measures by</p>	Ongoing

	colleagues in other local authorities which have successfully moved birds to other habitats are being investigated.	
Work with tourist industry and local business to champion bathing water.	Continued engagement with local business in to champion and raise awareness also Business Leaders group. Love my beach co-ordinator appointed via Keep Britain Tidy to promote the Love my beach campaign.	Ongoing
Develop and support community and business initiatives that foster ownership of bathing beaches.	Ongoing with the Love my beach campaign via Keep Britain Tidy Blackpool and Fylde Peninsula and Fylde Beach Care Officer	Ongoing
Create 50 hectares of retrofitted sustainable drainage.	A review of the achievability of this action is currently being investigated.	Deleted from the action plan. Obsolete.
Management of surface water from new developments meets current best practice standards.	Planning guidance in draft for Sustainable drainage solutions. Best practice Rigby Rd development.	Work is ongoing with Planning Departments to ensure that developers provide sustainable solutions to drainage that are not detrimental to bathing water quality
Incorporate best practice water efficiency measure in new developments.	Further work with building control to be investigated.	

## 6.6 Turning Tides

- 6.6.1 Since 2012 £700,000 has been invested into Turning Tides and the associated LOVEmyBEACH campaign by United Utilities and the Environment Agency. This has resulted in a fully collaborative approach from stakeholders to improve the regions bathing waters. In 2016, and then again in 2017, 100% of the 31 bathing waters met the minimum standards with many excelling to Good and Excellent classifications.
- 6.6.2 Individual partners continue to make bathing water improvements which can be shared through the existing Turning Tides network however the partnership is now developing into Phase 2 which encompasses Public Health and the improvements to the economy.

The graphic features a blue wave background. At the top left, the 'Turning Tides' logo is displayed with the tagline 'Unlocking the potential of the North West's bathing water beaches'. To the right, the title 'PARTNERSHIP EVOLUTION' is written in large blue letters, followed by a row of blue chevron arrows pointing right. Below this, three images illustrate the progression: a man holding a water bottle, a person running on a beach, and a crowded beach scene. A blue circular callout on the left states 'The original focus re: BWD'. The bottom section is divided into three columns labeled 'Wave 1', 'Wave 2', and 'Wave 3', each with a corresponding focus area. The 'NATURAL COURSE' logo is at the bottom left.

**Turning Tides**  
Unlocking the potential of the North West's bathing water beaches

# PARTNERSHIP EVOLUTION

The original focus re: BWD

### *Wave 1*

CONTINUING TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY & BEACH CLEANLINESS

### *Wave 2*

USING OUR BEACHES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

### *Wave 3*

USING WATER QUALITY AS A FEATURE WHICH BOOSTS TOURISM & THE COASTAL ECONOMY



**NATURAL**  
OUR WATER. OUR FUTURE  
**COURSE**

## LOVEmyBEACH & Fylde BeachCare

The LOVEmyBEACH campaign is managed by Keep Britain Tidy and supported by all local authorities across the North West coast. In 2017/18 the campaign achieved the following:



Media reach: Over 2.5 million  
Media value: £108,059  
Website visitors: 15,500 (up 30%)  
Social media followers:  
Twitter - 1389, up 32%  
Facebook - 1399, up 37%  
Instagram - 380, up 74%

Fylde BeachCare is the 'on the ground' element of LOVEmyBEACH; advising groups within the community how they can assist with positive changes to bathing water quality and beach cleanliness.

In 2017/18 the BeachCare project achieved the following:

Events/presentations: 21  
Schools visited: 5  
Volunteer hours given: Over 1110  
Estimated litter collected: Over 835 bags

## **6.7 Results at the end of 2017**

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

## **6.8 Short Term Pollution and pollution Risk Forecasting**

- 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.
- 6.8.2 Blackpool Council has engaged with the initiative to apply pollution risk forecasting signage at bathing waters when pollution events are expected or known and will reduce bathing water quality. Results can be discounted for providing this advice.

## **6.9 Awards**

- 6.9.1 The results from the 2017 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.

Blackpool Council has been recognised Regionally and Nationally by Defra for its

attention to the importance of delivery of quality bathing water

No

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

**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