

Report to:	TOURISM, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnership Investments
Date of Meeting:	31 March 2016

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 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 directive 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 “Revised” bathing water directive was introduced in 2006, and provided stricter standards to be adhered to in respect of bathing waters quality, these stricter structures are 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 “Revised” 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 directive. 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 under what is known as the “Revised” bathing water directive.

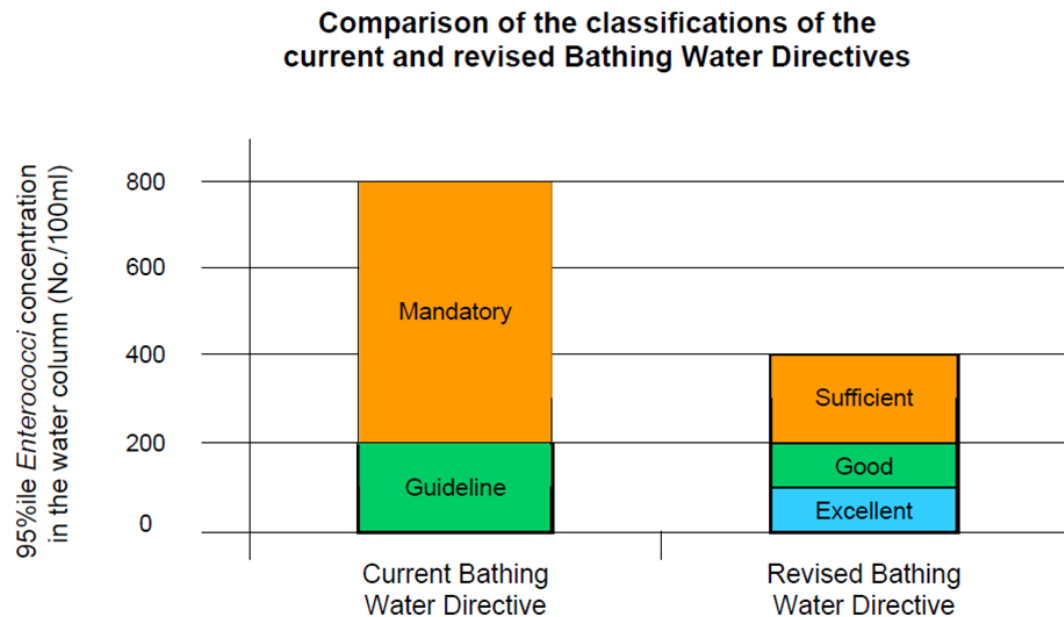
6.0 What is going well/ What is not

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.

6.2 What has changed

6.2.1 The graph below provides a quick indication of the change in standards that have been required to be met by the revised bathing waters standards.



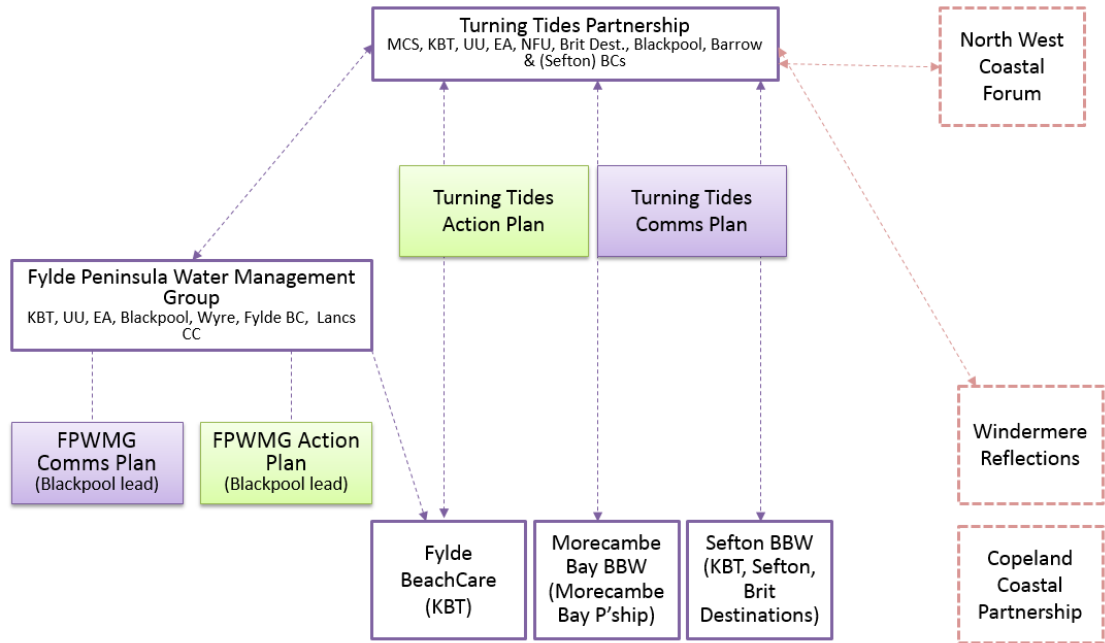
6.3 Bathing water predictions in 2011

6.3.1 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.

6.3.2 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.

6.4 Governance

6.4.1 The Governance for the partnerships is detailed below:



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 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 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	Annual Review 2016
Reduce pollution from activities on bathing waters	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	Ongoing.

Work with tourist industry and local business to champion bathing water	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	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 have two bathing water Love my beach co-ordinators	Ongoing
Create 50 hectares of retrofitted sustainable drainage	A review of the achievability of this action is currently being investigated	
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	Ongoing.
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.	Ongoing

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
UU 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 Central		Ongoing
UU coastal model built on river Ribble to improve understanding of potential sources of bacteria		Complete
UU 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 EA		
Misconnection – connect right links have been promoted across all channels includes 465 downloads from web site		Ongoing
Love my beach campaigns www.lovemybeach.org		
134000 page views 71% visitors new to the site over 60% visitors under 34 years old most popular page is what can I do		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

<p>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</p>		<p>Ongoing campaigns</p>
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6.7 Results at the end of 2015

6.7.1 As a result of all the actions that have taken place in the above action plans and the ability to apply step change particularly as a result of the United Utilities investment and by ensuring we challenged any predicted results the initial predictions highlighted at the start of this report have reversed. In addition seven out of eight bathing waters passed the quality standards at the end of the 2015 bathing season. These results mean that in particular Blackpool will not have to advise against bathing in the 2016 bathing season.

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. 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 Blackpool Council applied for seaside awards in 2014 and 2015 for Blackpool South central and Bispham as it met the required standards for these awards. This year for the first time in Blackpool's history we have been able to apply for the prestigious Blue flag award for Blackpool South and seaside awards for Blackpool Central, 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