

County Councillor Professor Bill Winlow
Chair – Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
PO Box 78
Preston
PR1 8XJ

Our ref: CMBLNC/68
Your ref: SC/EA/JM

Date: 23 March 2015

Dear Professor Bill Winlow,

Scrutiny Committee 13 February 2015

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 2015 following the Lancashire County Council Scrutiny Committee on 13 February 2015. Please note that my letter responds to the two recommendations relating to bathing water quality. The Environment Agency's response to the recommendations concerning the Alt Crossens will be made by Andy Brown and will follow in due course.

1. The Environment Agency provide full data on water quality across the Lancashire Coast

The table shown below provides the classifications for the 13 European designated bathing waters in Lancashire. In 2014 the bathing waters were assessed against two classification systems:

- a) Directive 76/160/EEC concerning the protection of human health and the environment from pollution – the 'old' Directive
- b) Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the management of bathing water quality (as implemented through the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 No. 1675)

The 2014 bathing season was the last time designated bathing waters were classified against the 'old' 1976 Directive. This Directive has now been revoked.

The 2015 bathing season is the first time bathing waters will be officially classified under the 'revised' Directive. For a number of years preceding 2015 the Environment Agency, on behalf of Defra, has predicted the classifications under the revised Bathing Water Directive.

Environment Agency

Gillan Way, Penrith 40 Business Park, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 9BP.
Area Manager – Cumbria & Lancashire – Keith Ashcroft
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

	OLD Bathing Water Directive *	Revised Bathing Water Directive
Bathing Water	2014 classification	2014 predicted classification
Formby	Guideline	Excellent
Ainsdale	Imperative	Sufficient
Southport	Imperative	Good
St Annes	Imperative	Good
St Annes North	Guideline	Good
Blackpool South	Imperative	Good
Blackpool Central	Imperative	Poor
Blackpool North	Imperative	Poor
Bispham	Guideline	Sufficient
Cleveleys	Imperative	Poor
Fleetwood	Imperative	Poor
Morecambe South	Imperative	Sufficient
Morecambe North	Imperative	Sufficient

* Guideline pass is the higher water quality standard

2. That real time monitoring of sewage discharge be introduced all along the Fylde Coast

The Environment Agency's position on real time monitoring is:

- We support information being provided to the public so that they can make informed choices on when and where to bathe.
- We will provide advice to water companies and other bodies to help them establish and maintain 'real-time' warnings of combined sewer overflow (CSO) spills at bathing waters.
- We will encourage partners to take a prioritised and risk-based approach to the issuing of spill warnings.
- While the focus is on CSOs, the approach may be applied to other types of intermittent discharges which may impact on bathing water quality such as storm tank overflows.
- We will not penalise water companies for issuing spill warnings by classifying them as pollution incidents, unless the overflow is operating in breach of the permit.

The actual provision of real time monitoring is provided by the water company, in this case, United Utilities Ltd. As such United Utilities Ltd has provided its response to this recommendation which is provided here:

“United Utilities is committed to extending its real time spill warning system which operates via our own website as well as providing the information to Surfers Against Sewage for use in their app and website. For the 2015 bathing season we plan to have real time spill warning live for 5 of the 8 bathing waters on the Fylde coast (Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Bispham, Blackpool North and Blackpool Central). During this summer we will then investigate the feasibility of extending the warning system to the remaining 3 bathing waters on the Fylde coast (St Anne’s, St Anne’s North and Blackpool South) with a view to having it live for 2016.

In order to set up the system for these bathing waters we will need to work closely with the EA to agree the most appropriate assets to monitor in order to provide a meaningful warning system. We believe the coastal model we have invested in for this part of the coast will provide us with good information with which to set up a meaningful warning system. Finally, I would like to confirm that we will continue to work closely with the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group and will keep them updated on our progress.”

Sarah Jenner, Bathing Water Manager,
Asset Management Directorate
Wholesale
United Utilities

In the meantime if you would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me on 01772 214272 or by email at daniel.bond@environment-agency.gov.uk or at Environment Agency, Lutra House, Dodd Way, Off Seedlee Road, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 8BX.

Yours sincerely

Dan Bond
Environment Manager