

## Update On Bathing Water In Lancashire

Briefing Note - Lancashire County Council Scrutiny Committee

13 February 2015

### Are signs going up on Fylde Bathing Water beaches (specifically signs that close beaches)?

Under the revised EU Bathing Water Directive (rBWD), a bathing water must meet at least the 'sufficient' standard at the end of the 2015 bathing season. If this does not happen, a sign will be posted the following year advising against bathing. Please note this is advice against bathing, not that the beach is closed.

After five consecutive failing years, the water will be de-listed and permanent advice against bathing at that water will be posted.

Using the results we have to date for the Fylde bathing waters we know that Blackpool North will be classified as Poor at the end of 2015. Therefore a sign will need to be placed at this bathing water in advance of the 2016 season. It will need to describe the reasons why the quality is Poor.

It is likely several other bathing waters will also be classified as Poor at the end of the 2015 bathing season and therefore will also need signs advising against bathing.

### What are we doing?

There are a number of actions across the Fylde area designed to improve and raise awareness of the bathing water quality issues:

#### - Partnership Working

Fylde Borough Council, Blackpool Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council are working with the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group (FPWMG) to reduce the pollution that ends up in the sea on the Fylde Coast. In addition they participate on the Turning Tides Partnership set up across the North West.

The LOVEmyBEACH campaign is active in the Fylde area through a local co-ordinator delivering Keep Britain Tidy's BeachCare project working with the FPWMG ([www.lovemymybeach.org](http://www.lovemymybeach.org)). LOVEmyBEACH engages local communities, businesses, schools, farmers and visitors to do their bit for cleaner seas.

#### - Discharges from the local wastewater treatment works

United Utilities (UU) completed a huge programme of improvement work in the Ribble catchment to improve St Annes, St Annes North and Blackpool South bathing waters. A large storage tunnel was completed early in 2014 close to the Preston City Centre (also known as the Preston Tunnels, or the Preston 7) to hold storm water and sewage and reduce overflows to the River Ribble during heavy rainfall. Other improvement schemes included the Preston 32 package of works along with ultra-violet (UV) sewage treatment to significantly reduce bacteria in the water at Blackburn Wastewater Treatment Works. Further storm sewage storage are planned at Preston, Blackburn and Chorley Wastewater Treatment Works under PR14.

Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Bispham, Blackpool North, Blackpool Central and Blackpool South bathing waters are affected by storm sewage discharges as a result of rainfall on the Fylde Coast. We are working with UU to reduce the impact of discharges on bathing water quality, particularly from Chatsworth Avenue, Anchorsholme and Manchester Square Pumping Stations. This work forms a key component of the 'Fylde Strategy' that UU is developing to address bathing water issues we have across the Fylde Coast.

UU recently finished installing ultra-violet (UV) treatment at Garstang Wastewater Treatment Works, and have completed improvements to intermittent discharges in the Poulton area, which will have a positive effect on Fleetwood's bathing water.

### **- Misconnections**

UU are investigating contaminated surface waters across the Fylde, particularly in the Rossall and Fleetwood areas. Where misconnections have been found they are working with householders to correct these.

### **- Local drainage systems**

Schemes are being identified to reduce the amount of clean surface water which enters the combined drainage systems on the Fylde.

### **- Run-off from agricultural land**

Natural England advises farmers on how they can help water quality within the River Ribble and Wyre catchments under Defra's Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative.

### **- Grazing animals on the salt marsh**

This can influence bathing water quality during high spring equinox tides when the animal faeces can be washed off the salt marsh around the Ribble and Wyre estuaries into the water and up on the shoreline. We are setting up a system for 2015 to issue pollution risk forecasts when this happens.

### **- Pollution Risk Forecasting System**

All three coastal local authorities are participating in the pollution risk forecasting system for all bathing waters on the Fylde. Signs are placed at the beach when there is likely to be reduced water quality. This normally takes around 24 to 48 hours to clear. If certain conditions are met, some sample results may be discounted.

## **Further Information**

Please contact Elinor Smith (Environmental Planning Specialist) on 01768 215774, or by e-mail at [inforequests.cmblc@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:inforequests.cmblc@environment-agency.gov.uk).

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