

Report to: Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## Beach & River Water Quality

### Report summary:

Beach & River Water Quality

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That the Committee note the contents of the report.

### Reason for recommendation:

N/A

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
  - A greener East Devon
  - A resilient economy
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## Report in full

Within East Devon there are eight beach bathing waters which, under the 2006/7/EC Bathing Water Directive, have to be assessed and sampled. The Environment Agency sample at each of the bathing water sites on a weekly basis between 15 May and 30 September each year.

The samples are used to quantify the levels of intestinal Enterococci and E.coli. These microorganisms act as indicators for faecal contamination, which may originate from sewage, livestock, wildlife or road drainage. Faecal contamination can have impacts on human health by causing stomach upsets or diarrhoea if swallowed.

The sample results taken over the previous four year period are used to provide a classification of each bathing water. At the end of the 2021 season, the following classifications were given to each bathing water site in East Devon:

Exmouth – Excellent

Sandy Bay (privately owned) - Good

Budleigh Salterton - Excellent

Ladram (privately owned) - Good

Sidmouth Town - Excellent

Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder - Excellent

Beer - Excellent

Seaton – Excellent

The Local Authority has a duty under The Bathing Water Regulations 2013 to provide this information to members of the public, and StreetScene have erected signs to at each bathing water site.

The Environment Agency have also set up a forecasting system to predict reduced bathing water quality at each site during the bathing water season. The forecasting system is based on a rainfall trigger; if the rainfall trigger is likely to be reached, a warning for short-term pollution is issued.

The Local Authority has a duty under The Bathing Water Regulations 2013 to provide the following information to members of the public:

- if short-term pollution is predicted as a result of the forecasting system or actually present, and;
- (if appropriate) to provide information advising against bathing for a recommended number of days.

The Environmental Protection team and StreetScene sourced and erected electronic signs for each of the bathing water sites in East Devon in 2016. The electronic signs are automatically updated daily to display real-time water quality information.

### River water quality.

The Environment Agency are primarily responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of fresh, surface and underground waters within England (and therefore in East Devon).

This is in accordance with the Water Framework Directives, 2000/60/EC, and other EU Directives. The Water Environment Regulations 2017 set out requirements to prevent the deterioration of

aquatic ecosystems; protect, enhance and restore water bodies to 'good' status; and achieve compliance with standards and objectives for protected areas.

Complaints relating to poor river water quality are therefore investigated by the Environment Agency.

The Private Sector Housing team will investigate incidents where a contaminated water course affects a water supply to a domestic or commercial premises which is not connected to the public mains of water companies (these are also known as a private water supply). This may entail provision of advice, risk assessment and sampling to ensure safe, clean drinking water.

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### **Financial implications:**

Investigations of incidents will be funded from the existing budget held by the Private Sector Housing team

### **Legal implications:**

The legal implications are set out within the report and require no further comment.