

Press release: Bathing water investigation continues

Investigations are continuing into the bathing water quality of a popular North East beach.

Cullercoats in North Tyneside is currently rated as 'sufficient', meaning it has passed bathing water quality standards. But work to understand the reasons for its decline in quality from 'good' are ongoing.

On Wednesday (22 August) Environment Agency Chief Executive Sir James Bevan visited the bay to hear about the work being done by the agency and its partners at Northumbrian Water and North Tyneside Council to investigate and understand the issues.

A number of factors can impact on bathing water quality, including the impact of humans, animals and birds, misconnections of pipes going into the sea, and heavy rainfall, which can result in run off from the land going into the sea and causing a temporary drop in seawater quality.

During recent years, the Environment Agency has seen that bathing water quality at Cullercoats deteriorates towards the end of the season. A partnership working group was set up in 2017 to investigate the issues and work has continued throughout this year.

The Environment Agency is carrying out additional monitoring at suspected sources of pollution and further microbial source tracking (MST) which through DNA analysis identifies the sources of bacteria predominantly present in the seawater.

Northumbrian Water is carrying out extensive investigations on the drainage network and is working with partners to resolve any issues found. This has involved checking a previously blocked up culvert owned by North Tyneside Council that was identified as having discharged poor quality water to the beach in 2011. The working group is also investigating potential misconnections from properties discharging into the surface water outlets rather than the sewer.



The Environment Agency's Mick Donkin collecting samples at Cullercoats

'Drastic improvements

The Environment Agency's Gordon Reid, who leads on the Environment Agency's activity in the North East, said:

The North East remains a beacon for bathing water excellence with a real success story of drastic improvements over the past 30 years. In 1988, nearly half of our bathing waters failed to meet mandatory standards, while in the most recent assessment they all passed. We'd encourage people to make the most of our wonderful coastline by getting out and enjoying it!

We work closely with our partners at local authorities and Northumbrian Water to understand what impacts on a particular bathing water's quality and then carry out work to try to improve it, and such work has already taken place here at Cullercoats.

We remain committed to identifying all sources of pollution and a number of investigations are taking place to understand the type of bacteria in the water and where it is potentially coming from. It's important to note that 'sufficient' status still means the bathing water has passed water quality standards.



Partnership working is important

All of the North East's Bathing Waters passed water quality standards in the most recent assessment at the end of last year with 32 out of 34 being rated excellent or good and 2 being rated sufficient.

Compliance is based on the current and previous four years of sample data (a maximum of 80 samples per beach, from 2014 to 2017). The samples are taken by the Environment Agency between May and September each year to assess the bathing waters against the strict regulations.

Northumbrian Water's wastewater director, Richard Warneford, said:

Looking after the environment is at the heart of what we do. We are extremely proud of the contribution we have made to protect and improve our region's stunning coastline through both investment and partnership working and we appreciate the significant impact that beaches have on tourism, the economy and the leisure industry.

Partnership working is particularly important in understanding the issues affecting bathing water quality and to provide the improvements needed".

Across the UK 98.3% of bathing waters tested at over 400 beaches and lakes passed tough water quality standards. Action plans are in place for all bathing waters in need of improvement.

The public have a key role to play in ensuring their local beaches are clean. They can do their bit by ensuring they #binit4beaches and take their litter home with them.

You can check for temporary warnings against bathing, or see the sampling results [online](#)

[Read Mick Donkin's blog on his role as Sampling and Collection Team Leader in the north east and his love of the north east coast!](#)

News story: Exmouth residents invited to tidal defence scheme drop-in event

Exmouth residents will have a chance to learn more about the benefits of the Environment Agency's £12 million tidal defence scheme at a drop-in event next week.

The event is being held on Wednesday 5 September at Ocean on Queens Drive, EX8 2AY between 11am and 8pm.

Rob Butler, project manager for the Environment Agency, said:

We have listened to feedback from the consultation events held in 2015 and 2016. We have designed a scheme that reduces tidal flood risk for many in Exmouth from a 4% chance to 0.5% chance in any given year.

This public exhibition is a great opportunity to come and see the plans we have developed and discuss them with the project team.

The Environment Agency is working in partnership with East Devon District Council to deliver this important scheme.

Councillor Tom Wright, East Devon's portfolio holder for the environment, said:

East Devon District Council is totally committed to working with our partners, the Environment Agency and Devon County Council, to ensure the future flood defences for Exmouth.

This is demonstrated in the urgent works we will be starting next month to reinforce the sea wall near Mamhead slipway. I urge all Exmouth residents to visit the exhibition.

The scheme is being designed and will be built by civil engineering contractor Team Van Oord. It will include:

- Flood embankments and walls between the Withycombe Brook and Imperial recreation ground.
- Raised defences between the Imperial recreation ground and Camperdown Terrace.
- Strengthening the existing seawall, improving drainage for water to drain back out to sea, flood gates and new set-back defences along the landward side of the Esplanade.

Following the public exhibition a planning application will be submitted to East Devon District Council, the local planning authority, in late September. If permission is granted construction will begin early in 2019 and should be complete by 2021.

Press release: PLANS HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD FOR HULL'S £42M TIDAL FLOOD SCHEME

Proposals for a multi-million scheme to protect thousands of properties from flooding from the Humber has been put forward to Hull's planning chiefs.

Planning permission is being sought for a £42 million Humber Hull Frontage Improvement Scheme to improve a 7-8 kilometre stretch of tidal flood defences in the Humber Estuary.

Led by the Environment Agency, the scheme has been designed to better protect 113,000 homes and businesses that are at risk from tidal flooding.

If the scheme gets planning approval, work will start at the end of the year and will be completed by the end of 2020.

Nine sites have been identified as part of the scheme including St Andrew's Quay, Albert Dock and Victoria Dock Village for improved defences.

Contractor BMM JV – a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald – are set to deliver the project which will help improve flood risk along the city's 19 kilometre waterfront.

[Residents can view the detailed plans by visiting Hull City Council's website:](#)

If you have any questions about the scheme please email:
humberhullfrontage@environment-agency.gov.uk

[More information is available on our dedicated web pages:](#)

In the past 65 years, there have been three major tidal events in Hull, the last was in December 2013 when 264 properties were flooded due to the overtopping of the existing defences. During high tides, water levels have the potential to rise to around 1 – 3m above some parts of the city.

Over the last few years, the Environment Agency has reviewed the existing Humber flood defences from Fleet Drain to the west of the city, through Hull, to Lord's Clough in the east. This work has identified the nine sites where work is now being proposed.

Helen Tattersdale, project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

“It is vital for Hull to have improved defences to protect against the potential devastating tidal flooding from the Humber Estuary.

“This investment has enabled us to assess a significant length of the current flood defence walls and embankments that run along the Hull frontage to come up with a scheme that will better protect the city both now and in the future taking into account climate change.”

“Over the past few months, we have been gathering feedback on aspects of the design from local residents and landowners, and other interested organisations including Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Hull City Council which have been taken into account in our proposals.”

These improvements in Hull are supported by a further four kilometres (2.5 mile) of new and raised tidal defences on either side of the city in the East Riding of Yorkshire, at Hessle and Paull, delivered by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in partnership with the Environment Agency.

The Humber Hull Frontage Improvement Scheme is one of a number of tidal flood alleviation projects that form part of the Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy. The Environment Agency and local partners are now in the process of developing an advanced approach to managing flooding in tidal areas by the River Humber for the next 100 years.

It will be a long-term investment that will contribute to securing the viability of Hull and the wider Humber region, ensuring it retains its place as the eastern gateway to the UK economy.

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Press release: Three fined for illegal fishing in the North East

Three people from Teesside have been fined a total of almost £1,500 after Environment Agency officers on Bank Holiday boat patrol with Cleveland Police caught them fishing illegally.

Maria Blyth, 30, and Adam Wakefield, 33, of Newtown Avenue in Stockton, were both fined a total of £270 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing without a licence, fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

In a separate case Thomas Stocker, 25, of Laurel Road in Stockton, was fined £440 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

Their cases were proved in their absence at Hull Magistrates' Court on 9 August.

On Bank Holiday weekend, Saturday 5 May, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were on boat patrol with Cleveland Police on the River Tees, upstream of the Tees Barrage, when they saw Blyth and Wakefield fishing at Bowesfield.

They saw Stocker fishing separately on the same stretch of river.

The fishing close season prevents fishing for coarse fish for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed. It runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive.

Regular partnership work

David Shears, from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Enforcement Team in the North East, said:

These boat patrols are part of the regular partnership work we do with the police to combat both rural and urban fisheries and other environmental crime.

Combining forces in this way allows us to target crime effectively and efficiently in locations where land-based patrols don't allow for easy access.

The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders. This is another example of how working with our partners results in successful court action.

The Environment Agency urges people to report illegal fishing as quickly as

possible by calling the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs from just £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are [available online](#)

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