

Plans set out for two new bathing waters

Two popular swimming areas in the [Isle of Wight](#) and the [River Thames in Oxford](#) could become new bathing water sites under plans set out in consultations today.

Designated bathing waters are coastal or inland waters used by large numbers of people for swimming or paddling and have facilities to promote and support bathing, as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.

If the applications are successful, it means the sites would be monitored regularly during the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September, for bacteria detrimental to human health.

The Environment Agency takes water quality samples throughout the season before sites are classified annually as 'excellent', 'good', 'sufficient' or 'poor' based on an assessment of the level of bacteria in the water.

The area in Oxford under consideration is Wolvercote Mill Stream on the River Thames at Port Meadow, and the area in the Isle of Wight under consideration is East Cowes Esplanade on the north coast of the island.

Local residents, including farmers, businesses and swimming groups, are invited to give their views on the respective sites until 2 March. After three weeks the responses will be reviewed and a final decision will be made by the Environment Secretary.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Bathing waters in England are a success story, with almost 95% achieving 'good' or 'excellent' status last year – the highest since new standards were introduced in 2015. We protect people's health at popular swimming spots across the country by requiring the water quality at those sites to be regularly monitored and improvements made if they don't meet the minimum standard.

It is great to see people getting involved in efforts to increase the number of designated bathing sites and I encourage local residents and swimmers to take part in these consultations so we can have as many views as possible to inform our final decision.

Any surface water can be designated as a bathing water if it is used by a large number of people and meets the requirements for designation. Designation does not indicate that the water quality is of bathing water standard as that is not considered in the assessment. There are currently 419 designated bathing waters in England.

Foreign Secretary flies to Moscow to urge de-escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine

- The Foreign Secretary will say the only way forward is for Russia to deescalate and pursue a diplomatic pathway
- She will make clear that the Kremlin's current strategy is damaging Russian standing and interests
- The Foreign Secretary will also assert the right of Ukraine to self-determination and urge Russia to abide by the international agreements it has already signed up to

Liz Truss will fly to Moscow today to urge the Kremlin to de-escalate and desist its aggression against Ukraine.

The visit is the first by a UK Foreign Secretary in more than four years. During the two-day trip, the Foreign Secretary will meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to make clear that the only way forward is for Russia to cease its aggression and engage in meaningful talks.

She will push for Russia to abide by the international agreements it has already signed up to – including the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, Minsk Protocols, and the Budapest memorandum, which ensures the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine is respected.

The UK is spearheading ongoing diplomatic and deterrence efforts – last week the Prime Minister visited Kyiv, and yesterday he hosted the Prime Minister of Lithuania, Ingrida Šimonytė, and spoke to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte about the situation in Eastern Europe. The Foreign Secretary has also spoken to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, and Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra about the situation on Ukraine's border in recent days.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK is determined to stand up for freedom and democracy in Ukraine. I'm visiting Moscow to urge Russia to pursue a diplomatic solution and make clear that another Russian invasion of a sovereign state would bring massive consequences for all involved.

Russia should be in no doubt about the strength of our response. We have said many times that any further invasion would incur severe costs, including through a coordinated package of sanctions.

Russia has a choice here. We strongly encourage them to engage, de-escalate and choose the path of diplomacy.

This visit follows the announcement last week of legislation for the UK's strongest ever sanctions regime against Russia. The new approach gives the UK unprecedented power to sanction a much broader range of individuals and businesses linked to Russia's strategic interests, leaving those closest to the Kremlin with nowhere to hide.

While in Moscow, the Foreign Secretary will also visit Moscow State University, where she will see first-hand how physics and math lessons are building a generation of future science leaders – a shared interest between Russia and the UK.

[Attorney General launches Review into Unaoil failings at the Serious Fraud Office](#)

Press release

The Attorney General has appointed Sir David Calvert-Smith to lead the Independent review into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil case.



On the day of the Court of Appeal's judgment in the Unaoil case (R. v Akle & Anor [2021]), the Attorney General, Suella Braverman QC MP, commissioned an independent review of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) failings identified in the case, including disclosure failings.

Today, the Attorney General is announcing that Sir David Calvert-Smith will lead this review. Sir David is a former Director of Public Prosecutions and High Court judge who has led several independent reviews including one into racism within the police service. Sir David has previously been named a 'changemaker within criminal justice'.

The Review will look at what went wrong in the Unaoil case and what changes are needed at the SFO to ensure that the failings identified in the judgment cannot happen again, especially in relation to contact with third-parties and disclosure.

The Review will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What happened in this case and why? In particular, the review will assess the two key failings identified in the judgment: a) What occurred as regards SFO contact with third-parties and why; and b) Why did the SFO disclosure failures identified in the Court of Appeal judgment occur?
2. What implications, if any, do the failings highlighted by this case have for the policies, practices, procedures and related culture of the SFO?
3. What changes are necessary to address the failings highlighted by the judgment and any wider issues of SFO policies, practices, procedures or related culture identified by the reviewer?

Sir David will have the support of a small team including the Deputy Chief Inspector of Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (which inspects the SFO), Anthony Rogers. Sir David will aim to report to the Attorney General by the end of May 2022 and the Attorney will update Parliament on his findings and the Government's response.

Commenting on the Review, the Attorney General said:

"I announced this Review on the day of the judgment as it was clear to me that swift action was needed. We must ensure lessons are learned so that the failings we saw in the Unaoil case can never happen again.

"I am pleased to appoint Sir David to lead this important review. Sir David is a former High Court judge and former Director of Public Prosecutions. I am confident he will be forensic and robust."

The full Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

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3rd UK-Philippines Economic Dialogue Joint Press Statement

The Philippines and the United Kingdom convened the 3rd Philippines-United Kingdom Economic Dialogue on 09 February 2022. The virtual Dialogue was led by Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo and Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufils.

With over 75 years of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the United Kingdom, the 3rd Economic Dialogue is the first manifestation of the new Enhanced Partnership agreed by Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. and UK Foreign Secretary Locsin and Secretary Liz Truss in November 2021.

The Dialogue witnessed the shared commitment of both countries to build back better from the pandemic and pursue mutual prosperity in key areas including economic reform, green infrastructure, human development, and digital economy, as well as to deepen cooperation in priority sectors such as manufacturing and innovation.

Further recognizing shared efforts towards boosting bilateral trade and investment, both sides agreed to continue coordination on trade policy, regional trade interests, and multilateral engagement, in addition to a regular dialogue on market access issues and investment opportunities.

Undersecretary Rodolfo remarked:

The United Kingdom is a key trade, investment, and cooperation partner of the Philippines. Given the importance of international collaboration especially in global health response and economic recovery efforts in view of the pandemic, we acknowledge the complementarities that both our countries can capitalize on towards this end,

Ambassador Beaufils also underscored the UK's commitment to deepen inclusive and sustainable economic development ties with the Philippines as well as to explore opportunities for regional opportunities in light of the United Kingdom's conferment as ASEAN Dialogue Partner and the Philippines' role as ASEAN Economic Coordinator for the UK.

The Philippines is a very important and valued partner for us. We are committed to pursuing deeper collaboration with the Philippines and enabling great integration in the ASEAN region. We will do this in areas of common interest, and deliver tangible results to the benefits of both of our countries and their citizens.

Both countries reaffirm the outcomes of the 3rd Economic Dialogue through a Joint Partnership Statement that highlights their commitment to continue working with each other to promote the mutual development of the Philippines and the United Kingdom in various areas and sectors towards post-pandemic economic recovery. These include support for key economic reforms that enable strong bilateral and regional linkages, capacity building, and sharing of expertise and best practices between both countries, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Philippine Development Plan.

[New South Cumbria stretch of the England Coast Path opens](#)

The latest section of the 2,700 mile England Coast Path National Trail will be opened today (9 February) by Natural England, taking in parts of the Lake District National Park and Duddon Estuary.

The new path stretches 11 miles, beginning in Silecroft and finishing at Green Road Railway Station on the western side of the estuary. It completes the Copeland section of the trail, following the opening of the Whitehaven to Silecroft stretch in West Cumbria in 2021.

The newly opened section showcases an incredibly varied landscape, which offers fabulous, uninterrupted views out across the Irish Sea. Visitors can walk through extensive beaches and dunes, taking in the golden Duddon sands, vast areas of wildlife-rich saltmarsh, and the historic town of Millom. The famous Lake District mountains are also visible from the route, whilst the distinctive pudding-bowl fell of Black Combe keeps a close watch over the whole stretch.

Visitor highlights of the 11-mile stretch include:

- Shaw Meadow and Sea Pasture SSSI at Silecroft, part of the Lake District National Park and the UK's most northerly lowland heath famous for its summer orchids.
- A brand-new section of trail between Silecroft and Haverigg.
- Hodbarrow Lagoon RSPB Reserve, a former iron mine famous for its rare nesting seabirds and sea wall walk.
- Millom town, with its industrial, architectural and literature heritage – the poet Norman Nicholson lived in Millom and Wordsworth's Duddon Sonnets include the area.
- The coastal railway, enabling linear walks along this stretch and much of the existing Cumbrian England Coast Path.
- Increased accessibility for all-terrain wheelchairs and walkers with reduced mobility, thanks to improvements in infrastructure.

The Silecroft to Green Road stretch joins Allonby to Silecroft and Walney

Island, bringing the total length of England Coast Path in Cumbria to 81 miles.

Mark Hesketh, Deputy Area Manager for Cumbria at Natural England said:

It is with real pride that we open up this 11-mile section of the England Coast Path today – a welcome addition to the West Cumbrian trail. The new section vastly improves accessibility to this part of the coast for many users”.

There is strong evidence that shows opening up access to the coast attracts more visitors, supports the local economy and brings increased health, wellbeing and nature connections. And what could be better than taking in some of UK’s most impressive countryside visitor hotspots?

Connecting people with nature is a fundamental part of the Government’s 25-year Environment Plan, which the England Coast Path is happy to be a part of.

Minister for Rural Affairs, Lord Benyon, said:

The England Coast Path is greatly improving access to our cherished coastlines, whilst also protecting rare wildlife and habitats. It’s all part of our 25 Year Environment Plan to help connect people across the country with nature.

For the people of Cumbria, as well as the thousands of people who visit this wonderful county every year, I hope this new route will encourage them to venture outdoors and explore the stunning Copeland coastline.

Gill Haigh, Cumbria Tourism’s Managing Director said:

The opening of this latest 11-mile stretch of the England Coast Path is wonderful news for all those who want to experience the stunning beauty of Cumbria’s coastline. Many visitors to our county miss out on all that the coastal areas have to offer by heading straight towards the popular central Lake District locations. This new path will encourage more people to get out and enjoy the wonderfully varied and beautiful landscapes around Millom and the Duddon Estuary.

This section of England Coast Path is funded through grant in aid by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and delivered by Natural England. Establishment works have been carried out by Cumbria County Council.

Once complete it will create a new National Trail all around England's coast, which at 2,700 miles will be the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world.

In addition, a new video will be launched at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd March, where Natural England's North West England Coast Path team will share highlights of the new stretch alongside the Whitehaven to Silcroft celebration event held in St Bees in September.

To sign up for the livestreamed premiere and social media discussion with the team, please email northwest.coastalaccess@naturalengland.org.uk.