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Consultation – summary of responses

Bathing Water Review in Wales 2016

Consultation on the designation of Aberdyfi Rural
Beach, Gwynedd as a bathing water

Date of issue: 10 March 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

Overview

Bathing waters are of value both for the recreational opportunities they provide to the people of Wales and for tourism. They also provide a strong indicator of the overall health of Wales' coastal zones and inland water bodies.

The Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) requires Member States to annually identify all popular bathing areas and to monitor water quality at these sites throughout the bathing season. In Wales the bathing season runs from mid May to the end of September. There are currently 102 designated bathing waters in Wales.

The Directive aims to protect human health by requiring Member States to:

- identify popular bathing waters
- monitor their water quality
- inform bathers about water quality
- and to achieve good water quality at all designated sites over time

Purpose of the Consultation

The aim of the consultation exercise was to seek views about our proposal to designate a new site in Wales as a bathing water. The site, Aberdyfi Rural Beach in Gwynedd, was requested for consideration as a designated bathing water by Gwynedd Council.

Consultation period and distribution

The consultation ran for a period of 6 weeks and closed on 26 February 2016. The consultation was published on the Welsh Government website and sent to a broad range of stakeholders.

Responses received

The Welsh Government received 3 responses to the consultation and the respondents are listed at Annex A of this document. Information was also requested and provided by Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water as part of the consultation process.

All the responses received supported our proposal to designate Aberdyfi Rural Beach as a bathing water for the 2016 bathing season. No objections were received.

The Marine Conservation Society's response supported the designation of all appropriate waters used by bathers, identifying the importance of good quality bathing water for protecting public health, contributing to tourism, to the economy and for protecting our marine environment. They also acknowledged that the 'designation will allow for the appropriate monitoring of Aberdyfi Rural Beach which is well used during the bathing season and will ensure that vital information on water quality is made available to the public. In addition monitoring will ensure that any sources of pollution are identified and will provide a regulatory framework to facilitate any improvements needed in the future'.

An additional point was also made by the Southern Snowdonia Local Access Forum, calling for suitable toilet facilities to be provided and appropriately funded for all beaches which

have been designated as a bathing water, however, the provision of such facilities at beaches is usually a matter for the Local Authorities.

Response to comments received

Following full consideration of all responses received and information and evidence provided, the Welsh Government is satisfied that Aberdyfi Rural Beach has met the criteria as set out in regulation 3(2) of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. Therefore, the Welsh Government has taken the decision to identify Aberdyfi Rural Beach as a designated bathing water for the 2016 bathing season. The Welsh Government will notify the European Commission of the decision.

Where a surface water is identified as a bathing water, Natural Resources Wales is required to produce a detailed profile and monitoring programme, as it does for each bathing water in Wales. Bathing water profiles include a description of the bathing water and surrounding area, any rivers and streams feeding into each site and details about how they will manage pollution at the site. These profiles also set out bathing water quality compliance results and explain the work they are undertaking with other agencies to identify where water quality improvements are needed. This includes working with water companies and local authorities to identify problems that could affect bathing water quality.

In addition, every local authority which controls a bathing water must ensure that detailed information about the bathing water is available in an easily accessible place in the near vicinity of the bathing water during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September).

From the 2016 bathing season, local authorities that control a bathing water will also be required to display further information in the form of water quality classification symbols at designated bathing waters in Wales.

De-designation of bathing waters

No requests were received for de-designation of bathing waters in Wales for the 2016 bathing season.

Next Steps

We will advise Natural Resources Wales of the Welsh Ministers' decision to designate Aberdyfi Rural Beach as a bathing water and ask them to prepare a bathing water profile for this bathing water and to keep this under review.

We will amend the Bathing Water Regulations 2013, to reflect these changes. The Welsh Government would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation on the 'Review of Bathing Waters in Wales 2016'.

Annex A

List of respondents

The Marine Conservation Society

Southern Snowdonia Local Access Forum

Water Health Partnership for Wales Bathing Water Group