



**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement
 and Infrastructure Management
 The Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel
 6th October 2021 @ 10am**

Pollution Control & Private Sector Housing - Water Pollution

Purpose	To brief the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel Wednesday 6 th October 2021 at 10am
Content	An overview on water pollution actions undertaken by the Pollution Control & Private Sector Housing Division
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information provided and give views
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Delivery and Operations.
Lead Officer & Report Author	Tom Price – Senior Environmental Health Officer. Team Leader Sam Naylor – Pollution Control Officer Pollution Control and Private Sector Housing Tel: 01792 635600 E-mail: pollution@swansea.gov.uk

1. Bathing Water In Swansea Council

- 1.1 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) collects detailed scientific data on the cleanliness of our bathing waters (mostly beaches) every year between May and September. Detailed reports are available for bathing water quality data on the NRW website
<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/water-management-and-quality/water-quality/bathing-water-quality/?lang=en>
- 1.2 Our coastal waters are hugely improved by large and sophisticated treatment schemes. We monitor water quality to protect public health using standards set in a European Directive transposed to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.
- 1.3 The standards protect public health but recognise that seawater is a natural variable environment. Bad weather will result in higher numbers of bacteria.

- 1.4** Gower beaches easily pass the standards but Swansea Bay is a little more complex.
- 1.5** In order to protect public health and avoid a detrimental effect on tourism, the Pollution Control team participated in a multi-agency, EU-funded project called 'Smart Coasts' which was a Wales/Ireland cross border programme.
- 1.6** In 2011, intensive sampling of seawater from the Designated Sample Point (opposite the Guildhall Slip) on Swansea Bay and various inputs into the Bay and monitoring of other environmental parameters, such as solar radiation, was carried out. This data enabled the development of a prediction model for Swansea Bay in real time. The model predicts the mean bacterial concentration, which determines the water quality in health terms. This information can be passed to the public so an informed decision can be made about whether to swim.
- 1.7** This approach protects public health and improves compliance with the standards.
- 1.8** During the summer we display water quality information for Swansea Bay on signs by the Slip. Results are updated hourly between 8am and 8pm. The water quality can change throughout the day depending on sunlight, wind direction, river flows and the tide.
- 1.9** The results are also broadcast via our Twitter account. To get up to date information simply follow us @SwanseaBayWater.
- 1.10** This season we have carried out a pilot trial using Robotic Process Automation technology. The 'Robot' is trained to use the same rules a human would follow if they were doing the process manually which means the system can run with minimal manual intervention. This method of running a Bathing Water Prediction model is the first in Wales and could be rolled out to other areas in the future.
- 1.11** The Pollution Control team carries out weekly sampling at Rhossili and Broughton Bay, two non-designated bathing waters (surface waters that have not been identified by Welsh Government, for example, as not having large number of bathers) throughout the bathing season, this data is shared with NRW.

2. Water Pollution - Incidents

2.1 The Pollution Control & Private Sector Housing Team provides a 24-hour response for water related incidents.

2.2 Incidents can include:

- Oil spills at sea
- Fuel oil spills on land
- Sewage issues relating to cesspits/septic tanks
- Drainage misconnection issues
- Construction sites.

2.3 Officers have developed a very good working relationship with colleagues in the local NRW Team over many years and collaborative approaches are taken during investigations where regulatory cross over may occur.

3. Water Quality

3.1 River Tawe - The Team operates and maintains the aeration system, within the river due to the Barrage, during the summer months to assist mixing within the water column for dissolved oxygen and salinity concentrations. Sampling is also undertaken at other locations on the Tawe for events and at the request of other internal departments.

3.2 Private Drinking Water Supplies - The Team carries out risk assessments and monitoring of private water supplies (supply of water not from a water undertaker or licensed supplier) in line with The Private Water Supplies (Wales) Regulations 2017. There are approximately 125 known private water supplies in the Local Authority area.

3.3 Swimming Pool samples - The Team monitors the water quality of the Council-managed pools and a few private quarterley.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Revenue to fund the existing monitoring set out in this report is contained within existing budgets. Additional interventions would require additional funding opportunities and would need to be assessed individually.

