

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

# **Consultation on the proposal to remove Staithes from the list of designated bathing waters**

## **Summary of responses**

**January 2016**

## Background

Bathing waters are popular beaches and inland waters that attract a large number of bathers and have been designated under the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC). Water quality is tested during the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September, for compliance with the Directive's standards. The objective is to protect bathers' health against faecal pollution.

Scarborough Borough Council applied in January 2015 for Staithes to be removed from the list of designated bathing waters on the grounds of low usage for bathing.

On 10 August 2015 Defra launched an informal consultation by publishing the evidence for de-designation on its website and emailing it to key stakeholders. The consultation ran until 30 September 2015.

## Analysis of responses

We received 207 individual responses and 80 using wording from a campaign opposing de-designation.

Of the individual responses:

- Five were in favour of de-designation
- 202 opposed de-designation

Most responses focused on water quality. One of the responses in favour of de-designation commented on the negative publicity that would result from poor water quality and failure of standards.

148 of the respondents who opposed de-designation commented on the proposal:

- 119 commented on water quality and its impact on public health and/or the environment
- 66 refer to usage for swimming, paddling, surfing and other activities, either by themselves or their families or by others

## Water quality

Since the consultation water quality at Staithes has been classified as Poor, based on the 2012 – 2015 data set.

## Final decision

The application followed Scarborough Council's beach usage survey, which was carried out over 20 days at weekends or during school holidays between 21 August – 5 October 2013. The total number of beach users counted was 6346, of whom 35 were swimmers and 362 were paddling. The main findings of the survey were:

- On average, there were fewer than two people per day swimming in the water;
- The average number of people paddling in the water was 18 per day;
- There was an average of 320 beach users (including bathers and paddlers) per day.

Although the beach attracts a large number of visitors, the number of people bathing is very low. Staithes will be removed from the list of bathing waters before the 2016 bathing season on the grounds of low usage for bathing.

## The way forward

The European Commission will be notified of the decision when the annual bathing water inventory is submitted before the beginning of the bathing season.

## Annex A: list of respondents

Marine Conservation Society

Surfers Against Sewage

285 private individuals



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