

Consultation on the removal of Heysham Half Moon Bay from the list of designated bathing waters

Summary of responses

1. Introduction

1.1 Beaches and inland lakes that attract a large number of bathers are designated as bathing waters under the Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC, revised by 2006/7/EC) and water quality is tested during the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September. The objective is to protect bathers' health against faecal pollution.

1.2 Under the current Bathing Water Directive, low usage is the only reason that is accepted for a beach or lake to be removed from the list of bathing waters. After the revised Directive is fully implemented in 2015, any bathing water that receives five consecutive Poor classifications will be removed from the list and will no longer be monitored. There will be a legal requirement for signage to be put in place warning the public that the site is no longer a bathing water.

1.3 Lancaster City Council applied in February 2013 for Heysham Half Moon Bay to be removed from the list of designated bathing waters. The application was based on low usage for bathing and on the risk that the beach may be classified as Poor for five consecutive bathing seasons after the provisions of the revised Directive come into effect in 2015. This risk has not been taken into account in considering the application because the provisions of Directive 76/160/EEC are still in force.

1.4 On 28 February 2013 Defra launched an informal consultation by publishing the evidence for dedesignation on the website and emailing it to five key stakeholders. The consultation ran until 12 April.

2. Analysis of responses

2.1 Three responses were received.

2.2 Two responses commented on water company plans that are in place to improve water quality at Heysham Half Moon Bay and at other bathing and shellfish waters in the area.

2.3 One response commented on the intention expressed in the application and related local consultation for the beach to be removed from the list of bathing waters before the provisions of the revised Directive come into force, when it would risk receiving a Poor classification. The respondent has been reassured that Defra has not taken this into account in considering the application and has accepted our reassurance.

3. Final decision

Heysham Half Moon Bay will be removed from the list of sites designated under the Bathing Water Directive because of very low usage for bathing.

4. The way forward

Water quality monitoring will cease with immediate effect and signage describing the beach as a European bathing water will be removed. 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

| List of Respondents |
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| Marine Conservation Society |
| Ofwat |
| United Utilities |

April 2013.