



Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
27 January 2022

## ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Key Decision [No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

### **Presentation from Southern Water on issues relating to bathing water quality and the provision of other services**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report provides some background information to assist the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) in scrutinising the Adur and Worthing bathing water quality results and other Southern Water services. Officers from Southern Water will be attending this meeting to present further information on these issues.

##### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That JOSC note the presentation from Southern Water on bathing water quality results and the work being undertaken for the provision of other water Services; and
- 2.2 That JOSC ask questions of Southern Water on the presentation and the progress being made to maintain quality bathing water and the provision of other services and make appropriate comments or recommend suggested action to Southern Water for its consideration.

### **3. Context**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 30 January 2020, JOSOC received a report and presentation from Southern Water on the results of the 2019 Adur and Worthing bathing water monitoring and were advised that the target for achieving an 'excellent' bathing water quality for Worthing would be 2021/22 based on the assessment of the data over a four year period. JOSOC, therefore, decided to add this matter to its Work Programme for 2021/22 and consideration at this meeting. It is anticipated that the bathing water quality results will be released shortly before this meeting and details reported to JOSOC.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 14 October 2021, JOSOC also received a scrutiny request which was added to the Work Programme which asked the Committee to review the performance of Southern Water, how it provides services and plans for improved infrastructure and meeting the needs of residents, particularly in areas of new developments where demand was set to increase.
- 3.3 To recognise the importance of the issue, the Councils Strategic vision - *'Platforms for our Places - Going further 2020 - 2022'* includes a commitment to improve water quality and as part of this there is an aim to obtain and maintain 'blue' flag status for the foreshore areas.

### **4. How the Councils are working together with Southern Water**

- 4.1 The Public Health & Regulation (PH&R), Beach Office and Building Control Teams continued to meet with Southern Water and the Environment Agency during 2021. These meetings were to highlight any bathing water quality issues needing action from any party. Misconnection work in Worthing was completed by PH&R, Building Control and Southern Water. This resulted in some training being provided to Council Officers to help identify misconnections in new developments. To date no further misconnections have been identified. The next meeting is due in February.
- 4.2 Additional dog signage was provided by PH&R along Worthing promenade to highlight the dog exclusion zone operating between May and September and attempt to improve compliance, thereby hopefully improving water quality.
- 4.3 The Councils also worked with Southern Water and other Councils on the [Beauty of the Beach](#) campaign. This aims to educate the public about what they can do to improve bathing water quality and provide relevant statistics on water quality.

## **5. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1 The JOSC Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, Southern Water and relevant Council Officers have been consulted on the contents of this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Councils have the power to do anything to facilitate or which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.
- 7.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a Local Authority to do anything that individuals generally may do (subject to any current restrictions or limitations prescribed in existing legislation).
- 7.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 7.4 JOSC has no direct legislative control over the work of Southern Water but can review other issues that impact on the Adur and Worthing communities. The water industry is regulated by independent bodies, each with a specific area of responsibility and expertise - The Drinking Water Inspectorate, the Environment Agency, Consumer Council for Water, Natural England and Ofwat.

## **Background Papers**

Report to JOSC on 30 January 2020 and relevant minutes  
Platforms for our Places: Going Further 2020-2022 - Platform 3 - Tackling climate changes and supporting our natural environment

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Issues relating to bathing water quality and provision of water services and infrastructure can have a significant impact on economic development long term.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

The quality of bathing water and the provision of sufficient water services can impact on social value.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

The quality of bathing water, the protection of beaches and overall service water provision is important for the protection of the environment and links directly with the overall aim in 'Platforms for our Places: Going further' which seeks to improve water quality and achieve blue flag status for the beaches.

### **4. Governance**

Matter considered. JOSOC does not have direct legislative responsibility for scrutinising or regulating the work of Southern Water, however, JOSOC can review other issues which impact on the Adur and Worthing communities and make recommendations or requests direct to Southern Water or the relevant regulators if appropriate.