

Place Scrutiny Meeting

1st April 2026

Vale of Glamorgan and Natural Resource Wales – Bathing Water Quality Project Partnership Agreement Update



Background Bathing Water Regulations

- Bathing Water Regulations 2013 introduced a classification system with stringent water quality standards and put an emphasis on providing information to the public.
- Members are reminded that previous reports brought to Scrutiny in relation to bathing water quality provided background and insight into ongoing work around investigations by NRW and Welsh Water in terms of future investment and improvements.
- NRW have established the South-Central Bathing Waters Project (SCBWP) to address poor water quality at Ogmore by Sea and Watchhouse Bay.
- Members were made aware of specific project for Barry Beaches, namely Jackson's and Whitmore and this report has formalised the partnership between VoG/ NRW on this work



Background Bathing Water Classifications

- The Vale of Glamorgan has **eight designated** bathing beaches, the highest concentration in Southeast Wales.
- Bathing water quality is vital for public health, environmental protection, and the local economy, especially tourism around Barry Island and other coastal resorts and destinations.
- Bathing water classifications for the 2025 season have been provided by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in accordance with the Bathing Water Regulations.
- Based on monitoring data collected over the 2025 bathing season and the preceding seasons, where appropriate –

Beach	2025 classification	2024 classification
Penarth Beach	Good	Good
Jackson's Bay Barry Island	Good	Good
Whitmore Bay Barry Island	Good	Good
Cold Knap Barry	Excellent	Excellent
Watch House Bay	Poor	Sufficient
Col-Huw Beach (Llantwit Major)	Excellent	Excellent
Southerndown/ Dunraven Bay	Excellent	Excellent
Ogmore-By-Sea	Poor	Poor



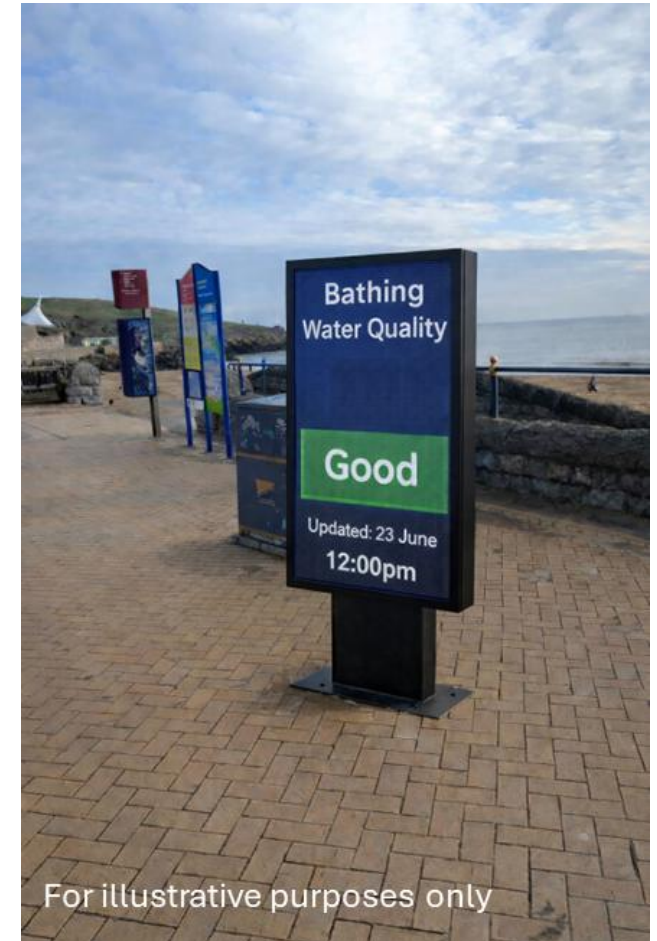
Background to Project

- In 2023 initial partnership project between NRW and the Council commenced to develop a real-time water quality prediction tool to help provide water quality information to bathers at two of the designated beaches in Barry, namely Jackson's Bay and Whitmore Bay.
- Project has been **funded by Welsh Government** -
- Phase I commenced during the 2023 bathing season, a detailed water sampling program was completed on Jacksons and Whitmore beaches
- The detailed water analysis was utilised with meteorological data, such as rainfall, UV radiance and river level data etc to develop detailed statistical models for the beaches - enables prediction of water quality.
- Project is now due to progress into **Final phase** to develop fully automated water quality prediction system and displays



Partnership Agreement

- The objective of the partnership agreement is to bring the models into operation through the development of an automated system and display the outputs to the public using electronic signage .
- The automation system, will provide a pollution risk forecast during the bathing season (15th May-30th Sept).
- System will be linked to electronic display screens to be installed at the seafronts at the beaches and published online to notify the public of the most recent pollution risk forecast water quality status
- VoG is to procure the automation system including the design, development, testing, implementation, and support of signage.



Partnership Agreement - Outcomes and Benefits



Introducing pollution risk forecasting in Barry will inform beach management decisions and provide timely water quality advice to the public to enable them to make an informed decision whether to swim

It will provide resilience to the overall bathing water classifications through discounting of a sample in certain conditions when a warning of predicted poor water quality is given to people, under strict guidelines set in the legislation

Provide resilience to Bathing Water Classifications at these two beaches

Anticipated that work will be completed during 2026 Bathing Water Season – Subject to procurement timelines