



Our coastline gets another water quality boost

Tuesday 8th November 2016

Bathing waters in Southend have been given another thumbs up for water quality with seven out of our eight beaches now being rated as 'Excellent' and 'Good.'

The [results](#) released by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) come after stricter EU legislation for bathing water quality were introduced in 2014

Four of our eight bathing waters are now ranked 'Excellent', which is a marked improvement from 2014 when only one was judged at that level. A further three are rated as 'Good'.

In 2016, Jubilee Beach has improved from 'Sufficient' to 'Good', but Leigh Bell Wharf has moved from 'Good' to 'Sufficient.' Work is underway with partners to identify the reasons for this and action will be taken accordingly.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has been working with Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and other local groups as well as businesses and residents for the past three years to improve the bathing waters and this work continues.

The water quality news follows the award of the prestigious Blue Flag to three of Southend's beaches (East Beach/Shoebury Common/Thorpe Bay) this Summer, and all seven receiving the Seaside Award. Only two local authority areas in the country, Cornwall (19) and Torbay (13) received more awards, and of seven new blue flags awarded across the country this year, Southend-on-Sea scooped three of them.

Tourism is worth £380m for Southend's economy and our beaches and coastline is clearly a large draw to our six million annual visitors. The importance of clean bathing water therefore is vital to our 'offer as seaside town. Just two years ago, only one of our bathing waters was rated 'excellent' and now we have four which is a great achievement.

To maintain our ratings this year is extremely encouraging and a testament to the effective joint working between the Council, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to improve infrastructure and tackle pollution head-on.

That said, we recognise that the result at Leigh Bell Wharf has gone down and although still sufficient, we want to raise that back to good. Therefore we will not rest on our laurels and will continue to work with our partners on projects to identify the issues and deal with them.

Regan Harris from Anglian Water said: "We're delighted to see many of the beaches and bathing waters around Southend are rated as 'Excellent' or 'Good' in this year's results.

“The improvement in Southend is marked and a testament to the hard work that has taken place by all partners – Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, the Environment Agency and ourselves. And with the £3million scheme we’ve already started, we hope we’ll get more bathing waters become ‘Excellent’ in the future.

“Caring for the coast is hugely important to us as a business, we want our customers and visitors to enjoy cleaner seas. We know the quality of our bathing waters and coastline underpins the important tourism economy in Southend and, that’s why we want all bathing waters to be excellent in our region.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Table below shows the water quality improvement since 2014

BATHING WATER	2016 RESULT	2015 RESULT	2014 RESULT	2016 BLUE FLAG	2016 SEASIDE AWARD
Shoebury East Beach	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Yes	Yes
Shoeburyness	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Yes	Yes
Thorpe Bay	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Yes	Yes
Jubilee Beach	Good	Sufficient	Sufficient		Yes
Three Shells	Good	Good	Good		Yes
Westcliff Bay	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent		Yes
Chalkwell	Good	Good	Sufficient		Yes
Leigh Bell Wharf	Sufficient	Good	Sufficient		Yes