



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Applications for the designation of 13 sites as bathing waters

February 2026

We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Defra is a ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies.



© Crown copyright 2026

This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/defra

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Bathing Waters Team
Defra
Ground Floor
Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Contents

Purpose of this consultation.....	1
Background	1
What designation as a bathing water means	1
Information applicants are asked to provide	2
Taking environmental impacts into account.....	2
Responding to this consultation.....	3
Proposals for bathing water designation	4
1. Little Shore, Amble, Northumberland	4
2. Newton and Noss Creeks	6
3. Canvey Island Foreshore	8
4. Sandgate Granville Parade Beach.....	10
5. Queen Elizabeth Gardens Salisbury	12
6. East Beach at West Bay, Bridport.....	14
7. Pangbourne Meadow	16
8. River Fowey in Lostwithiel.....	18
9. River Swale in Richmond, North Yorkshire	20
10. Falcon Meadow, Bungay	22
11. River Thames at Ham and Kingston.....	24
12. New Brighton Beach (East), Wallasey, The Wirral	26
13. River Dee, Sandy Lane, Chester	28
Annex - List of consultees	30

Purpose of this consultation

Through this consultation, Defra is seeking as wide a range of views as possible to support our decision on whether the 13 proposed sites which have been submitted to Defra should be added to the list of designated bathing waters in England. This is in line with the requirements of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 (the ‘Regulations’), as amended in 2025, and the application criteria and evidence requirements published at [Bathing waters: apply to designate or de-designate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bathing-waters-apply-to-designate-or-de-designate).

This consultation document summarises the evidence that has been provided by the applicant for each site and seeks your views on the proposal to designate these sites as a bathing water.

Background

What designation as a bathing water means

Popular beaches and inland waters that attract a large number of bathers, and have infrastructure or facilities provided which promote bathing at those waters, can be designated as bathing waters under the Regulations.

Designating a site as a bathing water means the site will benefit from a new programme of water quality monitoring by the Environment Agency (the ‘EA’), with a focus on working with partners collaboratively to identify any sources of pollution and to put in place actions to address these issues, aiming to bring social, economic, leisure and health benefits to areas.

During the general bathing season, which in England is between 15 May to 30 September, the EA monitors water quality for bacteria including intestinal enterococci and *E. coli*. Bathing water monitoring measures these bacteria as set out in the Regulations but does not imply that the area is safer than any other water body. The EA determine a sampling point based on where the largest number of bathers use the water. Information regarding the site published on gov.uk reflects the bathing water quality at this point.

Under the Regulations, the local authority must display public information about water quality and pollution sources at designated bathing waters during the bathing season. The information displayed is provided to the authority by the EA.

Bathing waters are classified annually as ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘sufficient’ or ‘poor’, based on the EA assessment of the level of bacteria in the water over the preceding four years.

Information applicants are asked to provide

Applicants are asked to provide specific information to evidence that a site meets the requirements for designation as a bathing water, as set out in the Regulations:

- a map or Ordnance Survey grid references showing the boundaries of the exact area or river stretch where most people bathe
- a letter of support for designation from the local authority (and each landowner, if the land is privately owned)
- information about toilet facilities up to 500m from the site
- user surveys recording the number of bathers on 2 days when the site is at its busiest during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September), taken in the same year that the application is submitted
- photographs of the site when you counted the number of bathers
- results from a local consultation about the proposal to designate the site as a bathing water. These should get views from local people, businesses and organisations about the proposed designation. The consultation must be open during the bathing season in the same year that the application is submitted, for at least 6 weeks.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bathing-waters-apply-for-designation-or-de-designation>

Taking environmental impacts into account

Some of the sites covered in this consultation sit within, or are adjacent to, areas that are regulated under different pieces of environmental legislation. Where this is the case, it is highlighted in the 'location' section.

As part of this consultation exercise, we have consulted directly with Natural England to seek their views on any potential environmental impacts that should be considered, but all respondents are invited to share their views on this specific issue.

Responding to this consultation

We would welcome your views on the proposal to designate any of these sites as a bathing water.

In your response please state:

- Which site(s) you are providing your view on
- Do you agree or disagree with the proposed designation(s)
- Your reasons or evidence to support your view
- Whether you think there are facilities or infrastructure at or near the proposed designation(s) to promote bathing at the site
- What facilities or infrastructure you think would be required at or near the proposed designation(s) to promote bathing at the site

Please respond by 23 March 2026 via Citizen Space:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/13-proposed-bathing-water-sites/>

You can also respond by email at bathingwater@defra.gov.uk or by post at:

Bathing Waters Team
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2 Marsham Street
Ground Floor
Seacole Building
London
SW1P 4DF

Proposals for bathing water designation

1. Little Shore, Amble, Northumberland

The Coquet River Action Group has applied for the area of Little Shore to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image A, is located in Amble, Northumberland. The address for the site is Little Shore, Amble, Northumberland, NE65 0AS.

This site is:

- within Northumbria Marine Special Protection Area (SPA).
- immediately adjacent to Northumbria Coast Ramsar and SPA and Northumberland Marine SPA.
- 300m from the North Northumberland Dunes Special Area of Conversation (SAC).
- adjacent to the Northumberland Shore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within 300m of the Warkworth Dunes and Saltmarsh SSSI, River Coquet SSSI and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.
- immediately adjacent to Coquet to St Marys Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and Berwick to St Marys MCZ.

Image A:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 6 July 2025 and 9 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 133 bathers on 6 July 2025
- 162 bathers on 9 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 148 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public car parks
- RNLI boat house and coast guard station
- 8 beach huts
- 6 life belts positioned around the area, including on the pier
- Defibrillator
- Train and bus links
- Picnic benches, seating and litter bins
- Recreation Park for children
- Cafes, restaurants and retail shops.

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 14 weeks. There were 553 respondents. 540 respondents supported the proposal. 4 respondents opposed and 9 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

2. Newton and Noss Creeks

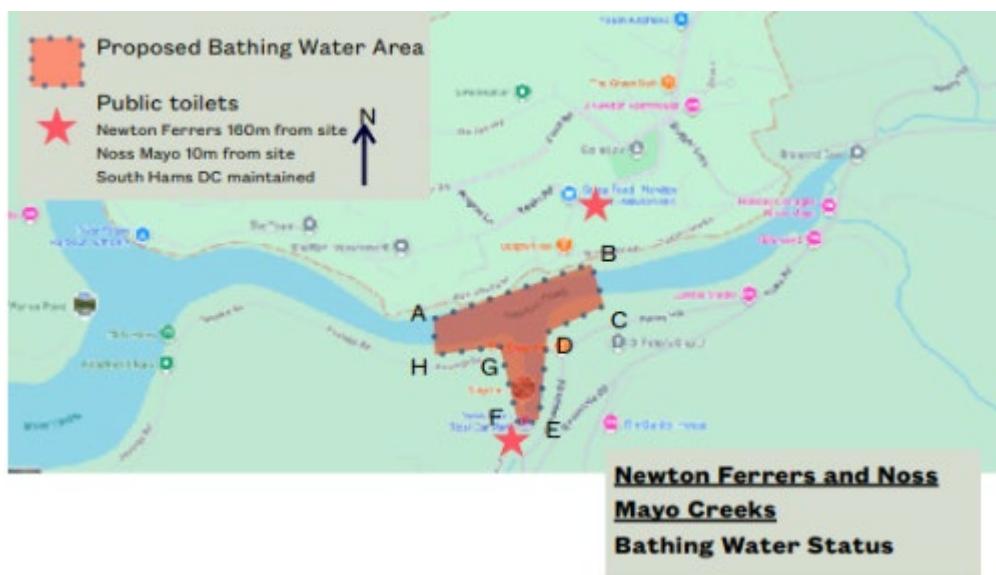
The Newton and Noss Bathing Water Status Steering Group has applied for an area of the River Yealm to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image B, is located in Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo Creeks. The address for the site is the body of tidal water between “The Brook” Riverside Road West, Newton Ferrers, Plymouth PL8 1AD and Pope’s Quay, Pillory Hill, Plymouth PL8 1EE.

This site is within the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image B:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 23 August 2025 and 24 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 156 bathers on 23 August
- 185 bathers on 24 August

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 171 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Parking Facilities
- Bus stops
- Bicycle racks
- Step free access and steps with handrails into the water
- Changing Facilities
- Lifeguards
- Lifebuoy on Pope's Quay and Yealm Yacht Club
- First Aid
- Lifebuoy on Popes Quay
- Defibrillators

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation, reaching a large number of people by using emails, letters, Facebook, posters, parish and coastal links magazines and local WhatsApp groups to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 7 weeks. Of those who expressed a view, 57 respondents supported the proposal, with 3 respondents neither supporting nor opposing the proposal. No respondents opposed the proposal.

3. Canvey Island Foreshore

Castle Point Borough Council has applied for an area of Canvey Island Foreshore to be designated as a bathing water.

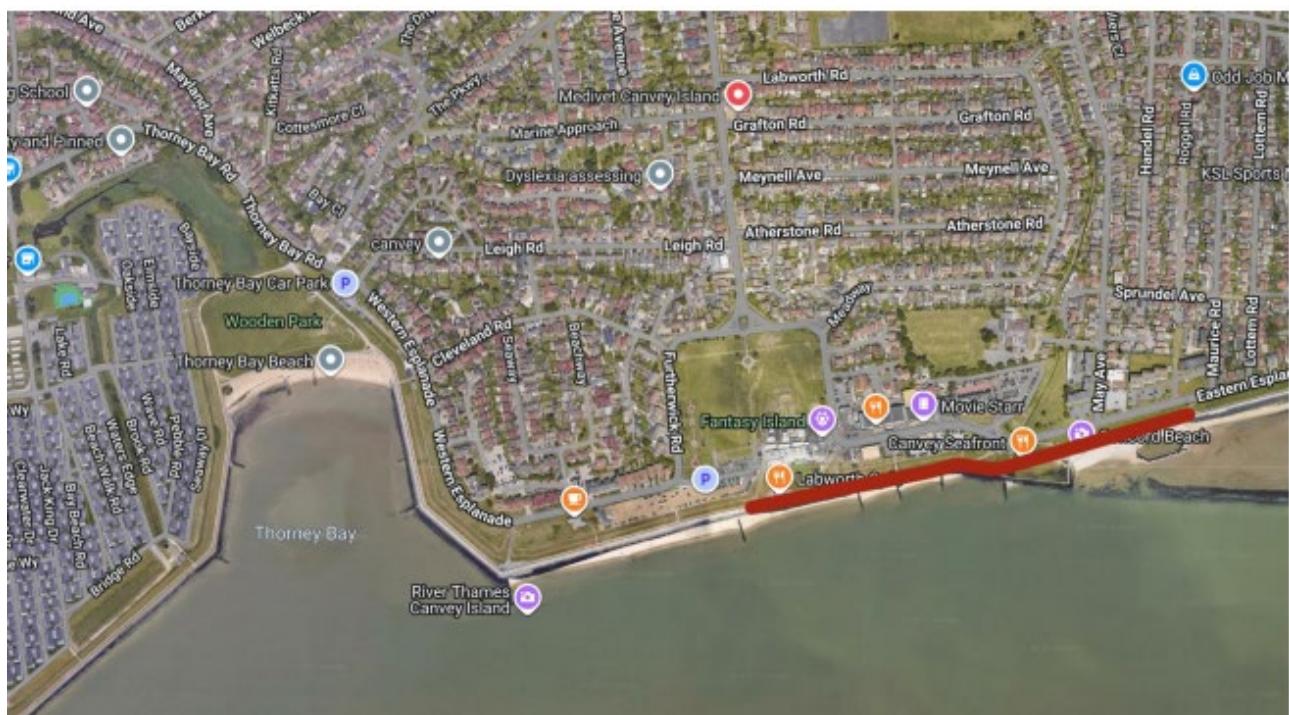
Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image C, is located in Canvey Island, Essex. The address for the site is Concord Beach Eastern Esplanade through to Thorney Bay Beach Western Esplanade, Canvey Island Essex, SS8 7HG.

This site is:

- within 1.6km of Benfleet and Southend Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within 1.6km of Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA).

Image C:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 13 August 2025 and 24 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 287 bathers on 13 August 2025
- 496 bathers on 24 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 392 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Over 300 public parking spaces
- 33 litter bins and street cleaning crews.

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks. There were 151 respondents. 149 respondents supported the proposal. 1 respondent opposed and 1 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

4. Sandgate Granville Parade Beach

Sandgate Parish Council has applied for an area of Sandgate Granville Parade Beach to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image D, is located in Sandgate, Folkestone. The address for the site is Granville Parade, CT20 3AL.

This site is:

- within 2.3km of Seabrook Stream Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within 9km of Dover-Folkestone Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).

Image D:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 22 August 2025 and 23 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 317 bathers on 22 August 2025
- 209 bathers on 23 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 263 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public car park
- Access to bus routes
- Public showers
- Drinking water fountains
- Cycle parking
- Pubs, cafes and restaurants.

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 14 weeks. There were 265 respondents. All supported the proposal.

5. Queen Elizabeth Gardens Salisbury

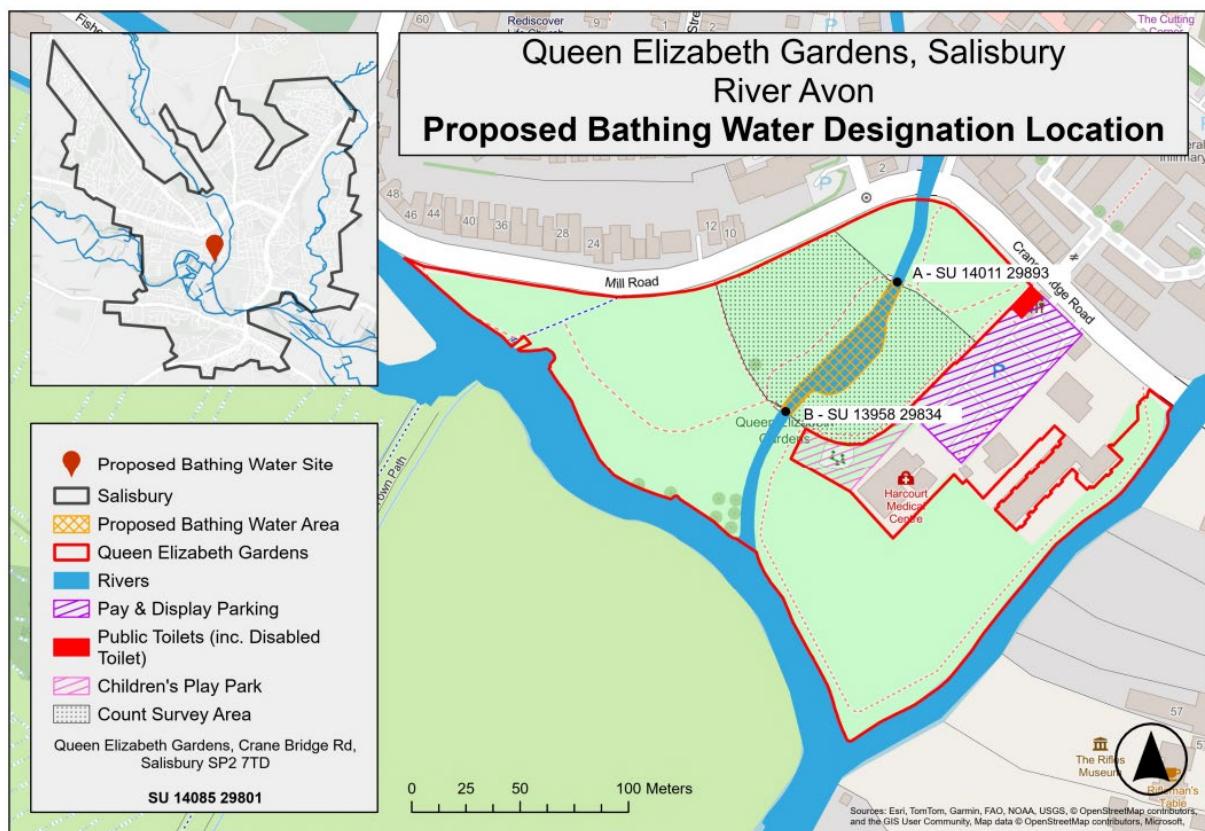
For the Love of Waters (FLOW) CIC has applied for an area of the River Avon to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image E, is located in Queen Elizabeth Gardens. The address for the site is Crane Bridge Road, Salisbury, SP2 7TD. The OS grid references for the site are (A) - SU 14011 29893 Central - SU 14085 29801 (B) - SU 13958 29834.

This site is within the River Avon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image E:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 13 July 2025 and 25 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 119 bathers on 13 July 2025
- 101 bathers on 25 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 110 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Pay and display car parking
- Litter bins

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks. There were 288 respondents. 278 respondents supported the proposal. 6 respondents opposed and 4 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

6. East Beach at West Bay, Bridport

West Bay Swimmers' Action Group has applied for an area of West Bay, Bridport to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image F, is located in Bridport, Dorset. The address for the site is East Beach, West Bay, Bridport, Dorset DT6 4EN. The OS grid reference for the site is SY462902 > SY463901.

This site is:

- within West Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within Chesil and the Fleet Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC.

Image F:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 12 July 2025 and 23 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 725 bathers on 12 July 2025
- 623 bathers on 23 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 674 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public car parks
- Public transport links
- Lifeguards during summer holidays
- First aid points, defibrillators, life rings, throw ropes and safety information boards
- Sauna
- Cafes and shops
- Picnic tables and litter bins

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 8 weeks. There were 388 respondents. 386 respondents supported the proposal. 2 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

7. Pangbourne Meadow

Thames 21 has applied for an area of the River Thames to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image G, is located in Pangbourne, Reading. The address for the site is Whitchurch Rd, Pangbourne, Reading RG8. The OS grid reference for the site is SU 63644 76801 to SU 63825 76863.

This site is within 900m of Sulham and Tidmarsh Woods and Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Image G:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 11 August 2025 and 12 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 103 bathers on 11 August 2025
- 126 bathers on 12 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 115 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public transport links
- First Aid facilities, including defibrillator
- Litter bins
- Access to local cafes and shops

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 20 weeks. There were 495 respondents. 481 respondents supported the proposal. 6 respondents opposed and 8 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

8. River Fowey in Lostwithiel

The Lostwithiel Environment Action Forum (LEAF) has applied for an area of the River Fowey to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image H, is located in Lostwithiel, Cornwall. The address for the site is The Parade, Lostwithiel, PL22 0DY.

This site is within the Upper Fowey and Pont Pill Marine Conservation Zone.

Image H:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 11 July 2025 and 12 July 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 294 bathers on 11 July 2025
- 212 bathers on 12 July 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 253 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public parking
- Changing facilities
- Cafes and shops

- Defibrillator and lifebuoy
- Rail and bus services

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 21 weeks. There were 70 respondents. All supported the proposal.

9. River Swale in Richmond, North Yorkshire

Save our Swale has applied for an area of the River Swale to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image I, is located in Richmond, North Yorkshire. The address for the site is Richmond Fosse, The Fosse Carpark, Riverside Road, Richmond, DL10 4JR. The OS grid reference for the site is NZ1734900594 to NZ1723400606.

This site is:

- within 200m of Richmond Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within 200m of Pennine Dales Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image I:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 10 August 2025 and 25 August 25.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 146 bathers on 10 August 2025
- 281 bathers on 25 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 214 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public parking
- Public transport links
- Pubs, cafes and shops
- Defibrillator and lifebuoy
- Picnic benches and seating

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks. There were 195 respondents. 194 respondents supported the proposal, with 1 respondent opposing it.

10. Falcon Meadow, Bungay

The River Waveney Trust has applied for an area of the River Waveney to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image J, is located in Bungay, Suffolk. The address for the site is Falcon Meadow, Bungay, NR35 1EU. The OS grid reference for the site is TM 33820 89925 to TM 34042 89847.

This site is within 1.8km of Broome Heath Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Image J:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 12 July 2025 and 13 July 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 184 bathers on 12 July 2025
- 170 bathers on 13 July 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 177 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Defibrillator
- Public parking
- Bus route

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 19 weeks. There were 69 respondents. 68 respondents supported the proposal and 1 neither supported nor opposed the proposal.

11. River Thames at Ham and Kingston

Ham and Kingston Bathers has applied for an area of the River Thames to be designated as a bathing water.

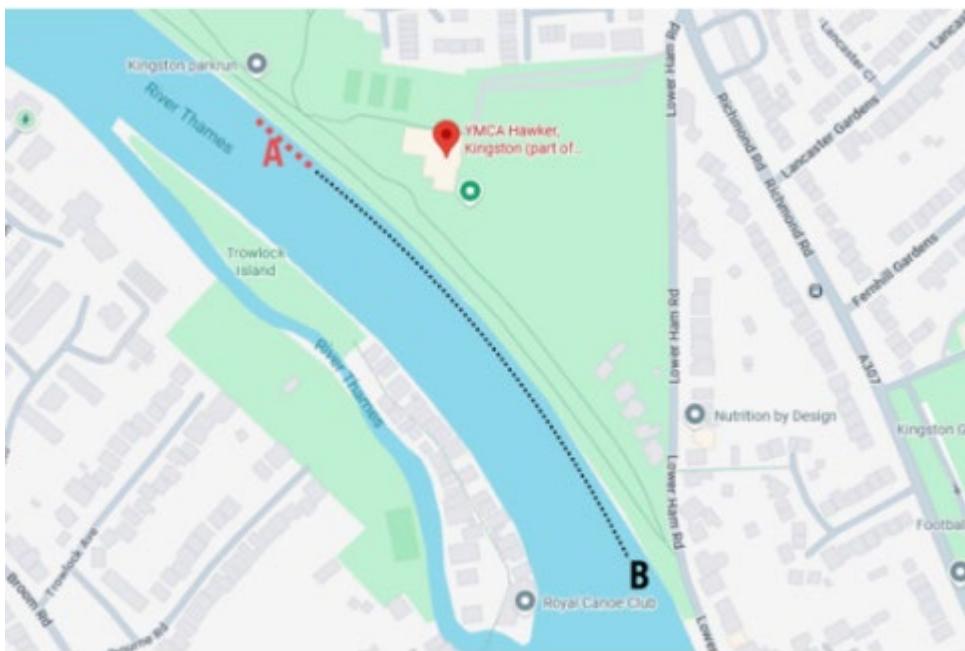
Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image K, is located in Kingston, Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames. The address for the site is Lower Ham Road, Kingston-Upon-Thames, KT2 5BH. The OS grid reference for the site is TQ 17538 71133.

This site is:

- within 1.3km of Richmond Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Bushy Park and Home Park SSSI.
- within 1.3km of Richmond Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image K:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 29 June 2025 and 13 July 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 134 bathers on 29 June 2025
- 150 bathers on 13 July 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 142 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public parking
- Cafe
- Bus routes
- Defibrillator
- Benches
- Emergency Throwbag

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 10 weeks. There were 502 respondents. 500 respondents supported the proposal with 2 respondents opposed.

12. New Brighton Beach (East), Wallasey, The Wirral

Clean Mersey has applied for an area of New Brighton Beach to be designated as a bathing water.

Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image L, is located in Wallasey, The Wirral. The address for the site is 59 Marine Promenade, New Brighton, Wallasey CH45 2JS. The latitude and longitude for the site is 53°26'36" to 53°26'13".

This site is:

within the Mersey Narrows SSSI and the North Wirral Foreshore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

- within the Mersey Narrows and within the North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar and SPA and Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA).
- within the Dee Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image L:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 12 July 2025 and 13 July 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 350 bathers on 12 July 2025
- 168 bathers on 13 July 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 259 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Litter bins
- Lifeguards
- Defibrillators
- Public parking
- Cafes, shops and leisure facilities
- Access to bus and train routes

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for over a year. There were 360 respondents. All supported the proposal.

13. River Dee, Sandy Lane, Chester

Clean Dee Community Campaign has applied for an area of the River Dee to be designated as a bathing water.

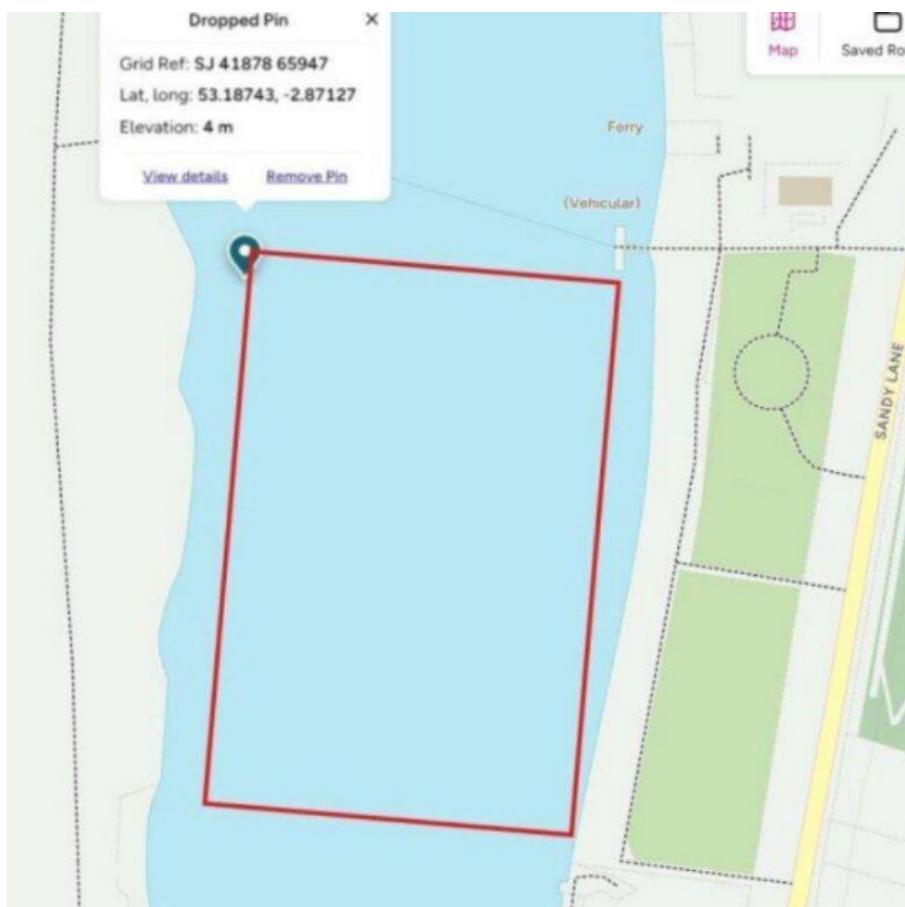
Location

The proposed site, highlighted in Image M, is located in Chester, Cheshire. The address for the site is Sandy Lane, Chester, CH3 5UL. The OS grid reference for the site is NE Corner: SJ41959 65946 NW Corner: SJ41879 65952 SW Corner: SJ41870 65835 SE Corner: SJ41944 65824.

This site is:

- within the River Dee (England) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- within the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Image M:



User surveys

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 2 days: 17 August 2025 and 25 August 2025.

The breakdown of numbers reported over 2 counts was:

- 176 bathers on 17 August 2025
- 237 bathers on 25 August 2025

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 207 bathers

Facilities

The facilities that are available near to the site include:

- Public toilets up to about 500m from the site
- Public parking
- Public play area and aqua park
- Defibrillator
- Lifebuoys
- Litterbins
- Cafes, shops and leisure facilities.

Local consultation

The applicant held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for bathing water designation at this site. The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks. There were 813 respondents. 788 respondents supported the proposal 18 neither supported nor opposed the proposal and 7 opposed the proposal.

Annex - List of consultees

Defra has written to the following organisations to seek their views on the proposed designations as part of this consultation:

UK Beach Management Forum
British Long Distance Swimming Association
Consumer Council for Water
Country Land and Business Association
Marine Conservation Society
National Farmers Union
Natural England
Outdoor Swimming Society
Royal Agricultural Society of England
River and Lake Swimming Association
Swim England
Tenant Farmers Association
Visit England
Affinity Water
Anglian Water
Bournemouth Water
Bristol Water
Cambridge Water
Northumbrian Water
Severn Trent Water
South West Water
Thames Water
United Utilities
Wessex Water
Yorkshire Water