Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing to inform you of our proposal to carry out surveys next winter (2015/16) to improve our understanding of how many people use certain beaches along the Somerset and North Somerset coast outside of the bathing season (15 May to 30 Sept).

We are doing this because the water quality at those beaches can be affected by discharges from sewage treatment works (STWs) that we are responsible for. These STWs treat sewage to a quality that enables bathers to safely swim, but in so doing consume significant amounts of energy, which is detrimental to the environment.

The part of the treatment process that we are particularly interested in is the disinfection of the treated sewage using ultraviolet (UV) light.

UV treatment is provided over and above normal sewage treatment in order to reduce bacteria levels to protect bathers. It is not provided to protect the ecosystem, which is naturally subjected to a wide range of bacteria levels without undue harm.

UV treatment is an energy hungry process with associated high carbon emissions. It is currently mandatory for us to operate UV treatment throughout the winter, even though there are often few, if any, beneficiaries.

These surveys are designed to identify how many people benefit from the all year round UV treatment process.

If our conclusions for particular beaches are that there is little or no use of the bathing waters throughout the winter period, we intend to submit a request to the Environment Agency to change the current Environmental Permit to allow the UV treatment to be switched off for a period of time outside of the bathing season.

This approach has already been applied in other parts of the country and throughout all of Scotland with resultant savings in energy and carbon emissions.

Details of the beaches concerned, the location of the relevant UV treatment processes and the amount of energy currently used are contained in the enclosed Annex A.

We would welcome your views on this initiative, plus any information you may have that quantifies out-of-season beach use especially events that require bathing/swimming activities such as triathlons.

If you would like to discuss this letter with someone at Wessex Water, relevant contact details are contained in the Annex.

Yours faithfully

Matt Wheeldon

Head of Wastewater Strategy
Annex A - Wessex Water seasonal UV consultation, Bridgwater

West Huntspill sewage treatment works discharging to the mouth of the River Parrett
Annual UV kWh  341,000
CO2 tonnes pa  182

Bridgwater sewage treatment works discharging to the tidal River Parrett
Annual UV kWh  484,000
CO2 tonnes pa  258

Brean designated bathing water sample point
Berrow designated bathing water sample point
Burnham designated bathing water sample point

Contact:
Matt Wheeldon
Wessex Water, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7WW
matt.wheeldon@wessexwater.co.uk
Annex A - Wessex Water seasonal UV consultation, Clevedon

Kingston Seymour sewage treatment works
Annual UV kWh  438,000
CO2 tonnes pa  234

Clevedon designated bathing water sample point

Contact:
Andy Mears
Wessex Water, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7WW
andy.mears@wessexwater.co.uk
Annex A - Wessex Water seasonal UV consultation, Minehead

Minehead sewage treatment works
Annual UV kWh  124,700
CO₂ text tbc  66.5

Minehead designated bathing water sample point
Dunster designated bathing water sample point
Blue Anchor designated bathing water sample point

Contact:
Andy Mears
Wessex Water, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7WW
andy.mears@wessexwater.co.uk
Annex A - Wessex Water seasonal UV consultation, Weston-super-Mare

Weston-super-Mare sewage treatment works
Annual UV kWh 365,000
CO2 text tbc 195

WSM Sand Bay designated bathing water sample point
WSM Main designated bathing water sample point
WSM Uphill designated bathing water sample point

Contact:
Andy Mears
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