

# Council 28 November 2024

Meeting recording: [(1) Cambridge City Council - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/@camcitco/streams)

## Motion 6d. Further action on Pollution

**Council notes:**

* That the River Cam at Sheep’s Green received Bathing Water Designation in May 2024, following a Labour motion at Full Council in July 2023.
* That a main goal of the application was to provide information on pollution levels to help swimmers to swim safely and to create a ‘Driver’ to increase efforts by Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to improve water quality.
* Serious concern over the Environment Agency’s monitoring during the 2024 bathing season (15 May to 30 September 2024) has recorded E. coli levels ranging from 980-6400 colonies/100ml at Sheep’s Green and that this gives a strong indication the water classification will be “Poor”.
* That once the Environment Agency’s classification is available, the City Council will display a notice at Sheep’s Green showing the classification.
* That if, as anticipated, the classification is ‘Poor’, notice will include advice against bathing.
* That Anglian Water has allocated £4.6m for a study and subsequent upgrades to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works under its 2025-2030 AMP8 business plan, subject to receiving Bathing Water Designation and subsequent approval by Ofwat (link: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/pr24/anh01-our-plan-2025-2030.pdf>).

**Council resolves:**

* To write to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water once the bathing water assessment is made available, welcoming the increased availability of information about the quality of water and its suitability for bathing.
* If the result of the assessment is ‘poor’, to use that letter to express concern at the indications of unacceptable levels of faecal pollution revealed by the monitoring and to highlight the risk this poses to the health of swimmers and other recreational water users on the river Cam.
* At the same time as expressing concern, the letter should demand that agencies involved take urgent action to investigate and address the causes of pollution, as required by the Bathing Water Act 2013, and that they keep this Council informed on progress with a report to the Chief Executive every six months.

The Council should request that their investigations must include:

* The adequacy of the performance of Haslingfield Water Treatment Works and Foxton Water Treatment Works, and the unacceptable frequency of storm overflows.
* The frequency and impact of overflows from sewage pumping stations in Harston, Hauxton, Haslingfield and Grantchester.
* The frequency and impact of bursts in the Rising Mains connecting Haslingfield, Harston, Hauxton and Grantchester to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works.
* Potential misconnections into surface water drains flowing into Hobsons Conduit, Vicars Brook and Paradise Local Nature Reserve, which then flow into the River Cam just upstream of Sheep’s Green.
* The murky (turbid) water in the River Cam, and whether this may be impeding the natural action of sunlight which would otherwise help by degrading faecal bacteria released upstream.

**Background**

The 2024 bathing water season, with weekly monitoring by the Environment agency at Sheep’s Green, has now finished for the year. The resulting classification won’t be released until sometime in November, but from the results already available online it’s obvious that, as expected, the classification will be “Poor”.

This classification is what we all expected, and it triggers an obligation on the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to investigate and then fix the causes. In expectation of this, Anglian Water has put around £5M in the budget for the Apportionment study and subsequent upgrades to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works (a.k.a the Sewage works)

The official Appointment Study won’t start until next financial year, but the EA and AW are already undertaking preliminary investigations. Cam Valley Forum is providing local expertise and additional testing.

Following a “Poor” classification the city council will be required to display a notice about the Poor water quality, with the addition that “bathing is not advised”.

Environment Agency Test Results available here [https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?site=ukh1201-09801](about:blank)

Bathing Water Regulations 2013[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1675/regulation/13/made](about:blank)