



The Northern Ireland Marine Taskforce (NIMTF) is a coalition of non-government environmental organisations – it includes RSPB, Ulster Wildlife, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, National Trust, Friends of the Earth, Marine Conservation Society, Live Here, Love Here, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Surfers Against Sewage, Shark Trust, Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust and Northern Ireland Environment Link. The NIMTF has the support of approximately 100,000 local people. We are working towards healthy, productive and resilient seas for Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force response to: [Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland](#)

Submitted: 21st August 2026

NIMTF thanks DAERA for the opportunity to respond to the Bathing Waters Policy Review and the ability to influence the definition of a bather and ensure that accessibility for the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard and other methods of communication is fully available and understood by interested members of society. NIMTF have engaged with the public strongly through our own public engagement events and through our member organisations and the main response coming through, especially through our 'Wish Fish' campaign is that more work needs to be done regarding water pollution and improving water quality (190 out 280 wish fish relating to water pollution).

NIMTF's new 5-year project, Sea Across Society aims to engage society through different departmental links such as Health, Education and Communities - all of which have a strong connection to water quality, awareness and engagement across all these strands. NIMTF's would advocate that DAERA liaise with all three Departments to elevate information sharing and communication between Departments and externally to the public through a connected scope and implemented strategy.

Consultation Question

How Information Is Communicated to Bathing Water Users

1. Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not aware of dashboard

1

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-08/2026-Northern-Ireland-COASTAL-Bathing-Water-Antrim-Coast-Poster_0.pdf

2 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7313150/>

2. If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved.

It may be beneficial to direct members of the public to more easy-to-understand literature, or an explanation about Intestinal Enterococci (IE) and Escherichia Cola (EC) to allow society to better understand these values and how it relates to public health. Greater transparency to the public in terms of what these relate to and the sliding scale that shows the greater number can mean a greater risk, alongside what values constitute “safe/acceptable” levels for bathers. This could be applied to the IE and EC Results tabs respectively. For example, this is highlighted on individual posters such as Antrim Coast¹, but not on the Dashboard itself:

Table 1. NI Bathing Water Classifications and associated IE and EC thresholds (DAERA).

Classification	IE Threshold	EC Threshold
Excellent	≤100 / 100ml	≤250 / 100ml
Good / Sufficient	>100 - ≤200 / 100ml	>250 - ≤500 / 100ml
Poor / Advice Against Bathing	N/A	>1250 / 100ml

NIMTF notes that for the EC threshold that there is nothing between >500 / 100ml and ≤1250 / 100ml, and therefore this can be confusing for members of the public to understand the thresholds directly. Clearer information should be available from DAERA on this. According to the World Health Organisation², drinking water standards shows the following:

- 0 EC / 100ml - Safe
- 1 - 10 MPN / 100ml - Low Risk
- 11 - 100 MPN / 100ml - Medium Risk
- >100 MPN / 100ml - Adjusted High Risk

It should be noted that whilst this is for drinking water, ingestion of water from any water-based activity - e.g. falling from a kayak - has the potential to lead to the same symptoms affecting human health.

Action: DAERA to change the ‘Poor’ classification to state “>500 ml / 100ml” for greater transparency.

Action: DAERA to further improve the Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to provide further explanation to the public around Blue-green algae, IE and EC levels to increase educational awareness and understanding.

Action: DAERA to include what are safe levels of IE and EC levels for public health.

Not all of the sites which link to a weekly poster take you to that weekly poster but to the collective posters for that site. This removes you from the Dashboard and requires the user to remember which county they are in to access the correct poster after 3 more clicks. All links should be checked to ensure they are going to the right destinations within the app to maintain interactive immersion. After viewing the poster, to get further information, the user must return to the Bathing Water Quality Dashboard website.

Action: DAERA to minimise the number of clicks by integrating relevant council posters into the 'Weekly poster' section to allow direct access via the Dashboard.

Additionally, there are 5 links, including important email contacts to report information to which do not reappear after clicking 'I have read and I accept the above terms and conditions'. This information should still be available to users to better access information if their local/interested bathing water has any issues associated with the following:

- Water Pollution Hotline and Emergency Pollution Email Address
- Links to Bathing Water Quality Information
- Links to Blue-Green Algae Information, including Bloomin' Algae App

Action: DAERA to reiterate the above information on the splash page of the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard throughout, or with its own bespoke section of the Dashboard under "Contacts".

It is important that the public are made aware that the information on the platform is not akin to real-time data. NIMTF are aware that there is ongoing work between NIEA, DAERA, NI Water and our member Surfers Against Sewage to encourage and allow an adoptable programme for Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) that would enable members of the public to eventually see as close, or live updates for their local areas to assist and support adaptive management of sites.

3. When do you usually check the water quality information for your preferred identified bathing water site? (Select all that apply)

☒ I check the information displayed at the site (e.g., notice boards, signage)

☒ I check the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard before deciding which bathing site to visit

☐ I do not usually check water quality information

☒ Other (please specify)

NIMTF member Surfers Against Sewage have the UK Live Sewage Map³ and the Safer Seas & Rivers Service App⁴. NI Water has a storm overflow map⁵ which details where discharge points are located and what ones are monitored, but when compared to the UK Live Sewage Map highlights the lack of

live EDM which is the much needed next step from the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard. This is further supported by Surfers Against Sewage's Water Quality Report (2025)⁶ which highlighted that only 2,967 sewage discharges were officially recorded in 2024. Only 122 sewage overflows were monitored which equates to officially 4.11% compliance in monitoring. Strangford Lough was recently in the news⁷ due to the lack of transparency regarding currently unknown levels of discharge into one of the most protected marine bodies of water across Northern Ireland - with DfI highlighting the South Street wastewater treatment works had pumped 35.4 million litres of sewage into Strangford Lough; whilst NI Water have admitted they do not know the true extent of discharges⁸. This will require linked work with the Department for Infrastructure to link to the existing maps which have been highlighted.

Action: DAERA to work with NI Water and Surfers Against Sewage to develop and integrate available EDM into accessible, public interfaces for improving effective communication to highlight when a pollution incident has occurred.

4. How would you prefer bathing water quality information to be communicated at identified bathing water? (Select one option)

Scan a QR code to obtain up to date information

I would prefer the notice board to be updated regularly with a poster as it is now

I would accept the notice board only being updated when a pollution incident or public health concern is identified, with a QR displayed to obtain the most recent results

☒ Not sure

Please explain your answer.

None of the above options provide a halfway house for different levels of technology-users. NIMTF would strongly recommend that for those water users who are not technologically adept, that a notice board continues to be used, whilst a QR code is also available for people to scan. This would provide the best of both worlds and the QR code would not have to be changed. Additionally, eventually having a direct display link to the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard would be beneficial so that people can see the water quality at an immediate glance, rather than having to use a QR code if they are in a rush.

From the Interacting With Wild Waters Survey⁹ by Surfers Against Sewage, it highlighted that 51% of respondents have highlighted that they would avoid entering the water after a potential pollution event. This is typically based on usage from the previously highlighted Safer Seas & Rivers Service App.

3 <https://www.sas.org.uk/sewage-map/>

4 <https://datahq.sas.org.uk/sewage-data-hq/is-it-safe-to-swim/>

5 <https://www.niwater.com/about-your-water/storm-overflows>

6 <https://www.sas.org.uk/resource/water-quality-report-2025/>

7 <https://newtownardschronicle.co.uk/sewage-shocker-as-strangford-lough-flooded-with-waste/>

NIMTF will continue to highlight the usage of the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard alongside the Environmental Incident Reporting System¹⁰ amongst our Ocean Advocates¹¹ to gather crucial feedback directly from society to help inform the development of this interface. Surfers Against Sewage have been building a strong network of members of the public who actively engage with bathing waters on an all-year round basis and would be more than happy to share their expertise directly, or through NIMTF.

Action: DAERA to continue highlighting communication updates to the NIMTF Ocean Advocates Programme will be available to provide feedback on user interface.

Action: DAERA to work with eNGOs to gather effective outputs from society into further development of communicative tools and methods that society are able to use at multiple levels of technological understanding.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how risk forecasting could be improved? Please explain your answer.

NIMTF are pleased to see that there is already risk forecasting in place for six 'at-risk' locations through the SWIM NI App. The main route for improving this would be through real-time monitoring and progression of the implementation of EDMs across all major outfalls into waterbodies to better monitor and understand levels of pollution spills as they enter. NIMTF would advise that the process for establishing risk forecasting for the six 'at-risk' areas should be rolled out to other areas which begin to show declines as a back-up plan. This could be twinned with the River Basin Management Plans¹² as an adaptive management option.

Action: Greater roll-out of EDM at major outfalls into bathing areas to improve accuracy and precision of data to enable robust risk forecasting.

Action: Link this consultation to the developing 4th Cycle River Basin Management Plans as a proposed measure for adaptive management plans.

Greater monitoring is required to link up existing health concerns from those who are engaging with water-based activities to ensure that any health risks are accounted for. From the Interacting With Wild Waters⁹ Survey by Surfers Against Sewage, 36% of those surveyed water users have become unwell in some way from interacting with waters, whilst 15% think they may have become unwell. 12 of these sites were established Bathing Water locations, specifically within Portrush (East/West Strand) (35.7%) and Helen's Bay (28.6%) which are both classed as Excellent, but does not explain why people are continuing to get sick.

Action: DAERA to link with the Department for Health and other Public Health services to share information from where people have been reporting sickness associated with interacting with water to gain a better understanding of issues which conflict with current water classifications.

Length of the Bathing Season

6. Of the following options please indicate your preference for the bathing water season.
(Select one option)

No change - keep as 1 June to 15 September

☒ All year round / no set dates for bathing season

1 April to 31 October

From the Interacting With Wild Waters Survey⁹ by Surfers Against Sewage, 84% of water users indicated that they interact with water all year-round.

7. Do you think it would be useful to incorporate a winter-season only, i.e. from 1 November to 31 March, at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms in the spring / summer / autumn?

☒ Yes

No

Not sure

Please explain your answer.

This option should only be necessary if there is not going to be enhanced monitoring at the selection of sites taking place all year round for blue-green algae blooms. It was recently highlighted that the swimming pool at Lemon's Wharf, in Ards, North Down catchment¹³ did not actually take routine monitoring to rule out that blue-green algae was occurring within, putting public health at risk; even when this was reported through the Bloomin Algae App due to discolouration. Greater integration of the Bloomin' Algae App within the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard should look to be another step towards successful communication.

Action: Integrate the Bloomin Algae App into the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard.

8

<https://newtownardschronicle.co.uk/ni-water-admit-they-have-no-idea-how-much-pollution-is-pouring-into-strangford-lough/>

9 <https://www.sas.org.uk/updates/northern-ireland-wild-waters-survey/>

10 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/daera-environmental-incident-reporting-system>

11 <https://nimtf.org/raising-voices/>

12 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/river-basin-management>

13 <https://www.instagram.com/p/DbLBe1vOKnh/>

14 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/public-consultation-river-basin-planning-fourth-cycle-timeline>

8. If you selected, all year round as your response to Question 6, i.e. there will be no set dates for the bathing season. Are you content with DAERA adopting a more flexible, site-specific monitoring timetable based on usage and risk throughout the year?

Yes

☒ No

Not sure

Please explain your answer.

All sites which are within the monitoring framework should receive a minimum of the required testing across the year within seasons to ensure that there is robust information coming in to assess water quality effectively. NIMTF would be in support of sites which consecutively show failings in water quality to have more frequent monitoring, but this must be backed up by management feedback loop - assessing what is going wrong within the area and be tied to the developing 4th Cycle River Basin Management Plans (2028 - 2033)¹⁴ and Nutrient Action Programme 2027 - 2030¹⁵ given that whilst there is a responsibility under the Bathing Waters Review to assess the impact on human health, there is a requirement under both The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017¹⁶ and UK Marine Strategy¹⁷ to protect biodiversity and protected areas for the same pressure.

Action: DAERA to link the Bathing Waters Policy Review to the River Basin Management Plans and Nutrient Action Programme to ensure effective management on water pollution is intrinsically connected.

Bathing Water Monitoring

9. Do you agree with the proposal set out above to introduce a risk-based sampling approach?

Yes

☒ No

Not sure

Please explain your answer, including any risks or benefits you wish to highlight.

Whilst NIMTF understands that resources are limited for DAERA and for NIEA when it comes to monitoring, it does not mean that there should be a reduction in quality and maintaining standards to protect both the public and biodiversity. NIMTF would err on the side of caution that a single sample per month is not adequate to provide a robust assessment of water quality. Standard sampling should provide enough replicates across different weather patterns to assess whether there is true compliance in place. As it currently stands, 56% of illnesses occurred within the official bathing season from Surfers Against Sewage Interacting With Wild Waters Survey⁹, alongside a majority (58 individuals) supporting year-round testing, monitoring and reporting, whilst others who

remained neutral highlighting the reliability of existing water quality assessments given the link to them and 'excellent' water classifications.

Action: DAERA to assess current standards and implement robust sampling across different weather patterns across the year at all sites to meet compliance.

Criteria for Identification of Bathing Waters

10. Do you think the current criteria used to determine whether a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water remains appropriate? (Criteria include evidence of high numbers of bathers, site safety and accessibility, and the presence of an operator.)

Yes

☒ No

Not sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

NIMTF would like to propose that these metrics are acceptable, however as the definition of a bather will potentially change due to the the diverse reasons people visit their local area - e.g. kayaker, paddleboarder, swimmer, etc - this will in turn increase the metrics which are accounted for. There is potential that when updating the current metrics to include newly adopted 'bathers' into the definition, DAERA may see that more users are interacting with the sites on multiple occasions. Please see NIMTF member, Surfers Against Sewage's response for a series of different activities which would be included with the enhanced definition of a bather.

NIMTF would opt for the multiple occasions route as a candidate site could be dismissed if a day with poor weather has been chosen, for example; whereas typically such a site might receive many people on a different occasion.

Action: DAERA to monitor current sites with potential inclusion of bathers meeting the updated definition - if this definition changes as a result of the consultation - and updates existing metrics within the required criteria for identifying new sites.

15 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-proposed-nutrients-action-programme-2027-2030>

16 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2017/81/contents/made>

17 <https://moat.cefas.co.uk/summary-of-progress-towards-good-environmental-status/>

11. Should Northern Ireland adopt an approach similar to other UK regions where the list of bathing waters is published annually rather than amended through legislation?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Please explain your answer.

NIMTF would be in support of this process as it would be quicker and allow further robustness in reporting and evidence, cataloguing the change in bathing waters over time and providing an opportunity to spot trends. This would also permit greater alignment and cohesion with processes with the rest of the UK and reduce an administrative burden on Departments where an alternative option is more feasible.

Action: DAERA to publish an annual list of bathing waters to reduce administrative burdens on Departments.

12. Should the bathing water programme be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Please explain your answer.

NIMTF understands that a greater proportion of individuals are engaging with our marine environment across a whole host of different activities. As a result, they are engaging all year round and through activities which immerse themselves partially or wholly and are therefore at greater risk than someone simply walking along the beach. It is entirely appropriate that we take account of their risk and include them within the definition to be properly accounted for with regards to public health, as well as accessibility.

Action: DAERA to extend the current definition of bathers to include wider recreational activities such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing and those who engage with the water frequently.

13. Are you aware of any locations where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur that are not currently identified bathing waters?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure.

If yes, please list these locations and describe the activities taking place.

NIMTF would recommend engaging with Surfers Against Sewage and Recreational Activity operators around the Northern Ireland coast as these activities can often start at a bathing water site, but progress to areas which are out of the original bathing water site area. There is potential that some sites have yet to be identified specifically for recreational use rather than casual bathers, but these groups would have a greater understanding of where these locations are as they engage with the water more frequently.

Additional activities can be seen below, in association with sickness reports, highlighting that the definition of a bather must be expanded to include the following activities and associated recreational providers who engage with the water more frequently.

Table 2. Types of water interaction from sickness reports (Interacting With Wild Waters Survey, Surfers Against Sewage, 2026^a)

Activity / Water Interaction linked to sickness	Adjusted Count	Percentage
Swimming	10.5	58.3%
Surfing	4.5	25.0%
Kayaking	1	5.6%
Canoeing	1	5.6%
Shoreline visit (not entering water)	1	5.6%
Total	18	100.0%

Action: DAERA to engage with recreational activity providers that are active on waterbodies to gain a greater understanding as well as NIMTF members who are active with communities; including the NIMTF Ocean Advocates.

Monitoring of Candidate Sites

14. Do you think DAERA should introduce a more structured 'pre application' or 'candidate site' stage for sites being considered as bathing waters? (This would allow selected sites to be monitored for a defined period before decisions on formal identification.)

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

As it currently stands, candidate sites are elected based on the factors indicated previously, but are also only monitored essentially on one to two occasions, requiring a frequency of 45 to 100 bathers interacting respectively. NIMTF do have concerns however in relating to how they intend to monitor this given current budgetary constraints. This should absolutely be built into a business plan for continued funding to support accessibility of our beaches and coastlines to the public - however a preliminary approach should be taken to assess these candidate beaches as part of the risk-based approach aforementioned within the consultation - e.g. a limit on resources to these sites to enable enough information for a robust assessment, without drawing away too many resources on candidate sites.

This should be twinned or combined with an assessment of the updated metrics and criteria which will be explored if the definition of a bather and what these do to affect the levels of bathers now attending areas.

Action: DAERA to combine existing metrics with new ones if the definition of a bather changes to account for increased activity which will adjust thresholds for candidate sites.

15. Do you agree that monitoring candidate sites in advance of formal identification would improve transparency and public confidence in the decision making process?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

See our response to the previous question where doing so would help to build up the data monitoring for proposed sites and see the effectiveness of what is currently taking place for any proposed sites. These must also be implemented into the River Basin Management Planning process and draft Nutrient Action Programme 2027 - 2030 to ensure management of water pollution sources are regulated effectively from all sources.

Action: DAERA to ensure management feedback loops are included to connect to the draft Nutrient Action Programmes and the River Basin Management Plans.

Removal of Automatic De-Identification

16. Do you agree that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of 'poor' classification should be changed?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

NIMTF have concerns about automatic de-identification of bathing waters due to poor classification without follow-up action to address why there was poor classification of water across 5 consecutive years. This could be related to a larger issue in handling regulation of water pollution for an area, or highlight that other methods of management need to be imposed. Automatic de-identification should still take place if an area is unsuitable for bathers, but that does not change the fact that that area of the natural environment is undergoing significant pressures which must be alleviated.

Action: DAERA to implement through the River Basin Management Plans effective management feedback loops to address long-term issues in water pollution, utilising areas failing 5 consecutive years as priority sites.

17. Do you agree that poor performing bathing waters should instead be reviewed on a case by case basis rather than automatically de-identified after five years?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not sure

Poor bathing water bodies still need to be effectively assessed to ensure that the root of the problem which is contributing to poor bathing water is addressed. If the bathing water season remains as it currently is, then this route would result in consistently poor water quality all year round which would not get addressed. A failure analysis needs to be carried out for poor performing sites to better understand the challenges in addressing water quality and see what could be amended and addressed within a strict timeframe.

Action: DAERA to properly assess why some bathing waters are consistently achieving a poor water classification and carry out a failure analysis to assess root causes and contributions linked to the River Basin Management Plans and Nutrient Action Programmes.

18. Do you think a more flexible, evidence based decision making process would better support long term water quality improvements?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

19. Do you think this approach would strengthen or maintain public health protection at poor performing sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not sure

Please provide additional comments.

NIMTF would urge that long-term, robust monitoring is critically needed to ensure that any sites have accurate information should be implemented to maintain and strengthen public health protection. NIMTF would strongly advise linking in strongly through any communication and monitoring plans with other departments such as Health and Communities to ensure they are not only aware, but are able to cascade available information through their own channels - e.g. doctors, GPs, etc. Networks like this are typically able to cascade relevant information on display boards, or through GP newsletters to ensure a greater coverage for their area. The Department for Education can also help to raise awareness of how to keep people safe at bathing water sites and in general around water.

Action: DAERA to engage with the Department for Health, Department for Education and Department for Communities to strengthen the awareness of which sites are performing poorly to maintain public health protection.

Ensuring Monitored Locations Match Actual Usage

20. Are the current monitoring locations for the 33 identified bathing waters appropriate?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not sure?

If not, please tell us the swimming location for your identified bathing water site.

Whilst NIMTF is primarily focused on the marine environment, it has been noticed that there are freshwater areas which have not been identified as bathing water locations, but nevertheless have ample use via members of the public for the purposes outlined within this consultation.

NIMTF would once again advise that DAERA engage with providers around Lough Neagh but also Lower and Upper Lough Erne as well as Upper and Lower Lough MacNea; these should include wild swimming groups alongside rowing and yacht clubs.

In Lough MacNea in particular, below water safety training is frequently carried out each year due to the levels of engagement with the water body. Additionally at Castle Archdale, there is a designated “swim-only” spot between Abbey Davy’s Island and the Castle Archdale Holiday Park which should be considered.

These locations are further supported by the Interacting With Wild Waters Survey⁹ by Surfers Against Sewage which highlights that 72% of respondents use water bodies which do not have bathing water status. Coinciding with the 23 illness reports that included a location or water body, 78% of these were coastal waters, whilst 22% were inland waters. The following tables highlight potential locations and the rationale for consideration for both coastal and inland waters:

Table 3. Potential Coastal Recreational Water Sites for Designation / Monitoring (Interacting With Wild Waters Survey, Surfers Against Sewage, 2026⁹)

Location	Why Consider It?
Cushendun Beach	Identified in your survey; popular for sea swimming but not currently designated as a bathing water.
Glenarm	Growing use by sea swimmers and coastal recreation users.
Ballycastle Harbour / Marina	Significant recreational use beyond the existing bathing beach area.
Carnlough Harbour	Popular for sea swimming and coastal water recreation.
Ballintoy Harbour	Well-known location for swimming, paddling and tourism activities.
Whitepark Bay	Popular beach for sea swimming and recreation but not currently designated.
Ballygally Beach (additional recreational access points)	Recreational use may extend beyond the current monitored area.
Newcastle Harbour Area	Significant water sports activity beyond the designated bathing water location.

Table 4. Potential Inland Recreational Water Sites for Designation / Monitoring (Interacting With Wild Waters Survey, Surfers Against Sewage, 2026)

Location	Why Consider It?
Lough Neagh (additional sites: Ballyronan, Kinnego, Oxford Island, Antrim Shore)	Northern Ireland's largest lake; extensive recreation but only one designated inland bathing water.
River Bann	Popular for kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding and angling.
River Lagan	Significant urban recreation corridor and paddlesports destination.
Lough Erne	Major tourism, boating and open-water recreation destination.
Camlough Lake	Established open-water swimming location.
Castlewellan Lake	Popular for swimming, kayaking and paddle sports.
Craigavon Lakes	High levels of recreational water use in an urban setting.

Action: DAERA to consider the above freshwater and coastal bathing waters and consider areas which have already been established as locations as initial identified areas.

21. Do you have any other recommendations for improving the bathing water programme that have not been raised in this consultation?

NIMTF have no further comments.

NIMTF thanks DAERA for the opportunity to respond to the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland. As we have highlighted in our response, a greater proportion of the population are engaging with our coastline and even advocating for change as a result. To keep people engaged, accessibility of the NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard is essential. NIMTF will continue to work with our Ocean Advocates and across the communities of Northern Ireland to ensure that they have access to accessible and accurate information to make the best informed decisions about their marine environment.

For further information, please contact the NIMTF Officer, Robert Walsh, on robert.walsh@nimtf.org.