

HUW MERRIMAN MP
(Bexhill and Battle)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Robbie Moore MP
Minister for Water and Rural Growth
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Our Ref: HM33528

31 January 2024

Dear Robbie,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Bathing Water Classifications for 2024.

I am grateful to you for advising that the bathing water in Bexhill has been classified as 'sufficient', and for providing a clear explanation as to how this classification was determined.

Tackling sewage pollution and improving the quality of local bathing waters is one of my key priorities for the constituency. I have been working closely with Southern Water and the Environment Agency over a number of years to better understand outflow operations and the measures required to improve the quality of bathing waters.

Whilst the Environment Agency classification is helpful, I am concerned that it may not present an entirely accurate and rounded picture of the true quality of local bathing waters.

The beach in Bexhill, from Galley Hill to Cooden Beach, stretches around 3.5 miles. The Environment Agency, however, only officially tests from one site, which is located in front of the Egerton Park stream outflow. Further, Southern Water last year introduced a 'shadow testing' regime taking frequent coastal and inland water samples, from across 14 sites in Bexhill, including the Environment Agency's official testing point. Initial results appeared positive, with samples taken during the bathing season falling into the 'excellent' water quality category.

I am keen to see a more diverse testing regime introduced which provides accurate information on bathing water quality from across the beach and would be grateful to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman', written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Huw Merriman
Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle

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