



Blackpool's water management partnership is the first of its kind

Blackpool brought together public and private sectors to protect the coast

Fred Jackson (Lob), cabinet member for municipal assets, Blackpool Council

Environment

The Fylde Peninsula water management partnership is the only one of its kind.

It is a group of local authorities, government agencies, charities and private businesses that are reducing the risk of flooding and improving our bathing waters to maintain the tourist economy that supports the Fylde coast.

The coast faces a large challenge due to changes in national and European legislation. The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 means Blackpool Council is classified as a lead local flood authority and has powers to reduce the risk of localised flooding in the region.

At the same time, a revised European Bathing Water Directive means standards

for measuring the quality of bathing waters are now twice as strict and could mean local beaches must have signs advising people not to swim where water does not meet the standards.

Water doesn't obey political boundaries and the water that ends up in our sea can be affected by what happens miles away. Dealing with that as a small unitary authority was never going to work.

So we are working with authorities across the whole north-west to improve the quality of our water management. We are also dealing with big private sector companies in Blackpool such as Merlin Entertainments, which runs some of the town's main attractions, to make them aware of the issue and how together we can fix

it, which will be good for their business.

Over the past three years, the group has worked towards providing a sustainable and integrated approach to coastal protection, water quality and surface water drainage.

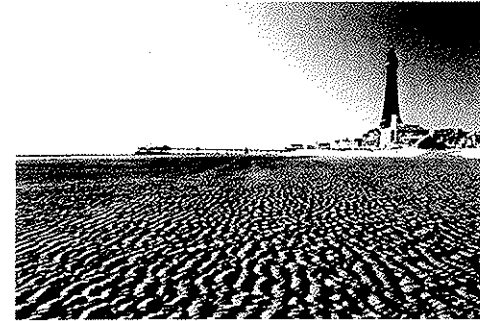
Blackpool Council is exploring sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) to reduce the impact of flood-

ing and pollution in both new and existing developments by diverting surface water into natural water courses rather than into the current, over-stretched sewers. We are also working to complete our final set of sea defences in a £22m scheme at Anchorsholme.

Three kilometres of new sea defences are being built, thanks to a successful part-

nership bid to the Environment Agency for £86m. The work is progressing well and will offer more flood protection to 12,000 houses. That bid was lauded for its partnership work and also won an award from the Environment Agency. Earlier works to regenerate the sea defences at Blackpool Central Promenade were completed in 2011 and bid for a £17m scheme in Lytham is under way.

We wanted to ensure that we would never have to put up signs advising people not to swim in the water, so we have all worked to make sure all bathing water on the Fylde coast can pass the new directive in the coming years. To improve bathing waters, water company United Utilities has constructed a £160m storm water tunnel in Pres-



“The three beaches are on course to be ranked among some of the best in the world

show that almost all the area's sea water has passed strict new bathing water regulations, with three areas – Blackpool South, St Annes North and Fleetwood – of 'excellent' sea water quality.

That classification puts the water quality at the three beaches on course to be ranked among some of the best in the world, by becoming eligible for Blue Flag status.

This is a partnership that will need to continue for the foreseeable future to continue to protect Blackpool's environment.

Project: Fylde peninsula water management partnership

Objective: Improve the quality of sea water on the Fylde coast and reduce flood risk

Timescale: 2011-present

Cost to authority: £425,000 – also made up from other local authorities and private companies

Number of staff on project: 50 across eight different agencies

Outcomes: Seven out of eight bathing waters passing the new standards with three being classified as having 'excellent' water quality', and £180m worth of flood defence works undertaken

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Herts is bucking the national trend on community meals

Why Hertfordshire has invested £5m in meals on wheels while other counties reduce similar services

Iain MacBeath, director, health and community services, Hertfordshire CC

Adult services

By 2035, over-65s will account for 23% of the UK population. Services that support independent living in later life will become increasingly important over the next three decades, not only as a cost-effective alternative to residential care, but to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for older people.

With no extra funding to cope with such demographic pressures we have to look at innovative ways to help our residents live as healthily and

independently as possible as they grow older. One of our great successes in this area is our meals on wheels service.

Over the past five years the number of people receiving meals on wheels in England has fallen by 63%, in part due to many local authorities no longer funding community meals services. Bucking the national trend, that figure has risen by approximately one-third in Hertfordshire.

In 2007, we helped to set up a social enterprise called Hertfordshire Community Meals to deliver a more

co-ordinated and cost effective service countywide. Since then it has become the biggest meals on wheels service in the country, delivering 500,000 meals and welfare visits to around 4,000 vulnerable people, 365 days a year.

Users pay £4.25 towards each meal, while we pay around £1m per year towards the cost of the service. Prior to this, because the 10 district councils in Hertfordshire all delivered the services differently, the total annual cost was around £2.5m.

We have invested in com-

munity meals as we recognise that they provide excellent nutrition, daily welfare checks, signposting, and a range of other support services that are critical in tackling the problems associated with an ageing population.

We are reaping the benefits. The service has moved to another level; Hertfordshire Community Meals, which received both the Hertfordshire and National Business Awards for social enterprise of the year in 2014, recently became Hertfordshire Independent Living Service



(IHLS), reflecting an expansion to deliver a range of other services which support

the independence, health, and happiness of our older population, from telecare

to a nutrition and wellbeing screening programme.

This is helping the clients first and foremost. In the 2015 annual survey, 92% felt better nourished; 92% felt more independent; 87% reported feeling healthier as a result of the service; and 76% said they visit their GP less as a result.

But it has the added benefit of easing the pressure on other social care and health services. For example, just under half of clients said they would be in care without meals on wheels; that's potentially 2,000 extra peo-

ple in care in Hertfordshire at an estimated cost of £800,000 a week.

Recent research conducted by Anglia Ruskin University revealed that for every pound invested in the meals on wheels service, the likely social value created is £5.28. That's the clients benefiting from receiving a nutritional meal, the family and carers benefiting from a loved one receiving the service, and money saved from the public purse. In short, it's an investment worth every penny – and more.