



Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Municipal Services

Cleansing / Beaches / Coastal Protection Section



Report on the Identification of New Bathing Waters

February 2023

## Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Beach Bye-Laws & Bathing Water Regulations

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Beach Bye-Laws 2012 were adopted by Council Members and came into effect on January 1st 2013. Schedule 2 of these bye-laws lists the bathing areas in the county of which the identified bathing areas are highlighted in bold text. These are:

Seapoint Bathing Area  
Killiney Beach  
Blackrock Beach & Baths  
Sandycove Beach  
Forty Foot Bathing Area  
White Rock Beach

Hawk's Cliff / The Ramparts  
Corbawn Lane Beach

In accordance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008, City Councils and County Councils are required to identify bathing waters on an annual basis, for the purposes of monitoring of bathing water quality at bathing areas where a large number of bathers are expected during the bathing season. The bathing season runs from 1st June until 15th September inclusive. The Bathing Waters Directive 2006/7 EC requires that water quality at all identified bathing waters meets stringent microbiological standards in order to protect the health of the people who choose to bathe there.

Currently, there are five locations in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown identified as bathing waters under the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008. These are:

Seapoint Bathing Area;  
Sandycove Beach;  
Forty Foot Bathing Area;  
Killiney Beach;  
White Rock Beach;

Bathing water quality sampling, testing and reporting is carried out once a week during the bathing season at these identified bathing waters, and twice a month outside of the bathing season. Information on bathing water quality is reported on the dlr website, on the [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie) website and on notice boards at each bathing area during the bathing season. Bathing water results from outside of the bathing season are published on the dlr website and social media platforms and are now also uploaded onto [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie).



Fig. 1: Sandycove Beach

## Public Participation in the Identification of New Bathing Waters

Since 2011 Local Authorities have a responsibility for encouraging public participation in relation to the establishment, review and updating of identified bathing waters, within their respective functional areas, for the forthcoming bathing season. As a result, this process not only gives the public the opportunity to identify new bathing waters which may be considered for classification, but also allows them to comment on existing, identified bathing waters with a view to continuation of classification, or not.

In 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued guidance documents for the identification of new bathing waters for both the general public and Local Authorities:

Public Advice on the Identification of New Bathing Waters – July 2016.

A Framework to assist Local Authorities in the assessment of submissions for the identification of new bathing waters – July 2016. This framework and the criteria set out within it was used to assess the submissions received for the identification of new bathing waters.

In May and June 2022, members of the public were invited to participate in the identification of bathing waters in the county, in accordance with Section 4(4) of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008. A notice was posted on the dlr website and an email address provided for the public to use when making their submissions. A link to the EPAs guidance document “Public Advice on the Identification of New Bathing Waters – July 2016” was made available to members of the public who wished to make a submission for the identification of a new bathing water.

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Six submissions were received in total and the EPAs guidance document “A Framework to assist Local Authorities in the assessment of submission for the identification of new bathing waters – July 2016” was used to assess the submissions. The locations suggested as identified bathing areas in these submissions are listed below:

Seapoint;  
Killiney;  
Whiterock;  
Blackrock Baths and Beach;  
Corbawn Strand;



Fig. 2: Seapoint Bathing Area

## Review & Outcome

Following a review of the submissions and an investigation into the historical reasons for the non-identification of some bathing locations for water quality purposes, the outcome is as follows:

Seapoint Bathing Area, Killiney Beach and White Rock Beach are all to remain as identified bathing waters, for the purposes of water quality monitoring.

The council will also continue to monitor the waters of Blackrock Baths Shore and Corbawn Strand.

In addition, a lifeguard service is provided during the Bathing Season at Seapoint Bathing Area, Sandycove Beach, and Killiney Beach. For safety reasons, a lifeguard service is not provided at the Forty Foot Bathing Area or White Rock Beach.

Dún Laoghaire Baths was opened to the public in December 2022 after a significant restoration project and the provision of a Lifeguard service will be provided, subject to recruitment, for the forthcoming Bathing Season.

The assessment criteria reviewed as per the Framework to assist Local Authorities in the assessment of submissions for the identification of new bathing waters, are summarized below:

1. Location – the proposed bathing area must be readily accessible to the public and not cause environmental damage to the shore side environment.
2. Beach Users / Bather Numbers – Applicants are required to submit at least 2 beach surveys undertaken on separate days in order to determine the number of beach users at peak periods during the bathing season. It should be noted that ‘bathers’ are considered to be anyone in contact with the water whether physically immersed, swimming or simply paddling in the shallows.
3. Car Parking and Facilities – Bathing areas should be able to cope with increasing visitor numbers without causing obstructions, undue nuisance, noise or litter pollution. The use of the roadway should not be impeded. Beach side facilities should be considered to promote usage. Ideally, toilet facilities should be available. Adequate litter management services and consideration to animal restrictions must be considered.
4. Commercial Impacts – The impact of visitor numbers on local commercial facilities must be considered.
5. Local Community Support – Submissions should indicate if any formal communication has occurred with locals or community groups that could potentially be affected by increased visitor numbers.
6. Water Quality – Potential pollution sources on the water quality should be considered, i.e. wastewater discharges / local streams etc to evaluate potential bathing water microbial risks.
7. Signage / Other Information – The level and quality of any existing signage must be considered along with the challenges and practicalities of updating signage in the

event of a potential Short-Term Pollution event or in instances where bathing restrictions are required to be applied.

8. Safety – This is a key consideration and must be reviewed in terms of the management of safe access to the bathing water but also in respect to issues such as traffic management on access routes or in car parks etc. Safety for Local Authority staff undertaking water quality sampling is also key – risk assessments would consider strong tidal currents and the nature of the seabed.

9. Planned Infrastructure / WWTP Developments – Consideration must be given to the potential positive and negative impacts of any known or proposed environmental, urban or infrastructural changes on the proposed bathing area.

10. Cost – Consideration is required to the overall costs associated with the provision of signage, safety equipment, Lifeguards (should Risk Assessments or LA protocols deem this necessary) and the sampling / analysis costs of including additional waters in the monitoring programmes.

The proposals to identify the following locations:

- o Blackrock Baths and Beach;
- o Corbawn Strand;

as New Bathing Waters, in accordance with Section 4(4) of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008, were considered under the framework criteria but were not accepted as bathing waters as they did not satisfy a number of the above-mentioned criteria. Blackrock Baths and Beach would require a significant financial and infrastructural investment in order to satisfy the criteria, however, the Councils Architects Department are currently at the preliminary design stage for a proposed development at this site so the status may change in the near future subject to completion of this project. Corbawn Strand is not suitable as a bathing water due to general accessibility and welfare reasons as well as the requirement for considerable financial commitment.