Bathing Water Consultation Findings

Market Research & Stakeholder Engagement Final Report

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

September 2021

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Kathryn Mackay	Joanne Casey	Sam Muir	Stephen Lavelle
Senior Consultant	Regional Director	Senior Consultant	Regional Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position

Distribution List

# Hard Copies	PDF Required	Association / Company Name

Prepared for:

SEPA

Prepared by:

AECOM UK Limited
7th Floor, Aurora
120 Bothwell Street
Glasgow G2 7JS
United Kingdom

T: +44 141 248 0300
aecom.com

Table of Contents

.

1. Introduction

1.1 AECOM has undertaken a Market Research and Key Stakeholder Engagement exercise to gather views on the proposed changes to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) bathing water signage.

1.2 Through the Market Research element of this exercise, views were sought on the aesthetics of the proposed signage and the legibility of the information provided. Following this and building on the market testing work, AECOM then explored, in greater depth, views with key SEPA partners and stakeholders on potential additional functionality and applications of the signage. This sought to explore if there were opportunities additional uses and information which bathing water signage could disseminate and to consider the implications, of this on future sign design.

2. Bathing Water Background

2.1 Scotland has 85 designated bathing water sites, which are monitored by SEPA between May and September.[1]

2.2 During the bathing water session, daily water quality predictions via electronic signs are available at 29 bathing waters. As well as information on water quality predictions the signage displays static seasonal and location specific information.

2.3 This network of signs plays an important role in allowing individuals to make informed choices regarding the bathing water quality, advising of poorer water quality after short-term pollution events.

3. Approach

3.1 The following section sets out the methodology undertaken for this consultation project. The methodology for this study has been spilt to cover the two distinct sections of this study: Market Research and Key Stakeholder Engagement.

3.2 As part of the market research phase, several steps were undertaken:

- Identification of stakeholders and creation of a stakeholder database.

- Development of a stakeholder plan;

- Creation of a consultation pack and; and

- Reporting of feedback.

3.3 AECOM through existing project knowledge within the team and in discussion with SEPA identified and created a stakeholder database relevant to the bathing water signage project, this included circa 55 organisations: Statutory Bodies, National

---

[1] https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/predictions.aspx

Charities, Local Authorities (with signed bathing waters), Community Councils and Voluntary groups interested in bathing waters and /or particular beaches.

3.4 Following on from the creation of a stakeholder database, a stakeholder engagement plan was developed. Given the COVID-19 restrictions a fully online approach to engagement was developed which utilised SEPA's Citizen Space consultation hub. An electronic consultation pack was hosted on the Citizen Space, consultation questions covered the following topics areas:

- Proposed signage design and aesthetics;

- Signage Information via the poster board & electronic Variable Message Screen (VMS); and

- Future Bathing Water Signage Options.

3.5 On closure of the consultation, the headline results were reported back to SEPA via a virtual meeting using MS Teams. This allowed for wider discussion on the results from the initial consultation exercise and informed the agenda for more focused discussion as part of the Key Stakeholder Engagement section of the exercise.

3.6 The Key Stakeholder Engagement explored in detail some of the potential additional functionality and applications of the signage through one to one engagement using a semi structured interview format was undertaken with stakeholders using MS Teams. Further details on the feedback can be found in section 5.

4. Market Research

4.1   The bathing water signage consultation was hosted on SEPA's Citizen Space an online consultation portal which allows members of the public to access SEPA consultations.

4.2   The bathing water signage consultation was hosted for a 3-week period from 22nd September to the 13th October 2020. Stakeholders identified and captured within the stakeholder database received an email inviting them to take part in the consultation. The email provided detail on the consultation and a link to the consultation. A copy of the invitation email can be found in Appendix A.

4.3   The bathing water signage consultation received 46 responses; a breakdown of these can be found below in Figure 1. The largest response rate came from recreational users of bathing waters. Individual recreational bathing water users where not directly contacted as part of the invitation process, so it assumed that organisations may have passed on the invitation to recreational bathing water users who have responded to the consultation.

Figure 1: Consultation respondents
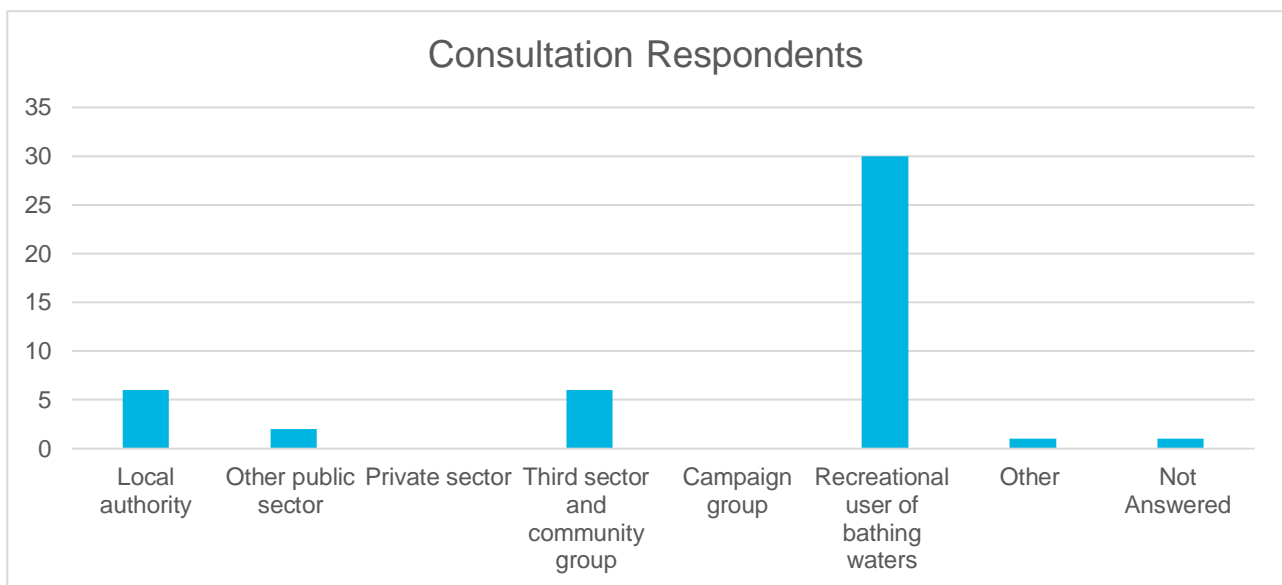
4.4   The consultation focused on three areas related to the proposed bathing water signage, these are outlined below with a breakdown of the results for each of the three areas:

- The design and aesthetic of the proposed Bathing Water signage

- Display information (electronic and static) on the proposed Bathing Water signage, and;

- Future Bathing Water signage opportunities

Proposed Signage Design and Aesthetic

4.5   Overall respondents felt that the proposed bathing water signage was an improvement on previous signage in terms of look and accessibility. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the responses, with 37 respondents (80%) indicating that yes, the proposed signage does improve the look of the bathing water signage.
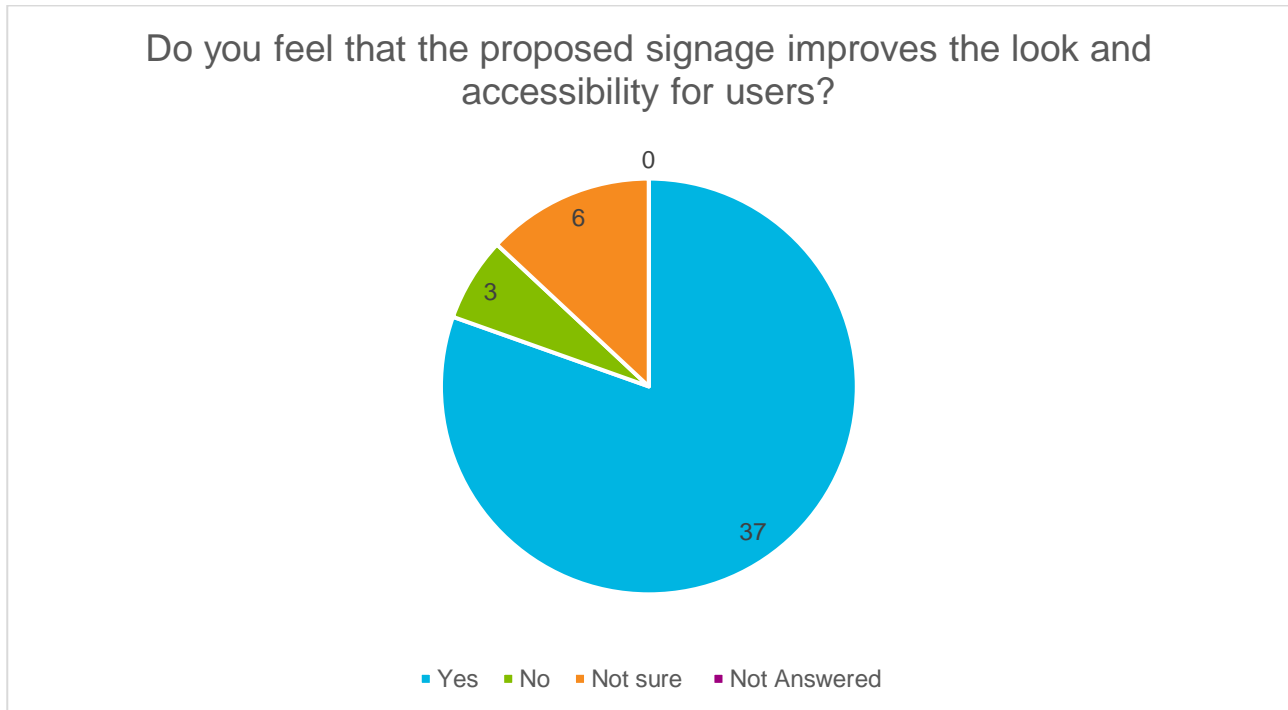
Figure 2: Proposed signage look and accessibility responses

4.6   Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments about the design and aesthetic of the sign, responses were mixed with comments from respondents being both positive and negative in relation to the signage design. A selection of comments are included below:

"I think the sign looks attractive, modern, clear and uncluttered"

"New signage looks modern and easy to read

"It isn't terribly eye catching - it's a bit 'corporate'"

"It is a very large and solid structure which may be appropriate for urban locations but not sympathetic to rural settings."

4.7 Respondents were asked what they thought of the overall look of the signage, with 29 (63%) of respondents saying that they liked it. And 5 (11%) of respondents say that they didn't like it. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of responses.
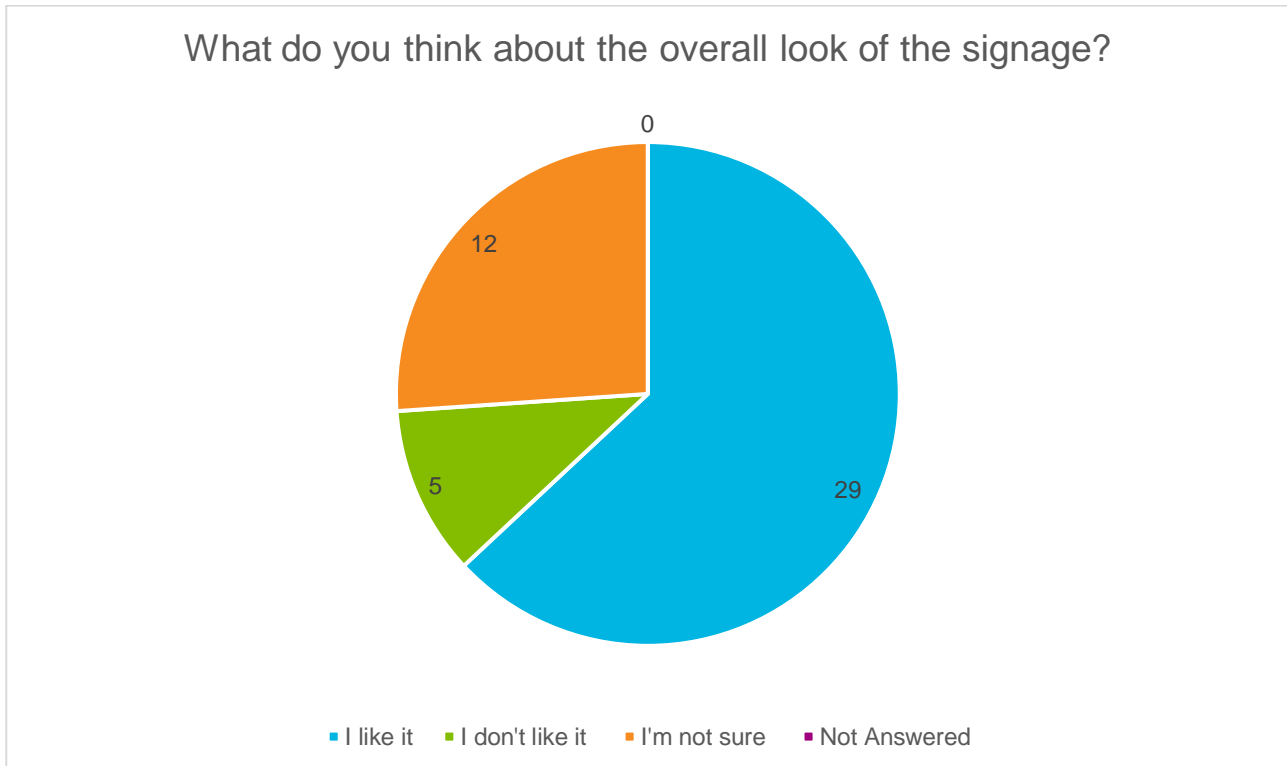
Figure 3: Response to the overall look of the proposed signage

4.8 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the overall look of the proposed signage. A key theme captured was that the sign may look out of place in a rural environment:

"For some beaches it may not be in keeping with its rural surroundings as it actually looks like a live advertising out of the city of London. It may be ok for Portobello beach but not in keeping with more rural and village settings such as Kinghorn Harbour".

"The electronic signage might look acceptable in urban locations but doesn't seem appropriate in more rural locations".

4.9   Respondents were asked about the proposed Bathing Water signage design in the context of the beach environment. 21 (46%) of respondents felt that it would look good, with 10 (22%) of respondents thinking it would look out of place. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of responses.

Figure 4: Look of the proposed signage within the beach environment.

Display Information

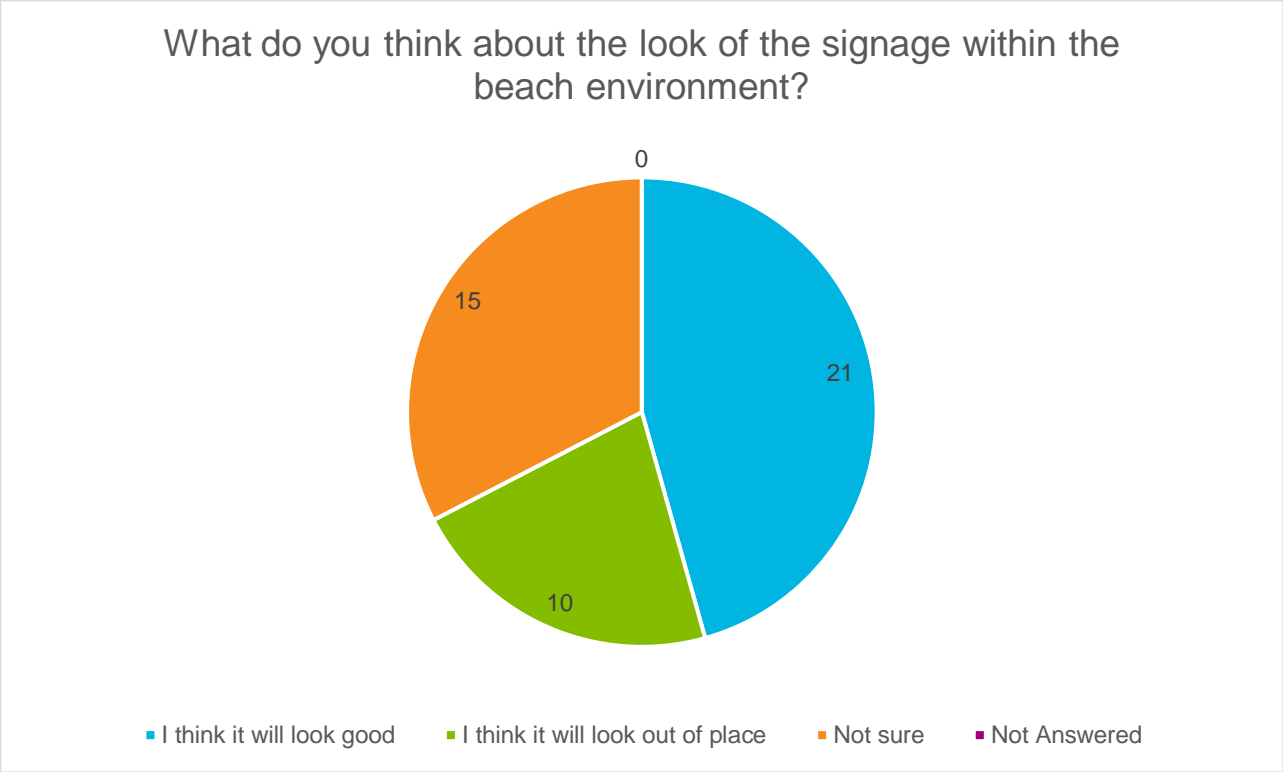4.10 Respondents to the consultation were asked about the types of information that they wanted to see displayed in both the poster cabinet and on the electronic VMS signs. Table 1, indicates the top 5 pieces of information that respondents wanted to see within the poster display cabinet.

Table 1: Top 5 pieces of information displayed within the poster cabinet.

Display Information	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
SEPA Bathing Water Information	42	91%
Information relating to the beach and local community	41	89%
Map showing the beach/ location of the bathing water area	40	87%
Past years' bathing water performance	27	59%
Campaigns from external organisations, e.g. RNLI, Keep Scotland Beautiful	24	52%

4.11 Table 2, indicates the top 5 information types (beyond water quality predictions) that respondents wanted to see displayed on the VMS sign.

Table 2: Top 5 information types respondents wanted to see displayed on the VMS sign.

VMS Information	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
Tide Times	41	89%
Beach Safety Messages	36	78%
Water Temperature	29	63%
Beach Campaign Messages	19	41%
General Beach information	18	39%

Future Bathing Water Signage

4.12 Consultation respondents were asked about future technology opportunities relating to bathing water signage. This included a question about flat screen technologies and asked respondents to share their views on any further signage technologies which could be used to support bathing water messaging.

4.13 When asking respondents, if they would be more likely to view a flat screen digital display for information, rather than the current paper posters, 31 (67%) of respondents said that yes they would be more likely to view the flat screen digital display, with 6 (13%) saying that no they would not be more likely to view the flat screen digital display.

If the bathing water signage displayed information on a flat screen digital display, rather than paper posters, would you be more likely to view it for bathing water related information?

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Not sure   ■ Not Answered
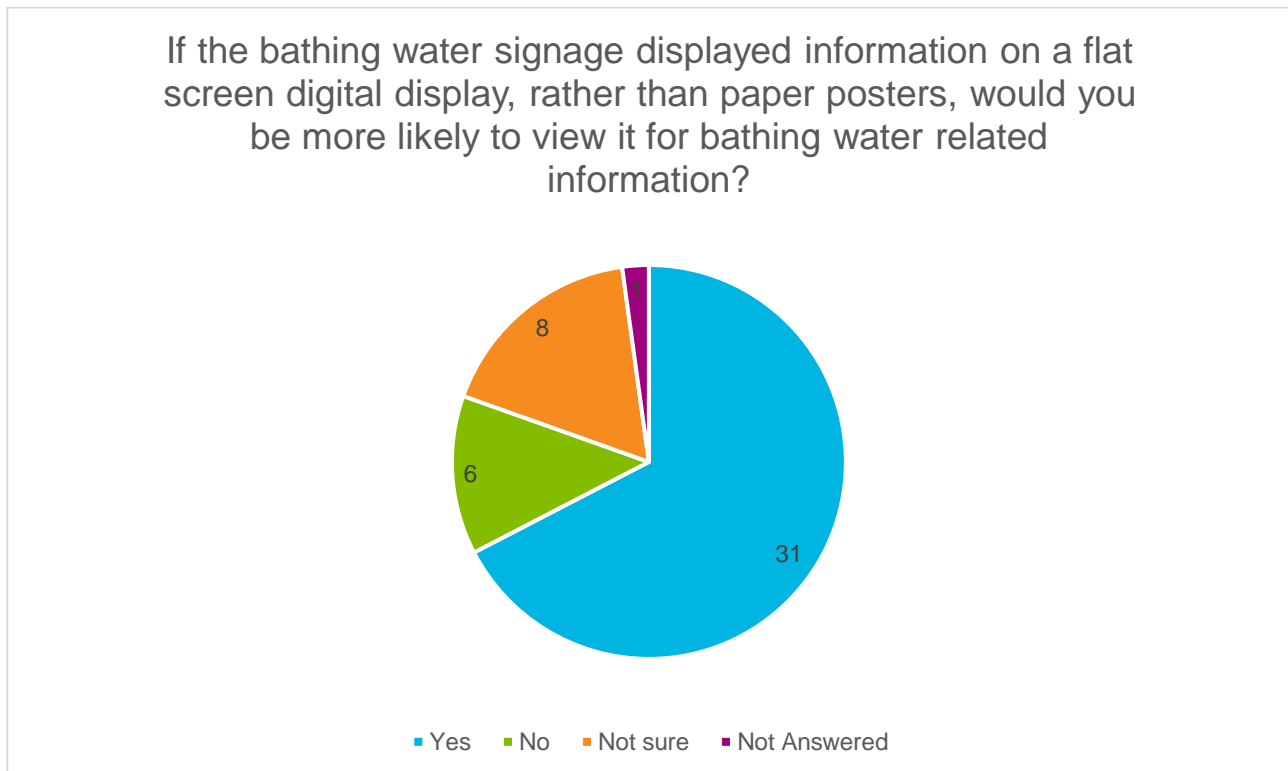
Figure 7: Bathing Water signage display: likelihood of viewing flat screen vs poster information

4.14 Respondents were asked if they felt that a flat screen digital display screen would fit within the beach environment, 29 (63%) of respondents felt that a flat screen digital display would fit within the beach environment, with 6 (13%) respondents answering that no it would not fit within the beach environment.

4.15 An open text box was provided to allow respondents to provide their views and more detail in relation using flat screen digital technologies in relation to bathing water signs. A selection of these comments are included below:

"I believe that this type of signage opens up the messages and news that can be conveyed quickly and to the point ... it is far superior to posters"

"I think that people would be attracted to this type of signage technology and would be more likely to read it…."

"They are modern looking and easier to interpret than the current signage"

5. Key Stakeholder Engagement

5.1 Following the completion of the bathing water market research a second phase of targeted Key Stakeholder Engagement was undertaken. The purpose of the engagement was to build on the feedback received through the Market Research with selected stakeholders and to explore additional functionality and information dissemination in relation to bathing water signage.

5.2 An exercise was undertaken to identify key stakeholders using the existing stakeholder database, developed in the Market Research phase of the project and the following stakeholders were identified and included within the engagement process:

- Scottish Water

- Keep Scotland Beautiful

- South Ayrshire Council

- North Ayrshire Council

5.3 Individual meetings took place with representatives from each of the above organisations via MS Teams, with the engagement taking place in April and May 2021

5.4 A summary from each of the meetings is included below, with full minutes from each meeting provided in Appendix B.

Keep Scotland Beautiful Summary

5.5 In summary Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) were positive about the potential to have more dynamic bathing water signage in appropriate locations. It was seen positively as being an additional communication channel which could be utilised by KSB. Additionally, it was felt that sign function could be used to provide real time information in relation to beaches and be utilised to provide additional safety messages e.g. crowd control, beach closures.

5.6 However, KSB felt that any additional functionality should be sensitive to the original purpose of the signs and shouldn't detract from the primary function of providing bathing water information and safety messages.

5.7 KSB have a well-established partnership with SEPA and believe that if a cross organisation working group was set up to support future signage and messaging opportunities then KSB would be in strong position to support this.

Scottish Water Summary

5.8   In summary Scottish Water (SW) were positive about the potential to have more dynamic bathing water signage in appropriate locations. Highlighting the advantages of being able to update messages currently held in the poster board section quickly and remotely, so messages remain current with no need to directly access the signage, as is the current practice.

5.9   New signage was seen positively by Scottish Water as being an additional communication channel which they could use to promote relevant Scottish Water beach/environment-related campaign messages. Helping reinforce how partners are working together to help provide advice and support people in these local areas/communities

5.10   SW would also be interested in utilising the current and proposed bathing water signs to display appropriate SW messaging out with the bathing water session if the signs were to be kept switched on (noting that they are normally switched off in the current arrangements).

5.11   SW have a well-established partnership with SEPA and would welcome the opportunity to be involved with future discussions and opportunities in relation to bathing water signage.

North Ayrshire Council Summary

5.12   North Ayrshire Council (NAC) were very positive and saw clear opportunities and potential for additional functionality of bathing water signage, they saw it as offering the potential to support the display of flood warning messages in coastal areas, emergency messages and to be used to manage beach zoning information. However, NAC felt that additional functionality should not distract from the core purpose of the signage which is to provide bathing water information, and that the signs could be utilised to provide more information about the bathing water season and encourage people to use the bathing water sites.

5.13   There are also additional opportunities to work with the Ayrshire Growth Deal which has identified Irvine harbour as one of its investment areas allocating £14 million for the Great Harbour programme which will improve the harbourside area between the town centre and the beach. It was noted that there could be synergies between this regeneration area and future bathing water signage and associated messaging.

5.14   NAC would welcome the opportunity to use existing and future bathing water signage outside the current bathing water session. This would be seen as very positive as it is another way for NAC to promote beach and safety messages.

5.15   Currently NAC have a large amount of informal communication with SEPA but would welcome an established protocol and management group associated with future signage, with the potential to this being extend to emergency protocol in relation to using the signs to display emergency messaging.

5.16   NAC could also support and facilitate a dialogue between the Ayrshire Growth Deal Team around future opportunities linked to bathing water signage and the wider Ayrshire Growth Deal. (note a short Appendix C has been provided which gives further information on the Ayrshire Growth deal and potential interaction with the bathing water signs)

South Ayrshire Council Summary

5.17   South Ayrshire Council (SAC) saw opportunities with signage functionality to allow for rolling campaign messages as well as bathing water information. Additionally, local and beach wayfinding information could become more interactive. However, there was a need to ensure that the messaging was aimed at right audience as locals and tourists may be interested in different messaging.

5.18   SAC felt that the examples of the flat screen signage shown were very modern and would enhance the beach environment but cautioned that any signage would have to be vandal proof and be able to withstand harsh environmental and weather conditions. SAC would be happy to be involved with future discussions around signage design.

5.19   Whilst SAC hadn't considered the possibility of using the bathing water signage to display messaging outside of the bathing water session, they considered it a positive and would be interested in supporting this with SAC messages.

5.20   SAC already have a partnership approach with SEPA in relation to bathing water sites in the South Ayrshire area and would welcome being involved in any working group or further stakeholder exercises to support the future development of signage or signage messaging. SAC also identified that there are potential synergies with this project and the development and upgrade of Ayr seafront strategy which is a regeneration project that includes potential improvements to the public space with better pedestrian connections and purposeful public open space.

Key Stakeholder Engagement Themes

5.21 Several key themes can be drawn from the Stakeholder Engagement element of this project:

- Stakeholders were positive about potential additional functionality of future signage and provided different examples of how such functionality could be utilised alongside the bathing water messaging in a beach environment.

- Stakeholders did not want additional messaging or messaging functionality to detract from the current purpose or messaging of bathing waters around water quality recognising the importance of communicating this information to the public.

- Functionality and operationality of the bathing water signage could be extended beyond the bathing water season – currently signage is only operational during the bathing water season.

- There was a strong willingness from stakeholders to work with SEPA to support future bathing water signage through a more formalised engagement process.

6. Conclusions

6.1　The proposed bathing water signage received positive feedback from the consultation respondents with 80% of respondents seeing the proposed bathing water signage as an improvement on the current design and 63% of respondents agreeing that they liked the overall look of the proposed design.

6.2　However, some concerns were raised regarding the fact that the signage may look out of place in a rural beach environment.

6.3　A solution considered was a modification to the proposed bathing water signage in rural areas, comprising of a vinyl wrap to cover the sign facing. However, due to the harsh environmental and weather conditions that the vinyl wrap would need to cope with and any additional maintenance that this might require, this was discounted as a solution.

6.4　Future flat screen or digital designs may need to take this feedback on board to ensure that this type of signage is in keeping with the surrounding environment. As well as considering harsh environmental and weather conditions that this type of signage will need to cope with.

6.5　As well as the display of bathing water information, stakeholders and consultation respondents felt that there was opportunity to display additional information on the bathing water signage. And that the signage could be utilised outside of the bathing water season to display campaign and information messages by SEPA and third parties i.e. Scottish Water, Local Authorities and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

6.6　There may be further opportunities to extend this to commercialising the signage space if flat screen and digital screens are developed in some bathing water locations.

6.7　The management of usage by third parties and stakeholder expectations will need to be carefully considered if bathing water signage is to be expanded to incorporate non-bathing-water messaging. It is clear when talking to stakeholders that they recognise the value of the water quality messaging and didn't want additional messaging / messaging functionality to detract from that purpose.

6.8　There is a strong willingness from stakeholders to work with SEPA in the future design and placement of bathing water signage. And the opportunity to develop further links with organisations and local authority teams e.g. Ayrshire Growth Deal Team to support a future programme of bathing water signage.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Based on the findings from the market research and stakeholder engagement exercises there are several areas associated with bathing water signage programme, which can be explored by SEPA. These areas are discussed below and a proposed programme has been developed covering short, medium and longer term timeframes.

7.2 Through stakeholder engagement and market testing it has been identified that appropriate campaign messages are something that bathing water users would welcome seeing as part of bathing water signage. There is an opportunity to explore hosting SEPA and external organisations' campaign messages (e.g. Keep Scotland Beautiful, RNLI, Scottish Water). Messages could be displayed on the current poster boards and outside the bathing water season.

7.3 A further area to explore in relation to information provision, is the opportunity to develop and maximise the offering of additional information associated with bathing water conditions on the electronic signage, this could include air/water temperatures and tide times.

7.4 With the development of the totem style signage there is opportunity for SEPA to explore the refurbishment of older signage so that it could be redeployed and reused at existing sites to support existing signage, an example of this would be were a bathing water site is particularly long or has multiple exit and entrances. It is noted however that there is merit in retaining some signs to have available as spares to assist the resilience of the system.

7.5 Through stakeholder engagement it has been identified that there is a key opportunity for SEPA to explore how green energy can power both new and existing bathing water signage, thus supporting national climate change policies.

7.6 An opportunity has been identified around utilising existing QR code technology to allow SEPA to host additional bathing water information as well as external campaigns on a suitable online platform.

7.7 There are several opportunities to explore additional and new bathing water signage types. This includes the opportunity to develop additional signage at longer beaches examples of this type of signage could be smaller repeater signage.

7.8 A further opportunity to explore in relation to new and additional signage could be the development of a rural version of the new totem signs. This was raised as a point that some locations would not suit the current sign design due to their rural nature.

7.9   A table below outlines these findings into a possible short / medium and long priorities table to allow SEPA to prioritise further exploration of these findings.

Table 3: Opportunities and Indicative Timeframe

Opportunity	Key Partners	Short (<2 years)/ Medium (2-4 years)/ Long (>4 years) term
Explore the possibility of hosting external campaign messages on the current posterboards outside the bathing water season.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • SEPA Communication Centre • SEPA Legal and Communications • Campaign / NGO groups • VMS Contractor	Short Term
Explore the opportunity to utilise the electronic messaging board to host SEPA and external messages outside of the bathing water season.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • SEPA Communication Centre • Campaign / NGO groups • VMS Contractor	Short Term
Explore the opportunities in relation to additional (electronic) information provision associated with bathing water conditions: Tide times and water temperature.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • SEPA Legal and Communications • VMS Contractor	Short Term
Explore linkages with local developments / regeneration activities noting opportunities at Ayr beach with a substantial regeneration project and at Irvine with links to the Ayrshire Growth Deal.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • SEPA Communication Centre • Local Authorities • VMS Contractor	Short Term
Explore refurbishing old signage so that it could be redeployed or reused at existing sites to support existing signage.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • VMS Contractor • Civils Contractor	Short Term

Opportunity	Key Partners	Short (<2 years)/ Medium (2-4 years)/ Long (>4 years) term
Explore how existing and new signs within the bathing water system can be powered by green energy.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • VMS Contractor • Civils Contractor • Local Authority (planning)	Short Term
Explore the opportunity to utilise the existing technology of QR codes on signage and develop an associated online platform linked to the QR code, allowing SEPA to host additional bathing water information and external campaigns as appropriate.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • SEPA Legal and Communications • SEPA Information Services Team	Medium Term
Explore the opportunity to include additional signage at longer beaches in the form of repeater signage. Investigate the possibility of such signage being solar powered.	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • VMS Contractor • Civils Contractor • Local Authority (planning)	Medium Term
Explore the possibility of a rural version of the totem signs	• SEPA Bathing Water Team • VMS Contractor • Civils Contractor • Local Authority (planning)	Longer Term

Appendix A Invitation to Consultation – Email Text

Dear SEPA Stakeholder

<u>Consultation on Bathing Waters Signage</u>

AECOM on behalf of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is seeking views on a new bathing water signage design. SEPA are upgrading current bathing water signage, with the next generation in signage design improving the delivery of bathing water information for residents and visitors alike.

SEPA offers a range of services to users during the bathing water season (including daily water quality predictions) through electronic signs at bathing water sites, via the SEPA website and the beachline telephone number. Further information regarding the bathing water signage programme can be found at:
https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx

AECOM is seeking stakeholder opinions on a range of aspects related to the functionality, signage design and associated bathing waters messaging. As a SEPA stakeholder you are invited to take part via the link to the online survey:

https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/evidence-and-flooding/6360100f

The consultation will close at 5pm on Tuesday 13th October.

If you have any questions related to the bathing water signage consultation, then please use the email address below, marking emails with the heading *bathing water consultation*.

Kathryn.mackay@aecom.com

Yours Sincerely

Appendix B Meeting Notes

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Bathing Water Meeting Minutes

Ideas Generation & Gathering on Future Bathing Water Signage

Meeting name	**Meeting date**	**Attendees**
Bathing Water Stakeholder Consultation	30 March 2021	Joanne Casey, Regional Director - AECOM

Meeting name
Bathing Water Stakeholder Consultation

Time
1400 - 1500

Meeting date
30 March 2021

Project name
Bathing water signage

Attendees
Joanne Casey, Regional Director - AECOM
Kathryn MacKay, Senior Consultant- AECOM
Georgina Massouraki
Jamie Ormiston

Apologies
Calum McPhail

Agenda Items

1. **Welcome**

   KM made introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting

2. **Overview and Update of Bathing Water Signage Project since previous meeting**

   a. **Key findings from the previous consultation**

   AECOM: Consultation ran for 3 weeks and majority identified as recreational users of bathing water. 12 questions over 3 topic areas - Signage look, information on sign (VMS and poster boards), future of bathing water signage.

   Asked if new signage improved on old signage and what respondents thought about new signage (in beach environment etc.). Overall positive feedback on look of signage (improvement on old signage) and beach environment itself.

   Additional signage/information – top 5 were: SEPA bathing water information, info to beach and local community, map showing beach, past years bathing water performance, campaigns from external organisations

   Bathing water presented on VMS plus different messages was desired by most responders – tide times, beach safety messages, water temp, beach campaign messages, general beach info

   The use of flat screen technology and future bathing water signage – felt that overall people were receptive to idea especially digital poster element

   b. **Development of the totem signage**

   AECOM: Based on previous feedback we looked at some of these suggestions around applying vinyl wraps to the totems, but a decision was taken to keep the relatively plain, due to concerns around how the vinyl wraps might survive in a costal environment

6 signs are ready to be rolled out

Likely to be installed for 2022 season but several factors affected this (COVID-19 and supply issues)

SEPA has a statutory role to provide bathing water information but is looking to discuss with stakeholders if there is a aspiration to have a more dynamic approach to the signage.

3. **Bathing Water Signage – Ideas Gathering on Future Opportunities**
   A discussion on the following topic areas, to generate and gather ideas to feed into future thinking around bathing water signage:

   a. **Stakeholder views on future technology opportunities**

   Would a more dynamic approach to bathing water signage using technology opportunities be welcomed?

AECOM: Looking at opportunities and appetite from stakeholders on going beyond the statutory SEPA bathing water messaging in the future and what this may look like. Caveated with this being an ideas and information gathering session and we have no development plans currently other than the new signage.

KSB: Sought clarification on the dynamic aspect of the signage, AECOM :advised that this could mean more information on the sign, rolling screens, and potentially interactive elements, very much open to ideas around how the sign will function and what stakeholders want to see.

KSB: From campaign perspective it always a challenge to find comms channels in the place that directly engages customers with the information. This type of signage would allow groups to do this. General point that dynamic sign would be useful for seasonal messaging and any specific targeted measures required.

KSB: See that these signs would be another communications channel and could have lots of uses. Useful exercise to map out types of content that would be available for signage. Electronic signs much more eye-catching and would be more engaging

KSB: Happy to see extras within the signage or more dynamic approach to the signage also long as it doesn't detract from the primary function and safety messages. KSB not keen to see this kind of signage becoming just a billboard. Queried where this type of signage would be placed?

AECOM: Likely that if this type of signage were to be taken forward it would be at a small number specifically picked locations

KSB: From a long term and practical point of view would manage and operate the signage?

AECOM: Working assumption is that SEPA would own and likely manage signs but this and partnership approaches are part of the ideas gathering stage.

KSB: Falls into the nice to have category but KSB would need to understand the wider value of it. Indicated that there is some research which shows that less than 50% of respondents looked at and digested sign information. KSB would be happy to seek views of community groups through a

Action: KSB to share this info if available.

KSB: The signage could be used to actively promote what SEPA do, something that currently may not be done through these signs. Could also be used to promote other organisations and their work but would have to be sensitive to not losing what the purpose of these signs are for.

AECOM: Any thoughts on the aesthetics of this type of signage within the beach environment?

KSB: This type of signage feels like the future but there is a need for it to be in keeping with the surrounding location and overall aesthetic of the location. KSB query regarding the carbon footprint of the signage and things like light pollution.

AECOM: Both carbon footprints of the signage and the light pollution aspects would have to be considered at a more detailed stage of such a project.

KSB: Requirement on both these fronts to have good engagement with local community groups and individuals, with a good cause and clear reason for the signage can see that communities would accept the signage in local areas / beach fronts.

b. Signage function

AECOM: Any key functionalities that KSB feel would be of benefit and would like to see in future signage? (i.e internet capability, rolling screens, ability to play short videos)

KSB: Nothing in particular comes to mind, but it would be good if local communities / areas could also use the increased functionality that would come with this kind of signage. However, raised the idea that there maybe little use in having internet capability, mapping functions given the fact most people may just use their phones.

But could be used to provide real time information that provides a specific function in relation to the beach. e.g directing people away from overcrowded beaches.

KSB: Raised concerns about the possibility of vandalism, given that beach fronts are not necessarily as occupied at certain times of day / times of year or covered by CCTV, in the same way town centres are.

c. Future opportunities

Generalised opportunities to work in partnership / develop a partnership with Local Authorities / stakeholders to deliver this type of signage in the future: e.g. through Redevelopment / Regeneration Schemes associated with beach fronts.

KSB: Are In good position to work with SEPA and have a well-established partnership and continue to build relationship. Potential for beach sign working group - which could support the management of messages and involve other groups and organisations.

4. AOB

Scottish Water

Bathing Water Meeting Minutes

Ideas Generation & Gathering on Future Bathing Water Signage

Meeting name	**Meeting date**	**Attendees**
Bathing Water Stakeholder Consultation	8 April 2021	Kathryn MacKay, Senior Consultant- AECOM Calum McPhail - SEPA Lorna Hamilton -Scottish Water

Time	**Project name**	
1500 - 1600	Bathing water signage	**Apologies** Andy Mortali _Scottish Water Kerry Davidson Scottish Water

Agenda Items

1. **Welcome**

   AECOM: Introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting

2. **Overview and Update of Bathing Water Signage Project since previous meeting**

   a. **Key findings from the previous consultation**

   AECOM: Consultation ran for 3 weeks and majority identified as recreational users of bathing water. 12 questions over 3 topic areas - Signage look, information on sign (VMS and poster boards), future of bathing water signage.

   Asked if new signage improved on old signage and what respondents thought about new signage (in beach environment etc.). Overall positive feedback on look of signage (improvement on old signage) and beach environment itself.

   Additional signage/information – top 5 were: SEPA bathing water information, info to beach and local community, map showing beach, past years bathing water performance, campaigns from external organisations

   Bathing water presented on VMS plus different messages was desired by most responders – tide times, beach safety messages, water temp, beach campaign messages, general beach info

   The use of flat screen technology and future bathing water signage – felt that overall people were receptive to idea especially digital poster element

   b. **Development of the totem signage**

   SEPA: SEPA received funding for signage at bathing water locations across Scotland, this is signage which has been in place for around 20 years provides daily updates of the bathing water quality in that location. As well as this they can have a multi-functional message purpose e.g. take your litter home, don't feed the seagulls.

The current signage is beginning to reach the end of its natural lifespan and therefore SEPA have carried out work to redesign and update the current signage.

AECOM on behalf of SEPA undertook the survey as outlined above and also want to look at the future of bathing water signage.

Six signs have been procured and these are likely to be installed for 2022 season, but several factors including COVID-19 and supply issues have affected this.

Scottish Water (SW): Indicated that if there was the opportunity to work with SEPA on using the messaging facilities of the new 6 signs, earlier than the bathing water session that they would be interested in discussing this further.

SEPA has a statutory role to provide bathing water information but is looking to discuss with stakeholders if there is an aspiration to have a more dynamic approach to the signage and the how SEPA work with stakeholders.

3. Bathing Water Signage – Ideas Gathering on Future Opportunities
    A discussion on the following topic areas, to generate and gather ideas to feed into future thinking around bathing water signage:

    a. Stakeholder views on future technology opportunities

    Would a more dynamic approach to bathing water signage using technology opportunities be welcomed?

    AECOM: Looking at opportunities and appetite from stakeholders on going beyond the statutory SEPA bathing water messaging in the future and what this may look like. Caveated with this being an ideas and information gathering session and we have no development plans currently other than the new signage.

    SW: With the technology advances the digital rolling screen is becoming more of an option, there are associated pros and cons with this technology: the number of messages that users will see could be more limited, and these need to be very short concise messages (similar to social media campaign messages), were as the poster board does give you the flexibility of people being able to view multiple things at once.

    However, an advantage of the using the digital rolling screen is that messages can be updated remotely so can reflect different messages quickly with no need to go out and replace posters.

    SW: As well as the use of the use of the bathing water signage by stakeholders, there may also be the opportunity to explore commercial activities through the use of this signage and to bring an outdoor advertising agency onboard, which could bring in additional revenue.

    Could be challenges around the advertisements or campaign material displayed and it was acknowledged that this material would need to be sensitive and not conflict with the core messaging that SEPA wanted to get across through the signage.

    Through discussion it was acknowledged that the any campaign messages or advertising would have to be high level, national and neutral in coverage as to ensure that the signs didn't become partisan. Discussions around good fit messages would be working with partners like Visit Scotland, Scottish Water (water cycle and top up taps) and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

b. Signage function / Aesthetics

AECOM: It is likely that if these signage was developed it would be placed in one or two high footfall locations but we are a keen to understand any key functionalities that SW feel would be of benefit and would like to see in future signage? (i.e internet capability, rolling screens, ability to play short videos)

A discussion around the fact the type of rolling screen signage could make the beachfronts look very modern, fresh and up to date feel.

AECOM: Specifically, keen to understand if there was any experience from SW of signage which is interactive and/or has internet capabilities.

SW: Haven't done anything specific in terms of interactive outdoor signage, however, in the world of social engagement, you are likely to get better engagement when you move from something that's static to either a video or moving image. However, you need to factor in the fact that these images won't have sound so that will make it different to social and digital media channels.

SW: Currently there are bus stops which are interactive and Wi-Fi enabled and allowing users to use live maps and interact with the digital content. This could be linked with weather / water report / water temperature which could be provided live and made engaging, at the moment this type signage use new technology which is seen in urban areas.

Discussion around the need of these type of screens to be sensitive to the local environment (including the materials used and the positioning of the signage) along with the need for the community engagement around any potential upgrades of the signage.

SW: Noted that the signage is fairly standard and if people are familiar with the signage in other locations there may be less issues.

c. Future opportunities

Generalised opportunities to work in partnership / develop a partnership with Local Authorities / stakeholders to deliver this type of signage in the future: e.g. through Redevelopment / Regeneration Schemes associated with beach fronts.

SEPA: Is there any appetite from stakeholders to use these screens and signage outside of the bathing water season?

SW: Indicated that they would be interested in having the opportunity to use the current totems and future signage both during the bathing water period as well as outside the bathing water season.

AECOM: Looking to understand the opportunities around partnership working in terms of the campaigns, previously stakeholders have mentioned the setting up of a working group or campaigns calendar to help support future campaigns.

SW: Yes a working group would be helpful, especially if there is a different range of messages from different organisations to make sure they compliment each other and ensure that all the stakeholders using this facility have sight of the messages for that period of time. This could also be extended to have one message from a number of different stakeholders if there is one particular theme that stakeholders wanted to promote.

Discussion around the need for some consideration is needed around partnership working, how would it actually work? What's involved in delivering this?

4. **AOB**

North Ayrshire Council

Bathing Water Meeting Minutes

Ideas Generation & Gathering on Future Bathing Water Signage

Meeting name	**Meeting date**	**Attendees**
Bathing Water Stakeholder Consultation	4 May 2021	Kathryn MacKay, Senior Consultant- AECOM
		Joanne Casey AECOM
		Calum McPhail SEPA
Time	**Project name**	Scott Mckenzie – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
1400- 1500	Bathing water signage	

Agenda Items

1. **Welcome**

   AECOM: Introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting

2. **Overview and Update of Bathing Water Signage Project since previous meeting**

   a. **Key findings from the previous consultation**

   AECOM: Consultation ran for 3 weeks and majority identified as recreational users of bathing water. 12 questions over 3 topic areas - Signage look, information on sign (VMS and poster boards), future of bathing water signage.

   Asked if new signage improved on old signage and what respondents thought about new signage (in beach environment etc.). Overall positive feedback on look of signage (improvement on old signage) and beach environment itself.

   Additional signage/information – top 5 were: SEPA bathing water information, info to beach and local community, map showing beach, past years bathing water performance, campaigns from external organisations

   Bathing water presented on VMS plus different messages was desired by most responders – tide times, beach safety messages, water temp, beach campaign messages, general beach info

   The use of flat screen technology and future bathing water signage – felt that overall people were receptive to idea especially digital poster element

   b. **Development of the totem signage**

   SEPA: SEPA received funding for signage at bathing water locations across Scotland, this is signage which has been in place for around 20 years provides daily updates of the bathing water quality in that location. As well as this they can have a multi-functional message purpose e.g. take your litter home, don't feed the seagulls.

   The current signage is beginning to reach the end of its natural lifespan and therefore SEPA have carried out work to redesign and update the current signage.

   AECOM on behalf of SEPA undertook the survey as outlined above and also want to look at the future of bathing water signage.

Six signs have been procured and these are likely to be installed for 2022 season, but several factors including COVID-19 and supply issues have affected this.

3. **Bathing Water Signage – Ideas Gathering on Future Opportunities**
   A discussion on the following topic areas, to generate and gather ideas to feed into future thinking around bathing water signage:

   a. **Stakeholder views on future technology opportunities**

   Would a more dynamic approach to bathing water signage using technology opportunities be welcomed?

   AECOM: Looking at opportunities and appetite from stakeholders on going beyond the statutory SEPA bathing water messaging in the future and what this may look like. Caveated with this being an ideas and information gathering session and we have no development plans currently other than the new signage.

   North Aryshire Council (NAC): New signage would be welcomed – in light of the Ayrshire Growth Deal which has a particular focus on Irvine. There could also be opportunities to engage with the regeneration team working on the Ayrshire Growth Deal, especially in relation to moving the bathing water signage inland at Irvine and supporting the development and potential messaging associated with any new signage.

   b. **Signage function / Aesthetics**

   AECOM: It is likely that if these signage was developed it would be placed in one or two high footfall locations but we are a keen to understand any key functionalities that NAC feel would be of benefit and would like to see in future signage? (i.e internet capability, rolling screens, ability to play short videos)

   NAC: See clear opportunities around the potential function of new signage.   The signage could support the display of flood warnings in coastal areas, as well as supporting the safer shores project and on-going wider safety messages. An example given was messaging associated with blue/green algae in bodies of water close to the signage. Opportunities were also identified around using the signage to display emergency messages e.g. unexploded ordnances which have washed onto shore, emergency beach closures.

   NAC: Further suggestions around how the signage could be used included displaying beach zoning information so beach activities can be managed and providing an emergency point for individuals who are accessing the beach.

   NAC: Overall NAC are very positive towards the potential for additional functionality from the signage and a different way to display information for beach and bathing water users.

   However, it was noted that there would need to be some caution in relation to the type and frequency of messages as to not distract from the core purpose of the signage which is to display bathing water information. This could be done through promotion of the bathing water aspects / associated bathing water messaging / encouraging people to use bathing water sites via the signage.

NAC: Felt that the signage could add a modern look to most locations but that for more historic or remote locations there might need to be more consideration around this style of signage. Noted that In areas with high footfall locations it could be signage you would expect to see anyway.

NAC: Raised the issue of the intensity of the screens in the evening and the need for the locations to be considered in relation to this aspect, or for the signage to be dimmed / turned off at these times.

NAC: Would welcome the opportunity to use future and existing signage outside the current bathing water session (signage is currently not used and remains switched off outside the bathing water session). This could be very positive as it's another way in which NAC could promote messages.

c. Future opportunities

Generalised opportunities to work in partnership / develop a partnership with Local Authorities / stakeholders to deliver this type of signage in the future: e.g. through Redevelopment / Regeneration Schemes associated with beach fronts.

AECOM: Looking to understand the opportunities around partnership working in terms of the campaigns, previously stakeholders have mentioned the setting up of a working group or campaigns calendar to help support future campaigns.

NAC: NAC already have communication with SEPA, although it was acknowledged that this is quite informal. NAC feel that it would be useful to a establish a procedure protocol around the management and planned messaging associated with the signage as well as an emergency messages protocol.

NAC: NAC advised that they could be the link between community councils the local authority and SEPA. Further to this there could be the opportunity for NAC to support and facilitate a dialogue between the Ayrshire Growth Deal Team around future opportunities linked to bathing water signage and the Ayrshire growth deal.

4. AOB

South Ayrshire Council

Bathing Water Meeting Minutes

Ideas Generation & Gathering on Future Bathing Water Signage

Meeting name	**Meeting date**	**Attendees**
Bathing Water Stakeholder Consultation	4 May 2021	Kathryn MacKay, Senior Consultant- AECOM Gordon Lauder – South Ayrshire Council
Time 1400- 1500	**Project name** Bathing water signage	**Apologies** Joanne Casey AECOM Calum McPhail SEPA

Agenda Items

1. **Welcome**

    AECOM: Introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting

2. **Overview and Update of Bathing Water Signage Project since previous meeting**

    a. **Key findings from the previous consultation**

        AECOM: Consultation ran for 3 weeks and majority identified as recreational users of bathing water. 12 questions over 3 topic areas - Signage look, information on sign (VMS and poster boards), future of bathing water signage.

        Asked if new signage improved on old signage and what respondents thought about new signage (in beach environment etc.). Overall positive feedback on look of signage (improvement on old signage) and beach environment itself.

        Additional signage/information – top 5 were: SEPA bathing water information, info to beach and local community, map showing beach, past years bathing water performance, campaigns from external organisations

        Bathing water presented on VMS plus different messages was desired by most responders – tide times, beach safety messages, water temp, beach campaign messages, general beach info

        The use of flat screen technology and future bathing water signage – felt that overall people were receptive to idea especially digital poster element

    b. **Development of the totem signage**

    SEPA: SEPA received funding for signage at bathing water locations across Scotland, this is signage which has been in place for around 20 years provides daily updates of the bathing water quality in that location. As well as this they can have a multi-functional message purpose e.g. take your litter home, don't feed the seagulls.

The current signage is beginning to reach the end of its natural lifespan and therefore SEPA have carried out work to redesign and update the current signage.

AECOM on behalf of SEPA undertook the survey as outlined above and also want to look at the future of bathing water signage.

Six signs have been procured and these are likely to be installed for 2022 season, but several factors including COVID-19 and supply issues have affected this.

South Ayrshire Council (SAC): Ask if any of the six new signs where located in South Ayrshire Council area? This is so that they can brief local councillor members of what is being installed as a good news opportunity.

3. **Bathing Water Signage – Ideas Gathering on Future Opportunities**
   A discussion on the following topic areas, to generate and gather ideas to feed into future thinking around bathing water signage:

   a. **Stakeholder views on future technology opportunities**

   Would a more dynamic approach to bathing water signage using technology opportunities be welcomed?

   AECOM: Looking at opportunities and appetite from stakeholders on going beyond the statutory SEPA bathing water messaging in the future and what this may look like. Caveated with this being an ideas and information gathering session and we have no development plans currently other than the new signage.

   SAC: Would be keen to see a more dynamic approach to the bathing water signage, overall thoughts are that the screen looks modern and it would enhance the opportunities around information display. This is also something that SAC would be keen to utilise in the display of localised beach information and campaigns developed by the Local Authority.

   b. **Signage function / Aesthetics**

   AECOM: It is likely that if these signage was developed it would be placed in one or two high footfall locations but we are a keen to understand any key functionalities that SAC feel would be of benefit and would like to see in future signage? (i.e internet capability, rolling screens, ability to play short videos)

   SAC: Could see that there would be uses not only to support rolling campaign messages, as well as bathing water information. Additionally, local and beach wayfinding information e.g. beach facilities, first aid, public toilets, could become more interactive with a short description / information on opening and closing times and short instructions on how to reach the facility. SAC: Felt that overall modern looking signage would enhance the beach environment but noted that any design would have to vandal proof and be able to withstand harsh weather conditions and the beach environment. Discussion in relation to the aesthetics of the signage, SAC were positive on the style and design of the examples of the flat screen style but indicated that SEPA may want to think about how long the signs are on for, for example would they be on 24/7 or would they be switched off

at night when there are few or no users around to see the messaging and light pollution / issues with light nuisance could be an issue.

SAC: Indicated that they would be happy to be involved in future input into the designs to support development of such signage.

SAC: Felt that this type of signage is probably more aimed at tourists/ visitors to an area and that this group may benefit the most from the signage, consideration should be given to what might benefit locals as well in terms of the information displayed on the signage.

AECOM: Currently the bathing water signage is switched on for the period of the bathing water session, would stakeholders interested in opportunities around having the signage operate for longer periods out with the bathing water session?

SAC: Whilst this isn't something that has been considered, it would be seen as a positive to be able to utilise the bathing water signage for other appropriate messages, these could be both messages about the beach environment i.e. warnings messages, or around local community events.

c. Future opportunities

Generalised opportunities to work in partnership / develop a partnership with Local Authorities / stakeholders to deliver this type of signage in the future: e.g. through Redevelopment / Regeneration Schemes associated with beach fronts.

AECOM: Looking to understand the opportunities around partnership working in terms of the campaigns, previously stakeholders have mentioned the setting up of a working group or campaigns calendar to help support future campaigns.

SAC: South Ayrshire Council already have a partnership approach with SEPA in relation to Bathing Water Sites in the Local Authority area and therefore have no problem in being involved in a working group or wider stakeholder exercise to support the development of signage or signage messaging.

In relation to regeneration / redevelopment opportunities SAC mentioned that there was on-going discussion around the development and up-grading of Ayr beach front but didn't have any timescales or further information on this.

4. AOB

SAC: Was there an opportunity for new or existing signage to go in a Girvan to support the bathing water messages at this location.

Appendix C Irvine / Ayrshire Growth Deal

In Irvine, there is a proposed sign upgrade at the beach and there are proposals as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal to improve the harbour. The following sections discuss the proposals and the potential benefits of introducing VMS as part of the harbour upgrade.

Existing Situation

There is an existing VMS at Irvine beach shown in Figure C-1 conveys information on bathing water quality, this is proposed to be replaced with a modern sign, Figure C-2.

Irvine's harbourside has been identified for development through North Ayrshire's Local Development Plan and the Ayrshire Growth Deal proposals to regenerate the area. Figure C-3 outlines the proposal area in relation to the existing VMS site at Irvine beach.

Figure C-1 Existing VMS *(Source: Google Maps)*

Figure C-2 New VMS

Figure C-3 Site Area

Ayrshire Growth Deal Proposals

The Ayrshire Growth Deal has identified Irvine harbour as one of its investment areas allocating £14 million for the Great Harbour programme which will improve the harbourside area between the town centre and the beach.

Figure C-4 below shows the development area for Irvine's harbourside, proposals will look to support new residential developments, commercial leisure facilities and strengthen physical and digital links between the town centre and the harbourside.
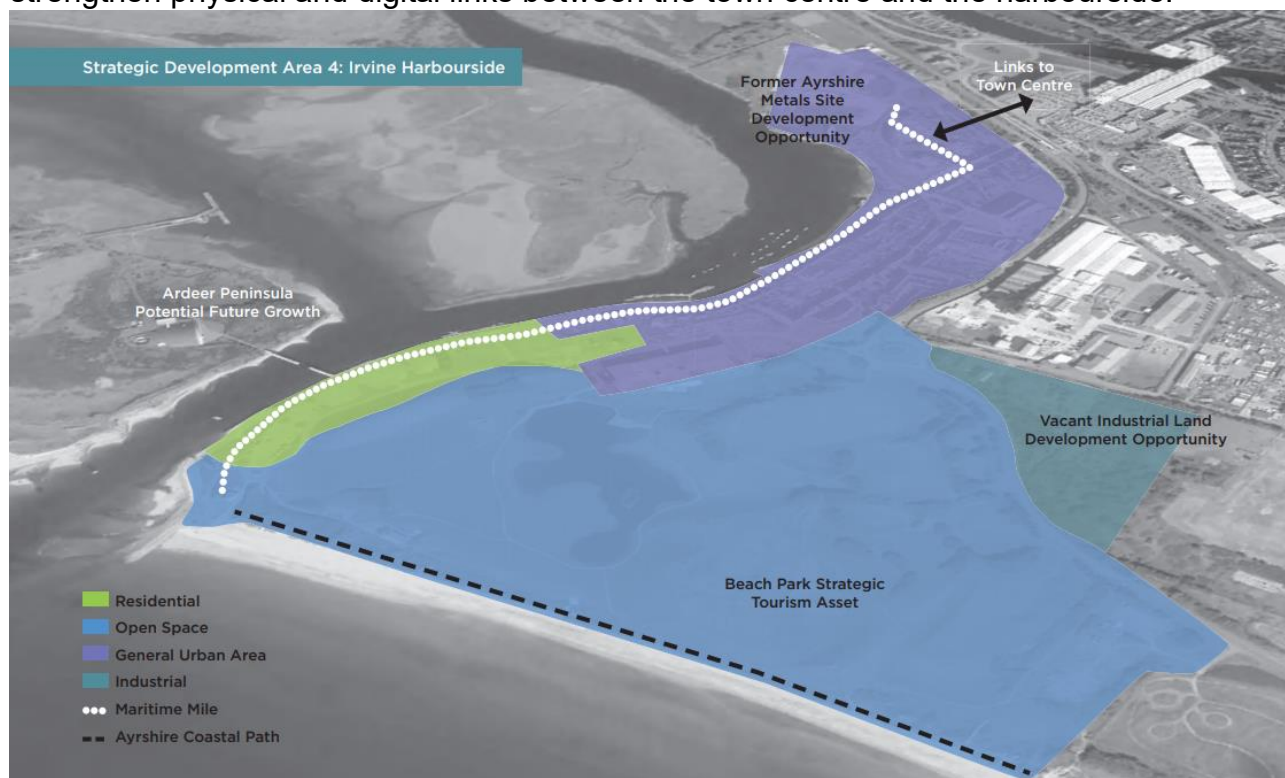

Figure C-4 Harbourside Proposal *(Source: North Ayrshire Local Development Plan)*

The Maritime Mile has been assigned as the initial investment for the Great Harbour programme and is hoped to act as a catalyst for further development. The Maritime Mile runs from Irvine train station to the beach, proposed works include:

- Redesign of the Puffer Café compound

- Development of a site to offer retail and restaurant/take away food commercial opportunities within an events and arts hub

- Expansion of the Scottish Maritime Museum to include exhibition and events space

- Enhance sense of place along the harbourside

- Improve quality and availability of berthing facilities and slip ways

- Development of Costal Active Travel Connections

VMS

The introduction of VMS at Irvine harbourside could help inform visitors of the development, activities, walking routes, places to eat and drink as well as help to aid wayfinding.   It may also support the goal to develop digital links between the town centre and the harbourside.

aecom.com