



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: TO/LGRRS/05258/26

[REDACTED]

30 June 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 June to Llyr Gruffydd MS, Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability, about sewage discharge in the Vale of Glamorgan, the capacity of local wastewater infrastructure, bathing water monitoring and the new pollution risk forecasting system being introduced. The Welsh Government's Water Branch has been asked to respond.

We recognise the strength of feeling on this issue, particularly among those who regularly use and value our coastal waters. The Welsh Government is clear that clean and healthy rivers, lakes and seas are central to the wellbeing of Wales and takes these concerns extremely seriously.

Our priority is to improve water quality, reduce pollution and protect our natural environment. The Welsh Government will hold water companies to account for their environmental performance, working with the regulators; Ofwat and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the water companies, to strengthen oversight, transparency and enforcement where standards are not met. The Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability has set these expectations out clearly in meetings with water companies and regulators.

You ask what immediate action is being taken to tackle sewage discharge into the seas surrounding the Vale of Glamorgan. NRW is responsible for ensuring that Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water complies with their environmental permits and that wastewater treatment works operate within permitted capacity. NRW has the statutory powers to investigate suspected breaches and take action to enforce permits and specify improvements and reparations where environmental harm occurs.

The Welsh Government is working closely with NRW, Ofwat and water companies to target the most harmful storm overflows and improve environmental performance. NRW has also embedded a new strategic approach to pollution incident management, focusing resources

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

on incidents with the most significant environmental impact and using performance metrics to assess how the new model is working.

Water companies in Wales will invest £1.1 billion between 2025 and 2030 to deliver environmental upgrades, including modernising wastewater infrastructure, expanding network capacity, and supporting more resilient, catchment-based solutions that will reduce pollution at source over the long term. This investment will be monitored by Ofwat to ensure the water companies deliver.

At a local level, the Vale of Glamorgan Bathing Waters Project funded by Welsh Government and led by NRW, will support a catchment level approach to the challenges faced by the Ogmere and Watch House Bay catchments. The project will focus on improving water quality at priority bathing waters which have received poor bathing water classifications in recent years. The project has a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement and collaborative work with partners to identify root causes and to design effective, catchment-scale interventions.

You also raise concern that current sewage infrastructure may be unable to cope with further pressure from planned housing developments, and you ask whether impact assessments and risk mitigations have been undertaken. As set out in [Planning Policy Wales](#), the planning system has an important part to play in ensuring that the sewage infrastructure on which communities and businesses depend is adequate to accommodate proposed developments. Any approved development sites in a Local or Unitary Development Plan should have sewage capacity demand considered, and where needed plans should identify investment needed in infrastructure to meet demand. As a consequence, new development should not increase sewage spills, and any new sewage flow should be supported by adequate capacity in the associated wastewater treatment works.

You ask about bathing water sampling. Routine bathing water samples are taken at each designated bathing water by NRW and published on NRW's website. For information on detailed investigation sampling at Cold Knap, Jacksons Bay, Watch House Bay and Whitmore Bay you will need to contact NRW, as Welsh Government do not hold this information.

You also raise queries about the pollution risk forecasting system being introduced. Throughout the bathing season, pollution risk forecasts are currently made for 16 bathing waters in Wales. These forecasts are used to identify when water quality may be temporarily reduced.

Each forecasting model is bespoke to the location and may include factors such as tides, temperature, river data, heavy rainfall, wind, sunlight or the tide condition. Where a temporary reduction in bathing water quality is forecast, advice against bathing is posted on NRW's [website](#) and on signs at the bathing water. In the case of the Barry beaches this information will be displayed on the boards you mention in your email. These models have been developed to be run hourly between 8am and 8pm May to September to reflect near real time bathing water quality. This enables bathers to make informed decisions about when to swim, avoiding times or locations where the risk of pollution is higher than normal.

This forecasting approach has been through scrutiny sessions at the Vale of Glamorgan Council. If you need further technical information about the bathing water pollution risk forecasting model being introduced in Barry, we recommend that you contact the Local Authority and NRW as Welsh Government do not have this technical information.

Yours sincerely,

Water Policy Branch
Climate Change and Rural Affairs Group
Welsh Government