



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
Committee
By email only

20th January 2023

Dear Sir Robert,

Sea life mortality off the northeast coast

Further to my letter dated the 11th January 2023, I am informing you that I am publishing the report from the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel today.

The panel has completed their assessment of the evidence from all parties involved with a view to determine the most likely cause of the crustacean mortality event in the Northeast of England. I received the report on Tuesday evening and met my Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Gideon Henderson yesterday to discuss it.

The independent panel concluded that pyridine or another toxic pollutant was very unlikely to be the cause of this unusual mortality incident.

The panel considers a novel pathogen may be the most likely reason. I will consider if further analysis by CEFAS will be able to ascertain the reason more conclusively, though I believe there had already been significant assessment undertaken previously.

Given all the recent speculation, I thought it best to inform the House and the public today. I am happy to arrange a briefing for you and the Committee next week.

Yours sincerely,