

Model 'Motion for the Ocean' for Local Authorities

Ocean Recovery Declaration

Example background on how the Authority has exemplified marine and wider environmental values.

Plymouth City Council is leading the way in connecting people to the ocean through the development of the UK's first National Marine Park, in Plymouth Sound. We are champions of a sustainable Plymouth fishing industry. We are advocates for good marine management and put these principles into practice through hosting the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum and supporting the Devon & Severn IFCA. Marine research and maritime culture are at the heart of our economic recovery programme.

In 2018 we brought through our Plan for Plastics to do our bit and encourage others to do theirs in reducing marine plastic pollution and our dependency on plastics, made from polluting oil. In 2019 we unanimously declared a climate emergency and this year we are moving towards our third Climate Emergency Action Plan and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan, driving our journey towards carbon neutrality in 2030. Given the role of the ocean in climate regulation and our connections with the ocean, it is natural that Plymouth would be the first council to declare an urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

International and national context

2021 is the first year of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It is the year the UK hosts COP26 in Glasgow and the year the G7 came to Cornwall. The UK Government has publicly declared its ambition to be a global leader in marine conservation. All eyes are on the ocean.

There is national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, including in our local waters. Raised atmospheric carbon dissolves in the seawater and causes ocean acidification, dissolving the shells, reefs and other hard parts of marine animals. The heating of the climate causes ocean heating too which makes some parts of the ocean intolerable for life and is changing what lives and is caught locally. It also increases the volume of the ocean which causes sea level rise, added to by ice melt at the poles. Thanks to a more turbulent climate, increased storminess and sea level rise is a serious threat to all coastal communities, economies and infrastructure in the world, including [*coastal authority area*]. Marine microplastics have been found in all marine environments and in the bodies of many species, including humans. Fish stocks collapse from permitted and illegal overfishing. Poor water quality is impacting seafood and preventing safe bathing.

And yet the ocean is a place of incredible importance for people, providing food, energy, connections from one nation to another, and regulating the climate system which is so threatened by human activity. We must play our part in securing the sustainability and health of the ocean.

In [*authority area/the UK*] the ocean is at the heart of our economy and the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our *community/nation*. Urgent action is needed to recover the health of our ocean to enable it to deliver the full range of benefits, including capturing and storing carbon through coastal salt marshes and seagrass beds, regulating our climate, supporting a sustainable and equitable blue economy, with equitable access to clean, safe recreation and nature experience for happy, healthy communities. Action is needed at all levels, from individuals developing their ocean literacy (understanding of the relationship between people and the ocean), individual and collective marine citizenship (promoting and demanding an ocean recovery through local, national and international policy changes).

This Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

We recognise that we need ocean recovery to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

This Council pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within [6] months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in [authority area].
2. Embed ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate emergency plans.
3. Ensure that the Local Plan supports ocean recovery.
4. Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in local marine industries and invest in the development of a sustainable and equitable blue economy, including the local fishing industry and the vital work of [local] IFCA.
5. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in the city, including ensuring all pupils have a first-hand experience of the ocean before leaving primary school, and promote sustainable and equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital experiences.
6. Create an online portal of the Council website to update on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
7. Call on the Government to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by
 - a. Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
 - b. Incorporating social scientific evidence and lived experience to improve community co-production of policy and develop more effective and equitable solutions.
 - c. And by listening to marine scientific advice to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
 - i. Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
 - ii. Consider levelling up, marine conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.
 - iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.
 - iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits from ocean management, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.