

The people of the Scottish Borders benefit from our ocean through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the way our ocean regulates the climate.

We all impact the North Sea not only if we visit the coast, but every day through what we put down the drain, the litter and pollution that flows into our rivers, through our seafood and consumer choices, and with the carbon emissions we produce.

The River Tweed is a key feature of our area and is our direct link to the sea. The burden of taking care of our oceans often falls to communities at the coast; but they are at the end of the line, receiving pollution and problems from inland communities like ours, and are on the frontline of the impacts of climate change. We know that many of our citizens are concerned about the future of our oceans.

Scottish Borders Council recognises that we have an essential role to play in recovering the health of our seas and oceans through increasing awareness of how local actions can affect the oceans and by acting as responsible custodians of the rivers, streams and waterways that run through our area on their way to the North Sea.

This Council asks officers to bring back a report to full council on all works and actions that contribute to the wellbeing of the River Tweed, its tributaries and North Sea.

This could include matters such as;

1. protection and recovery of the River Tweed in strategic decisions, plans, budgets, procurement and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, waste, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering nature-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
2. how we embed the protection of the River Tweed in our planning systems.
3. ensuring that our nature, biodiversity and climate strategies recognise how land and rivers connect to and impact the ocean and strive to support ocean recovery through a source to sea approach.
4. how we work with partners locally and nationally to deliver improved water quality and increased sustainability, including the River Tweed Commission, SEPA, Scottish Water and the Tweed Forum.
5. growing ocean literacy and marine citizenship in Scottish Borders Council.
6. how we use the Council website and/or other communication channels to update on the River Tweed wellbeing, and signpost to opportunities and guidance that enable residents to become more ocean literate and to get involved with river and marine citizenship activities.