

Report to:	TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Meeting:	28 September 2022

THE HEALTH OF THE OCEAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform the Committee of the concerns relating to the health of the ocean and request that the Committee consider making a recommendation to Council to declare an urgent need for ocean recovery.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the Committee makes a recommendation to full Council to declare an urgent need for ocean recovery.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Ocean recovery is required to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Cabinet Member has requested that Scrutiny consider making a recommendation to full Council to declare an urgent need for ocean recovery. The recommendation has been developed to address key concerns regarding the health of the ocean and its impact on coastal communities such as Blackpool.

6.2 The proposed recommendation notes that:

- Our ocean and climate are in a state of emergency, the communities we serve are vulnerable to these emergencies, and local government has an essential and urgent part to play in tackling these interconnected crises.
- As a local authority we have already declared a climate emergency; the ocean is included in our climate action plans, but needs its own working group to ensure we address specific issues and protect our ocean.
- The message from COP 26 stated “A healthy ocean is an essential ally in our fight against climate change”.
- The UK government’s Marine Strategy assessment confirms that our marine environment is not healthy. An ocean in crisis is not only bad news for our climate, but also for our fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal communities. Ocean recovery would yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal economies, and happier, healthier people.

6.3 The detail of the recommendation is based on the model Motion for the Ocean that has been developed to help local authorities play their part in realising a clean, healthy and productive ocean and all of the direct economic, health and wellbeing benefits it will bring. It also helps local authorities communicate the same evidence-based asks around ocean recovery directly to central government – ensuring a louder united voice.

6.4 The following councils have declared an urgent need for ocean recovery using a locally adapted motion for the ocean:

- Plymouth City Council, 22 November 2021
- Falmouth Town Council, 10 January 2022
- South Tyneside Council, 13 January 2022
- North Norfolk District Council, February 2022
- North Devon District Council February 2022
- Monmouthshire County Council March 2022

6.5 The proposed local adaptations for Blackpool are contained within the draft recommendation attached at Appendix 9(a).

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 9(a) – Draft Recommendation

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The motion aims to place considerations relating to the health of the ocean at the centre of Council decision making and enable practical local steps achieve this. The motion will also support national efforts by coastal communities to lobby central government to place the ocean in net recovery by 2030.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.