

Recommendation to Council

The Council notes:

- 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.

Local government can’t fix the ocean crisis alone. But we do need to play our part. The model Motion for the Ocean 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.

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

The Council therefore commits to:

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 12 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in Blackpool.
2. Embed ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, budgets, procurement and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning

with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering ocean-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.

3. Ensure that local planning supports ocean recovery, working closely with the Marine Management Organisation to embed strong links between the Local Plan and the Blackpool Marine Plan to support ocean recovery.

4. Ensure that the Blackpool Blue Green Strategy strives to support ocean recovery.

5. Work with partners locally and nationally including our continued involvement with the Turning Tides Partnership to deliver increased sustainability in local marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity, including the local fishing industry and the vital work of IFCA in the North West.

6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in the Blackpool, including ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to have a first-hand experience of the ocean before leaving primary school - striving to include home-schooled children - and promote sustainable and equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital experiences for all residents.

7. Create an online portal on the Council website to update on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.

8. Write to the Government to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by:

a. Working with coastal communities to co-develop marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes in local place making.

b) Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.

c) Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.

d) And by listening to marine and social 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 of ocean recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.