

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jane Hugo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
Date of Meeting:	30 November 2022

HEALTH OF THE OCEAN – RECOMMENDATION FROM THE TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To set out the recommendation of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee to Council for adoption.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the recommendation of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee to declare an urgent need for ocean recovery be adopted by Council:

This Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery:

The Council recognises that ocean recovery is needed to meet the Council’s net zero carbon targets, and net zero carbon is required to recover the 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 the Council’s 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 the Council's 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 area, 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) Appointing a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
 - c) Stopping 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) 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.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The issue was considered fully by the Tourism, Economy and Communities Committee which resolved that Council be recommended to approve the recommendation.

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 Council could determine to not approve the recommendation.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priorities are:

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment submitted a report to the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee on the Health of the Ocean to its meeting on 28 September 2022. The report sought 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.

6.2 The Committee was advised that the recommendation had been developed to address key concerns regarding the health of the ocean and its impact on coastal communities such as Blackpool and covered a number of key issues:

- 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 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None specific to this report, however, any future costs and action would need to be identified and approved as appropriate.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None associated with this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None specifically associated with this report, however, risks could be identified from taking no action.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None associated with this report.

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.