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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Full Council
<b>Subject:</b>	Ocean Recovery Declaration - Update of Progress
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Cabinet, 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022 Council, 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
<b>Report by:</b>	
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

**1. Requested by**

1.1 Full Council

**2. Purpose**

2.1 To provide an update on progress since the Ocean Recovery Declaration.

**Information Requested**

- 3.1 On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the Motion for the Ocean and Our Coastal Communities was carried with amendment at the Full Council meeting. This motion is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Declaration contained 9 (nine) paragraphs of pledges, including pledge 1: *"Report to Full Council within 6 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in Portsmouth"* to which this Report pertains to. A summary of the status of these pledges are detailed within Table 1.

*Table 1 Status of pledge items contained within the Ocean Recovery Declaration*

	<b>Summary of Pledge</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Request of six-month update report	This Report fulfils this pledge.
2	Alignment of ocean recovery into PCC decision-making	At present, marine and coastal recovery are aligned through a number of relevant processes and strategies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Integrated Impact Assessment process that is required to be undertaken for any PCC decisions that are made through Councillor Portfolios, Cabinet, and full Council. Specific mention is given to the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (Bird Aware Solent) and the Portsmouth Plan.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Climate Change Strategy describes the natural environment as a strategic priority area for its implementation, drawing specific reference to the Ocean Recovery Declaration.</li> <li>• In July 2022, PCC Cabinet supported the recommendations from the Response to the Traffic, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel report on biodiversity. Within this report, it detailed the revised approach more connected environmental management that includes marine and coastal management.</li> <li>• PCC is currently trialling the 'Greenprint' framework for a green recovery led by a number of local authorities, institutions and the Partnership for South Hampshire. The framework encourages actions around priority areas including 'World Class Blue Environments'.</li> </ul>
3	Stronger links to Marine Organisation, Local Plan and Marine Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portsmouth is covered by the MMOs Southern Marine Plan (inshore). The MMO are currently recruiting to a vacancy for a South Coastal Marine Planner position, and expect that once this position is filled, they will be in a position to engage with the local work more fully.</li> <li>• Further, Portsmouth is also covered by the Southern Inshore Fisheries &amp; Conservation Authority (IFCA). The Southern IFCA were not aware of the Ocean Recovery Declaration but engagement regarding a stronger relationship has begun.</li> <li>• The existing Local Plan (active period 2006 to 2027) specifically links marine and coastal quality to policy PCS9 'the seafront' which is a key policy to two objectives of the overall Local Plan.</li> <li>• PCC are in the process of creating a new Local Plan for 2020-2038, and there is a notable progression of linking planning to the marine and coastal environments with specific links within the proposed new policies:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Biodiversity (Policy G1)</b>, which notes our international, national, and local marine and coastal sites with nature designations, as well as further opportunities within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Nature Recovery Networks. Impacts to the marine and coastal environment from recreation, tall buildings and construction are also noted</li> <li>○ <b>Green Infrastructure (Policy G2)</b>, which includes 'blue' infrastructure</li> <li>○ <b>Water Quality (Nutrient Neutrality) (Policy G3)</b>, which directly links assessment of future developments with the water quality of the Solent</li> <li>○ <b>The Seafront (Policy S8)</b>, which states its great importance for local and national nature conservation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Eastney Beach has its own Habitat Restoration and Management Plan.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portsmouth is a test study site for Integrating Diverse Values into Marine Management, a project funded by the Sustainable Management of UK Marine Resources group. PCC are part of the Diverse Values Steering Group, aiming to develop local 'transdisciplinary marine management'.</li> </ul>
4	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies are established by the Environment Bill and currently being piloted. Portsmouth are included on a county-level LNRS being led by Hampshire County Council.</p> <p>PCC have been consulted on its development and have requested that its geographical boundary includes that below the tide line. PCC will continue this engagement and lobbying for more of the marine and coastal environment to be included in the LNRS</p>
5	Partners for sustainable and equitable marine industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PCC are already strongly involved in the marine industry as we own and operate Portsmouth International Port and Portico. Funded by the Clean Maritime Demonstration Call and led by the University of Portsmouth, we have partnered with a number of organisations to analyse and develop low carbon sustainable energy opportunities for the Port.</li> <li>PCC is also part of the newly created Solent Cluster aiming to become a leading centre for investment into low carbon technologies. Launched in November 2022, it is led by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and aims to attract investment into new low carbon industry. PCC will remain part of this cluster to learn how we can engage and support future-thinking marine industries in our region.</li> </ul>
6	Ocean literacy and marine citizenship, and equitable access	<p>We intend to increase ocean literacy, citizenship and access through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Diverse Values Steering Group that PCC are a member, local studies are being undertaken in Portsmouth to evaluate the potential of ocean literacy to act as a policy tool. The local authority is looking to support researchers in their work in the city, and will work alongside the team to understand the findings and develop evidence-led responses.</li> <li>Developing a schools-focussed offering around World Ocean Day on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023. This offering will be developed in line with available resources and with city partners</li> <li>We continue to develop messaging around associated areas such as water safety, particularly looking at hotspot areas such as the Hotwalls.</li> </ul>
7	Partners for higher and further education	<p>The University of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Colleges are currently engaging with discussions about developing city-wide ocean literacy in higher and further education. PCC are now linked into these discussions and seeking to develop a broader citywide approach.</p>
8	Online portal development	<p>In line with the recommendations from the Response to the Traffic, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel report on biodiversity, it is intended that further online local resources will be</p>

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		developed that support not just marine and coastal agendas, but other PCC work around carbon and climate, air quality, greening and the nature emergency, and energy reduction. Internal work has begun on reworking our online materials and guidance, including interactive mapping.
9	Letter to Government	Completed - attached as Appendix 2. At the time of writing, no response has been received.

3.3 There is recognition that Portsmouth's waterfront nature is a huge part of what makes it special as a city, and the declaration for the ocean is just one facet of the wider approach that is being taken in the city to ensure that city waters are:

- Clean - the regulator for the cleanliness of sea water, and water that is discharged into the sea, is the Environment Agency, but the local authority is obviously concerned about the issue. Not only does the quality of seawater impact on the natural environment, but there can be impacts on public health and the wider economy. In Portsmouth, our seafront is a huge attraction, and there is a significant impact if potential visitors avoid the area because they feel beaches are unclean, for example. There are also industries, such as seafood fishing, that can only flourish if the local waters are clean. Recognising these issues, the local authority is now part of a regular forum which includes Southern Water, partner authorities and members of parliament, as well as community representatives, to work together to solutions. We are also working to make information on water releases into the sea more accessible to the wider public.
- Safe - we continue to work with partners to ensure that areas of high risk around our waterfront are as safe as possible, with signage, safety equipment and where possible, outreach work put in place. The authority hosts a regular water safety forum, bringing together a wide range of partners to ensure safety is being addressed effectively. A key issue for us is to try and ensure that there is a high level of water confidence in the city, and we continue to offer free swimming for under 12s at Portsmouth City Council pools. We also continue to offer discounts on swimming activities through the Portsmouth Leisure Card, to ensure that income is not a barrier to participation.
- Active - we want our waterfront to be an active part of our city and so we continue to promote the economic benefits that the water brings us as a city, including the opportunity for sectors to develop here, taking advantage of features such as deep-water access. We also encourage water sport activity and events that make a feature of the water, such as the annual Portsmouth Regatta.

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Signed by:  
Paddy May  
Corporate Strategy Manager

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Notice of Motion, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
Appendix 2 - Letter to Government

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

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### **Appendix 1 - Motion for the ocean and our coastal communities**

It was therefore RESOLVED that Portsmouth City Council acknowledged that the health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generated by human activity.

However, decades of irresponsible marine exploitation and pollution have led to significant levels of degradation, and this together with the detrimental impacts of our changing climate on marine ecosystems has led to national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. An unhealthy ocean does not absorb or store carbon as effectively as a healthy one, further worsening the impacts of the climate crisis.

The UK government's recent 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 local fishing and tourism industries and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal communities.

In Portsmouth like the rest of planet, we are witnessing the ocean crisis first-hand. Fish stocks continue to collapse from permitted and illegal overfishing and poor water quality is impacting seafood and safe bathing. Our beaches are covered in litter with each tide, much of it plastic, though this is just the tip of the iceberg of the amount of litter in our oceans. Marine microplastics have been found in all marine environments and in the bodies of many species, including humans and the species of fish we regularly eat.

Our residents are on the frontline of climate change and are being disproportionately impacted relative to inland communities. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, from rising water temperatures and changes in ocean chemistry, to sea level rise and increased storminess, including in our local waters. This is changing what seafood is caught locally, accelerating the erosion of our coastline - increasing the risk to infrastructure and properties, and increasing the risk of flooding and storm damage.

Urgent action is needed to halt these devastating changes and recover the health of our ocean to enable it to deliver the full range of benefits, including climate regulation, carbon storage in coastal and marine habitats, coastal protection, a thriving local economy, clean safe recreation and happy, healthy coastal communities. We must play our part in recovering the health of the ocean.

In Portsmouth, the ocean is at the heart of our heritage and economy. From the maritime and marine expertise around the Portsmouth Port, to the millions of visitors who come to the Portsmouth area to experience the sight, sound and feel of the ocean. The ocean can play a vital role in our economic recovery and we must strive to develop a sustainable and equitable

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blue economy that delivers both ocean recovery and local prosperity. We must ensure that ocean recovery is embedded in our relevant strategic decision-making, policymaking and budget-setting; as well as being considered in future strategies and plans, including those seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

At present, not everyone has the opportunity or means to access and enjoy the ocean. Even within Portsmouth there are people of all ages who have never experienced the joy of our ocean. First-hand experience of the ocean is essential if people are to be motivated to play their part in protecting it, whether that is through disposing of their litter responsibly, recycling what they can or volunteering in ocean conservation with local organisations. Helping individuals develop their ocean literacy (understanding of the relationship between people and the ocean) is an essential part of this motion, as is individual and collective marine citizenship (promoting and demanding an ocean recovery through local, national and international policy changes).

Local authorities cannot solve the ocean crisis alone, but we can – and must – play our part.

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, through requesting Cabinet to:

1. Report to Full Council within 6 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in Portsmouth.
2. Consider ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, plans, budgets 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. Promote closer working between the Portsmouth City Council and the Marine Organisation and embed strong links between the Local Plan and the Portsmouth City Council Marine Plan to support ocean recovery.
4. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy strives to support ocean recovery.
5. Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.
6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in Portsmouth, including ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to experience the ocean first-hand before leaving primary school-

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striving to include home-schooled children - and promote equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital experiences for all residents.

7. Work with Highbury and Portsmouth Colleges to continue to embed marine, maritime and blue carbon training at the heart of training provision as well as with technical / apprenticeship training providers where appropriate.
8. Create an online portal of the Council website to update on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
9. Write to the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by
  - a. Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and Natural England 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. Ensuring coastal communities have a meaningful say in the development of marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes.
  - c. Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
  - d. And by listening to marine scientific advice, including marine social science, 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.
    - v. 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.



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- vi. Placing a duty on water companies engaged in sewage disposal to ensure untreated sewage is not discharged from storm overflows into inland and coastal waters and to provide targets and timelines to ensure this change is achieved.

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Appendix 2 - Letter sent to Prime Minister, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
SW1A 2AA

**Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE  
Leader of Portsmouth City Council**

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Our Ref: GVJOUT035

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

**Re: Ocean Net Recovery**

At the Council meeting on 17th May 2022 Portsmouth City Council unanimously resolved to declare an urgent need for Ocean Recovery. In Portsmouth, the ocean is at the heart of our heritage and economy. From the maritime and marine expertise around the Portsmouth Port, to the millions of visitors who come to the Portsmouth area to experience the sight, sound and feel of the ocean, the ocean can play a vital role in our economic recovery and we must strive to develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers both ocean recovery and local prosperity. Our residents are on the frontline of climate change and are being disproportionately impacted relative to inland communities. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, from rising water temperatures and changes in ocean chemistry, to sea level rise and increased storminess, including in our local waters. This is changing what seafood is caught locally, accelerating the erosion of our coastline - increasing the risk to infrastructure and properties, and increasing the risk of flooding and storm damage.

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Ocean recovery cannot be delivered without national as well as local action. As the Leader of Portsmouth City Council I therefore ask the Government to support our work and agree to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by taking forward a series of related outcomes:

1. Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities, and Natural England 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.
2. Ensuring coastal communities have a meaningful say in the development of marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes.
3. Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
4. And by listening to marine scientific advice, including marine social science, to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
  - a. Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.
  - d. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.
  - e. 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.
  - f. Placing a duty on water companies engaged in sewage disposal to ensure untreated sewage is not discharged from storm overflows into inland and coastal waters and to provide targets and timelines to ensure this change is achieved.

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We are very proud of the marine and coastal work we are already delivering in and around Portsmouth that support our Climate and Nature Emergency declarations. I would be very pleased to share our learnings to date and discuss how we can accelerate our collection work towards an Ocean Recovery.

Yours sincerely

**Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE**

Leader of the Council

CC: George Eustice  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF