

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 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.

In Torridge the ocean is at the heart of our heritage and economy. From the commercial activity in the Port of Bideford, to the thousands of visitors who come to our coast 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. We must ensure that ocean recovery is embedded in our relevant strategic decision-making, policy-making 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. 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 can play an important role.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

Within existing resources

Human Resources Implications

Within existing resources

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

As set out in the body of the report

Equality/Diversity

As set out in the body of the report



Risk Management

As set out in the body of the report

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Pledge in accordance with the Council's climate emergency declaration

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

N/A

Climate Change

N/A

Ward Member and Lead Member Views

Date of Consultation – Cllr Hodson 23/05/22 – Member to present this item

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order that action can be taken to protect our marine environments the Council should consider declaring the urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

To do that the Council will need to accept that ocean recovery is essential to address the climate emergency.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following pledges are made as a response to the Motion for the Ocean.

This Council pledges to:

1. Review within twelve months the actions and projects that have been undertaken to promote ocean recovery for the coast of Torridge District.
2. Consider ocean recovery in our 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. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy strives to support ocean recovery.
4. Work with partners locally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.
5. Communication through our social media of actions which are being taken to aid ocean recovery progress, signpost ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
6. 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.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations: Date of Consultation –Chief Executive, Deputy Leader, S151 Officer, Head of Legal and Governance
Officers Consulted -

Contact Officer: Sean Kearney

Background Papers:

