



## PROJECT OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

# Plymouth Sound National Marine Park





# THE BIG IDEA

## 'Park in the Sea'



to the top →

### **Photographs of Plymouth Sound:**

*From left to right: 1) View of the Hoe, 2) People enjoying the NMP, 3) Decapod, 4) Evening view of Plymouth's waterfront 5) Plymouth fisherman at work,*

In launching the Heritage Horizon Awards in 2019, during the 25th anniversary of the National Lottery, the ambition of the Heritage Fund could not have been clearer to us. We completely recognise that need for our project to be truly outstanding, transformational and to not only have a significant impact on our communities, but to also raise the bar in making the link between Lottery players and the Heritage Fund's investments.

We believe our project to create the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP) in Plymouth Sound is a perfect fit for the Horizon Fund. We share the scale of your ambition through our objective to transform the lives of every single one of our communities through engagement with our maritime heritage, landscape and nature. This new partnership between the Heritage Fund and the NMP provides a national opportunity to

create a climate change exemplar and thought leader that can then be replicated across the UK.

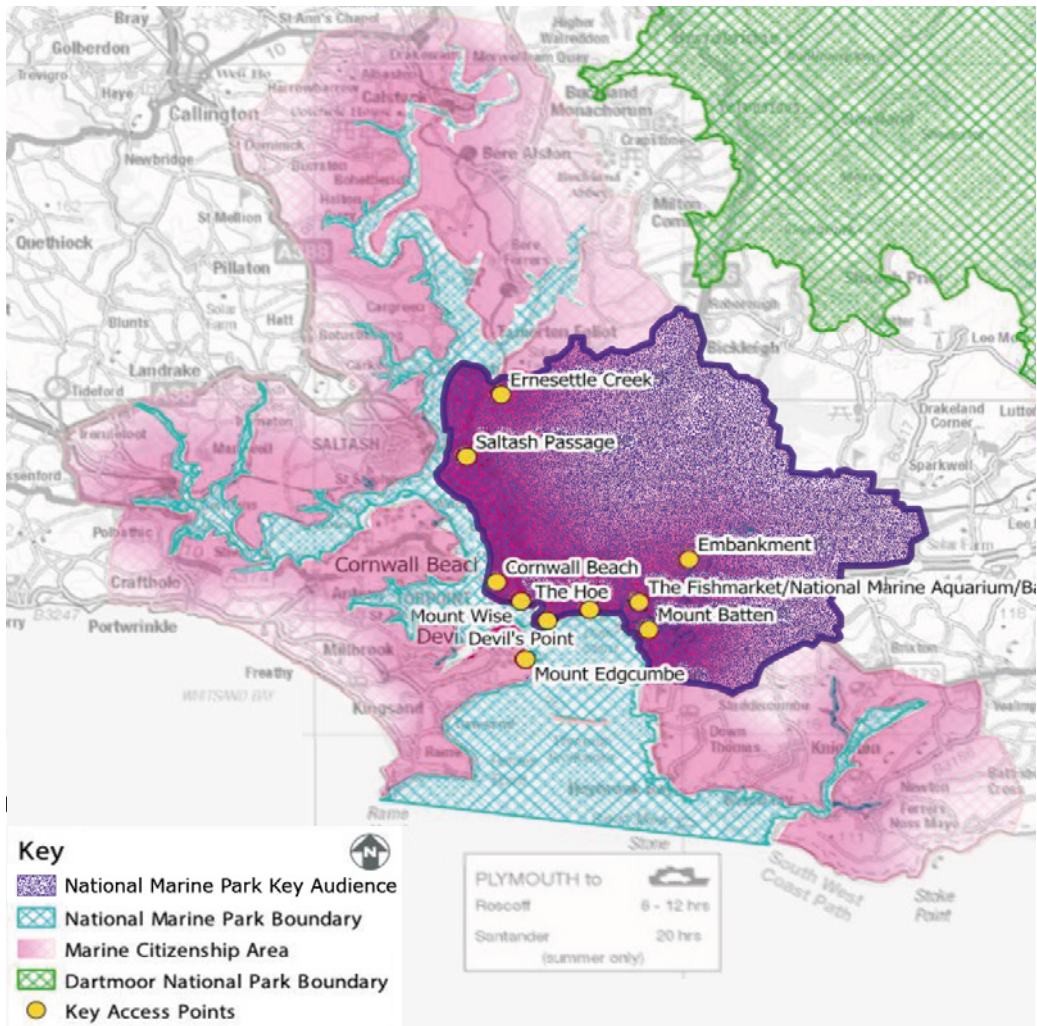
Plymouth Sound is an unsurpassed marine environment; a historic landscape that has defined a city and its citizens for centuries. A unique place where the largest naval base in Western Europe and fragile sea grass beds co-exist. A place where the world's greatest voyages began and fishermen today still leave for the daily catch. At a time of enormous global challenges and climate change this unique environment and the golden thread between people and place is threatened. Our project provides a national opportunity to nurture the innovation needed to completely reimagine how a landscape and its people can work together.

Our historic marine landscape cannot be separated from the people who live and work in





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**Proposed NMP boundaries**  
The NMP Key Audience will be Plymouth  
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our coastal community whether commercial fishing, shipping, naval defence, coastal leisure and tourism, marine research or blue technology. More than a landscape, it is their heritage and their future. Yet for the first time since the Ice Age, our marine environment is under threat from climate change, habitat degradation and human disconnection. Our built heritage is being lost and our cultural ties to the sea have, in places, been severed.

Our project will establish the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP) - a 'Park in the Sea'. A 21st century park enabling a new collaboration between ocean, heritage and City. Co-designing with communities will ensure people engage enabling a lifelong connection, fostering positive behaviours and benefits for individuals and heritage. Our five 'Gateways', community access projects and 'Digital Park' are physical, and social connection points focusing on health and wellbeing, active recreation, heritage, nature and environment. More than a park, our 'Park in the Sea' will transform lives, employment, education, volunteering and environment; re-establishing the bond between people and place that has defined Plymouth.

## Unlocking Potential

We believe in the power of heritage projects to transform far beyond the reach of other initiatives and our ambitions for the impact of the NMP are unapologetically bold and far reaching.

Leading a new generation of Park's our 'Park in the Sea' will:

1. Establish the UK's first National

Marine Park;

2. Protect and enhance a world class natural environment and heritage landscape;
3. Be a national exemplar and thought leader in enabling a positive response to climate change for government, Plymouth and the Heritage Fund;
4. Level up access to heritage to ensure all citizens and Lottery players can enjoy the benefits;
5. Provide new employment opportunities and career pathways in sustainable future ocean jobs;
6. Act as a city-wide and regional stimulus for economic 'green' recovery post COVID;
7. Position Plymouth as a UK Top Ten day-visitor destination
8. Champion health and well-being with a new generation of engaged volunteers, communities and heritage champions;
9. Get the entire City in, on under and next to the water through 5 gateways and a network of community projects;
10. Deliver an innovation pilot for digital heritage engagement that will give the Park an international platform.

## Collaborative

Our ambition to engage with every citizen and every community in our city is clearly bold needing a new approach to collaboration, co-design and engagement. These principles define our Park both in our journey to date and our approach going

forward. This must be the 'People's Park'. Through our approach we will create a movement where people recognise the value of their landscape, nature and their role within it. We will create active citizens, through a concept of Ocean Citizenship, which will aim to define both rights and responsibilities for this unique landscape. A new social contract that seeks to reconnect the citizens with their heritage that has defined them for hundreds of years.

Our journey began with extensive community, professional and business engagement involving over 75 institutions and thousands of individuals, culminating in a conference at the National Marine Aquarium in June 2018, 'Marine Parks: Bringing It All Back Home'. This resulted in a clear consensus and mandate for the first NMP in the UK endorsed by our communities.

Co-designing the NMP with our communities, partners and stakeholders will ensure people engage with the NMP in a manner that enables a lifelong connection, fostering positive behaviours

and benefits for individuals and heritage. The concept of the 'Park in the Sea' represents a new way of thinking. An increasing focus of academic research, the unique attributes of Plymouth Sound makes it the prime location in the UK for testing and development; to protect, conserve and be a catalyst for transformation.

The landscape of Plymouth Sound is currently managed through multiple partners and mechanisms. There is no common management framework. Interventions, while collaborative, are not necessarily designed to an overall scheme. The results are therefore, understandably, mixed. Nature is afforded protection through environmental designations and individual assets have similar historic designations. This has value, but does not encapsulate the full scope of the landscape in a holistic way.

It also means that the landscape is vulnerable. Not all risks are visible, as damage to the landscape is not always easy to see. We need to open eyes as a way of changing behaviour. These are





threats to the fabric of our natural capital, but threats that can be addressed and become opportunities for the future. The value of natural capital can be measured in many ways: socially, economically and environmentally. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated how important it is to people's physical and mental well-being. It is also a significant opportunity to both protect and rejuvenate the landscape, above and below the water, while delivering mass engagement.

The development of the NMP requires this approach to management of the landscape. We will work with partners and stakeholders to address a system of multiple designations and management systems to look at a more holistic approach. As part of project delivery, we will design a 5 year Management Plan to come into effect when funding from the Heritage Fund comes to an end in 2028.

## Transformative

During the delivery phase of our project, we intend to deliver our 'Park in the Sea' concept through investment in:

- Capital - five large-scale 'Gateways' focusing on a specific themes and activities aligning with a network of 'Community Access Projects' and a programme of direct marine habitat enhancement.

- Activities - an city-wide, community engagement programme through the Gateways. A project-wide digital programme to increase access and widen participation amongst our target groups and deliver a wider national and international platform for this heritage landscape.
- A Digital Park – championing new methods of engagement driven by innovation and cutting edge technology.

The gateways are located across the NMP, building on our existing assets, providing a framework for engagement and concept development. As physical access points they will create coherent infrastructure enabling mass participation, education and engagement. Taken together with our community access projects we will create a network around our amazing waterfront enabling the whole city to engage with the NMP. However, the real power of these gateways lies in their thematic approach, reaching deep into our communities, delivering meaningful and life changing outcomes for health, well-being, employment, heritage and landscapes. These programmes will operate across the City taking the message of the NMP to the people where they live and work.

Our gateways are:

- a. The Hoe Waterfront and Tinside – Health



- & Wellbeing Hub;
- b. National Marine Aquarium – Nature & Environment Hub;
- c. Mount Batten – Active Recreation Hub;
- d. Mount Edgcumbe – Heritage Hub;
- e. Smart Sound Heritage – Digital Hub.

We will empower our communities to deliver a linked growing network of community access projects. These are smaller in scale, local access points to the NMP. Some of these physical assets exist already; our plan is to reimagine and reactivate these assets aligned to the Gateways programme. It enables us to connect more communities to the ocean at a local scale, leading to a democratisation of the water.

## Changes and Benefits

Whilst it is early in the development of our project we have ambitions to create a generation of Ocean Citizens, a new NMP visitor centre, new classrooms in the Park, to open up the water to significant numbers of new users and to inspire careers in the ocean jobs of the future. We have also set ourselves an ambition to create the UK's first Digital Park offering unparalleled access and engagement opportunities. We will use a series of 'Innovation Labs' in the development stage to engage our communities and innovative businesses with in this endeavour.

We recognise that our project must deliver for people and we have set ourselves the ambitious targets including:

- Connect 10million people with the NMP

- Engage with 264,000 people
- Activate 100,000 hours of volunteer hours
- Increase visitor numbers from 5.2million to 6million
- NMP investment will create 464 jobs and deliver £18.4 million of GVA.

Excellence in leadership and transparency in governance will be at the centre of our project. We have assembled a diverse and experienced multi- disciplinary professional team with hundreds of millions of pounds of project delivery experience. We have already created a Project Board to deliver our capital projects and a NMP Stakeholder Forum to ensure that we are in touch with, and accountable to, our communities. This will result in learning that can be disseminated using a range of media including: conferences, events, printed and digital.

We will galvanise people across the city. The NMP will be open and accessible to all. However, we recognise that there are large numbers of people who do not currently engage with heritage and water-based activities. There are numerous barriers to access including: the current state of the facilities, lack of information and accessibility. Our project will change that. Working across the city, we will reach beyond communities of place and identity, to use the NMP as a way to inspire and build a culture of ownership and stewardship that reconnects people with the ocean.

Our Activity Plan is hugely ambitious and developed with inclusion at its heart. The City of Plymouth has a proud history and stunning location,

to the Right →

**Photograph:**  
Fisherman deploying CPR on the Sound











but not everyone feels connected to this. This is our opportunity to make targeted investments and deliver an exciting and inspiring engagement programme so that everyone feels welcomed and involved. We will engage with a whole city and reach out to specific under-represented groups we have identified. We will activate our communities to help them understand their impact on their environment and show them how small changes cannot only help, protect and enhance this unique landscape, but improve their own well-being.

However, we also recognise that this project will not address every issue that requires work. We will use the Heritage Fund as anchor funding to unlock further income to extend the benefits of the project across the NMP. We are having active conversations and are confident of success.

As one of a handful of Heritage Horizon Award (HHA) projects, we acknowledge the high profile the project will have and the importance of being a national exemplar. We will not do this in isolation from the wider network of UK and international heritage organisations. Working collaboratively with the Heritage Fund, we envisage a joined up approach with other HHA projects to ensure that learning is shared and openly available to help affect change in other areas. National Government has already indicated an interest to work with Plymouth as a national pilot to understand how National Marine Parks can be applied across the UK. We believe this is a major opportunity for both

the Heritage Fund and Plymouth City Council.

We will make this project a success. We also want it to be the blueprint for a network of NMPs across the UK. We spent most of the last decade preparing for this moment, now at a critical moment in our planet's history, we want to make a major statement about how collaboration can deliver that transformation. The NMP Board, working with local people, will become an increasing focus of that change; putting in place the necessary governance structures and funding mechanisms to ensure that the NMP protects and flourishes.

## **COVID-19**

The National Marine Park isn't a project so much as a realisation of the City's wider strategic ambitions. It is embedded in all that we do through our strategic plans and as such will play a full role in the City's recovery from Covid-19, our 'Resurgam'. The NMP will be a recovery catalyst for the city in terms of economic growth, social well-being and environmental sustainability. It will reconnect residents to this unique environment and natural capital improving personal well-being and driving behavioural change. It will also be a major catalyst and recovery beacon for the tourism industry that has been so devastated during the pandemic. It will be an inspirational call to action for the new sustainable future Ocean jobs that will be at the bedrock of our economic recovery. The UK's first NMP has the potential to be a national green recovery flagship.



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**Photograph:**  
Mount Edgcumb

## Our Commitment

We understand that our project challenges many of the traditional assumptions of a Heritage project and we believe and hope this is exactly what the Horizon Heritage Awards are looking for. We invite the Heritage Fund to join us on this transformational journey to create the UK's first NMP engaging with a whole City and setting a new benchmark for how people and landscapes interact.

We believe in our proposition and have already committed £2.5m cash funding from the City Council - a bold decision in the context of austerity and during a global pandemic. A demonstration of our belief in the project and an illustration of our commitment and intent.

We acknowledge and value the contribution lottery players in making the Horizons fund and the transformational projects it will support a reality. We want to ensure for this project there is a strong and clear connection to lottery players throughout the delivery. As a result, if successful, we will commit as one our

first acts to create a marketing manifesto with you to agree our joint ambition and delivery mechanismsto create a marking manifesto with you to set out joint ambition and agree how this will be delivered.

← to the Bottom  
**Photographs:**  
From left to right: 1) Royal Navy Vengeance alongside the PRT Berth, 2) Seahorse finding refuge in seagrass, 3) NMA outreach event









*Top front cover image ©Lewis Huddy*  
*Bottom front cover image ©Bracken Jelier*

