

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park

Update Report



Executive Summary

Plymouth Sound is one of the world's most important and visually stunning natural harbours. It has multiple designations for protected habitats and supports over 1000 species of fish and other marine animal life. It is home to Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Devonport, the largest naval base in Western Europe, commercial ports, a substantial national fishing fleet, international fish market, commercial diver training, a global hub for marine leisure industries and an internationally important marine research cluster. It is a historic tourist destination; Plymouth and its people have played a vital role in the development of Europe and the Americas. Nowhere could be more deserving of special recognition at a local or national level. So many pioneering voyages of discovery have set sail from Plymouth that it is natural for Plymouth to be delivering the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP).

To deliver this ambition and transformational project the NMP currently has work streams:

- The NMP Horizons project which provides the first delivery mechanism for the Park a spring board to deliver on wider ambitions for the NMP and inspire other funders to invest in the Park.
- The NMP Park set up which has a much broader scope than the NMP Horizons Project. It will be the new Interim NMP CEO's role to evolve the vision for the Park, review the governance and define a sustainable financial future for the NMP.

NMP Progress to Date.

Plymouth's history, heritage and future prosperity has been and continues to be, shaped by its economic, social and physical relationship to the ocean. The NMP journey to this point of Declaring our Intent has been significant:

- In 2012, Plymouth established its brand, Britain's Ocean City, to inspire, celebrate and promote its marine and maritime heritage.
- In 2012 the concept of establishing national marine parks across the UK was conceived and has since been promoted by Plymouth.
- In June 2018, a national Conference, (organised by Blue Marine Foundation with Plymouth City Council), *Marine Parks: Bringing It All Back Home*, was held at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, which resulted in consensus that Plymouth should be the first to establish a national marine park in the UK.
- The Plymouth Plan (2018-34) adopted in 2019 incorporating our Joint Local Plan, focuses the city's development and regeneration efforts along its HMNB Devonport, unique waterfront,

with world-renowned businesses, particularly in marine science, technology and engineering.

It is reflected in the marine city deal and a marine enterprise zone, delivering new investment, new jobs and helping young people gain new careers and job opportunities.

- Since January 2019, Plymouth City Council has sought to facilitate a citywide discussion on the national marine park concept and its potential for development in Plymouth.
- September 2019 – UK's first National Marine Park declared in Plymouth Sound. In September 2019 Plymouth declared the UK's first National Marine Park. The Declaration was signed by leaders of both political parties and sector leads from across the City. The declaration sets out how collectively the City will work together to enhance the economic, environmental and social values of Plymouth Sound, and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of those special qualities by the public. The full Declaration is contained within Appendix I
- 2019-2021 – NMP Bid to National Heritage Lottery Fund, Horizons Programme. Multi stage bidding process, including EOI, Interview and full bid submission.
- June 2021 - NHLF award Plymouth nearly £9.6million as 1 of 5 National innovation projects to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the fund.
- Recruitment of CEO to lead the Park – ongoing.

NMP Horizons Project

The delivery of the NMP is commencing with the £9.6million of funding from the National Heritage Lottery Funding. This funding represents the first significant investment in the NMP, increasing both its national and international profile. This will bring the NMP to life by engaging the entire city, co-designing enhancements to physical assets, recovering marine nature and leading innovation in digital engagement with the Park. This will act as a catalyst for delivering the NMP and will enable the transformation to start at pace, leading to the protection and enhancement of the landscape and nature. Working with the Heritage Fund, through shared outcomes and common purpose, we can energise people to become actively involved in shaping the future.

The ambition of the Plymouth Sound NMP Horizons project is to reconnect the entire city to the Sea; rekindling a golden thread between citizens, the marine environment and its history. It aims to protect and enhance our natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations, whilst enabling the development of marine citizenship and new approaches to sustainable management. The NMP Horizons project will galvanise residents and visitors to reconnect with and explore the ocean

in exciting ways and to enjoy a city where landscape, nature and community heritage in all its forms can be enhanced, understood and valued for the benefit of people, place and planet.

The NMP Horizons Project will deliver 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 are at the heart of the project, enabling a lifelong connection, fostering positive behaviours and benefits for individuals and heritage. The programme will deliver through five ‘Gateways’, a network of community access projects and a ‘Digital Park’. The gateways will deliver 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. The gateways are as follows:

- Tinside and the Hoe – Hub for Health and well-being
- Mount Batten – Hub for Active Recreation
- National Marine Aquarium – Hub for Nature Connection
- Mount Edgcumbe – Hub for Marine and Maritime Heritage
- Smart Sound - Digital Hub Delivering the ‘Digital Park’.

The project will be co-designed with the city but as key institutions integrated within the project the following organisations are formal partners on the project:

- Ocean Conservation Trust / National Marine Aquarium
- Mount Batten Sailing and Water Sports Centre
- Cornwall Council as joint owners of Mount Edgcumbe.
- Through the development phase we will also be working with the emerging Local Authority Trading Company that will manage Tinside.

NMP Horizon Objectives

Leading a new generation of Parks, our ‘Park in the Sea’ will:

- Establish the UK’s first National Marine Park
- Protect and enhance a world class natural environment and heritage landscape
- Be a national exemplar and thought leader in enabling a positive response to climate change for Government, Plymouth and the Heritage Fund
- Level up access to heritage to ensure all citizens and Lottery players can enjoy the benefits,
- Provide new employment opportunities and career pathways in sustainable future ocean jobs;

- Act as a city-wide and regional stimulus for economic ‘green’ recovery post Covid;
- Position Plymouth as a ‘UK Top Ten’ day visitor destination;
- Create a new generation of engaged volunteers, communities and heritage champions;
- Get the entire City in, on under and next to the water through 5 gateways and a network of community access projects;
- Deliver an innovation pathfinder for digital heritage engagement that will provide an International platform for the NMP.

Timescales and Budget

The Heritage Horizons Programme requires a two stage approach.

- Development Stage that runs until June 2023 - £921,500 of NLHF secured for this stage.
- Submission of Delivery Stage bid June 2023 - non-competitive application stage where we need to present a delivery project that meets our original ambitions.
- Delivery Stage – Winter 2023 to Winter 2028 (exact dates dependant on NLHF decision timelines) – around £8.66million of NLHF ring fenced for this stage.

To secure the Heritage Horizons funding Plymouth City Council (PCC) matched the bid with £2.5million of funding. In addition there is £175k of LEP Getting Britain Building Funding (development phase only) and match funding from PCC staff, partners and volunteer time.

Boundary:

For the submission of the bid, the project boundary aligns with the boundary of the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation. A map of the boundary is contained within Appendix 2

Development Phase Programme:

The purpose of the development phase is to co-design the delivery stage bid with the City. It’s a stage where we can test and trial approaches, identify barriers that need to be addressed and ensure the proposals in the delivery stage bid will catalyse a ‘Park for the people.’

There a number of components of the development stage that will be delivered through a cohesive programme:

Activity Plan

The vision for the Park is to create a new relationship between the city and the ocean. This will be through community led engagement to connect, involve and activate. Our goal is to establish Plymouth Sound NMP as the people’s ‘Park in the Sea’. We have had early consultation with

communities and organisations and in response to what they said we have identified a set of Activity Plan aims that we plan to test and refine throughout the Development Phase.

The purpose of the Activity Plan is to enable people to connect with the NMP in a way that is relevant to them. This is such an important part of the delivery of the Park that we submitted an outline activity plan with the bid submission. The outline activity programme can be found in Appendix 3.

The Activity programme it is critical as it will enable people to explore all aspects of the Park and discover what they value about the Sound and why it is, or could become important to them. Engaging a wider range of people with heritage including landscape and nature is a mandatory outcome for the Heritage horizons funding and is central to the value of the project. Enabling the connection is key as from that the opportunities for communities to value and care about the Park increases as does the wellbeing improvements for individuals. The programme will therefore be full of unashamedly fun and exciting activities. It will work at different levels – from mass engagement events to targeted work aimed at understanding and addressing key barriers to why people are not accessing the amazing benefits of the NMP. Throughout the programme our aim is for people to be inspired, connect with the water and develop a sense of ownership and wellbeing by being part of the NMP's future. This element of the work will align with and help deliver some elements of the Motion for the Ocean agreed at Full Council in November 2021.

The final details of the Activity Plan are being refined, but it will include some wild and wonderful events, opportunities to engage and invitations to help design the project. A over view of the programme includes:

- Launching the NMP City Wide Design Team
 - People from across the City can start being part of the NMP design team. Digital platforms and physical spaces will provide opportunities for everyone to share their ideas and ambitions for the Park.
 - National Marine Aquarium – Come and meet the NMP. Free event where all the amazing parts of the NMP will be showcased within the spectacular setting of the NMA. Will be a chance to explore and be inspired but also share your ideas about the NMP and what it should deliver for the City.
 - Digital Innovation Labs Commence – Digital will be key in enabling everyone to experience the wonders of the Sound. The innovation labs will provide a creative space to test and trial the art of the possible in bring the Sound to life.

- NMP Access All Areas
 - Events to enable the City to get in, one, under and next to the NMP. From full immersive experience trying snorkelling to paddling, to hunting for cannon balls, becoming an ocean ambassador through to relaxing with a view of the sea this summer will offer it all.
 - NMP meets the City – The best and most exciting part of the NMP will be transported around the City enabling communities to engage with the design of the NMP without the need to travel to the waterfront.
 - NMP past present and future – Events and activities to connect with our story filled past, to enable people to get hands on in supporting the Park's wildlife and history now and helping to shape a carbon free future.
- NMP Next Generation
 - Piloting an inclusive and cutting edge schools programme which will enable pupils to become 'Generation Ocean'.
 - Working with businesses to enable them to become 'green' next to the blue and make the most of their connection with the NMP.

NMP Hubs and Community Accesses - Design Work and Inclusive Engagement

Across the 4 physical hubs and the identified community access points we will be completing the survey and design work to enable us to secure the necessary consents so we can start at a run in the Delivery stage of the project. All of the ideas and design work will be drawn from the input we receive from people across the City. The NMP hubs will be a vital part of the Activity programme as not only will they receive capital changes during the delivery phase they will provide a lot of the content for engaging people with the Park in both phases.

- *The National Marine Aquarium* - will provide opportunities throughout the development phase for people to see what is under the Sound and be inspired by the wildlife. They will also lead lots of activities outside the aquarium taking all the excitement of the NMA to communities across Plymouth. The Ocean Conservation Trust will also be leading the pilot of a super-sized schools programme, running events to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn about the wonders of the Park and being a key part of the Marine Nature Recovery planning work.
- *Tinside and the Hoe* – During the development period the focus will be on trialling new activities linked to the NMP within the pool and finding out what more people would like to use the amazing facility to deliver. Engaging all the incredible groups already using the Hoe to find out what more the NMP could do to support and empower them to encourage a wider diversity of people to enjoy the benefits will also be a key focus.

- *Mount Edgcumbe* – Will be inspiring people about the wonders of the NMP's maritime history through activities on its shores and working within communities to identify what people are interested in knowing more about and how they would like to be involved.
- *Mount Batten Peninsula* – In addition to running some amazing 'give it a go' events at the Peninsula, the Mount Batten Sailing and Water Sports Centre will also be going on tour around the Park to take the activities they offer to waterfront communities within the NMP. This will help identify barriers to participation and how we resolve them during the development phase.
- *Community Access Points* – Identifying and co-designing with the communities a network of access points across the waterfront will be a focussed work stream during the development phase.

Marine Nature Recovery Design Work

Plymouth is already leading ground breaking work on marine nature recovery. Building on the excellent work already happening in Plymouth Sound, during the development phase we will collectively develop a Marine Nature Recovery Plan with achievable but ambitious projects that will be implemented in the delivery phase. Plymouth Sound is one of the most highly protected marine sites in the country and many organisations are engaged in work to protect and enhance the site through the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF). The NMP Horizons project will support this work and in line with the new Environment Act and the recent Motion for the Ocean agreed at Full Council, will work collectively with other to develop a Marine Nature Recovery Plan. This Plan will then drive work to enhance the site through direct action during the Delivery Phase.

NMP Innovation Investment

New investment markets are emerging to fund nature based solutions to our greatest challenges. We want the NMP to be at the forefront of this new area and will therefore be developing an investment plan during the development stage to inform and hopefully help secure further funding for the delivery phase.

Environmental Action

Throughout the development phase a key theme running through all aspects of the work will be ensuring that the activities and events deliver the highest level of sustainability and connect people in a manner that fosters a sense of ownership and care. Plymouth Sound is home to an amazing assemblage of wildlife. The project will nurture a new relationship with the Sound to ensure

additional people and activities they participate in help care for the Park and do not place increased pressure on habitats and species.

There is already a significant level of work taking place in the Sound to ensure wildlife and the activities of people can co-exist. The Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum is a partnership of organisations and local authorities with statutory responsibility towards the management of the Plymouth Sound & Tamar Estuaries Marine Protected Area (MPA). TECF and its advisory groups – the Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee (PPMLC) and the Wembury Voluntary Marine Conservation Area Advisory Group (WAG) already provide an effective and collaborative framework for managing the MPA whilst recognising the commercial, defence and recreational importance of the site.

There is also work underway to manage the recreational pressures of the growing city on the features of the MPA. The project funded by developer contributions is delivering work to inform users and encourage behavioural change to prevent any conflicts between wildlife and users as more people begin to use the Park.

The NMP will work alongside and learn from these existing projects and partnerships to add value to great work already being undertaken. Partners on the project are also already leaders in the field in engaging people with the Sound in a way that encourages a life-long connection. The Ocean Conservation Trust for example has run a significant schools and learning programme for many years, developing and championing work to develop marine citizens. These existing cutting edge programmes and partnerships are why Plymouth Sound is the perfect place to develop the UK's first National Marine Park. There is already so much learning, knowledge and activity happening that the NMP can link with and highlight to others the great work that is happening. During the development phase of the NMP Horizons project the idea is to work with stakeholders leading these activities to identify how the NMP can add value and enable them collectively to deliver more than the sum of their parts in a cohesive and inclusive manner.

Enabling a positive transition to net zero will also be a key outcome that will run through all the work, from how the capital works are designed, through to transport options in and around the Sound to helping businesses and individuals play a role in reducing carbon and making the city more resilient to climate impacts. Each of the Hubs and community access points will be assessed during the development phase to determine how they can be designed to support the net zero carbon by 2030 ambition. How people move around the Sound and from communities to the waterfront areas will

also be reviewed. This will be looked at through two lenses, how to travel in more sustainable ways and how to remove travel to the NMP as a barrier to use for new users.

Behavioural change will also be inter-woven through the activity plan delivery. In the same way marine citizenship and creating a connection to the ocean will be championed to encourage pro-nature behaviours, the programme will also look at the best way to engage people in net zero carbon action.

Finally through the marine nature recovery work stream in the development phase one of the key areas of focus will be how best to support nature to help lock up carbon. Seagrass restoration is already being piloted in the Sound due to its capacity to act as a carbon sink. The NMP Horizons programme will learn from the seagrass work and other research being undertaken throughout the Park to establish an ambitious programme of nature recovery which supports nature based solution to carbon reduction.

NMP Wider Development

Beyond the scope of the NMP Horizons programme there is much work to be done developing the National Marine Park. We have in place the NMP Declaration and coalition of the willing. We need to evolve and formalise the partnership and governance arrangements and we need to engage stakeholders more formally. We also need to develop some basics including values, brand, communications, funding as well as developing an annual work programme. We have made an offer, subject to references and signing of contract, for the new Interim NMP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to progress these areas of work over a 2 year period. It is anticipated that the NMP CEO will focus on six key areas:

- To develop a 5 year vision and development plan for the NMP working with the NMP Board and other key stakeholders that clearly defines what the Park is and what the Park is not. To ensure that the Park has scientific and environmental credibility, driving social and economic value with public engagement at its core.
- To develop and lead an engagement plan for the NMP focussed initially on core city stakeholders, institutions and residents. To develop a longer term plan for engaging nationally and internationally that will be delivered beyond the 2 year interim phase. To be the face and voice of the NMP.

- To complete the key elements of the Parks initial set up: Governance review, constitution/terms of reference, brand identify, formalise boundary, online presence, communication plan, environmental statement, policy development and consultation.
- To develop and implement a funding strategy for the NMP, which as a minimum, delivers sustainable funding for the NMP staff structure by the end of year 2
- To oversee the activity and operation of the Park developing and promoting an annual visible programme of activity raising the profile of the Park within the city, region and nationally. Through management of strong networks amplify and coordinate existing interventions including Smart Sound, Horizon Bid, Capital improvements, events, partners work, environmental and community projects.
- To support the National lottery Horizon BID national lottery project and Community Renewal fund

It is anticipated that the Interim NMP CEO will commence in the role in March 2022.

NMP Governance (2 year interim position)

As a result of the scope of the NMP Horizons Project and the wider ambitions of the NMP there are two distinct and separate governance structures. There is a distinction between the NMP Horizon Bid project and the wider leadership and governance of the NMP. They are not the same and need different approaches to governance and executive leadership. The NMP Horizons project needs its own defined governance as required by the Heritage Fund and will be required to follow its own methodology and reporting.

The governance arrangement now is an interim one limited to 2 years providing the opportunity to complete the development work in both spaces before creating a permanent and sustainable solution. The Heritage Fund development phase, which is 2 years neatly provides a timeline for this next stage of the NMP's development.

Further NMP Funding

The NMP Horizons fund provides the first significant investment for the NMP and we are incredibly grateful to the lottery players and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for supporting us and believing in our vision. The Parks ambitions are however significant and further funding in future years will be required to enable the Park to reach its potential.

Fortunately the NMP has already secured £1.4million of further funding. This includes £670k from the Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver enhancements across the NMP including, improvements to waterfront infrastructure and community assets. £100k Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding

for tourism and environmental business support and most recently £630k from the UK Community Renewals Fund.

The NMP has the potential to drive the triple bottom line of prosperity, environment and engagement. However, for the NMP to be successful: the businesses that it contains need to thrive commercially while also supporting the environmental agenda. People, both residents and visitors, need to engage with the marine environment and by doing so support both the business and the environment. NMP infrastructure also needs clear and feasible plans for carbon-zero improvement.

The work within the CRF programme will start a virtuous circle between business innovation and effectiveness, engagement of people, and environmental protection and recovery.

The business targeted in the programme are NMP related, specifically including tourism, hospitality, cultural, sports activity businesses, environment engagement organisations. Ultimately businesses that will benefit from leveraging the attraction of the NMP and also engage public in environmental enhancements.

The programme has 5 key work streams:

- Improve environmental impact and support of NMP-related business through benchmarking carbon emissions and other environmental impact, providing deliverable improvement plans and support to start implementation
- 20 new blue-green tourism/cultural products supporting business growth and attraction developed to support the viability of NMP related businesses.
- Increase public engagement with the NMP and marine environment to drive footfall for economic success and marine citizenship, and increase pride in place
- Create path to a zero carbon and highly usable leisure waterfront, with feasibility studies and business cases produced for low-carbon energy source and environment improvement.
- Gain and understanding of the barriers and drivers of carbon/environment positive change within NMP related businesses

This programme will support the delivery of the NMP Horizons project and the wider development of the NMP.

Recommendations

- The Brexit Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee become a key point of engagement in the development of the NMP future vision being led by the Interim NMP CEO.
- The committee endorse the approach to the development phase of the NMP Horizons Project and that scrutiny have a continuing role in assessing the outcome and impact of the Activity Plan and development of the Delivery Phase bid.
- The Committee asks for the Activity Plan for the NMP Horizons project to be presented to it in February 2022.

APPENDIX I**PLYMOUTH SOUND NATIONAL MARINE PARK
DECLARATION OF INTENT**

We, the undersigned, pledge our support to create the UK's first National Marine Park. By this we mean that the undersigned will work together to enhance the economic, environmental and social values of Plymouth Sound, and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of those special qualities by the public.

The waters of Plymouth Sound are unique and have been instrumental in shaping not just our city's and nation's heritage, culture, wealth and security, but that of America, Europe and many other parts of the world. It is a place where people have met the sea since time immemorial. The National Marine Park will be the legacy that we have the privilege and responsibility of bestowing on future generations.

The National Marine Park will celebrate our past and our future: it will encourage greater prosperity and enhanced engagement with our marine and maritime environment. Building on our current work and existing structures, it will support a new approach to how we value and work in harmony with the natural environment to deliver the greatest benefit for all. Our vision is for a National Marine Park that supports thriving businesses, connected communities and inspired visitors.

The waters of Plymouth Sound are a place of extraordinary and inspiring natural beauty, where local people enjoy sailing, swimming, fishing and countless other leisure activities and where adventurers from around the world have set out on global voyages. They are already home to a complex and diverse mix of uses – from the Navy and the port to commercial fishing and diver training as well as the marine leisure industry. These uses thrive alongside some of the most highly protected areas designated for wildlife in the UK. Through our common endeavour these uses and strong partnerships will continue and be developed further.

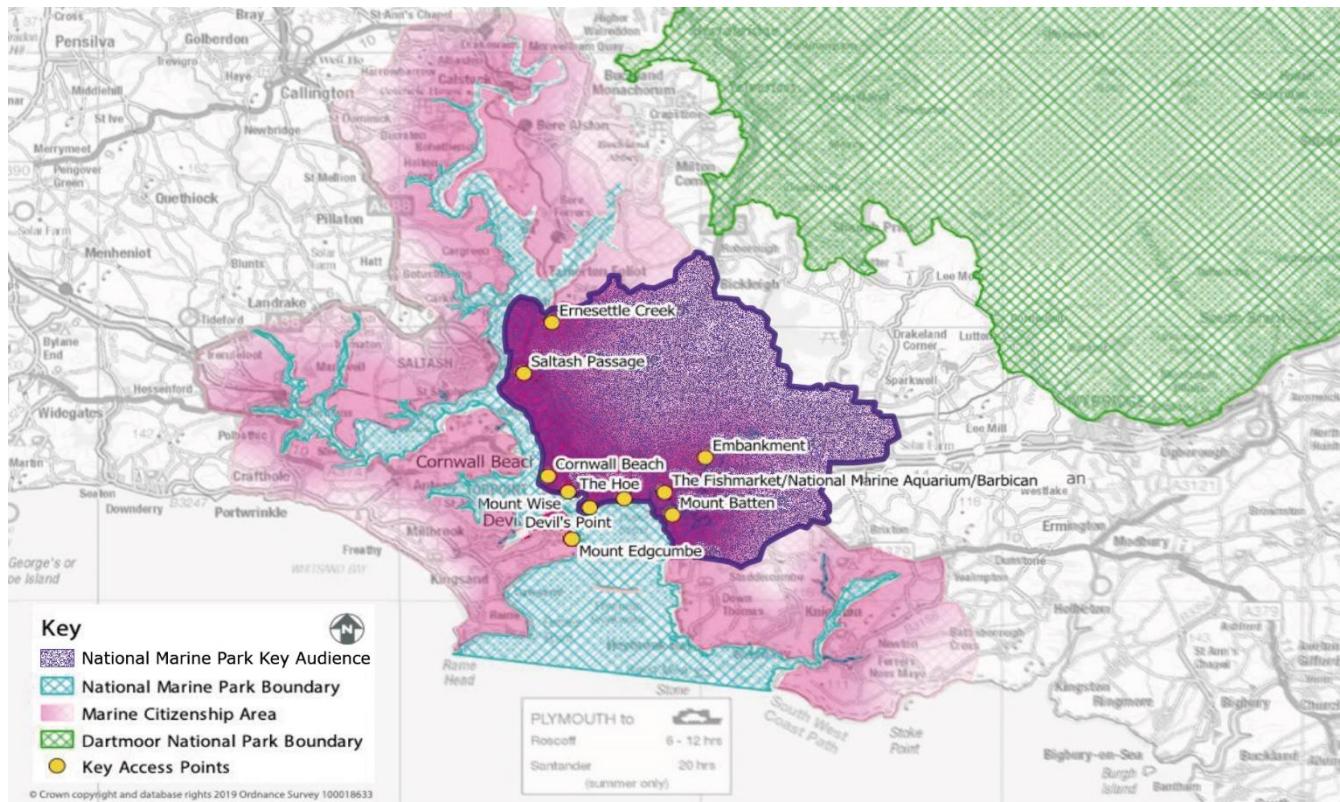
In declaring our intent to create the first National Marine Park in Plymouth Sound we are also signalling the next stage of our journey. Plymouth City Council will constitute a Marine Park Board to co-design a strategy and delivery plan. To provide advice to the Board, a working group will ensure that the voices of all users are heard and fully engaged.

The National Marine Park has been developed collaboratively, declared locally, and delivered through a spirit of opportunity.

We invited the nation to recognise the international significance of Plymouth Sound as we embark on a new journey, as so many others have. We will become the UK's first National Marine Park, and be a proving ground for others to follow this innovative new approach.

This declaration signals a citywide commitment to work with Government, stakeholders and citizens to develop a blueprint for National Marine Parks that can be replicated nationwide. The signatories are not, at this stage, seeking additional statutory powers under the National Parks Act 1949 or other legislation, and will work within existing legislative frameworks. The National Marine Park is a statement of intent of the signatories to work together for the public benefit.

APPENDIX 2 – NMP Horizons Project Boundary



APPENDIX 3 – Outline Activity Plan

Attached Paper