

# **Plymouth Sound National Marine Park – Horizons Project**

## **Activity Plan Report**



### **Executive Summary**

The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (NMP) will reconnect an entire city to the Sea, rekindling a golden thread between citizens, the marine environment and its history. It will nurture our natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations, whilst aiming to develop a sense of marine citizenship and support sustainable heritage management.

The UK's first National Marine Park (NMP) will create opportunities for 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. Based on three key elements, namely: physical infrastructure; social infrastructure (engagement programmes) and digital infrastructure, our project vision is to create a new relationship between the city and the ocean. Engaging residents and the wider community is key to changing the way a city interacts with its environment; to care for, protect it and use it in different ways to develop a healthier and more harmonious relationship with the ocean. Only a community-led approach will ensure the goal to establish Plymouth Sound NMP as the people's 'Park in the Sea' is achieved.

To deliver this ambition and transformational project the NMP currently has 2 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.

The activity plan presented relates to the NMP Horizons project.

The delivery of the activity plan within the development phase of the bid will, test and trial approaches to ensure more inclusive engagement with the NMP in line with the ambition above. To be successful the activity plan must provide a mechanism for citizens to help design the future of the Park by shaping the delivery phase bid.

This paper sets out the background to the activity plan for the development phase of the project, its approach and purpose, how it interacts with other areas of the projects work and how it will positively influence the delivery stage bid.

### **Background and Approach**

Our goal is to establish Plymouth Sound NMP as the people's 'Park in the Sea' and that can only be achieved through an enabling and inclusive approach to engaging and empowering communities. The NMP project submitted to the Heritage Horizon Awards is subject to a stage phase funding approach as follows:

- 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.

The development phase bid included an outline activity plan which set out a framework for engagement and learning during the development stage of the project. At that early stage of the projects development, it was considered important to undertake desk research of national and local research data to better understand who currently does, and does not, engage with the heritage of Plymouth Sound. This work included consulting with the general public via an online survey to get a better idea of how people currently use the Sound and to gather outline responses to some of our ideas for increasing engagement. This information is contained within the outline activity plan within sections 2 and 3.

Based on the findings of the early desk research and consultation, an Outline Activity Plan (OAP) was developed that will be tested and revised in the Development Phase. The OAP describes the approach to engagement that will be delivered. A summary of the activity plan programme can be found on page 38 of the OAP. We have grouped the activities under 8 programme headings with the aim that the activity plan delivery begins to create a new relationship between the city and the ocean, through community led engagement.

On the basis of the feedback and information gathered at the submission stage of the project bid a short set of barriers were also highlighted as potentially limiting the engagement people have with Plymouth Sound. An analysis of these barriers helped shape a set of engagement activities that will be trialled and evaluated within the development phase of the project.

The insights and evidence gained during the development of the OAP has been vital in designing an inclusive and engaging activity plan that will pilot approaches and enable learning to inform the delivery phase bid. The framework and proposals detailed in the OAP have remained the basis of the more detailed activity plan now presented. The activity plan presented has been developed in line with the 8 work programmes as set out in the OAP to ensure our approach and purpose are retained. What has been developed over the past few months is the delivery detail.

### **Purpose of the Activity Plan**

The purpose of the activity plan is to:

- Drive the engagement work for the NMP in the development phase of the bid.
- To test and trial approaches to ensuring citizens can explore and enjoy the NMP and have a say in its future development through shaping the design of the delivery phase bid.
- To ensure that the project will deliver against the NLHF core outcomes as this is vital in ensuring we secure the delivery phase funding.
- Ensure and enable the capital design work to respond to the needs of the community and their ambitions for the NMP.
- Enable the Peoples Park in the Sea to have the greatest impact for people, planet and place.

### **Activity Plan**

The activity plan presented provides more detail on how the programmes set out on the OAP will be delivered during the development phase. The original 8 work programmes remain as these are the fundamentals on which our approach is based. What is provided, after significant engagement with partners and stakeholders, is the mechanisms for delivering each work programme and who is leading the different areas of work. This will ensure we have an ambitious but deliverable programme from which we can learn and develop the project that will be submitted in the Delivery Stage bid.

Where it has been deemed beneficial to our engagement approach we have aligned the NMP programme with other City initiatives, for example aligning the Give it a Go programme with the SailGP Inspire programme.

The activity plan is designed to test and trial approaches to enable broad, diverse and inclusive engagement to ensure the citizens of Plymouth can co-design the delivery stage of the project and therefore shape the future of the NMP.

The programme includes a broad range of activities that will be delivered at different scales including:

- Large scale city engagement events including - the National Marine Park Residents Day at the National Marine Aquarium and the Give it a Go programme linked to Sail GP.
- Community lead work to shape the Park's design– including community access point design, Sea in the Park events, NMP Sparks creative programme and Give it a Go community level events.
- Digital innovation testing – working with communities to discover how digital can help enable an immersive NMP experience and connect people with the Park.
- Learning programmes – Generation Ocean, trialling a sustained curriculum based programme with schools, meet the Marine Park a focused programme with young people, designing a NMP Apprenticeship.
- NMP Ranger Programmes – piloting how NMP Rangers can work alongside communities and existing initiatives to enable diverse experiences and connections with the Park that enable long term relationships with the NMP.
- Aligning with City events – Utilising the brilliant programme of initiatives to enable further conversations and co-design opportunities with the citizens of Plymouth.

With all elements of delivery of the activity plan, how we deliver is as important as what we deliver. To meet the project ambitions around impact and positive benefit inclusion has been designed to be at the core of every part of the programme.

### **Alignment with Capital Design and Development Work**

During the development phase of the bid we have to design, develop and gain consent for any capital works that will form part of the delivery phase of the bid. The capital interventions are planned to be delivered at the key hub sites, National Marine Aquarium, Mount Batten Peninsula, Mount Edgcumbe and Tinside and the Hoe as well as at a number of community access points. The design and development of these capital items will be determined by the insights and learning from the engagement that occurs through the activity plan delivery.

Citizens across the city will be given a co-design role in the development of the capital programme proposal for the hub sites and will be empowered to lead the work for the community access points. This will be enabled through the delivery of the activity plan programme. For example events

designed with communities to enable people to try activities on the water will also provide time for discussions and design of the capital items.

This approach will ensure the capital infrastructure changes enable inclusive engagement with the Park. For example if access is identified as a barrier to engagement for some people this will need to be addressed through the capital design.

The consultant team appointed to support the capital design work will need to demonstrate their commitment and expertise in enable community co-design. The success of the approaches to co-design will form part of the evaluation so adaptations can be made to the approach as the project is running if needed to ensure inclusive engagement at each step of the design work.

### **Evaluation**

We will appoint an evaluation consultant to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the project. This will ensure that we effectively and efficiently measure our progress against key milestone and NHLF outcomes. It will also enable the adaption and evolution of our activities and programming to better meet the outcomes of the project.

A Theory of Change (ToC) has been produced for the NMP Horizons project which has identified what impact we are trying to achieve and the short term indicators, medium term and long term outcomes needed for the NMP Horizons project to achieve the impacts identified. The ToC has been developed with the project partners and stakeholders. A working group has been formed that will meet regularly during the development phase to keep the ToC under review so it can evolve with the project and enable learning from the evaluation.

The evaluation framework for the project will have the ToC as a focus and during the development phase will have three interconnected areas of evaluation and learning:

### **Project Evaluation**

- Evaluate project impact and delivery at key points within the programme.
- Focus on progress towards short term indicators and impacts detailed within Theory of Change work.
- Element to focus on collaborative working approach to delivering differently.

### Active Learning through Delivery

- Critical friend role to learn as we deliver – enabling programme tweaks to increase impact. Working alongside the NMP Team and partners.

### Young People Specific Pilot Evaluation

- Drawing evaluation

The purpose of these three interconnected approaches is to maximise the testing and trialling approach during the development phase. This approach will enable us to continually review and improve our approach and impact during delivery to ensure we don't learn lessons only at key review points or at the end of the project. We will be able to mature and grow the approaches as we deliver to enable the most inclusive and impactful programme. It will also continually focus on how elements of the programme are brought forward not just what is being delivered.

All elements of the evaluation will be used to help inform the content and approach submitted in the delivery phase bid.

### **Delivery Phase Bid**

The activity plan presented is for the development phase of the bid and will enable citizen to not only explore and enjoy the Park but also influence its future by helping to shape the Delivery phase bid which has to be submitted in June 2023. The testing, trialling and evaluation learning gained during the development phase will inform what is included in the Delivery phase bid. Although we had to set out a draft proposal for the Delivery phase in the initial bid the Heritage Fund are expecting it to be changed and evolved as a result of the Development phase work and particularly by enabling citizens to influence the future of the Park through the bid content.

Our bid will only be successful at the next round if it clearly demonstrates that we have worked with citizens from across the City to shape the bid. The bid must demonstrate that the approach and content responds to our communities ideas and ambitions for the Park, overcomes barriers to engagement and will deliver a park for the people.

### **Recommendations**

- The Brexit Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the approach to community engagement as detailed in the NMP Horizons Activity Plan.

- The Committee asks for the outputs and learning from the NMP Horizons Activity Plan delivery to be presented to it in March 2023 to enable any recommendation of the Committee to be included in the Delivery phase bid for the NMP Horizons project.