

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	08 November 2023
Title of Report:	Plymouth Sound Water Quality – Challenges, Issues and Opportunities
Lead Member:	Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change)
Lead Strategic Director:	Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)
Author:	Kat Deeney
Contact Email:	Kathryn.deeney@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	231108 Plymouth Sound Water Quality - Scrutiny Briefing Note
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

As Plymouth Britain's Ocean City, we want to be the most vibrant waterfront city in Europe. Plymouth is also home to the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP). A high-quality natural environment including clean and healthy seas is essential in us achieving our ambition. The Water Quality (WQ) of the Sound is therefore a key issue for the City, as we encourage more people to get in, on, under and next to the water. There are many challenges in improving the WQ of the Sound and this paper sets out the challenges, issues and opportunities.

Recommendations and Reasons

Recommendation

The Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the Water Quality Briefing Note.

Reason

To note the complex nature of the challenges, issues and opportunities with improving the water quality of Plymouth Sound and the number of stakeholders engaged with this area of work.

Recommendation

To establish a Select Committee in 2024 focused solely on Water Quality, inviting key stakeholders and user groups to provide evidence for consideration and review.

Reason

Recognising the complexities but also the importance of improving the water quality of Plymouth Sound NMP there is a need to have a dedicated Select Committee to enable key stakeholders to present evidence and for the issues and opportunities to be thoroughly reviewed.

Alternative options considered and rejected.

Do not have a Select Committee – This would not enable the issue and opportunities around water quality to be thoroughly reviewed taking into account evidence from key stakeholders. This would not support work to resolve current issues and ensure improvements are made.

Review water quality issues and opportunities at a standard Scrutiny meeting – due to the complexity of the issue and number of key stakeholders that are engaged in the subject reviewing the matter as part of a scrutiny meeting would not give the time and focus on this important matter.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

As Britain's Ocean City, a high-quality natural environment that has clean and health water is essential. Improving the water quality in the UK's first NMP will help deliver many of our policies. The programme will deliver against policies within the Plymouth Plan including policy 'INT1 - Implementing Britain's Ocean City'.

Many of our key City initiatives including the NMP and our Active to Thrive Plan will be utilising access to blue space, getting people in, on, under and next to the water to improve health and wellbeing. Improving the water quality of the Sound will therefore support the City Vision to be 'One of the finest waterfront cities in Europe where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone' as well as Plymouth City Council's priority: 'making Plymouth a great place to grow up and grow old'.

How we improve the water quality of the NMP is important as we need to prioritise methods that reduce carbon and improve places for people and nature. The works to enhance water quality must be resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change to ensure the City's environments can adapt to changes in sea level and weather patterns. This approach will support the City aspirations to be net zero by 2030 and enable adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

This update report has no direct financial implications.

Financial Risks

This update report has no direct financial risks.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

This report will not have any direct implications on the City's carbon footprint. Carbon, nature and people's wellbeing will however need to be central to decisions on how to respond to the water quality challenges and the opportunity to improve the current situation.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

This update report has no direct other implications.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	231108 Water Quality – Scrutiny Briefing Paper							
B								

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	Click here to enter text.	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
-----	---------------------------	-----	---------------------------	---------	---------------------------	----	---------------------------	--------	---------------------------	------------	---------------------------

Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Philip Robinson

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 31/10/2023

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change)

Date approved: 31/10/2023