

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Plymouth Sound National Marine Park
Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	15 January 2019
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Dann
CMT Member:	Anthony Payne (Director for Place)
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Ref:	190115 NMP Cabinet Report FINAL
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

The Council's is committed to supporting the designation of the first National Marine Park (NMP) in the UK within Plymouth Sound. Our aspiration is that this will set the framework for a national network of NMP's across the country.

Over the last year significant support and momentum has been created around the idea of a National Marine Park for Plymouth Sound. Workshops and a National Marine Park conference has been hosted in Plymouth supported by Blue Marine Foundation and local partners to discuss and debate the idea of a NMP. The conclusion of all these events was that a NMP would be very beneficial for Plymouth Sound and it is something that should be progressed as a city priority. There was also high-level support for the City Council to take the lead role in developing the designation, working with a diverse range of partners, which represent the wide-ranging marine interests found within Plymouth Sound.

The next step is to translate the work and commitment from the City and surrounding communities into a designation that is developed locally but is recognised and valued nationally. This report confirms the City Council's commitment to take on the lead role in developing the NMP designation for Plymouth Sound. It also sets out the next steps that we will take to turn the concept of the first NMP into a designation.

The Corporate Plan 2016 - 19:

The development of the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park will support the aims of the Corporate Plan in the following ways.

Pioneering Plymouth – Plymouth will designate the first National Marine Park in the country and will set the standards and framework for how a network of NMPs could be delivered nationally. This will place Plymouth on the national and international stage and will allow the city to make best use of one of its greatest assets, Plymouth Sound.

Growing Plymouth – It will ensure the City is a great place to live for future generations and the marine environment is fully integrated as a valued part of the growth agenda.

Caring Plymouth – Designation of an NMP will ensure the significant health and well-being benefits of accessing and living near a high quality marine environment will be realised for our residents, workers and visitors.

Confident Plymouth – It will enable Plymouth to demonstrate to a national audience the benefits, to growth and communities, which can be derived from recognising the value of our marine environment.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

The National Marine Park (NMP) will result in the city changing the way it values, interacts and develops opportunities around Plymouth Sound. Resources will be required to support the development and designation of the NMP. Once designated the NMP will also require ongoing sustainable resourcing to enable it to deliver its functions. At this stage as the actual designation requirements have not been established and the business model for the NMP developed the exact resources required have not been identified. It is anticipated we will need approximately £250K to undertake the detailed development work needed to designate the National Marine Park. The Council will look to secure external funding from European and Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), Foundations and other sources to resource this work.

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

The new National Marine Park (NMP) should provide positive benefits for our communities, workers and visitors. The ambition is that the NMP designation is inclusive and supports the city's ambition to enable everyone to enjoy a high quality of life. The objectives of the NMP will enable the social, economic and environmental benefits of Plymouth Sound to be maximised for the City and surrounding communities. The details on the benefits of the NMP will be clarified once the designation process and NMP objectives have been fully defined.

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No, at this stage there is not sufficient detail on the NMP's designation objectives to conduct an EqlA. Once the designation process has been established an EqlA will be completed.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

1. Adopt the leadership role in developing and designating the first National Marine Park for Plymouth Sound.

Reason: To drive forward the designation of the UK's first National Marine Park for Plymouth Sound as a city priority, working with partners and stakeholders.

- Instruct officers to commence an engagement exercise on the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park.

Reason: To engage with communities, businesses and stakeholders to help shape the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park and ensure the City and surrounding communities value and recognise the new designation.

- Work with Government departments to ensure the National Marine Park local designation has national recognition and enables the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park to be the first of a network of National Marine Park's across the country.

Reason: To ensure that the locally developed National Marine Park designation is meaningful at a national and international level and the work in Plymouth Sound can be used as a framework to deliver National Marine Park's across the country.

- Continue to seek funding to support the development of the National Marine Park.

Reason: The development of the first National Marine Park will have national significance and is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the value of the marine environment. We will therefore be seeking external funding to help us to achieve a designation of such importance.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Do nothing – This would mean that the political leadership of this agenda needed to ensure that Plymouth Sound is the first successfully designated NMP would not be available.

Enable a different organisation to lead this work – There has been a clear request from Plymouth stakeholders that the City Council should lead this work. No other organisation has the same mandate to lead this work.

Published work / information:

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plymouth Sound National Marine Park – Engagement Document.	Yes								
Plymouth Sound National Marine Park - Prospectus	Yes								

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1.0 Introduction

As Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth's marine environment provides a link to our proud heritage as well as being integral to our future, prosperity, well-being and culture. Plymouth Sound is a beautiful and unique natural environment that is integral to what makes Plymouth special. This high quality environment supports a naval dockyard, commercial ports, a tourist destination, a natural playground, a marine research cluster, a base for a fishing fleet and fish market, somewhere to unwind or get an adrenaline high and wildlife that is internationally important. Nowhere could be more deserving of special recognition. There are however currently no marine designations that allow us to celebrate the significance and diversity of Plymouth Sound.

Plymouth Sound is a unique asset and we need to be able to celebrate all of the features that make it so special, from the people to the wildlife, from our heritage legacy to our commercial future. We need to do this in a manner that is meaningful at a local and national level. Developing a marine designation that can be applied nationally but is first declared in Plymouth would provide the recognition the area so deserves.

Currently we do not have the level of designation that is designed to engage people with the marine environment. Instead, we have a series of technical designations but none that are explicitly targeted at increasing public awareness and engagement as National Marine Parks would be. We want a designation that everyone understands, enhances socio-economic benefits, attracts visitors and increases awareness and appreciation of our coastal waters.

2.0 The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park

The concept for Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (NMP) is to include people and economic activity in the marine environment rather than exclude by regulation. This means that fishing, military use and commercial shipping will continue to exist alongside marine protection, habitat restoration and species reintroduction efforts. The NMP would be a beacon for tourism, discovery about the marine environment and would help promote and protect our coastal waters. We want to build on the success of existing forums that integrate marine environmental and recreational management and extend it to other uses over a wider area.

Marine Parks are not a new concept with examples existing around the world. Each of these marine parks are slightly different with different regulatory and environmental protections. An early challenge was to describe what a National Marine Park might look like and achieve to elicit discussion and debate. Working with the University of Plymouth's MarCoPol centre and the Blue Marine Foundation the following is an initial definition that has been produced:

"A Marine Park is a specially recognised coastal or marine space important for its environment and community health and wellbeing. Marine Park status will encourage greater prosperity, responsible enjoyment, deeper knowledge and enhanced appreciation of the natural world and our place within it." – MarCoPol/Blue Marine Foundation

3.0 Work to Date

Over the last year significant support and momentum has been created around the idea of a National Marine Park for Plymouth Sound. Workshops and a National Marine Park conference have been hosted in Plymouth supported by Blue Marine Foundation and local partners to discuss and debate the idea of a NMP. The conclusion of all these events was that a NMP designation would be very beneficial and should be progressed as a city priority.

The Government is reviewing the framework for protected landscapes including National Parks and AONB. This review offers an opportunity to join the work happening in Plymouth to develop a National Marine Park directly into the highest levels of government policy. Plymouth City Council has submitted a response to the Landscape Review call for evidence setting out the reasons why the first new National Marine Park should be designated in Plymouth Sound but then be rolled out nationally.

Work has also been ongoing with the Marine Management Organisation to try and secure additional funding to support the development of the National Marine Park,

4.0 Next Steps

Work to date has demonstrated the support and commitment across the City to Plymouth Sound becoming the first National Marine Park, we now need to turn the concept into a reality.

The Council will be providing a lead role in this work but is very keen to continue to work with partners from across the City to develop and designate the first National Marine Park. This will include the MOD, Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF), Blue Marine Foundation and representatives from the fishing, commercial and recreational sectors as well as other local authorities that border Plymouth Sound. We also want to do more to engage communities, businesses, schools and visitors from across Plymouth and in other communities that surround Plymouth Sound in developing the proposal.

The next step in this citywide conversation is an engagement exercise to enable further discussion about the detail of the National Marine Park. This includes questions such as, what should be the objectives of the NMP, how big should it be and what benefits should it aim to deliver. The Council will be running the engagement exercise from the 15th January to the 26th February where everyone can provide their views on the proposals and how we can shape the designation so it delivers the maximum benefits for people, wildlife and business.