DECLARATION
OF INTENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Plymouth
Britain’s Ocean City
This FAQ document should be read alongside the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Declaration of Intent. The Declaration of Intent is a celebration of the significant step forward we are making in developing the UK’s first National Marine Park. This document provides further clarity on the nature and purpose of our Declaration of Intent; what it is, what it is not, the benefits and the next steps.
PLYMOUTH SOUND

Why should Plymouth Sound be the UK’s first National Marine Park?

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 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 considered as the UK’s first National Marine Park.

What would are the benefits of developing Plymouth Sound as a National Marine Park?

These include:

• Helping people engage with our stunning marine and maritime environment to promote health, and wellbeing and enjoyment.

• Reinvigorating civic pride.

• Engaging new audiences with the marine and maritime environments helping to overcome the fact that 17% of children in Plymouth have never been to the beach.

• Highlighting the extensive and diverse role of the Navy to the people of Plymouth and to the country.

• Showcasing our world class marine science, engineering, and research.

• Bringing together community, and business to raise social capital, trust and develop strong partnerships.

• Exploring fishing infrastructure improvements, through close working with Sutton Harbour and the industry.

• Supporting our Ports through strong destination marketing management and other economic development activity.

• Helping our marine leisure industry use Plymouth Sound as a natural amphitheatre for events including; Fastnet, America’s Cup and the World Power Boat Championship.

• Driving the visitor economy by embedding the NMP at the heart of the Visitor Plan (2020-2030).

• Raising the profile and extraordinary history of Plymouth internationally, driving sustainable tourism trade and research.
THE DECLARATION

Journey 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 journey to this point of Declaring our Intent has been significant:

• In 2009, 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 HMB Naval base 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.

• We have consulted the public on the concept of Plymouth establishing a national marine park, evidencing wide support for this. We have met with more than 75 organisations and individuals who have confirmed their in principle support for a Park that targets benefits for Place, People and Planet.

• We have discussed the co-design of the national marine park with the Marine Management Organisation, Defra and other statutory partners, who are supportive of the city’s ambition to provide a proving ground for the national marine park concept.

• We have secured a £75,000 grant from the Marine Management Organisation to undertake a feasibility study.

What does the National Marine Park mean?

We have defined national marine park to mean an area where a group of public bodies and other stakeholders have agreed to recognise the following two objectives of:

a enhancing economic, environmental and social values within the areas specified in the following subsection;

and

b promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public, in the way that they carry out their functions, and to liaise and co-ordinate with each other over those objectives. The National Marine Park is an intention for the signatories to work together.
What does the Declaration of Intent Mean?

The Declaration of Intent is the DNA of the UK’s first National Marine Park. It sets out the intentions of the signatories to work together within the parameters of their own governance framework.

Firstly we want to locally design and deliver a National Marine Park that celebrates and amplifies all the unique features of Plymouth and encourages more people to engage with the marine environment. We also want to share our learning from this with national stakeholders and government so that what we do in Plymouth can be replicated across the nation.

It is a significant moment as stakeholders across the City come together to support the proposal and provide a show of confidence that the City has the will and capability to develop a blueprint that can be replicated nationwide. The Declaration is however one of intent and there is a lot of work to do to develop and deliver the Park. This will involve further phases of stakeholder engagement and the development of a detailed business plan and sustainable finance model that will be formally consulted upon.

How is the National Marine Park NMP recognised in local Policy?

The creation of a National Marine Park for Plymouth Sound is already embedded in local policies. The Plymouth Plan, which has been developed locally and extensively consulted upon highlights the City’s aspirations to create a National Marine Park. The National Marine Park is highlighted in the Plymouth Plan as a key part of the ‘Growing’ and ‘International’ city aspirations. The Plymouth Plan states - “Plymouth Sound, its estuaries and watersides are managed comprehensively as an economic, social and environmental asset of international renown...”

The National Marine Park is also fully integrated within the Plymouth Visitor Plan (2020-30) and is seen as a key driver for Plymouth’s future visitor economy, which was adopted in March 2019 after extensive consultation.

Will the new National Marine Park lead to the development of National Policy?

Our proposal is to work with stakeholders locally to create and deliver the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park. The Park will celebrate what we already have, amplify things we do well and find new and innovative ways to engage people with the marine and maritime environment. Our offer to government is to work alongside us as we pilot this approach, utilising the learning to enable policy to be formed nationally. Any future policy related to national marine parks would clearly be developed by national government and therefore would be subject to formal consultation.

Will the NMP result in new restrictions for current uses?

The National Marine Park is founded upon a collaborative way of working that will complement existing uses, enhance communication and work with successful and established frameworks already within Plymouth Sound. The aspiration to develop greater public connection to the marine and maritime environments is hoped to benefit Place, People and Planet.
The purpose of the National Marine Park is not to create new restrictions for water users. Plymouth Sound is already one of the most highly designated sites. It includes a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, a Marine Conservation Zones plus numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site also boasts numerous protected heritage features. The Park's purpose is to enhance economic, environmental and social values in Plymouth Sound, and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of those special qualities by the public.

The intention is to create a local pilot that showcases and celebrates the successes of the National Marine Park and Britain’s Ocean City. Then alongside that offer to share our learning with central government.

GOVERNANCE

Will there be new governance to support the creation of the National Marine Park?

To support the creation of the National Marine Park new governance will be established, in the shape of a National Marine Park Board. The purpose of the Board will be to ensure that decisions on the creation and delivery of the Park are made collaboratively for the benefit of all users and stakeholders. The Board will include representatives from amongst the Navy, City Council, business sector, community, research and environmental organisations. The Board will be supported by a National Marine Park Working Group whose members will be established through the stakeholder workshops that are planned to take place to ensure all key interests are represented.

The new governance arrangements will not replace existing forums and groups already successfully functioning within Plymouth Sound such as Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum and Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee. The Board will be set up to add value and learn from the best practice operating models such as those aforementioned.

NEXT STEPS

Will there be further stakeholder engagement and formal consultation?

Following the Declaration of Intent and to support the creation of the National Marine Park, the Council will facilitate a further phase of extensive stakeholder engagement. This work will be overseen by the National Marine Park Board. This engagement will include a series of all-day workshops involving stakeholders, which will be designed to help resolve challenges and identify innovative solutions to inform a five year National Marine Park business plan and sustainable funding model.

The process will engage stakeholders from across the many marine and maritime interests, with participants being drawn from organisations and individuals across a range of sectors, including defence, commercial fishing, angling, marine technology, visitor economy, research, as well as the natural environment.
**How will the National Marine Park be funded?**

A sustainable finance model will be an essential component in creating a NMP that continues to deliver benefits in the future. How this will be achieved will form a key part of the feasibility study and the NMP Board work.

In the short term and in tandem with the stakeholder engagement Plymouth City Council will be working with partners to develop bids for funding to support the Park’s development and delivery. The most notable opportunity will be a submission for Horizons funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which requests bids in excess of £5 million.

**How long will it take to create the Park?**

The work has already begun and it will evolve over time. Our aim is for the Park to develop locally, in a way that provides learning that can be replicated nationwide. It is an exciting opportunity that also comes with great responsibility. We have a twin track approach:

1. Locally, working with stakeholders over the next year to produce a draft business and finance model that will be consulted upon.
2. Nationally, sharing our learning with national partners to act as a proving ground for the development of national marine parks across the UK.

This does not mean that developments, projects and initiatives that fit with the vision for the National Marine Park will not commence until then. There are already many exciting initiatives underway including:

- Building the type 26 frigates
- OceansGate
- Marine Business Technology Centre (MBTC)
- The Smart Sound
- Mayflower 400
- Illuminate
- Eco-moorings trials
- Fishing net beacons that reduce ghost fishing
- Establishment of the Eddystone Institute
- Innovate seagrass restoration.

We want to continue to develop and promote our unique offer for enterprise and development that supports Place, People, and Planet.

**Who do I contact about the NMP?**

- NationalMarinePark@plymouth.gov.uk