

Ocean and Coastal Recovery Strategy



September 2025

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Background

On Friday 23 August 2024, water quality sample results taken from the Deal Castle sampling point and showed Intestinal Enterococci (IE) 1,700 colonies per 100ml and Escherichia coli (EC) 3,900 colonies per 100ml.

The average reading for May to September 2024 season was Intestinal Enterococci (IE) 58 colonies per 100ml Escherichia coli (EC) 37 colonies per 100ml.

In November 2024, Deal bathing water quality was classified as 'poor' by the Environment Agency based on samples taken from 2021 through to 2024.

In 2019 Deal's bathing water quality classification was 'excellent' but began to decline when in 2021 it was rated 'good', then 'sufficient' in 2023 before the most recent change which has led Dover District Council advising people not to swim in our shores.

The steady decline has caused local concern and the 'spike' in August 2024 galvanised the town.

In October 2024, Full Council resolved to explore an Ocean and Coastal Recovery Declaration & Strategy to:

1. make a declaration supporting the recovery of the Deal coastline and sea off Deal
2. develop strategies to achieve this for the Town Council itself
3. develop cooperative strategies with neighbours and interested parties

A reading of Intestinal Enterococci (IE) 540 colonies per 100ml and Escherichia coli (EC) 9,900 colonies per 100ml was recorded on Monday 7 July 2025.

Ocean Recovery Declaration

The Ocean Conservation Trust has created the model for a 'Ocean Recovery Declaration' or Motion for the Ocean (#Motion4TheOcean).

Almost 40 local councils, including Walmer Town Council, have signed up to the scheme which supports local authorities to embed a declaration and policies within its work.

In signing up to the Ocean and Coastal Recovery Declaration, Deal Town Council recognises that our ocean and climate are in a state of emergency and that the communities we serve are on the frontline. An ocean in crisis is not only bad for our climate, but also for our fishing, tourism, marine industries, and for the health, wellbeing, and stable prosperity of our coastal and maritime communities.

Key stages, priorities and aims

Key stages:

1	Ascertaining the concerns of local people and community groups
2	Considering how efforts already being made can be supported
3	Consider how our local coastal and maritime wildlife might be enhanced
4	Producing a set of realistic actions that can be promoted by the Council

Priorities & Aims:

	Priority Area	Aim	Who
1	A community response: Our shores are woven into the fabric of the town. From fishing, swimming, walking, business, exploring nature, art, mental health - we are all linked with the sea and it forms part of who we are as a town. Deal Town Council understands an holistic approach is required for us to protect our coastline.	Support local groups who use and/or protect the sea through grant funding Climate Action Day – the annual event that brings local knowledge and experience together at the Town Hall Litter-picking equipment available to hire free of charge at the Town Hall Promote local groups on the Deal Town Council website, social media and notice boards	Finance & General Purposes Committee, R.F.O Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer Facilities Team Communications Officer
2	Bathing Water Quality Lobby for improved bathing water quality on behalf of the people of Deal Better reporting of results	Deal Town Council will continue to engage with all relevant authorities to seek answers, press for positive change and better communications Additional signage to be installed on Deal Town Council assets where suitable Deal Town Council website homepage link to Dover District Council advice and Environment Agency website for latest results	Full Council & Committees, Councillors and Officers Full Council, R.F.O, Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer and Facilities Team Communications Officer

	Regular stakeholder engagement	Deal Town Council to host stakeholder meetings at the Town Hall, every six months until the bathing water quality classification is “good”	Dover District Council, Southern Water, Environment Agency, neighbouring coastal town and parish councils, local stakeholders and environment action groups
3	Sea Health Declaration of Ecological Emergency	In October 2023, Deal Town Council declared an Ecological Emergency and agreed to the Environment Committee implementing actions on local nature protection and recovery, including community engagement and partnership working	Environment Committee, Environment Committee Clerk and Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer
		Continue to support the work of local groups and work together for a better marine environment	Full Council
	Committee Carbon Emission check list	Sea health is one of twelve areas of impact that are considered when decisions are made to ensure everything is viewed through the prism of climate action	Full Council & committees
4	Campaigns and communications	Look After What You Love – Deal Town Council’s anti-litter campaign. Raising awareness about litter ‘hot-spots’ in the town, encouraging people to bin rubbish rather than drop it	Environment Committee, Environment Committee Clerk and Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer
		Continue to explore new campaigns/initiatives opportunities, submitting project plans to Full Council for consideration	Councillors and Officers
		Signpost projects and campaigns that work to improve the coastline on DTC website, notice boards and social media	Town Clerk and Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer
		Work with our local primary schools (and councils) to share	

	Confederation of Cinque Ports	Deal Town Council's climate work The 12th Century title of the Lord Warden was "Keeper of the Coast". As Cinque Ports we are uniquely placed to take a lead on protecting our seas and we will seek a commitment from the confederation to work together to raise the profile of this issue and its effects	Town Clerk and Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer The Mayor of Deal, Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk & Climate Change, Projects and Communications Officer
5	Deal Town Council Climate Action Strategy Environmental Policy Plastic Free Deal Working alongside neighbouring coastal town and parish councils Water samples are taken by the Environment Agency during the bathing season between May and September	The decarbonization commitment and environment adaptation & improvement plan will build on work already done and continue to seek new and innovative ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the council, residents, businesses, organisations and neighbouring authorities. We will use our power and influence to protect and improve the environment and encourage and support others to do the same All single use plastics have now been eliminated from council operations. Improvements have also been made in waste management to maximise reuse and recycling. Explore externally funded projects that benefit our combined coastline Southern Water take water samples along coastline all year round and have assured Deal Town Council this information will be frequently shared with the town & parish councils and local stakeholders	Full Council Full Council Councillors and Staff Sandwich, Deal, Walmer, Ringwould with Kingsdown and St Margaret's town & parish councils Southern Water

6	Business and tourism		
	Provide the latest information about Deal	To continue to share the latest information about the town and what it has to offer	DTC Visitor Information Team, Councillors and Staff
		Share DTC events with the White Cliffs Countryside online team	Clerical Officer, Communications Officer
	Keep up-to-date with the impact on local business	Continue to support and build good relationship with the Deal & Walmer Chamber of Trade	Councillors and Staff
	Monitor footfall and visitors to the town	Working with DDC to monitor reaction to the 'poor' bathing water quality classification	DDC Town Centre, Business Support and tourism teams