

## **Blue Belt at 10: delivering the next decade of ocean protection – roundtable discussion with Ocean APPG and Cayman Islands**

9 June 2026

- In attendance: Al Pinkerton MP (Chair), Fleur Anderson MP, Anna Gelderd MP, Adrian Ramsay MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Baroness Golding, Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks MP (Minister for Health, Environment and Sustainability, Cayman Islands Government), Hon. Wayne Panton MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Environment and Sustainability, Cayman Islands Government), Tasha Ebanks Garcia (Cayman Islands Representative to the UK), John Bothwell (Manager, Legislation Implementation and Coordination Unit, Cayman Islands Department of Environment), Sophie Richards (Cayman Islands adviser), Prof Susan Gourvenec (SMMI), Dr Ben Moat (NOC), Sarah Taylor (NOC), Felix Lane (Greenpeace), Alex Taylor (Oceana), Adrian Gahan (Blue Marine Foundation), Charles Long (Environment APPG Secretariat), Florence Lee (Ocean APPG Secretariat)
- The Cayman Islands representatives began the session with an overview of the progress made under the Blue Belt programme in marine protection in Cayman waters, and the engagement through the programme with the UK and other overseas territories. This included the recent research mission to map the reefs and seabed near the Islands.
- NGO representatives remarked on the successes and value for money of the Blue Belt programme across the great variety of ecosystems and climates found in UKOTs. They noted knowledge sharing across UKOTs, enhancements in satellite monitoring and a growing presence of UKOTs in international fora demonstrating the value of the programme. The need to protect domestic UK waters as well was raised.
- Scientific community representatives focused on the need to boost climate resilience over the next ten years through programmes like the Blue Belt, as ocean chemistry and currents change, potentially drastically. It was noted that the Global Ocean Monitoring Programme and other similar initiatives need longevity to demonstrate their value.
- Chair Dr Al Pinkerton noted geopolitical pressure potentially reducing emphasis on environmental protections.
- Fleur Anderson MP cited the Blue Belt and protections for Atlantic spawning fish as a way to engage more MPs with the ocean, and the need to apply learnings from the Blue Belt to Ocean COP1.