



PLYMOUTH'S PLAN FOR PLASTICS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

2020 Update
Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force

Introduction

As Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth is at the vanguard of the worldwide effort to eliminate plastics from our natural environment.

In 2018 Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force created the first Plymouth's Plan for Plastics in a truly citywide collaboration of organisations, businesses, education organisations, research establishments and communities.

This document provides updated information and further clarity on the key priorities for the city as we move towards avoiding all unnecessary single use plastic by 2030 and as such supports Plymouth City Council's Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019.¹



¹ Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019
www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmentandpollution/climatechangeandenergy/howweretacklingclimatechange



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France (Channel) England
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European Regional Development Fund



**PREVENTING
PLASTIC POLLUTION**

News ways to tackle plastic pollution

Since launching the first edition of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics in June 2018, Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force have successfully secured a share of €14million of EU INTERREG funding as part of the Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force. This is a partnership project with 18 organisations from across France and England that seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the marine environment by the end of 2022.

The information gathered from research in areas across France and England will allow the Cross-Channel partnerships to tackle some of the four million tonnes of plastic waste that enter the sea via rivers every year.² This forms the basis of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics targets over the next phase.

Further information: <https://preventingplasticpollution.com>

2

Schmidt et al 2017. Environ. Sci. Technol. 51, 12246-12253





Every year an estimated 12.2 million tonnes of plastic enters the world's seas from land, rivers and marine activities. Research has shown that the main contributor is larger plastic litter, including everyday items such as drinks bottles and other types of plastic packaging³

3 [Plastics in the Marine Environment 2016. Eunomia
https://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/plastics-in-the-marine-environment/](https://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/plastics-in-the-marine-environment/)



Context

**As Plymouth
Britain's Ocean City
with an enviable
natural environment
and world-
renowned marine
research, Plymouth
is well placed to
lead cutting off this
flow of plastics into
our seas**

Plastic is a versatile synthetic material which comes in a wide range of forms and because of this versatility it has been used in many ways in almost every aspect of modern life. In some cases, such as food hygiene and healthcare, plastics are vital products for which there are currently no viable alternatives.

However, the elements that make plastic so durable also make them resistant to natural processes of degradation. The sheer scale of plastic use and consumption by humans is now recognised as one of the most serious environmental challenges facing the Earth.

We can however rapidly reduce our consumption of avoidable plastic, such as single use plastic bottles. Together we can investigate sustainable alternative products and technologies to reduce our reliance on plastics, and move towards eliminating its unnecessary use. As Britain's Ocean City, our collective goal is to become a global leader in solving this problem.

**Since the 2019
Declaration of Intent
for Plymouth Sound
to become the UK's
first National Marine
Park, Plymouth
acts as an exemplar
in marine and
environmental
management**





In 2019 Plymouth was awarded 'Plastic Free Community' status by the charity Surfers Against Sewage in recognition of its hard work with all partners across the city to reduce single use plastic

Following the success of the first edition of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics, this updated version of the plan will continue to focus and drive a citywide effort to significantly reduce our use of single use and avoidable plastics and lead work to achieve our ambition of reducing plastic use to an absolute minimum by 2030.

Plymouth's Plan for Plastics will also include an element of work to enable everyone, but particularly, children and young people, to access and enjoy the natural environment so that they can reclaim their blue and greenspaces for their generation and for their children.

The delivery of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics will be driven, monitored and supported by Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force, which includes representatives from public bodies, the environmental sector, the voluntary sector, the charity sector, academia, industry and businesses.

Achievements: Much has been achieved since the launch in 2018 with actions across all five themes and by all partners; a full list is given in the Achievement to date section.



Principles

The plan is framed around five fundamental principles which interlink to inform best practice and ensure collaborative working. These themes are:

- Avoid
- Recycle
- Innovate
- Connect
- Communicate

Each theme is managed by a lead within Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force, although they obviously link together and all partners will be required to work together to achieve the delivery as a whole. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

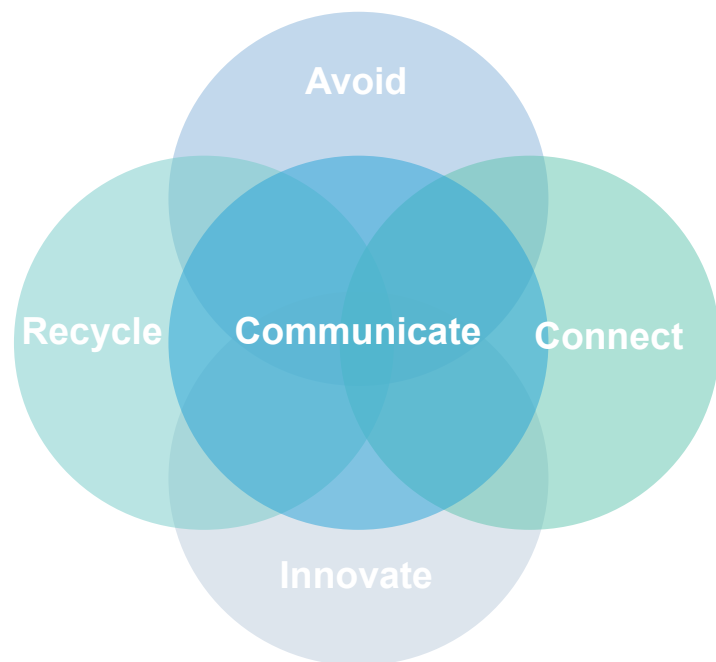


Figure 1: The five themes of the Plymouth Plan for Plastics

These fundamental principles will enable organisations, businesses, community groups and schools to develop their own detailed action plans to achieving our collective citywide ambition. The principles will drive the delivery of both long and short-term outcomes.



Avoid

This principle will continue to drive immediate reductions in avoidable plastic consumption in the city, building on achievements made between 2018 and 2020 by:

- Continuing to drive forward a significant reduction of single use and avoidable plastics by 2030.
- Promoting the awareness required to reduce our use of single use and avoidable plastics and the actions needed to limit the impact of the pollution they have already created.
- Leading a wholesale change in the use of plastics within organisations, communities, schools and businesses across the city, initially focusing on the 'quick wins' that can rapidly reduce avoidable plastic use.
- Promoting the overall aims of the plan and encouraging every individual in the city to do their bit through local action and easily accessible information.
- Expanding our proactive network of 'plastic free' pioneers, ambassadors and champions to assist in leading realistic solutions that can be shared, basing our approach on the Plastic Free Communities toolkits developed by Surfers Against Sewage and our recognized status as a 'Plastic Free Community'.
- Encouraging behaviour change by ensuring that the alternatives to plastic are easily available and well understood.
- Ensuring that the alternatives promoted are cost effective and that the choices recommended do not contribute to a larger environmental footprint than the plastic they replace.
- Establishing how the Plan for Plastics can augment other citywide plans and our approach to tackling climate change.

Preventing Plastic Pollution Project outcomes

- Engaging with businesses in the reduction and removal of plastics in the Tamar river catchment.
- Supporting the development of a framework for Catchment Based Approach (CBA) for businesses and retail, tourism and leisure and schools and communities.



- Delivering 50 plastic free businesses and 50 plastic free schools.
- Recruiting 50 community stakeholders.
- Reducing plastic in hospitality, tourism and events sector by delivering a plastic-free fireworks and events protocol.
- Providing a central database and website for local plastic free solutions and circular economy opportunities.
- Installing two water fountains.
- Installing one waste sculpture.



Recycle

This principle will drive a change which will prevent plastics polluting the natural environment and enable plastic products to be reused or recycled while alternatives to plastics are investigated and developed.

This will be achieved by:

- Increasing recycling rates, and ensuring all plastics that can be recycled actually are.
- Working with the Communicate theme to bring awareness around data on plastics recycling rates.
- Working with partners and the Innovate theme to support research in plastic reduction and recycling.
- Working with the partners across the city and industry to identify the types of plastic products that do not currently have an identified recycling stream and developing recycling options.
- Identifying and supporting new ways to make it easier for people to contribute to Plymouth's Plan for Plastics goals.
- Supporting improvement in quality of recycled plastics. Exploring a plastic off-setting scheme for organisations across the city to compensate for the plastic use that is unavoidable in the short term.
- Identifying and supporting commercially-viable methods for recycling marine plastics.

Preventing Plastic Pollution Project outcomes

- Piloting four plastic free initiatives.

Innovate

This principle, using academia, manufacturing and creative approaches, will drive forward a long-term ambition to guide us towards sustainable use of plastics in society by:

- Harnessing the significant knowledge base in the city.
- Facilitating collaboration between academia, manufacturing, industry and governance.
- Evaluating our pioneering approach in order to deliver robust impact.
- Gaining a better understanding of the behavioural factors that influence littering.

Preventing Plastic Pollution Project outcomes

- 15km of waterfront assessed for level and type of plastic pollution in order to test/ground truth/inform a mapping model.
- Using citizen scientists to assess ecological impacts of reducing plastic pollution.
- Supporting the development of informed risk mapping via data collected through surveys.
- Trialling and evaluation of marine litter collection devices.
- Installing 200 yellow fish markers on surface drains.



Connect

This principle will drive forward work to foster connections to the Ocean. Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to explore, experience and enjoy their natural environment, encouraging positive action for the future by:

- Providing a programme for communities to connect them with the ocean, increasing access to the marine environment. This will coincide and enhance plans for the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park.
- Delivering a coordinated programme of ocean activities including beach cleans, wildlife surveys and fun activities.
- Supporting community, public and school engagement programmes that will increase knowledge and understanding of the ocean and the issues it faces.
- Explore new ways of engaging and connecting local residents to the environment.

Preventing Plastic Pollution Project outcomes

- Empower waterfront communities with citizens engaged to assist in assessments.
- Running community events within the rivers around Plymouth and the river Tamar Catchment.
- Working with partners on common methodology for removal of plastic pollution (e.g. contractors vs. community events).
- Support the 50 community stakeholders (recruited in the Avoid theme).
- Delivering angling waste collections service.
- Reducing plastic pollution in recreational sailing sector through audits and training via the framework approach.



Communicate

This principle will act as an overarching theme across Plymouth's Plan for Plastics, supporting the other principles by effectively sharing the plastics message and sharing achievements across the city. This will be achieved by:

- Coordinating Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force activities and meetings.
- Collaboratively working with partners to develop and implement effective communications strategies, learn from experience and share best practice.
- Producing and amalgamating advice and best practice, including publications, press releases, website content, and social media materials that share Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force activities and achievements.
- Identifying opportunities to enhance funding and the reputation of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics.
- Ensuring consistency and regard is kept for the Preventing Plastic Pollution EU INTERREG branding when sharing the Plastic message across Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force.
- Supporting the development and marketing of products to ensure the reduction of single use and avoidable plastics.

Preventing Plastic Pollution Project outcomes

- Delivering an integrated city-wide Partnership to bring together and oversee roll-out of Plymouth based actions providing knowledge sharing and support.



Delivery

This plan recognises that everyone has a role to play and it is only through all Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force members working together that the vision will be achieved of reducing the use of unnecessary plastic

Plan for Plastics will be delivered through the 'Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force' whose objectives are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and drive the citywide effort to reduce plastic use to an absolute minimum by 2034
- To promote and drive the delivery of the Plan for Plastics and its five fundamental principles for enabling actions
- To provide a framework for the co-ordinated action around plastic reduction
- Plymouth City Council provides the secretariat whilst all Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force members support the resourcing of the delivery of the plan through work to deliver against the themes. With the exception of the work to deliver the EU 'Preventing Plastic Pollution' element of the Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force members are all responsible for seeking and securing additional funding to deliver the plan



Dr Stephen Bird

Pictured front left in this photo is Dr Stephen Bird, former Managing Director of South West Water and founding member of Britain's Ocean City: Plastics Task Force. Stephen sadly passed away in May 2019. Stephen made an immense contribution to South West Water, the region and the water industry in his twenty-seven year career with South West Water. A proud Plymothian, Stephen's commitment to the communities South West Water serve was an inspiration. Stephen is greatly missed by all who knew and worked with him.

Achievements to date

Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Avoid		
Plymouth sites sign up for (SAS) Plastic Free Plymouth pledge.	Viridor/Pennon Group	Complete
Viridor commitment to cut exporting plastic outside of UK. www.viridor.co.uk/who-we-are/latest-news/2019-news/largest-uk-owned-recycling-company-cuts-plastic-waste-exports/	Viridor/Pennon Group	Complete – September 2019
SWW founding member of REFILL campaign. 20,000 ReFill stations now registered in locations like cafes, hotels, restaurants and shops. www.southwestwater.co.uk/about-us/latest-news/2019-news/south-west-water-and-recycle-devon-encourage-exeter-shoppers-to-show-theyve-gotthebottle-to-prevent-plastic-pollution/	South West Water/ Viridor/Pennon Group	On-going
No plastic cutlery used in our workspace. Plastic recycling points increased. Unnecessary single use plastics replaced with alternatives across the estate.	Plymouth City Council	Complete
Recruited 125 businesses as 'Pioneers', 116 Community Ambassadors and 43 school champions to support Plymouth's Plastic Free Community.	Environment Plymouth	On-going
Undertook 30 presentations about 'plastic free' status.	Environment Plymouth	On-going
Completed 25 Plastic Free Workshops between January 2018 and December 2019.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – December 2019
Began work with the Chamber of Commerce (November 2019).	Environment Plymouth	On-going
Began work with the DWP and other big employers.	Environment Plymouth	On-going
Supported the development of Plastic Free Saltash.	Environment Plymouth	Complete
Supported the lunch of South West Action Against Plastic (with the Environment Agency).	Environment Plymouth	Complete
Supported the development of Phase 2 of the Plastic Free Community campaign (with Surfers Against Sewage).	Environment Plymouth	On-going
Won the national Groundwork Community Environmental Sustainability Award in December 2018.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – December 2018
Won the CIWM SW Award for best presentation in March 2019.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – March 2019
With Plymouth Waterfront Partnership, won the Special Recognition Award for work in the waterfront area.	Environment Plymouth	Complete
Delivered the Schools Conference for 280 young people in March 2019.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – March 2019
Delivered the Plastic Free Schools Day for 500+ young people on 16 October 2019.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – October 2019



Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Recycle		
Viridor hailed as trailblazer in bid to hit plastic recycling targets. www.viridor.co.uk/who-we-are/latest-news/2019-news/viridor-trailblazer-plastic-recycling-targets/	Viridor	Complete – December 2019
Viridor commitment to cut exporting plastic outside of UK. www.viridor.co.uk/who-we-are/latest-news/2019-news/largest-uk-owned-recycling-company-cuts-plastic-waste-exports/	Viridor	Complete – September 2019
Viridor founding member of UK Plastic Pact. Progress report here: http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/The-UK-Plastics-Pact-report-18-19.pdf	Viridor	Complete
Viridor continued input to Green Alliance Circular Economy Task Force. www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Plastic_promises.pdf	Viridor	On-going
Explored options to reduce single use plastics within own organisation.	PML	Complete

Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Innovate		
The National Marine Aquarium is hosting a giant humpback whale tail installation to raise awareness of plastic pollution. The installation was entirely made of plastic.	Ocean Conservation Trust.	Complete – July 2019
Awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for our ground-breaking research revealing the extent of microplastics and their impact on marine life and the food chain.	University of Plymouth	On-going
Launched a three-year collaboration with sailing and science organisation eXXpedition to conduct research into the impact of plastics on our oceans.	University of Plymouth	On-going
Awarded European funding for five collaborative research projects examining the impact of plastics and ways to stop them damaging the environment.	University of Plymouth	On-going
Contributed to a report for the European Commission which suggested microplastics and nanoplastics could present widespread impacts in future if emissions to the environment continue at the current rate.	University of Plymouth	Complete
Published pioneering research showing that plastic bags labelled as biodegradable are still capable of carrying full loads of shopping after being exposed in the natural environment for three years.	University of Plymouth	Complete
Worked with the MBA to show there has been a significant increase in larger plastic items in the oceans over the past 60 years.	University of Plymouth & Marine Biological Association	Complete
Gave evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into the sustainability of the fashion industry.	University of Plymouth	Complete
Introduced reusable plastic cups at the Students' Union bar and campus cafes, as well as removing plastic straws.	University of Plymouth	Complete



Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Ground-breaking South West project sees Viridor power plastic recycling with non-recyclable waste. www.viridor.co.uk/who-we-are/latest-news/2019-news/avonmouth-plastic-recycling-announcement/	Viridor	Complete – November
INEOS and Viridor partnership closes the loop with new hybrid plastics range available across Europe. www.viridor.co.uk/who-we-are/latest-news/2019-news/Viridor-INEOS-hybrid-plastics-project/	Viridor	Complete
Introduced new Terracycle recycling programmes for non-recyclable products including biscuit and cracker wrappers, crisp packets, pens and stationary, pet food packaging and tetrapak cartons.	Marine Biological Association	Complete
Worked with in house teams to minimise single-use plastic, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegware packaging is now used in catering for sandwiches and salad boxes • A Rhoddfa local milk dispenser was introduced • Plastic water fountain cups were replaced with paper cups 	Marine Biological Association	Complete
PML is undertaking a one year study to investigate the feasibility of removing marine micro plastics with mussel power - funded by Waitrose Plan Plastic to develop an ecological solution to micro plastic pollution. https://www.pml.ac.uk/Research/Projects/Removing_marine_microplastics_with_mussel_power	PML	Ongoing
PML contributes to a research project aiming to inspire international action to tackle marine plastic pollution. https://www.pml.ac.uk/News_and_media/News/Cooperation_to_tackle_plastic_pollution	PML	Ongoing
A PML led study reveals that marine plastic pollution has significant negative impacts not only on the plants and animals living in the ocean, but also upon the benefits and the value of the provisions we gain from the sea. https://www.pml.ac.uk/News_and_media/News/Marine_plastic_has_a_cost_to_humans_too	PML	Ongoing

Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Connect		
STEM festival hosted at the National Marine Aquarium for young people (pupils) to celebrate core subjects.	PML	Ongoing
Over 1,300 primary and secondary school students have attended marine engagement events.	Ocean Conservation Trust	Complete – September 2019
The National Marine Aquarium has won a prestigious award for its commitment to working with the community to reduce single-use plastic pollution in Plymouth – as well as significantly reducing its own consumption over the past few years. https://www.national-marine-aquarium.co.uk/blog/national-marine-aquarium-wins-three-coveted-biaza-awards-in-education-and-sustainability/	Ocean Conservation Trust	Complete – July 2019



Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Launch of Pennon Plastics Programme. www.pennongroup.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/pennon-plastics-programme-fv-0219.pdf	Pennon Group	Complete
SWW continued microplastics research through UKWIR. Highlight includes published study on microplastics presence/removal in waste/drinking water process: https://ukwir.org/How-do-we-achieve-zero-harmful-plastics-in-the-water-cycle-by-2050 Supporting 2 PhD students on microplastics research at Plymouth and Exeter Universities.	South West Water	Complete
Continued partnership with Keep Britain Tidy on BeachCare programme. Latest stats: 1287 beach cleans, 174 tonnes removed. www.facebook.com/beachcare	South West Water/ Viridor/Pennon Group	On-going
Community events (including beach cleans and education activities) around the Ocean, and plastics. As part of the National Marine Park launch event.	Plymouth City Council	Complete – August 2019
Plastics Week of Action A series of events and action to help remove plastics from our natural environment as part of the Launch of Plymouth's Plan for Plastics.	Plymouth City Council and BOC P4P Task Force	Complete – Summer 2018

Theme	Relevant authorities	Status
Communicate		
Special Recognition for the Plymouth Waterfront Partnership contribution to the plastics campaign.	Plymouth Waterfront Partnership	Complete – October/November 2019
CIWM SW Best Presentation Awards.	Environment Plymouth (Jackie Young)	Complete – Spring 2019
Groundwork Community Environmental Sustainability Award.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – November 2018
Plastics Code of Conduct launched. http://plymouthnewsroom.co.uk/partners-launch-new-plastics-code-conduct/	BOC P4P Task Force	Complete – July 2019
Recycle Week comms. On-going comms on recycling for Recycle Week.	Plymouth City Council	Complete – September 2019
New BOC Plan for Plastics branding agreed and made live.	BOC P4P Task Force	Complete – July 2019
Achieved Plastic Free Waterfront Community status in June 2018 and Plastic Free Plymouth Community status from Surfers Against Sewage.	Environment Plymouth	Complete – June 2018
10,132 reach on Plymouth Facebook, with high level of activity on Twitter. It was No 9 that day on the national list of most engaging social media messages. 600 volunteers involved in Great British Spring Clean with 1,600 bags of litter collected.	Plymouth City Council	On-going



Code of Conduct

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Plymouth has been recognised as a single-use plastic-free community. This means the city has made a long term commitment to helping its communities to reduce the amount of single-use plastics in our everyday lives.

You can get involved and help by following these simple steps...

REFUSE **REDUCE** **REUSE** **RECYCLE**

- 1** Just say no to single use. Take a good look at what you use. What can you do without? What can you swap?
- 2** Wherever possible, refuse to use single-use plastic items like straws and cups.
- 3** Encourage others to do the same – offer incentives for reusable cups or refill drinking water for free at Refill Devon's Refill Stations.
- 4** Think about events – make sure cups, plates, glasses and cutlery are reusable, recyclable and made from eco-friendly materials.
- 5** Take reusable bags with you and use them again and again.
- 6** Recycle whenever and where you can. Don't let Plymouth go to waste.
- 7** Do you really need it? Think free and unwrapped.

Be the change you want to see

Pledge forms, ideas and guidance available from info@environmentplymouth.gov.uk

How can you help limit the damage?
PLYMOUTH'S PLAN FOR PLASTICS
#plasticspledge

"Plastic is poisoning our planet. We have created it. Now we must rid of it."
Sir David Attenborough
In a message of support to Plymouth, Plastic Free Planer School's Coe, 28th March 2018

PLASTIC FREE PLYMOUTH
NOW ENDS AGAINST BEWASTE

PLAN FOR PLASTICS

Plymouth
Britain's Ocean City

CODE OF CONDUCT

Single-Use Plastics in Britain's Ocean City

Plastics are a modern, durable material that have transformed how we live, work, and play. They are a versatile and fantastic resource and have a key role to play in modern life.

But plastics are man made and while some plastics can be recycled, much of the world's plastic waste ends up in landfill sites or as waste litter in our oceans and on land.

The biggest issue is with single-use plastics, or disposable plastics, which are used only once before they are thrown away. These items are things like plastic bags, straws, coffee stirrers, pop and water bottles and most food packaging.

Plymouth is committed to:

- Reducing Plymouth's reliance on plastic – to refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle; switching to alternatives wherever possible.
- Tackling the plastic waste that is already in our environment – limiting its impact and creating a better world for our communities, our wildlife and our city.

Plymouth will achieve this by delivering our Plan for Plastics. We're inviting you to join us!

We're encouraging businesses and community groups from across the city to lead the way as **plastic-free community ambassadors or pioneers.**

We will:

- AVOID** contributing to the amount of plastic in Plymouth's environment leading by example in taking positive action... however small.
- CONNECT** communities across the city with nature to encourage positive behaviour change.
- RECYCLE** to manage what we've got more responsibly; find ways of reusing plastics as often as possible and challenge the reliance we've developed and recycle whenever you can.
- INNOVATE** on ground breaking science to guide us towards sustainable solutions.

Billions of plastic items are used every day – including bottles, cups, straws and carrier bags. Millions of these then find their way into the marine environment every day.
(Source: Surfers Against Sewage)

How can you help limit the damage? **Do your bit!**
PLYMOUTH'S PLAN FOR PLASTICS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET
#plasticspledgeplym



Interreg
France (Channel
Manche) England



European Regional Development Fund

**PREVENTING
PLASTIC POLLUTION**



Natural Environment Planning
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www.plymouth.gov.uk/plastics