

Cambridge Sustainable & Green Toolkit

Energy saving, reducing plastics, commercial waste and specialist schemes



Declutter your supply chain

The “**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**” mantra applies in that order of priority. If you are constantly unwrapping deliveries and storing up wasted packaging for bin collection day – work with your suppliers. Their flexibility might surprise you, as they also face pressure to improve their green credentials.

Some steps you can take:

- **Spot the offenders** (e.g. cardboard, bubble wrap, plastic bags) and their volume. Can you reuse any of this usefully?
- **Send it back.** Will your suppliers collect packaging for their own re-use?
- **Request bulk-shipment** and no individual wrapping within your orders.
- **Ask for recyclable packaging** like shredded newspaper rather than plastic padding.

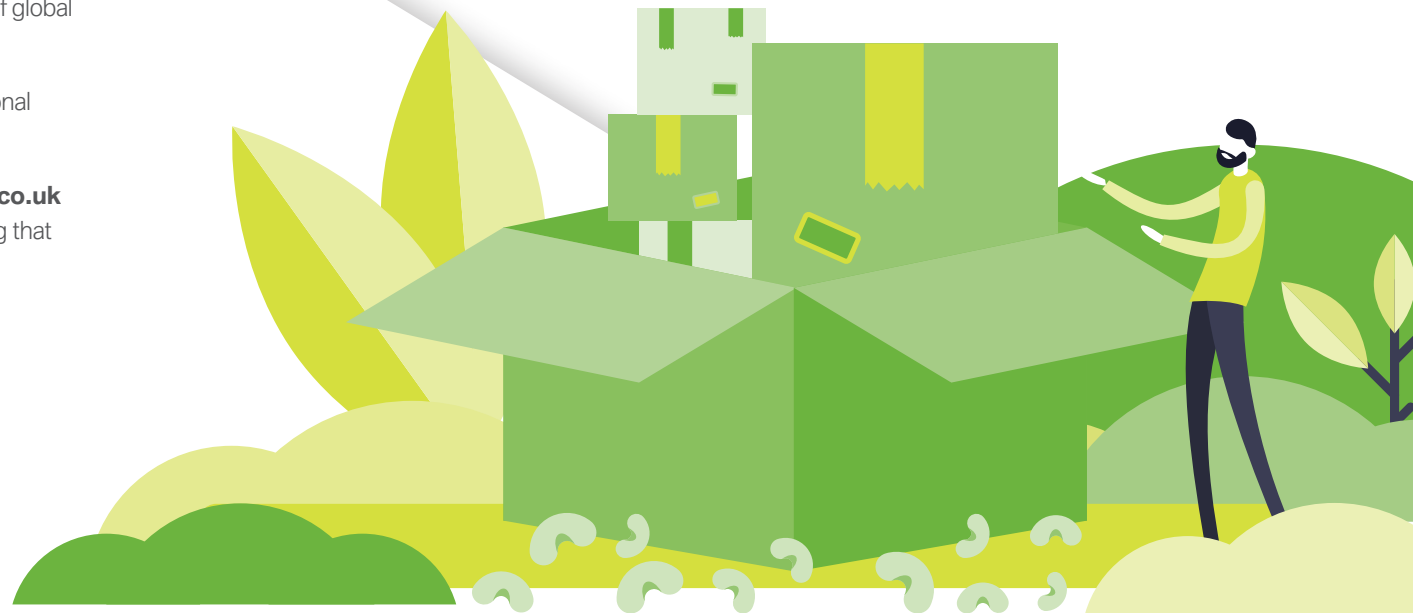
Cambridge BID has written this Sustainable & Green Toolkit to guide businesses of all sizes in making greener choices.

Positive action by just one business is more significant than you might think. A collective, city-wide reduction in energy consumption would help preserve earth's natural resources, prevent habitat destruction, and lower the risk of global warming beyond the 1.5°C danger zone.

We've included guidance on energy reduction, waste management, national schemes and local initiatives.

We'd really value your engagement. Please email info@cambridgebid.co.uk with feedback, or tell us about something proactive your business is doing that we can promote to the wider community.

Let's work together to ensure Cambridge is ready to face the global environmental challenges ahead.



Net zero carbon Cambridge

Cambridge City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and aspires for the city to reach net zero carbon by 2030.

Cambridge Carbon Footprint is developing the 'Cambridge Climate Change Charter'. Brand new tools and resources will be available on their website later in 2020, to help businesses understand their carbon footprint and take action to reduce it

cambridgecarbonfootprint.org



Quick, impactful changes you may wish to make:



Green your commute. Register with cyclescheme.co.uk and your staff get tax breaks on purchasing a new bike and accessories. A great incentive costing employers nothing.



Switch to clean energy – Compare suppliers of renewable, natural energy sources at bigcleanswitch.org/about.



Light up with LED bulbs. Using 80% less electricity than traditional bulbs, and lasting up to 50 times longer.



Shut the door. Reduce energy usage by up to 50%. University of Cambridge research found no evidence that closed doors negatively affects footfall.



Know your EPC. If your Energy Performance Certificate is below a D, ask your landlord if they intend to make improvements (e.g. loft and wall cavity insulation, double glazing, a new heating system).



Offset your emissions. Visit carbonfootprint.com/carbonoffset.html to invest in schemes like tree planting.



Refill, don't rebuy. From cleaning products to sugar and cereal, visit a zero-waste outlet like Full Circle to restock office staples without purchasing more plastic.



Smart thermostats. Create heating schedules and access your system remotely. Cut energy waste and set room temperature at 18 – 19°C.



Shout about your efforts! There is huge consumer interest in sustainability. Leading the way will future-proof your business as Cambridge moves towards its goal of net zero carbon.



Optimise commercial waste

Any business producing waste must by law manage and dispose of it correctly. Most city-centre businesses have contracts with council-run **Greater Cambridge Commercial Waste** service. Private contractors include **Veolia** and **Biffa**.

Cambridge City Council enforces the rules, and businesses failing to comply may face action. Reasons might include overflowing bins, putting waste out at the wrong place or time, leaving bins unsecured, storage of incorrect items.




How do I store waste?

- **Securely** so nothing can escape, such as litter, liquids, pollution or odour.
- **Away from public access** in a locked bin, secured compound, or on your premises.
- **Know your contract** check your Controlled Waste Transfer Note (CWTN) and put the right items in the right bins.
- **If in doubt ask** your waste carrier first, then the city council.

Visit rightwasterightplace.com for helpful info.



When can I put my rubbish out?

Please **do not** leave rubbish bags out overnight.

	Bags	5:30am - 9:30am. Do not use unmarked black bags
	Bins	5:30am - 9:30am. unless you have designated bin store areas on your premises
	Cardboard	5:30am - 9:30am. Your waste carrier should provide bags or branded tape, so their drivers know to pick up from you.

Which colour bags do I use for recycling?

Colour-coding can cause confusion. Don't get caught out, ask your supplier.

	Blue bags	Greater Cambridge Commercial Waste customers Blue bags = general waste (landfill)
	Purple bags	Greater Cambridge Commercial Waste customers Purple bags = recycling

What if I don't have a recycling contract?

Make this important contribution to the environment and you'll likely save money as a bonus. A recycling contract will reduce your reliance on general waste collections (by far the most expensive as landfill is taxed heavily and gate fees apply).

What can actually be recycled?

Symbols found on packaging may not mean what you think. Cross-check anything you're putting into recycling: recyclenow.com/recycling-knowledge/packaging-symbols-explained



Fertile food scraps

Calling all foodies!

Only a tiny number of Cambridge businesses take a food recycling contract.

Stop your waste emitting methane and CO2 in landfill and turn it into compost instead.

Why compost?

Local benefit – the **Amey** plant at Waterbeach churns out a whopping 35,000 tonnes of nutrient-rich soil conditioner per year. Cambridge residents can turn up with a bag and spade and claim a sample for their own garden or allotment. How's that for closed-loop recycling?

Business efficiency – gauge your food waste mileage and adjust your orders.

Potential savings – through optimising your procurement and reducing your number of (more expensive) general waste collections, there's a good chance you'll save overall.

Compostable Packaging

Compostable packaging (food storage, cups, cutlery etc.) is the much-promoted greener alternative to single-use plastics.

Benefits and limitations

Vegware – and other suppliers – sell plant-derived bioplastic products made from PLA (polylactic acid).

However...

These products are only **commercially compostable**.

This specific industrial process is not available through most UK council facilities (including Cambridgeshire). Compostable packaging is not recyclable and must not be added to recycling.

How do I dispose of compostable packaging?

- **Private collection.** Huntingdon-based Envar turns compostable packaging into quality topsoil for use in farming, and even growing grapevines! enquiries@envar.co.uk
- **General waste.** Despite ending its life in landfill, many argue that compostable packaging, made from natural materials, is comparatively sustainable – just not a perfect solution.



Reduce your disposables

Society relies heavily on single-use items – and our business models are no exception. Promotion, packaging and the everyday supply chain are plastic-guzzling activities.

Convenience and habit come at a huge environmental cost.

What about wooden or bamboo products?

This may be a good step – but things are not quite as green as they seem. The demand for disposable wooden or bamboo products causes habitat damage and deforestation.



Plastics take an
estimated
1000 YEARS
to decompose in
LANDFILL



How to lead the way

There is no easy answer, but businesses can (and do) invest in pioneering solutions:



Rethink your promo – What happens to balloons and plastic badges after an event, or the surplus of branded t-shirts? Ask suppliers for advice on sustainable promotion.



Take charge on your watch – If a customer is consuming on-site, offer dishwasher-safe tableware not disposable plastics.



STOP selling bottled water – Provide a water refill station for customers and staff.



Drinks deposit scheme – Serving drinks outside? Offer durable plastics, not single-use. Charge a deposit and refund customers at the end of their round.



Reward – Offer a discount or incentive to customers bringing in reusable coffee cups, containers, cutlery.



Go paperless – This could mean menus, price lists, discount vouchers – or ensure everything you print is 100% recyclable.



Cut out plastic straws – Government policy now bans plastic straws on display (legally you can provide one if a customer requests it). Switch to paper or cut out straws altogether.



Accurate waste disposal – Clearly label your bins in the kitchen and shop floor to help staff and customers recycle and waste accurately. Specify which packaging is recyclable; it isn't always obvious.

Tap into national schemes

Refill

Every minute 1,000,000 plastic bottles are bought around the world. That figure is predicted to rise a further 20% by 2021.

The national Refill campaign promotes reusable bottle and encourages people to use free water refill points in towns and cities.

Cambridge currently has over 100 Refill points. Download the app to see who else is taking part, and sign your business up as a refill point. refill.cambridge@gmail.com



Become a recycling point

Crisp packets, toothpaste tubes, disposable gloves: all unrecyclable. **TerraCycle** will collect and store this refuse, while it actively researches and tests new methods of recycling.

Businesses can sign up to be a public drop-off point for a specific type of waste, which might be ideal if you generate a lot of it.

[terracycle.com/en-GB](https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB)

Recycling coffee cups

In the UK 7.8 million coffee cups per day are NOT recycled.

Cups are made from a hybrid of paper and plastic-based materials. Many people mistakenly think you can drop cups into a regular recycling box – but if they end up at a recycling plant they will be redirected to landfill. The tiny fraction that are recycled go via a specialist route.

DS Smith offers a “coffee cup drop box” scheme for retailers, offices, and venues. Each hardwearing cardboard box holds up to 700 cups (empty cups only, no lids). Boxes are collected and processed at a facility in Kent – creating stationery, greetings cards or foodservice packaging.

The greenest solution? Eliminating disposable cups altogether. For now, this scheme gives visibility to an important issue and enables positive action.

[dssmithepack.co.uk/cardboard-boxes/coffee-cup-drop-box](https://www.dssmithepack.co.uk/cardboard-boxes/coffee-cup-drop-box)

Recycling used cooking oil

Used cooking oil should never be tipped down the sink, as it will pollute the sewage systems and waterways (look up fatbergs to give you a scare!) However, it can be collected and turned into bio-diesel. **Bio UK Fuels** offer a free of charge collection, for quantities of 60 litres and above (collected weekly, monthly or on demand).

[bioukfuels.co.uk/waste-oil-collection/](https://www.bioukfuels.co.uk/waste-oil-collection/)

Get involved locally

Staff training

The **Greater Cambridge Commercial Waste** service offers free staff training on good quality recycling.

E: trade@scambs.gov.uk or **T:** 01954 713496
(9:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday – Friday).

Recycling coffee grounds

Do you keep our city caffeinated?

Whether you're a coffee shop or a corporate, steering your coffee grounds away from landfill might save money on disposal costs. Cambridgeshire-based bio-bean is the UK's largest recycler of coffee grounds, turning the by-product into a sustainable fuel source.

E: info@bio-bean.com or **T:** 0203 744 6500

Cambridge Food Hub

The Green Coffee Shop Scheme encourages collaboration between local businesses. Sign up to purchase local, sustainable produce direct from suppliers. When your order is delivered, used coffee grounds can be collected at the same time.

E: info@cambridgefoodhub.org or **T:** 07734 470 888

Taste Not Waste

The UK wastes one million tonnes of food every year, 3/4 of which is still edible. If you're keen to measure and cut food waste, Cambridge Sustainable Food's 'Taste Not Waste' project has great tips and guidance to get you started.

www.cambridgesustainablefood.org/taste-not-waste





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