

## **WestCountry – Environmental and Sustainability Policy**

WestCountry is a key employer in Cornwall and the wider South West of England, and has developed significant links within the food and agriculture sectors across the region. As a part of this role, WestCountry is committed to protecting Cornwall's natural environment through proactive management of its environmental impacts.

The business is committed to making continuous improvements in the management of environmental impacts. WestCountry aims to work in partnership with others to promote environmental stewardship across their value chain, increase understanding of environmental issues amongst stakeholders and disseminate good practice with other companies. As a business with strong links amongst Cornish businesses in both supplier and customer roles, the business is uniquely placed to provide good stewardship and to provide examples of best practice.

WestCountry complies with applicable environmental legislation and regulations and where possible goes beyond the legislation to improve its ability to contribute to environmental growth and circular economies within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

WestCountry is responsible for ensuring that the environmental policy is implemented. However, all employees have a role to play – this Sustainability Policy outlines individual and shared responsibilities to ensure that the aims and objectives of the policy are met.

### ***Growing***

We will consider the impact of our operations on the ecology of our landscape and native species, and we are committed to ensuring that our supplies share our goals as closely as possible to ensure a sustainable future for the food and agricultural businesses in the South West, alongside a healthy natural environment.

Where possible we will source materials and products for sale and manufacturing locally, thereby reducing emissions and positively influencing the local economy.

We will work with the most ethical suppliers we can find, and will continue to engage with them so as to promote environmental sustainability.

### ***Culture***

We will encourage our staff to avoid travelling to work by (non-electric) car; where this is unavoidable we will promote car-sharing. We seek to develop new ways to make this easier for our employees alongside our operational vehicles.

All staff will be encouraged to promote the ideals and attitudes herein, and will be provided with the necessary training to do so.

### ***Energy, Waste and Water***

The consumption of energy and water, and the creation of waste, to be reduced wherever possible through investment in more efficient technologies and through engaging users with the appropriate use of these resources (e.g. turning lights and electrical equipment off at the end of the day and when not in use and turning off taps).

WestCountry has an existing excellent track record in terms of renewable energy, via a roof mounted solar array. We will seek low-carbon electricity suppliers in addition to existing renewable energy technology if required.

### ***Maintenance***

Before purchasing equipment, we will investigate whether renting or sharing equipment is possible.

We will investigate the environmental impact and provenance of any equipment to be purchased, with a view to reducing this impact where possible.

Vehicles are maintained in house in order to maximise efficiency and reduce emissions. WestCountry will seek low emissions vehicles for its operations where suitable, as existing fleet vehicles near retirement.

### ***Ecology***

We will identify and protect wildlife (in particular species protected by European and UK legislation) on our premises/work sites, through the consultation of experts where necessary. We will provide proven habitat improvements for the benefit of native species on our premises/work sites.

We will work to increase abundance of pollinators by enhancing the habitat they rely on and we will encourage our neighbours and customers to do the same, including through suppliers in the agricultural sector.

Where physical works and installations are to be carried out, where possible we will use native plants to replace, screen or shelter the works. Before works are carried out we will seek appropriate advice in order to carry this out more effectively.

Where possible we will reduce noise and light pollution created due to our on-site activities.

Where pest control is required, we will endeavour to use physical repellents and barriers to prevent access. Where this is not possible, we will seek independent advice and use poisons/kill traps that have the smallest/no known impact on non-target species. Where the use of herbicides and fungicides are required, we will limit their application as much as possible, and take all appropriate safety measures.

### ***Circular Economy and Logistics***

We will aim to make our packaging as reusable as possible, and to dispose of materials responsibly when no longer reusable.

We will aim to reduce the proportion of single use plastics in our operations where feasible, and will seek alternatives if required.

We will reduce the use of non-recyclable or hazardous materials in our activities.

We will aim to develop a low-emission vehicle fleet in line with the availability of suitable technology, helping to avoid unnecessary carbon emissions.

### ***Customers***

We will use our website/other channels to engage with, educate and inform our customers about the work we do to contribute to Cornwall's environmental growth, and how customers can complement this.

We will use our website/other channels to inform our customers about how important Cornwall's natural environment is to businesses and people living and operating in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

### ***Strategy and performance***

We will review and update environmental objectives and targets on an annual basis.

We will be prepared to meet any future legislative requirements in the distribution, food and agricultural sectors by future-proofing our activities and remaining as resource-efficient and responsible as possible.

We will meet any relevant regulatory requirements so that customers/clients/donors can be confident that they are supporting a business that is contributing positively to Cornwall's environment.

