

Annual Impact Report

2023





Words from our founder

At First Mile, our purpose is to recycle waste from businesses to slow down climate change. We've helped over 30k organisations reduce their waste, improve recycling and manage their waste sustainably, and as a result we're delivering positive impacts for the planet, our society and the communities we serve.

But it's not enough to simply believe this. So, we've been working hard to better understand and quantify the impact we're having. This report captures some of those findings also outlines where we're planning to focus our efforts next. We're proud to have accomplished all the sustainability targets that we set in last year's report.

I look forward to updating you on our progress in this report and future ones.

Bruce Bratley CEO

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Planet

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Our Environmental Impact
3 Year Plan



People

Our People Impact
Governance
Workers
Community
Customers



01 Introduction

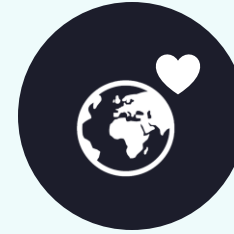


Our purpose and values

The carbon impact of using recycled materials to manufacture new products is much lower than using virgin materials.

Recycling helps to avoid carbon emissions, reducing climate impact.

We recycle waste from businesses to slow down climate change.



Love the Planet



Amaze Customers



Be One Team

Our values underpin everything we do.



First Mile employees activate and **supercharge** these values through their **behaviours** and actions.

Our approach to sustainability

How we deliver better impact:



Planet

Better Recycling

Continuing to develop our sustainable business model that encourages the transition to a circular economy.

Greener Operations

Reducing the impact on the environment of our own operations.

Sustainable Supply

Working with suppliers to reduce our environmental impact upstream.



People

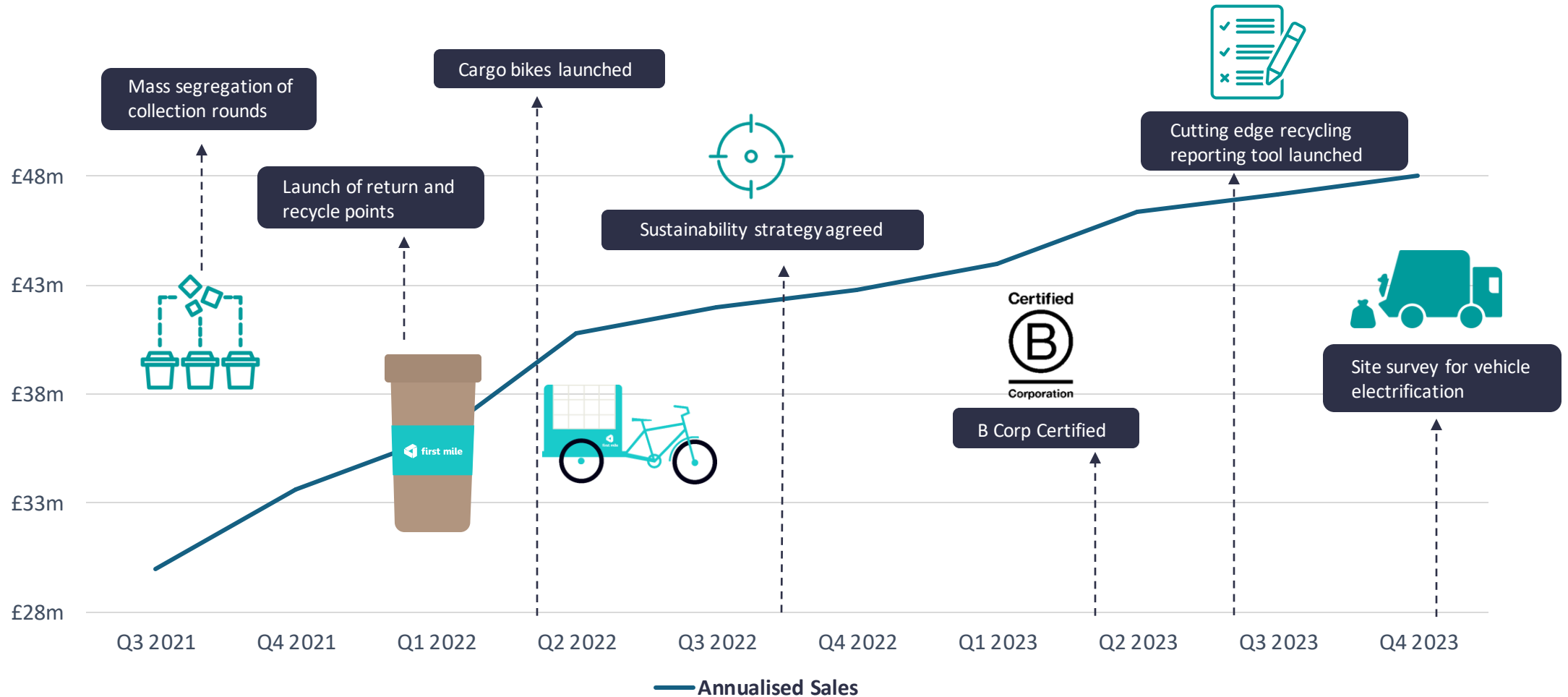
Our People

Social initiatives to support our team, community and customers, who we depend on to succeed in our environmental mission.

Sustainability initiatives timeline

We provide industry-leading sustainable waste solutions.

Our growth is fuelled by our dedication to innovation and initiatives with positive environmental impact.



Impact highlights 2023



Planet

45% lower carbon impact than industry average.

2x lower land use impact.

17% annual reduction in combined scope 1 and 2 emissions.

94% waste end destination in UK.

People

100% workers paid the living wage.

85% customer satisfaction.

8% pt increase in ethnic minority representation.

Became **B Corp Certified**

Awards and certifications

We are delighted to have been recognised for our impact and purpose.



2023 Awards and shortlists:

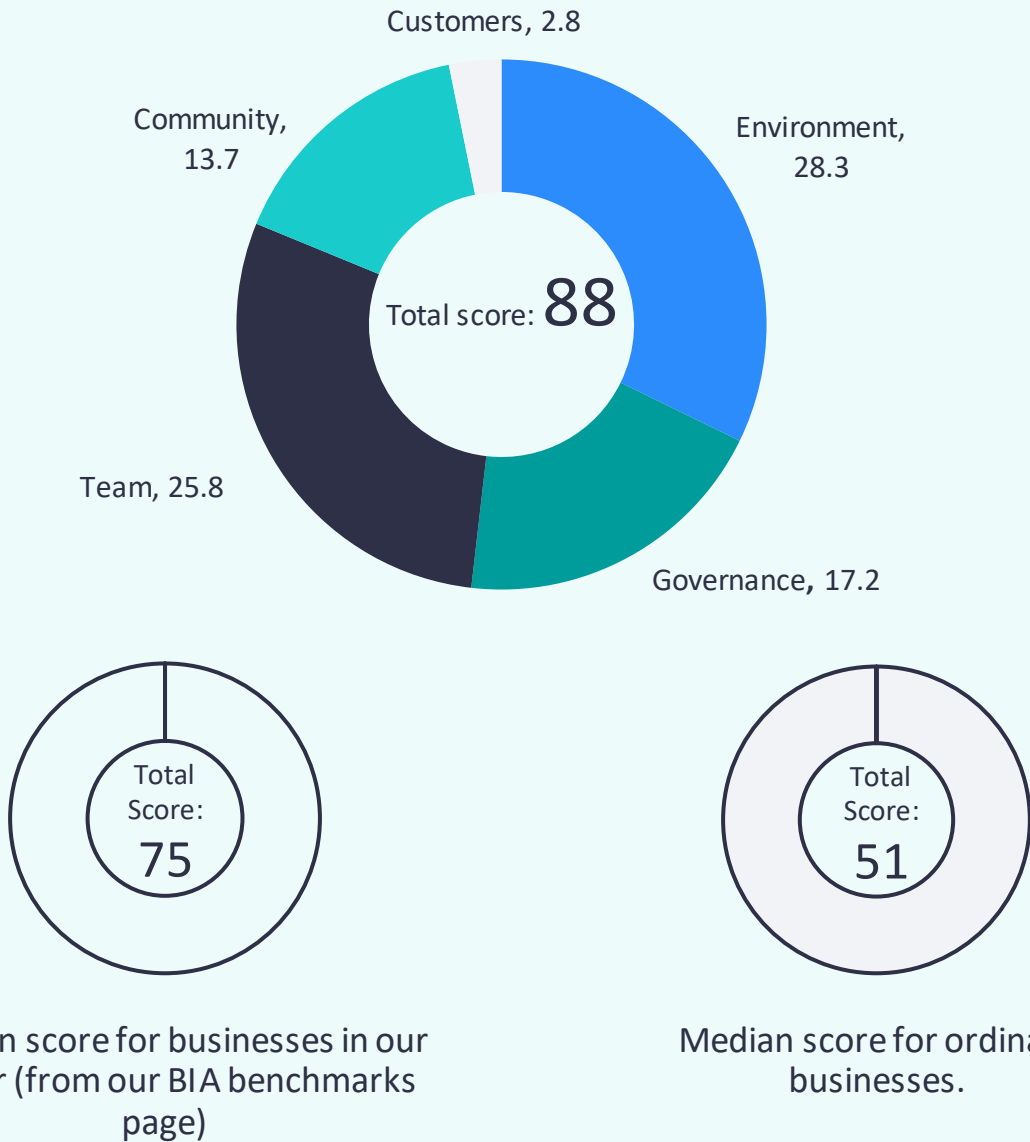


Our B Corp journey so far...

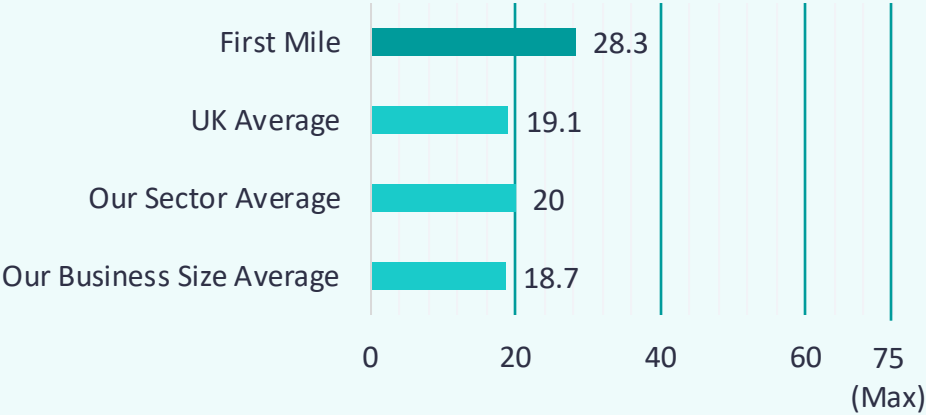
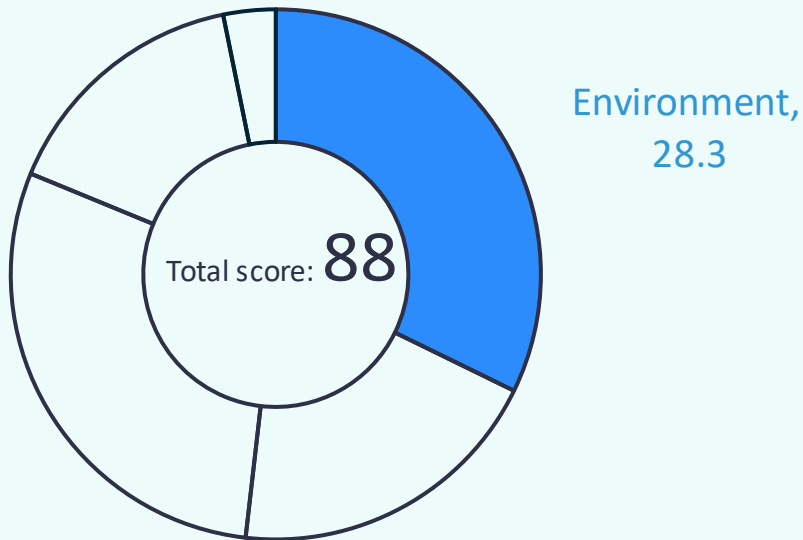
We have been using the B Impact Assessment as a tool to measure our impact.

First Mile Certified May 2023

We certified as a B Corp in May 2023, scoring 88 points on the B Impact Assessment (BIA).



Environment

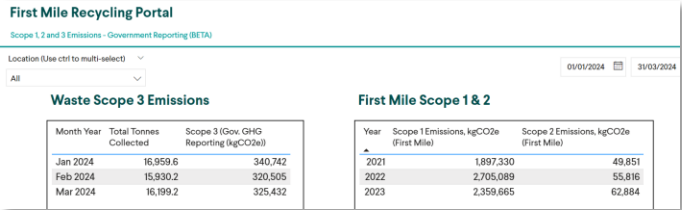


Highlights this year:



5700 collections per week by Cargo Bikes Dec 23.

c.17,500 deliveries completed by e-bike, avoiding c.12T CO₂e vs diesel delivery vans.



New portal to give customers better access to recycling impact data, encouraging behavioural change.

~41kT of CO₂e emissions avoided by recycling

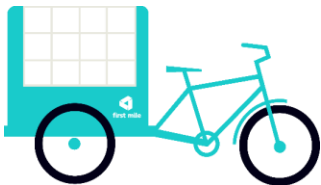
Our plans for 2024:



Measure our scope 3 emissions and refine our CO₂e avoided emissions factors.



Full rollout of our new recycling portal to all customers, giving on demand access to all recycling and carbon data.

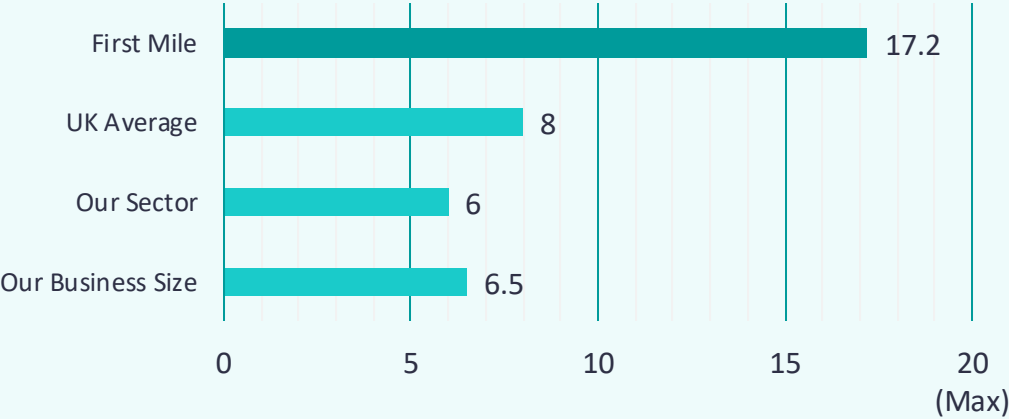
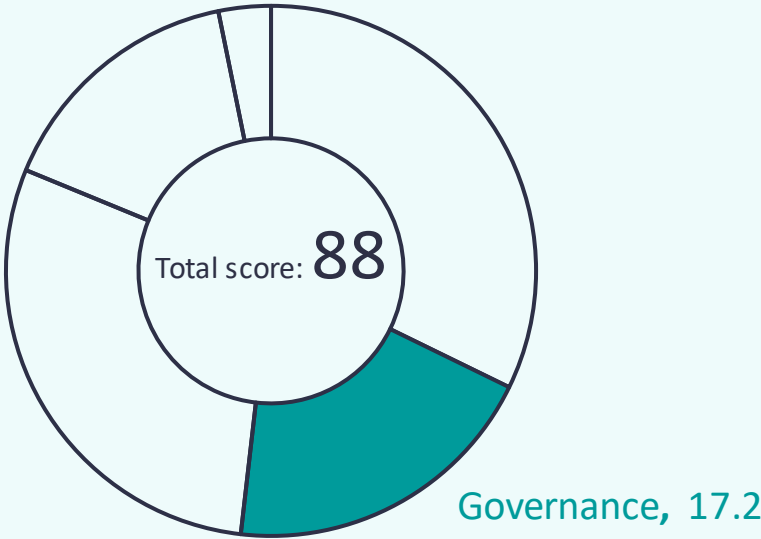


Rollout more cargo bike collections and implement round optimisation across the majority of collection rounds

Governance

Highlights this year

Our plans for 2024



We became B Corp Certified and changed our articles of association.



We introduced company-wide cybersecurity training.

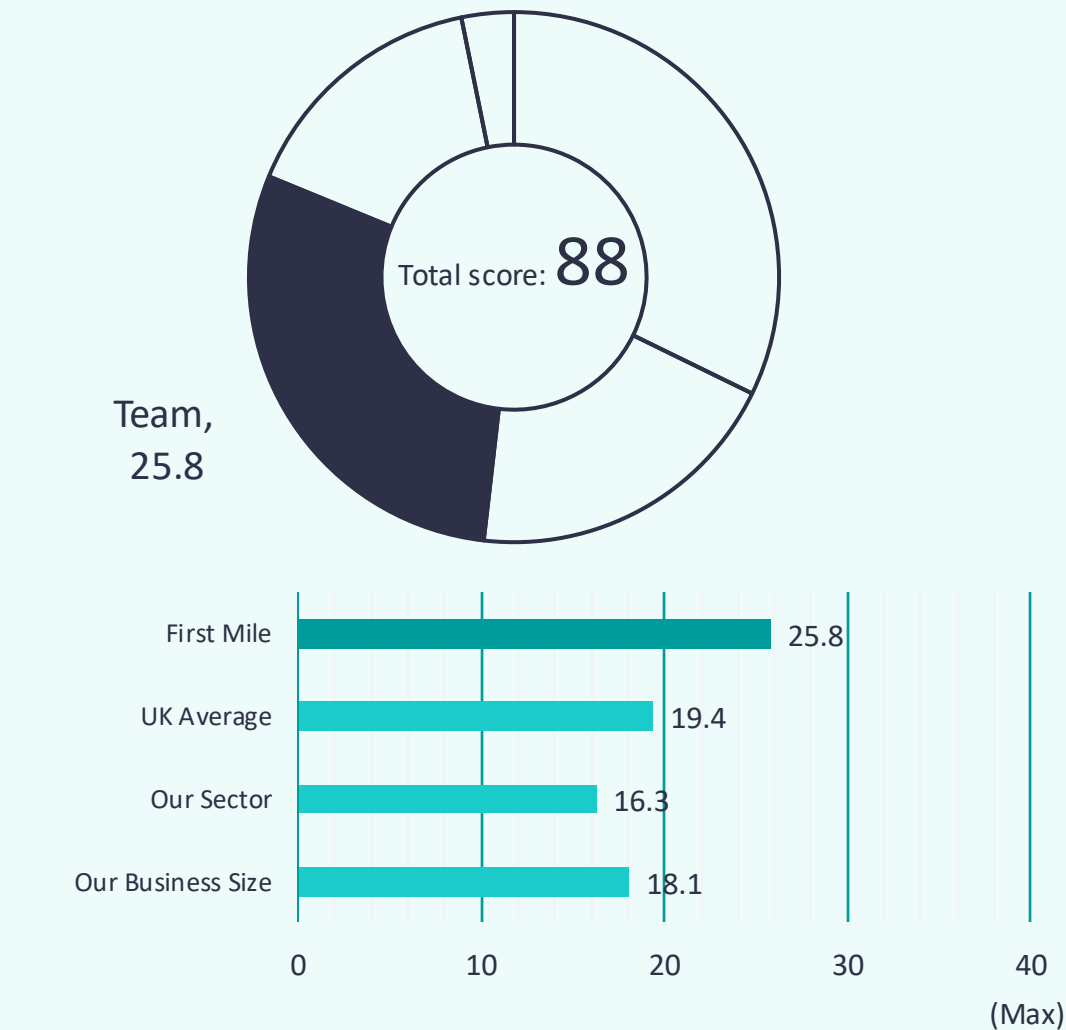


Implement a “B Keepers” program to embed accountability for continuous impact improvement across the business.



Improve tracking of environmental and social metrics for replicability and accuracy.

Team



We listened to employee feedback and restructured our operations and sales teams, and hired a compliance manager to improve our health and safety processes



Our employee NPS score was 33 in 2023 (vs an average of manufacturing companies of 9 in 2022)



Update our company culture book to reflect our current business condition after years of growth

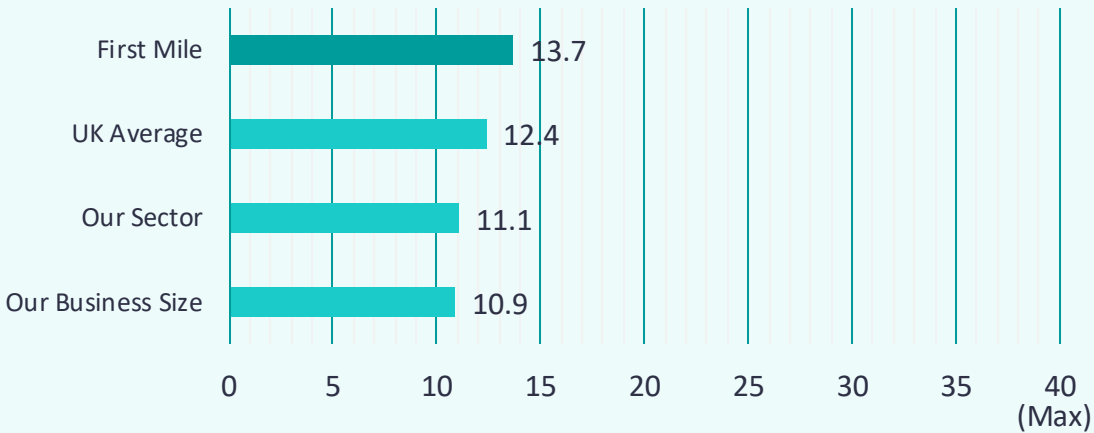
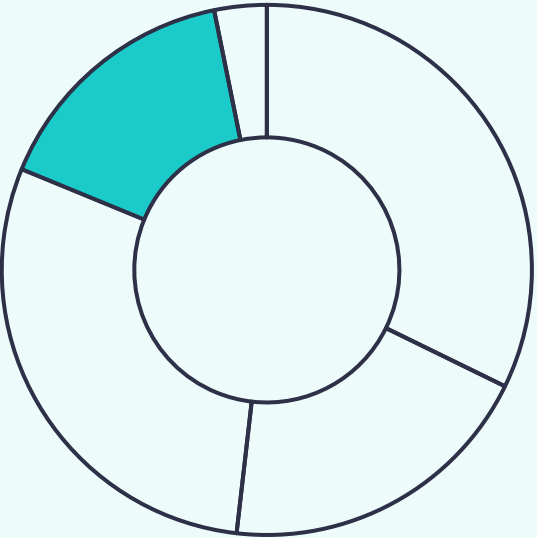


Analyse and reform our employee benefits package including moving to a greener pension provider

B Impact Assessment 2023 overview

Community

Community,
13.7



Highlights this year



Our supplier questionnaire asking about environmental and social certifications.



Our company podcast reached >12,000 downloads.

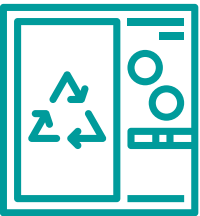


9 new business improvement districts and estates.

Our plans for 2024



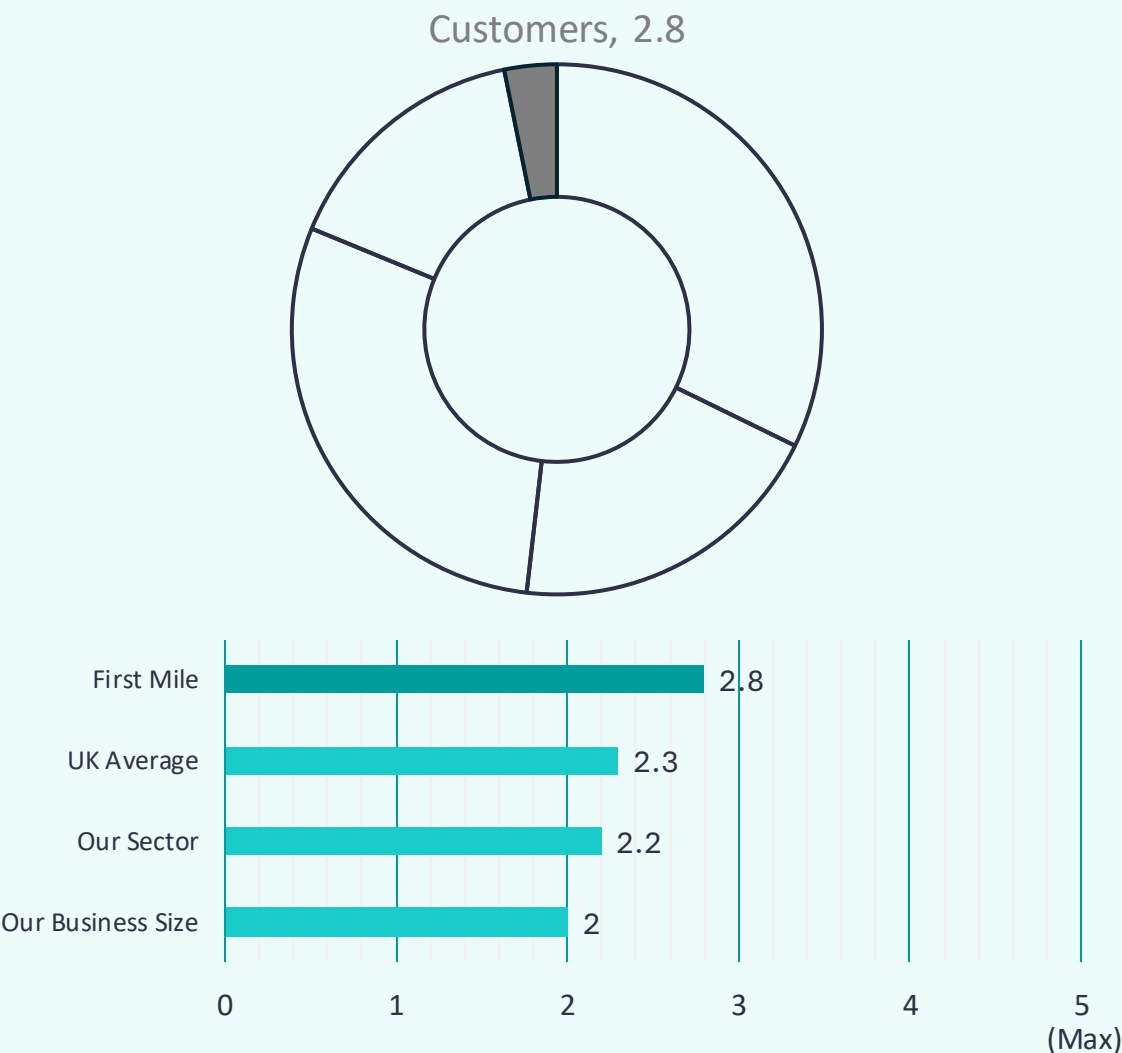
We will become more involved with community garden projects and are actively engaging with a site in north London.



We will review our significant suppliers to screen for high environmental and social performance.

B Impact Assessment 2023 overview

Customers



Highlights this year



Received 794 customer satisfaction survey responses, averaging 85% score



Delivering 40+ waste audits and support customer learn about their waste production.

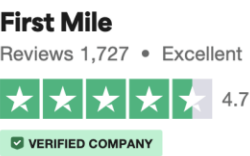


Receiving over 450 responses on a customer survey.

Our plans for 2024



To launch our new customer reporting tool in 2024.



Goal to improve our Trustpilot score from 4.7-4.9.

02 Planet

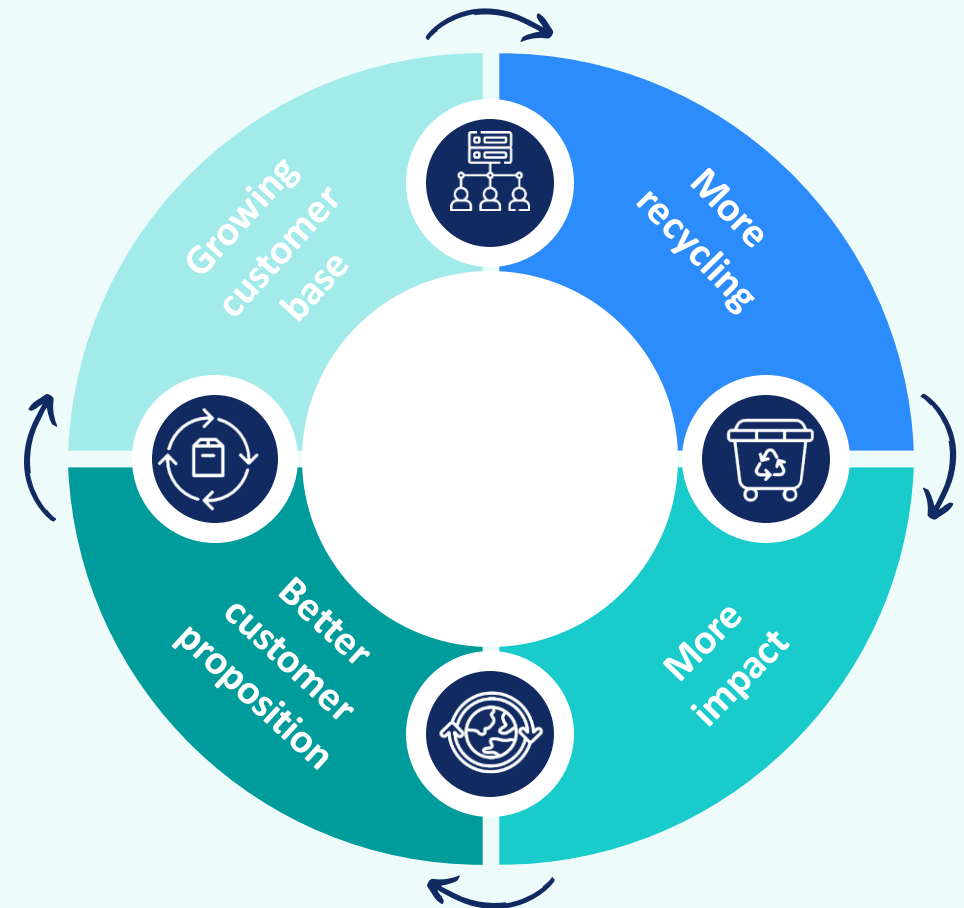


Virtuous circle of recycling

As we grow, our operational efficiency improves, decreasing emissions intensity and allowing us to deploy short distance clean transport (e.g cargo bikes).

Our ability to improve customers' recycling rates helps us to avoid more emissions, develop new recycling streams with partners and improve our proposition to customers.

Our business model is inherently good for the planet – the more our customer base grows, the lower our environmental impact.

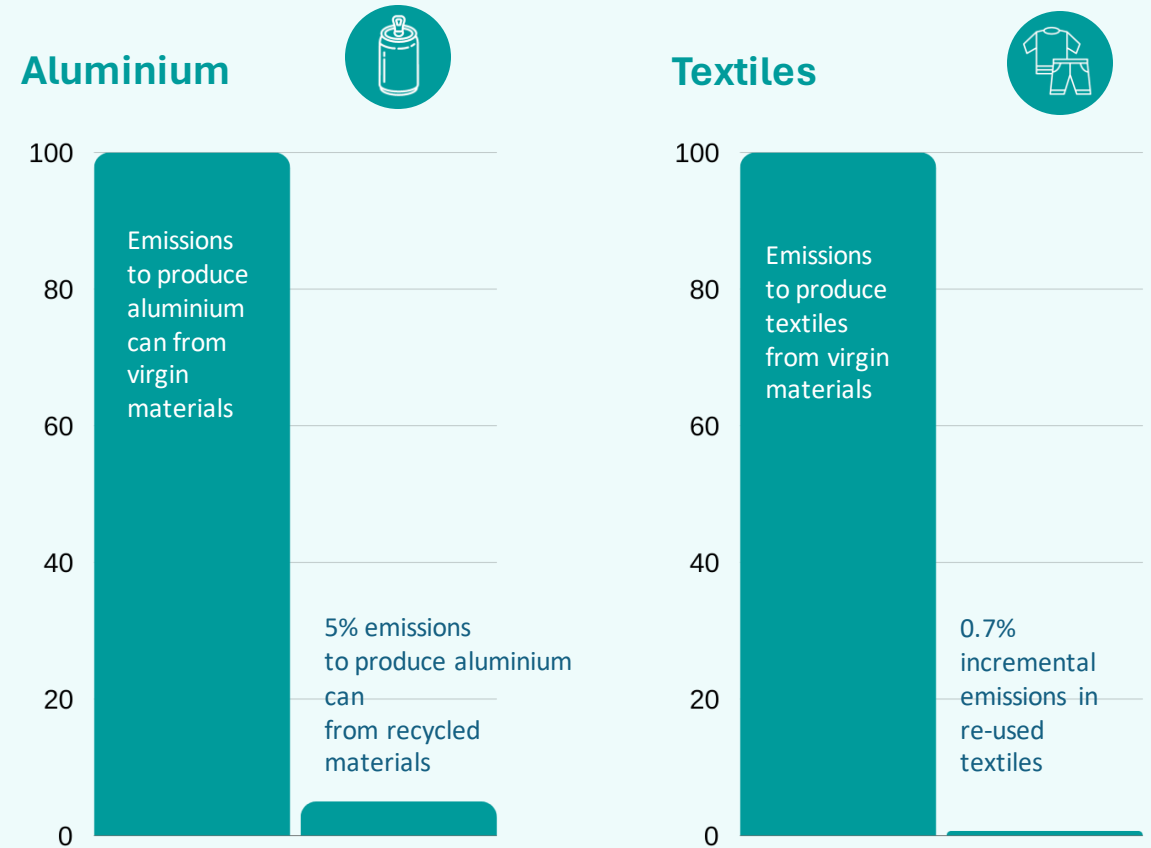


Avoided carbon emissions explained

CO₂ emissions are avoided by recycling, because making new products from recycled material emits less carbon than making them from new virgin material.

Every time you recycle, you are putting more recycled material into the supply chain, reducing the need for new resource extraction.

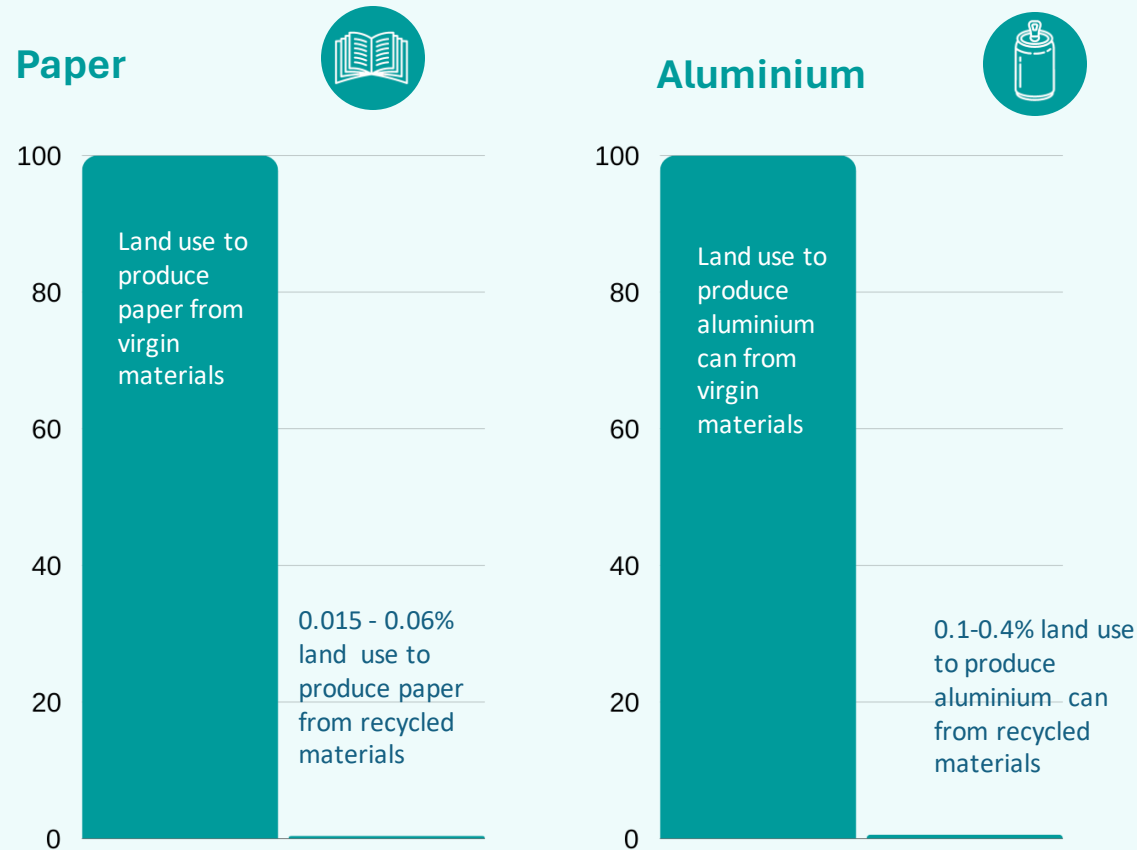
Example carbon avoided by recycling aluminium, and re-using textiles



Virgin Processes: Growing/synthesising, extracting, transport and processing
Recycling Processes: Embedded emissions in bins, direct emissions of collection, re-processing, transport sorting & redistributing

Sources: Imperial College London Centre for Environmental Policy, International Aluminium Institute, Government GHG Conversion Factors

Land use avoided by recycling paper and aluminium ¹

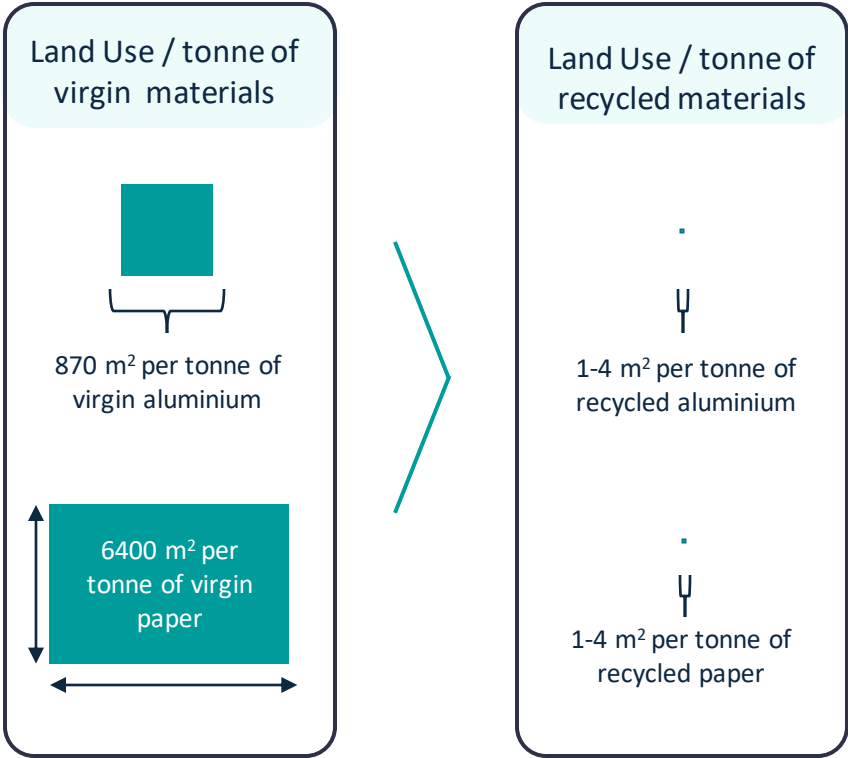


Virgin Processes: Growing/synthesising, extracting, transport and processing
Recycling Processes: Land use embedded in collections, transport, sorting from other recyclables and processing

¹ Land Use values are total lifetime land use - units of m²a are typically used to represent the land used multiplied by the number of years the land is occupied, giving the lifetime land usage

Avoided land use explained

Recycling also avoids the land use for forestry, mining and processing that would have been required to produce from virgin materials. This has positive implications for biodiversity.



Rectangles to scale with land use

Carbon emissions of end treatment explained

As well as avoiding emissions by displacing virgin materials, recycling also avoids the additional emissions that would result from other treatment options.

Example: Plastics

Energy from Waste:

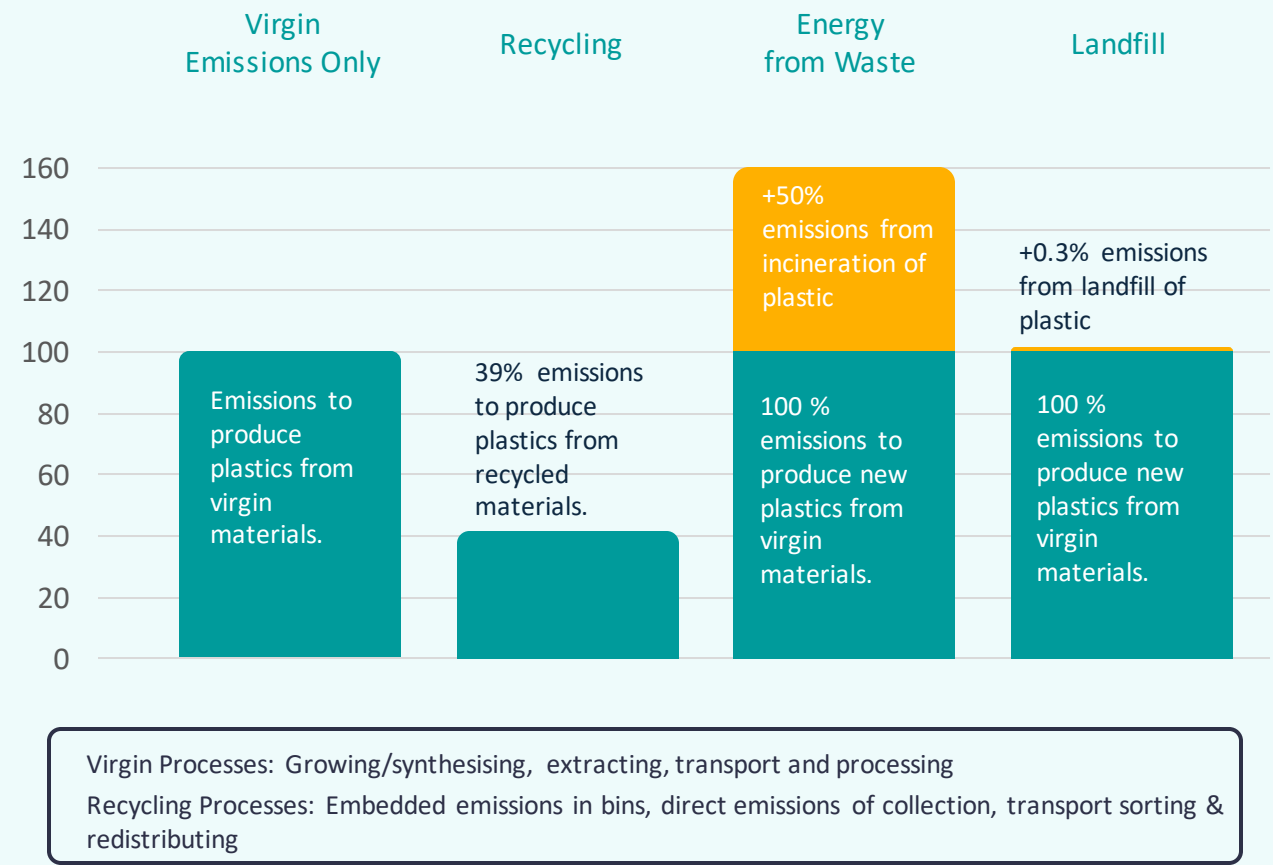
- Does not avoid virgin production and extraction.
- 50% more CO₂ emissions are emitted, even including the impact of energy captured.

Landfill:

- Does not avoid virgin production and extraction.
- Plastics are mostly inert in landfill in terms of carbon emissions, but improper management can lead to leakage of plastics to natural environment.



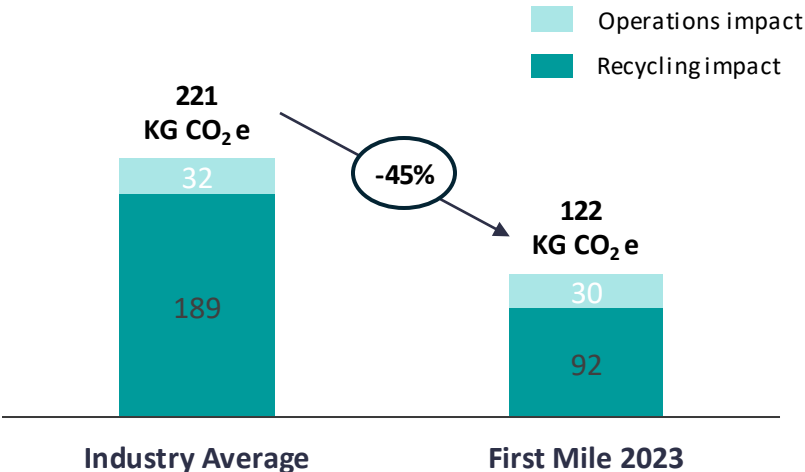
Example: Carbon impact from recycling vs other treatment options



Environmental impact results 2023

Carbon impact

CO₂e per tonne of waste (including emissions avoided by recycling)

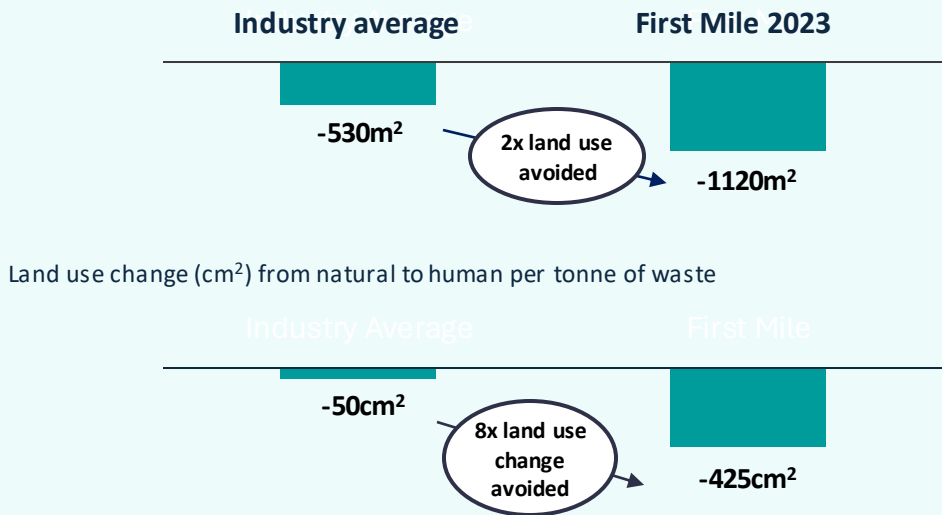


Through better recycling rates and greener operations, we deliver 45% lower overall emissions per tonne of waste collected than industry average

Biodiversity impact

Land use (m²) per tonne of waste

Recycling impact



>90%

of biodiversity loss and water stress is a result of extraction and processing of materials, fuels and food.

- Ellen MacArthur Foundation



Environmental impact approach

Our Planet Pillars –
Approach to Improving
Environmental Impact



Environment
B Impact Assessment Relevant
Impact Area



Better recycling

Thanks to superior customer engagement and better waste segregation than industry average, we can recycle more.



Greener operations

We can collect waste more efficiently than peers and reduce local air pollution levels.



Sustainable supply

We work with partners who care about the environment and develop them to be lower impact.

Better recycling



Customer behaviour

In 2023 we delivered 40+ waste audits and recycling workshops. Our unique waste tracking system RecycledID™ improves accountability around contaminated sacks accurate weight tracking.



Waste segregation

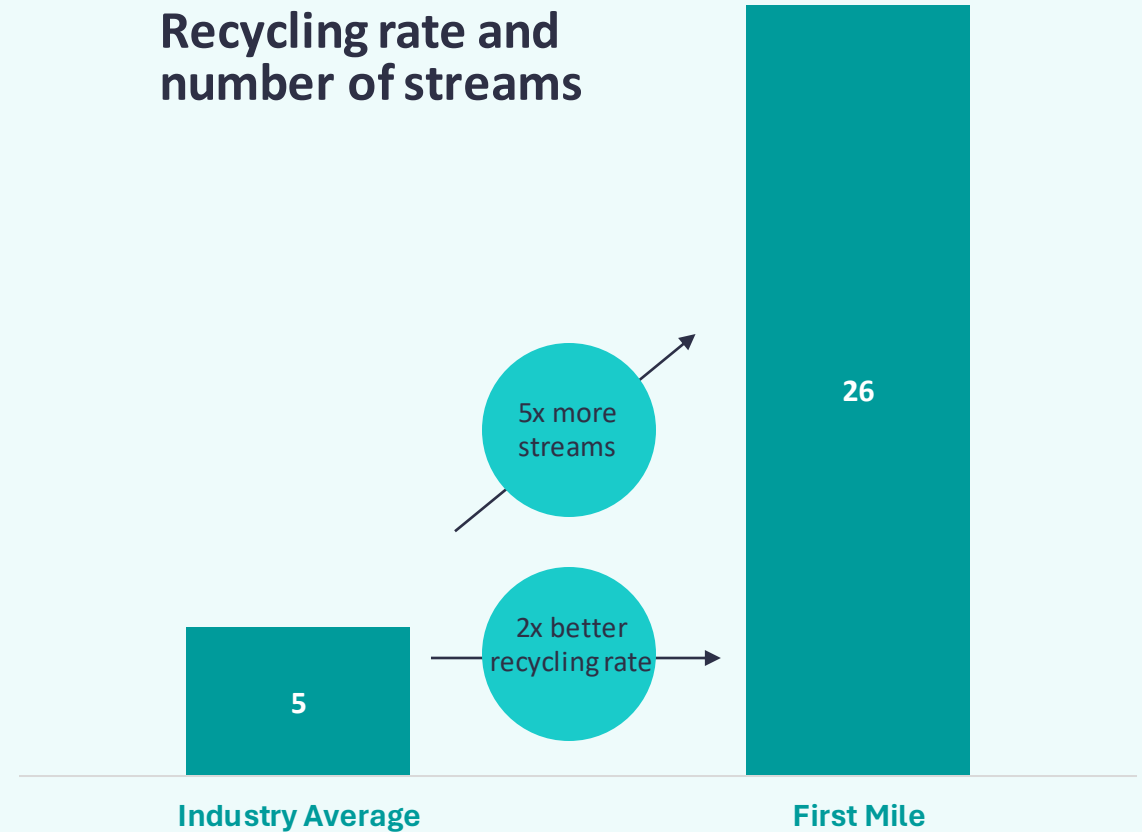
In 2023, we introduced optimised routing for our delivery drivers and specialist collection streams. At our materials sorting facility we separate recycling sacks from general waste sacks where other operators often dispose of them as general waste.



Downstream recycling

We seek out and work with processors who have a higher recycling rate and lower contamination rate than industry average. specialist collections and partnerships form the backbone of our service.

Recycling rate and number of streams



We achieve better recycling rates thanks to quality customer engagement, more segregated streams and unique operating model. We achieve 2x higher recycling rates which are critical to our environmental impact.

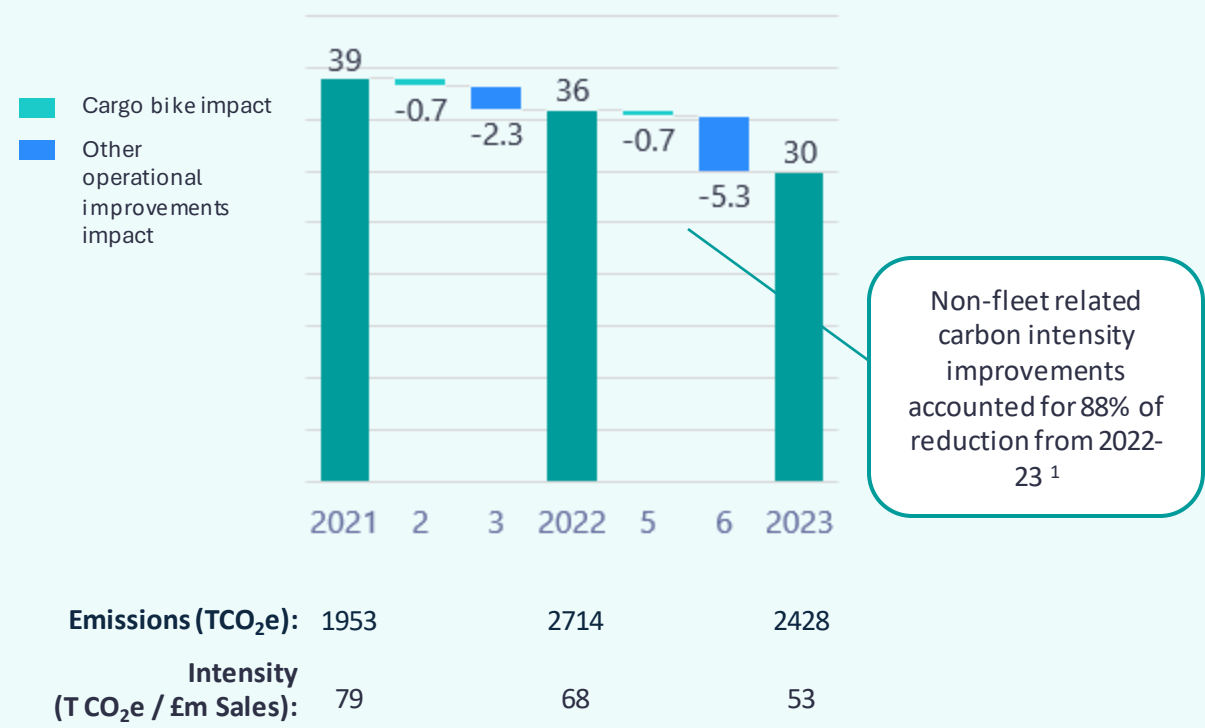
Recycling impact vs other impact initiatives

Recycling can have a far bigger impact on carbon emissions than other business initiatives



Greener operations

Scope 1 & 2 emissions intensity
kg CO₂e / tonne waste collected



Sustainable supply chain initiatives



Operational partners

Our cargo bike provider completed a lifecycle analysis to give us a complete view of their environmental benefit vs alternative transport.



End destination of waste

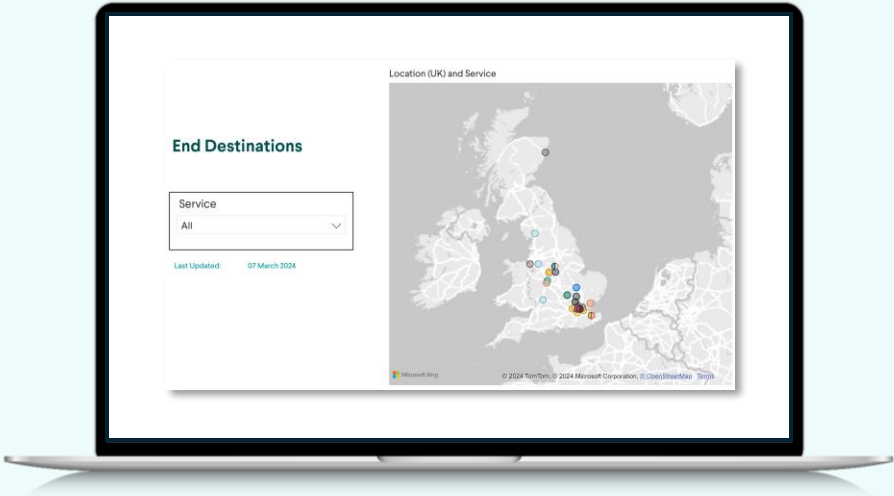
When we send waste to another sorting facility, we access data to determine how much we think is at risk of shipment abroad.



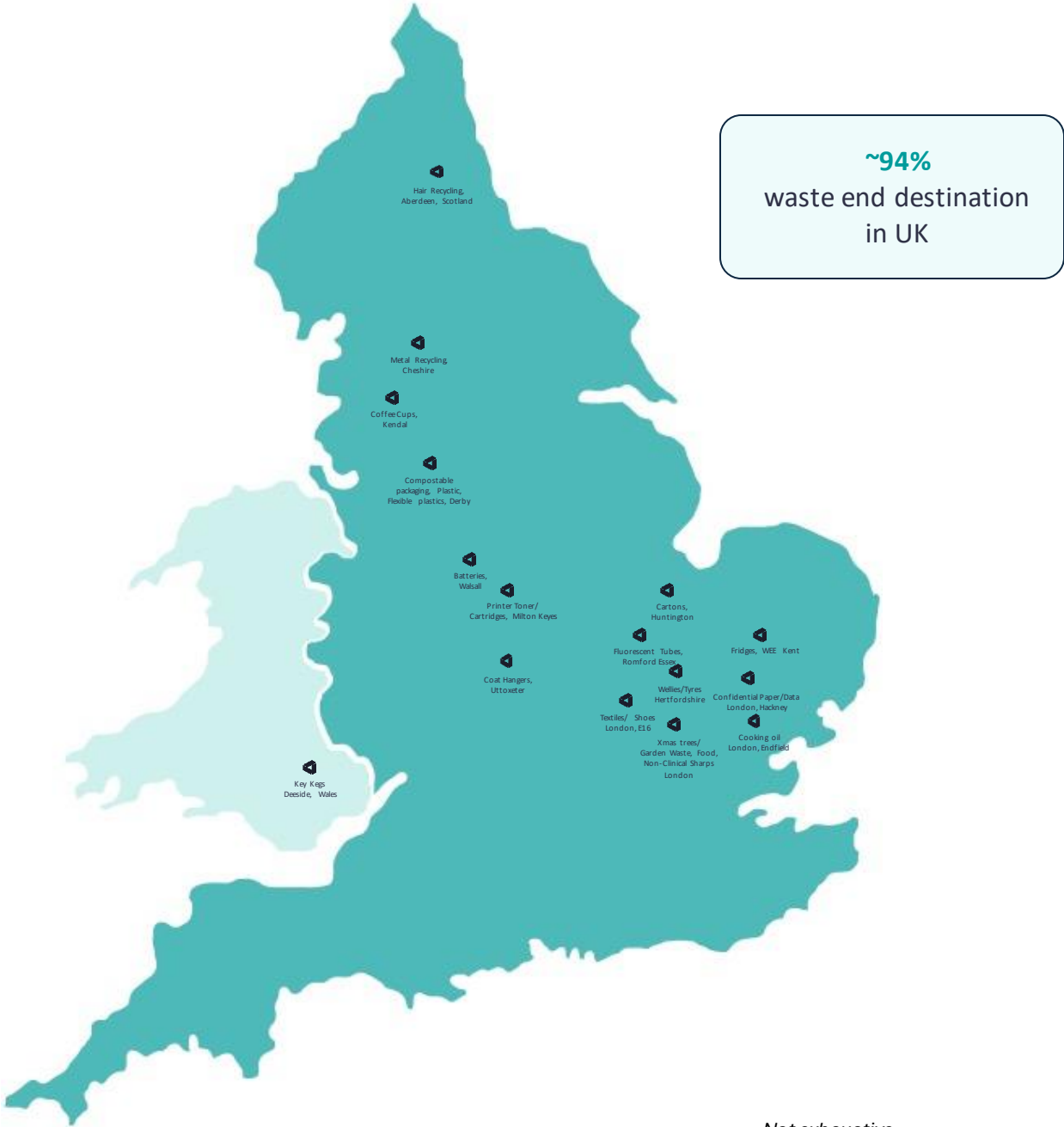
Low environmental impact

Our sacks are produced from recycled agricultural film and the recycled plastics that we collect are sent back to the manufacturer.

Sustainable supply



We have the flexibility to choose our downstream partners, sending waste to UK-based sites only and using environmental impact to guide our decisions. We do our best to monitor where waste ends up going from our partners, but more work must be done.



First Mile's 3 year planet plan

Better recycling



Use our RecycledID tracking system to lower contamination rates.



Provide customers with better weight data through our portal, identifying areas for improvement.



Better segregation of waste by using more rounds dedicated to specific waste streams.

Greener operations



We commit to reduce our combined scope 1 and 2 emissions by 42% by 2030 from a 2022 baseline.

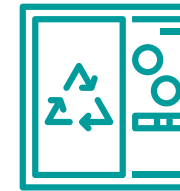


Further decarbonize our fleet with cargo bikes and electrification of our compactors and delivery vans.



We have demonstrated the benefit of our pre-sorting facility - we intend to expand its capacity.

Sustainable supply



As more customers purchase and access data online, we will move to greener data centres.



Create obligations on ourselves and landlords to manage and reduce the environmental impact of our sites.



Investigate and trace our downstream waste destinations, to be sure that no waste is being sent abroad.

03 People



People impact approach

Our approach to improving social impact:

Social initiatives to support our team, community and customers, which indirectly support us to succeed in our environmental mission.

B Impact Assessment relevant Impact Areas:

Governance

Workers

Community

Customers



01

Stakeholders

We amended our articles of association to embed decision making that considers all stakeholders into the foundations of our business.

02

Cybersecurity

We enrolled our workforce into cybersecurity training, to protect First Mile's sensitive information, improve employee safety and reduce risk.

03

Regulation

We hired a compliance manager to ensure we adhere to all relevant laws, regulations, and waste standards, mitigating legal risks and uphold ethical practices across our operations.

04

Communication

We regularly shared our progress against financial, environmental and social targets with employees at monthly town hall meetings and externally, keeping management team and board accountable.

Governance in 2023

Effective governance ensures that our actions prioritise the well-being of our company, the environment, the communities we serve, and our workers. Simultaneously, it reduces risk and maintains stability and productivity.

Our workers

Diversity within the workplace



Female representation is equal to industry average at 18% and we exceed market average representation in our office roles and managerial staff.



We improved the representation of ethnic minorities by 8%pts from 2022 to 2023.



Our workers

How we supported and developed our workers in 2023:

Health & safety

Benchmark

In 2023, our incident rate was equal to industry average across the waste sector according to Health and Safety Executive data.

Collection Operations

Collection operations typically have a higher-than-average injury rate than other parts of the waste sector. We are proud of our performance but are always looking to do more to protect our employees.

Pay & benefits

Bonuses

We pay our staff industry leading salaries and pay bonuses including BEN cards up to £60 monthly.

Appraisal

Quarterly employee reviews, driver of the quarter and First Miler of the month bonuses.

Mintago

Access to pension and online doctor appointments.

Development & wellbeing

Employee assistance program

We support our staff to help them deal with personal or work-related issues that may affect their well-being and performance.

Driver training

Our driver academy supports staff to earn their CAT C license. We provide extensive driver training, regular review and bitesize trainings.

Winningtemp

We allow our staff to provide, anonymised feedback with a weekly winningtemp survey.



Community: charitable giving

We support a variety of charitable causes as part of our commitment to giving back to the communities. We have supported our customer's fundraising efforts by donating to prize pots up to £150 per person.

We serve and support initiatives that promote social and environmental well-being.



First Mile are proud to support Crisis at Christmas, with free recycling and waste collections for all their London shelters.



First Mile donates Small Steps, Project who provides families that survive on municipal rubbish dumps and landfill sites with shoes and aid.



First Miler's every year, a group of our staff participate in the London winter run, raising money for Cancer Research.

Community: engagement

We value the views and engagement of our community. We actively participate and engage with our city and always listen to the experts.



Sustainable City Charter

First Mile is a signatory to the **Sustainable City Charter** a common collaborative framework for decarbonising and driving the sustainability of Westminster.



Litter Picks

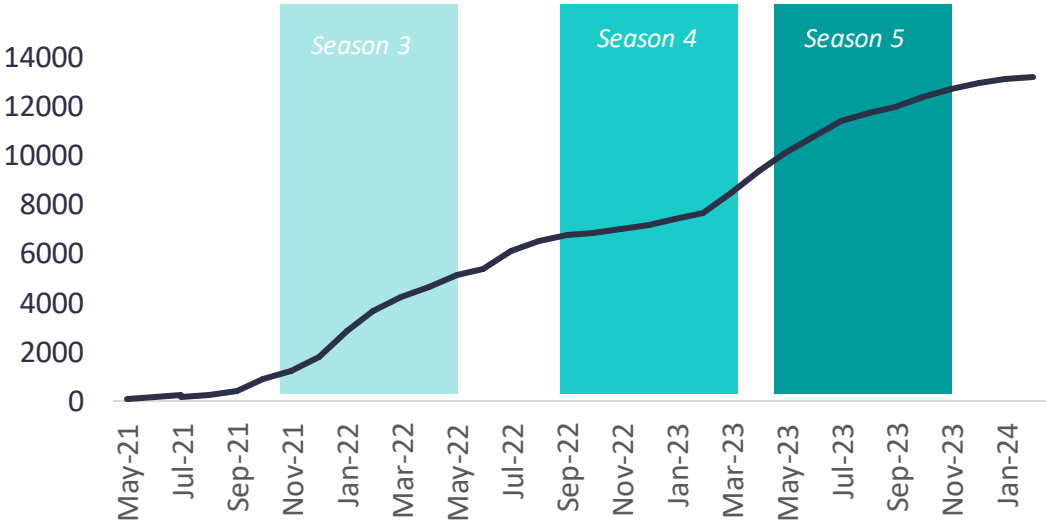
Our staff regularly take part in **litter picks**, often in collaboration with customers and members of the local community



Climate Podcast

The **First Mile Climate Heroes Podcast** shares the stories of businesses, activists and academics working to solve climate change – averaging c.100 downloads per week.

Cumulative Podcast Downloads Since Season 2



Community: championing SMEs

We've serviced over
30,000 businesses
in the UK, the
majority being
SMEs.

Local SMEs

Over 85% of our sales take place in the local London area and over 40% of all our COGS expenses are from suppliers based within the M25.

BIDs

We have been working closely with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). These are collections of small businesses that join forces to order from us at higher volumes for lower prices.



Mutual benefits

Geographical proximity of businesses within a BID makes them a prime candidate for using cargo bikes for collections. We work with the BID to identify suitable consolidation sites and in return, their members will receive cargo bike collections.

BID reporting

We offer BID and estate level reporting to encourage more businesses to sign up and reap the benefits.

Customer initiatives

Providing a superior service is part of our duty to amaze customers.

Account Management	We work with customers to help them recycle more, through activities such as waste audits.
Customer Service Centre	Customers can use our online resources but are always able to speak to a human if they prefer
Digital Tools	We offer detailed waste and carbon data reporting with our recycling portal.
Customer Engagement	Every year we incentivise customers with our own recycling standards awards.
Customer Feedback	We ran a survey in 2023 to determine what mattered most and learn how we can improve our service.

Our account managers go above and beyond to educate, collaborate and listen to our customers. The result is better recycling.





Thank you

If you would like to learn more about our impact initiatives or the methodologies in our report, then feel free to

contact us through our website:
info@thefirstmile.co.uk

